

# Tonality Since 1950

Edited by Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler  
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## “Das Wunderland”: Tonality and (Political) Topography in Eisler’s Songs Around 1950

Thomas Ahrend

### I

It comes as no surprise that, at the midpoint of his life and career, after his enforced remigration to Europe in 1948 (through expulsion from the USA, after which he initially moved to Vienna) and his subsequent decision to settle in East Berlin, Hanns Eisler composed tonally.<sup>1</sup> For one thing, in addition to “atonal” or twelve-tone pieces, Eisler had continuously composed tonal works with different functions and styles (workers’ songs, chansons, stage music, film music, etc.) before his return to Europe. Among these works were film scores for two Hollywood productions by RKO from 1947: *The Woman on the Beach* (directed by Jean Renoir) and *So Well Remembered* (directed by Edward Dmytryk). Further, Eisler faced certain preexisting conditions particular to the German Democratic Republic (GDR),<sup>2</sup> whose state-controlled cultural policy demanded tonality, or explicitly excluded “atonality” as undesirable. In the well-known speech by Andrei Zhdanov delivered in 1948, one of the most crucial attempts at defining “socialist realism” (at least until Stalin’s death in 1953), the issue of atonality arises as a critique of Shostakovich and other Soviet composers branded as “formalistic,” as can be seen from the discussion of the opera *Velikaya druzhba* (The Great Friendship) by Vano Muradeli:

It appears that novelty is almost the main characteristic of the formalistic direction. But novelty is not an end in itself; the new must be better than the old, otherwise it has no meaning. It seems to me that the followers of the formalistic direction use this little word mainly to create propaganda for bad music. [...] Yet, the “novelty” of the formalists is above all not even new, since this “new” reeks of the modern decadent music of Europe and America. [...] Behind the mask of surface-level compositional complications, a tendency toward the impoverishment of music is concealed. The musical language loses its expressiveness. There is so much coarseness, vulgarity, so much dishonesty carried in the music that it ceases to fulfill its purpose – to give pleasure. [...] This music becomes an enemy of the people, purely individualistic, and the people truly have the right to be and to remain indifferent to it. If one requires the listener to praise a coarse, formless, vulgar music, which builds on atonality, on perpetual dissonances, while consonances occur only in isolation and wrong notes and their combinations become the rule, that is a direct departure from fundamental musical norms. Taken together, that threatens to liquidate music, just as cubism and futurism in painting represent nothing more than a tendency toward the destruction of painting. Music that intentionally ignores normal human

- 1 For further details on Eisler’s remigration, see Peter Schweinhardt, *Fluchtpunkt Wien: Hanns Eislers Wiener Arbeiten nach der Rückkehr aus dem Exil* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2006), 15–119.
- 2 In German, the DDR (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*).

emotions, that shakes the psyche and the nervous system of human beings, cannot be popular, cannot serve society.<sup>3</sup>

Eisler had previously been involved in the so-called realism debate in the 1930s – in fact, he had been accused of defending formalistic tendencies.<sup>4</sup> He was confronted with the most recent manifestations of this debate, at the very latest, in 1948, on his return to Europe for the Second International Congress of Composers and Music Critics, held from May 20–29 in Prague.<sup>5</sup> In the GDR, the relevant musical func-

- 3 Es zeigt sich, daß das Neuerertum geradezu das Hauptcharakteristikum der formalistischen Richtung ist. Aber Neuerertum ist nicht Selbstzweck; das Neue muß besser sein als das Alte, sonst hat es keinen Sinn. Mir scheint, daß die Anhänger der formalistischen Richtung dies Wörtchen in der Hauptsache gebrauchen, um Propaganda für schlechte Musik zu machen. [...] Und dabei ist das “Neuerertum” der Formalisten überhaupt nicht einmal neu, denn dieses “Neue” riecht nach der modernen dekadenten Musik Europas und Amerikas. [...] Hinter der Maske einer rein äußerlichen Komplizierung der Manier des Komponierens verbirgt sich die Tendenz zur Verarmung der Musik. Die musikalische Sprache verliert an Ausdrucksfähigkeit. Es wird so viel Grobes, Vulgäres, so viel Unechtes in die Musik hineingetragen, daß sie aufhört, ihrer Bestimmung zu entsprechen – Genuß zu verschaffen. [...] Diese Musik wird volksfeindlich, rein individualistisch, und das Volk hat wirklich das Recht, gleichgültig ihr gegenüber zu werden und zu bleiben. Wenn man vom Hörer verlangt, eine grobe, formlose, vulgäre Musik zu loben, die sich auf Atonalität, auf ständigen Dissonanzen aufbaut, während Konsonanzen nur ganz vereinzelt vorkommen und falsche Noten und ihre Kombination zur Regel werden, so ist das eine direkte Abkehr von den grundlegenden musikalischen Normen. All das zusammengenommen droht die Musik zu liquidieren, ebenso wie Kubismus und Futurismus in der Malerei nichts anderes darstellen als eine Tendenz in Richtung auf die Zerstörung der Malerei. Eine Musik, die absichtlich, die normalen menschlichen Emotionen ignoriert, die die Psyche und das Nervensystem des Menschen erschüttert, kann nicht populär werden, kann der Gesellschaft nicht dienen.

Andrej Aleksandrovič Ždanov (A. Shdanow), “Fragen der sowjetischen Musikkultur, Diskussionsbeitrag auf der Beratung von Vertretern der sowjetischen Musik im ZK der KPdSU (B), Januar 1948,” in *Über Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Berlin: Dietz, 1951), 55–79 (68–69 and 74–75) (for a contemporaneous English edition of the book, see also A. A. Zhdanov, *Essays on Literature, Philosophy, and Music* [New York: International Publishers, 1950], 87, 88, 93). Unless otherwise noted, English translations of quoted passages in the present chapter are by the editors.

- 4 See Ernst Bloch and Hanns Eisler, “Die Kunst zu erben” (1938), in Eisler, *Musik und Politik: Schriften 1924–1948*, ed. Günter Mayer, *Hanns Eisler Gesammelte Werke* III/1 [hereafter *EGW*] (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1973), 406–14; and Eisler, “Antwort an Lukács” (1938), in *ibid.*, 433–35.
- 5 See the editor’s commentary on Eisler, “Gesellschaftliche Grundfragen der Musik,” in *Musik und Politik: Schriften 1948–1962*, ed. Günter Mayer (*EGW* III/2) (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1982), 13–25, at 23: “Eisler spoke on the first days of the congress (before May 23) in the plenary session. [...] At this congress a Soviet delegation took part [...]. The two last days were devoted to their appearance. On this occasion the results of consultations with representatives of Soviet music among the Central Committee of the CPSU (B) (in January 1948) and an evaluation of members of the Union of Soviet Composers (February 1948) were presented and explained.” Eisler is among the cosignatories (and, presumably, among the authors most significantly involved) of a “manifesto” from this congress, wherein, among other points, emphasis on “the people” can probably be understood as a reaction to Zhdanov’s speech at the Union of Soviet Composers. (Hanns Eisler, “Manifest [I]”, in *ibid.*, 26–28, at 27: “The music and the musical life of our times shows a deep crisis. [...] The overcoming of this musi-

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tionaries adopted this view in their own cultural policy. In particular, Ernst Hermann Meyer formulated this view in his book *Musik im Zeitgeschehen* of 1952, with significant references to Zhdanov.<sup>6</sup> A music theory-based problematization or definition of tonality or atonality is lacking in both Zhdanov and Meyer and is not, of course, their goal. For them, “atonality” acts merely as a cipher which, among other purposes, serves to downgrade “modern” music. Instead, the legitimization of putative “fundamental musical norms,” or “tonal fixedness” [*tonartliche Gebundenheit*] as “normal” and “popular” [*volkstümlich*], remains in the foreground. Eisler himself possessed a relatively sophisticated and particularly historically-informed notion of tonality, which had been shaped not least through his lessons with Schoenberg and the study of his *Harmonielehre*.<sup>7</sup> In this situation, he obviously tried to mediate between the implications of “socialist realism” and his own compositional

cal crisis seems possible to us, if [...] music becomes the expression of great, new, progressive ideas and sensations of the masses”).

- 6 See Ernst Hermann Meyer, *Musik im Zeitgeschehen* (Berlin: Henschel, 1952), 152:

In modern music making, formalistic tendencies always go together with a lack of sentimental content, which is accessible and precious to the people. [...] The endeavor of dissonance, the expression of an ever more sharpened emotion in classical music, originally an enrichment of expressive feeling, becomes meaningless, completely uncommitted, all leveling out and unfeeling “atonalism”. [...] The exclusiveness of dissonant sounds not functionally linked, unresolvedly following one another means in contemporary music [...] such a complication of the intelligibility of any content, that the people must see, in these works, content hostility, or *only* negation, aggression – as in the distorted object contours of many expressionist paintings. [...] The relatedness of music to the forms of tonal fixedness in question and, at the same time, the recognition of the need for resolutions in music is, however, the “normal,” the “typical,” the “popular,” the “healthy,” the “human.”

[Im modernen Musikschaffen gehen formalistische Tendenzen immer zusammen mit Mangel an Gefühlsgehalte, die dem Volke erreichbar und wertvoll sind. [...] Das Dissonanzwesen, in der klassischen Musik Ausdruck eines mehr und mehr geschärften Emotionalismus, ursprünglich als Bereicherung des Gefühlsausdruckes, wird zum nichtssagenden, zu nichts verpflichtenden, alles nivellierenden und gefühllosen ‘Atonalismus’. [...] Ausschließlichkeit einander folgender, funktionell nicht verknüpfter unaufgelöster dissonanter Klänge aber bedeutet in der zeitgenössischen Musik [...] eine solche Erschwerung der Verständlichkeit eines Inhaltes, daß das Volk in diesen Werken Inhaltsfeindlichkeit sehen muß, d. h. *nur* Verneinung, Aggression – wie bei den verzerrten Objektconturen mancher expressionistischer Malerei. [...] Die Bezogenheit der Musik auf eine jeweilige tonartliche Gebundenheit und gleichzeitig die Anerkennung der Notwendigkeit von Entspannungen in der Musik ist aber das ‘Normale’, das ‘Typische’, das Volkstümliche, das Gesunde, das Menschliche.]

On the structure of “official” music politics in the GDR, see Elaine Kelly’s summary in *Composing the Canon in the German Democratic Republic: Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 32–36.

- 7 See Thomas Ahrend, *Aspekte der Instrumentalmusik Hanns Eislers: Zu Form und Verfahren in den Variationen* (Berlin: Mensch & Buch, 2006), 107–15; and Markus Roth, *Der Gesang als Asyl: Analytische Studien zu Hanns Eislers Hollywood-Liederbuch* (Hofheim: Wolke, 2007), 104–15. On the relationship between tonality and atonality for Eisler see also Thomas Ahrend, “Die Freiheit muss man sich nehmen: Hanns Eisler und die Verwendung der Atonalität,” in *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung 2008/2009*, ed. Simone Hohmaier (Mainz: Schott, 2009), 155–70.

preferences and possibilities, without, of course, calling into question the ideological polemic against formalistic tendencies (e.g., “atonality”). Along those lines, a lecture given in Berlin in January 1949 and published in the same year, states in relativizing terms:

The pursuit of popularity [*Volkstümlichkeit*] in highly capitalist countries [is] nothing but the desire for the easiest possible intelligibility. As such, it must certainly be respected. But it is also to be criticized. Because, in general, popularity is considered a certain sentimentality; a playfulness authorized by nothing, like manners and customs, as these do not easily correspond to our modern lives. If one is aware, however, that the most advanced stratum of society – its actual core, its heart – is the working class, then to be popular means to turn, above all, to the workers, who represent the most advanced consciousness of people today. This would, however, render a new characterization of “popular” necessary. Because the workers are not naïve, they learn quickly; they have peculiar manners and customs – from different national particularities, but international in their contents. They are innovation-addicted. They have experienced how necessary change, remodeling, variety of methods, and agility are. They have the most extensive plans and perspectives. A musical style that turns to this most advanced stratum of society must definitely be different, therefore, from what one previously understood by popularity. It will, therefore, be a new kind of popularity. How can this be achieved? Well, such musical questions must be answered on staff paper. [...]<sup>8</sup>

A large part of Eisler’s musical output from 1949 can be interpreted as an attempt to provide his own response “on staff paper” to the demand for popularity, and at the same time – probably at least in his intention – to critique the ideological concept of “popularity,” which he had recognized as abstract. It comes as no surprise that under the given cultural-political conditions, Eisler, in turn, composed tonally. (And it is not without a certain political irony, of course, that for some pieces written under the conditions of “socialist realism,” Eisler fell back on compositions or parts thereof originally conceived for Hollywood feature films).<sup>9</sup>

- 8 [D]as Streben nach Volkstümlichkeit in den hochkapitalistischen Ländern [ist] nichts als der Wunsch nach möglichst leichter Verständlichkeit. Als solcher muß er gewiß respektiert werden. Aber er ist auch zu kritisieren. Versteht man doch unter Volkstümlichkeit im allgemeinen eine gewisse Gefühlsseligkeit, eine durch nichts berechnete Spielfreude, auch Sitten und Gebräuche, wie sie unserem modernen Leben nicht leicht entsprechen. Wenn man sich aber bewußt ist, daß die fortgeschrittenste Schicht des Volkes, ihr eigentlicher Kern, ihr Herz, die Arbeiterschaft ist, dann bedeutet volkstümlich sein, sich vor allem an die Arbeiter wenden, die das fortgeschrittenste Bewußtsein der Menschen von heute repräsentieren. Dies würde aber eine neue Charakterisierung des “Volkstümlichen” notwendig machen. Denn die Arbeiter sind nicht naiv, sie lernen rasch, sie haben eigentümliche Sitten und Gebräuche, verschieden durch nationale Besonderheiten, aber international in ihren Inhalten; sie sind neuerungssüchtig; sie haben erfahren, wie notwendig Veränderung, Umgestaltung, Vielfältigkeit der Methoden, Beweglichkeit sind. Sie haben die weitestgehenden Pläne und Perspektiven. Ein musikalischer Stil, der sich an diese fortschrittlichste Schicht der Menschen wendet, wird also durchaus verschieden sein müssen von dem, was man bisher unter Volkstümlichkeit verstand. Es wird sich also um eine neue Volkstümlichkeit handeln. Wie kann sie erzielt werden? Nun, musikalische Fragen solcher Art müssen auf dem Notenpapier beantwortet werden.

Hanns Eisler, “Hörer und Komponist [II]” (1949), in *Musik und Politik: Schriften 1948–1962*, ed. Günter Mayer [*EGW III/2*] (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1982), 64–72 (69).

- 9 See Peter Deeg, “Filmographie: Hanns Eisler in Hollywood,” in Horst Weber, “*I am not a hero*,

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What is surprising, though, particularly in songs such as the *Nationalhymne der DDR* (Example 1) or the *Neue deutsche Volkslieder* – both produced in the GDR in 1949 – is the extreme reduction of the possibilities of “advanced” tonality, as Eisler had definitely practiced it in earlier tonal compositions by means of fluctuating tonality (*schwebende Tonalität*) and other “modern” techniques.<sup>10</sup> One could also make use of Eisler’s own term, “retraction” [*Zurücknahme*], from the early 1960s, which he applied on the broadest historical scale:

The cave drawings functioned, to a certain extent, to first conquer the animals graphically and, to a certain extent, to charm, before they are met in real terms. [...] That is a highly interesting thing. Because the original function of art – one so practical – reminds me, strangely enough, of the function of the revolutionary labor force. [...] Here, I see an immense retraction [*Zurücknahme*]. Because if we want to explain the history of art at all, the individual fields of art arise – above all, through division of labor. And the secularization – the emancipation of art from religion, from rite, from myth – is its bourgeoisification or its modernization! [...] With the secularization of art being a culinary enterprise – that is, art became a stimulant; it developed from the myth of the dull community to an individual activity; it became an entertainment instead of a compulsory community matter – we have to say that these days [...] we are going back, I put it most cruelly, to those cave drawings.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to Eisler’s earlier tonal compositions, the songs emerging around 1950 appear oversimplified – not primarily because they are tonal, but in comparison to Eisler’s earlier tonal works. These songs appear ill-matched to a historical narrative based upon a progressive history: they are not conveniently inscribed into a history

*I am a composer”: Hanns Eisler in Hollywood* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2012), 488–503.

10 Eisler himself refers, as late as the fall of 1948, to such techniques in his music:

If I say that the composer himself has endeavored to see the Viennese people witness the musically new, I mean, thereby, something very concrete, musically-technical. Thus the Angst-Ensemble is devised, for example, in a kind of fluctuating tonality. It is in B $\flat$  minor, though the tonic never occurs. This is no technical joke, but is required by the material. In order to concretize a lightweight, an eerily comic, whispered piece, a very modern technique was needed, which goes far beyond the notion of the popular.

See Hanns Eisler, “Wie ich Nestroy verstehe: Über die Musik zu ‘Höllenangst’” (1948), in *Musik und Politik*, 40–41 (41). Apart from the question of whether fluctuating tonality may be referred to, around 1950, as “a very modern technique,” it is still striking that, after 1949, such indications are lacking in Eisler’s remarks.

11 Eisler, *Gespräche mit Hans Bunge: Fragen Sie mehr über Brecht*, ed. Hans Bunge [*EGW III/7*] (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1975), 237–38:

[D]ie Höhlenzeichnungen hatten die Funktion, die Tiere gewissermaßen erst einmal zeichnerisch zu erobern, sie gewissermaßen zu bezaubern, bevor man sie real trifft. [...] Das ist eine hochinteressante Sache. Denn die Urfunktion der Kunst – eine so praktizistische – erinnert mich merkwürdigerweise an die Funktion der Kunst der revolutionären Arbeiterschaft. [...] Hier sehe ich eine ungeheure Zurücknahme. Denn wenn wir die Kunstgeschichte überhaupt erklären wollen, so entstehen die einzelnen Gebiete der Kunst vor allem durch Arbeitsteilung. Und die Säkularisierung, die Emanzipation der Kunst vom Religiösen, vom Ritus, vom Mythos ist ihre Verbürgerlichung oder ihre Modernisierung! [...] War die Säkularisierung der Kunst eine kulinarische – das heißt, die Kunst wurde zu einem Genußmittel; sie wurde vom Mythos der dumpfen Gemeinde zu einer individuellen Betätigung; sie wurde zu einem Spaß statt einer verpflichtenden Gemeinschaftssache –, so müssen wir sagen, daß wir doch in diesen Zeiten [...] zurückgehen, ich sage es ganz grausam, auf die Höhlenzeichnungen.

# National-Hymne

der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik  
 Dichtung von Nationalpreisträger Johannes R. Becher  
 Musik von Hanns Eisler

*Ruhig*

1. Auf - er - stan - den aus Ru - i - nen und der Zu - kunft  
 2. Glück und Frie - de sei be - schie - den Deutsch - land, un - serm  
 3. Laßt uns pflü - gen, laßt uns bau - en, lernst und schafft wie

zu - ge - wandt, laß uns dir zum Gu - ten die - nen,  
 Va - ter - land. Al - le Welt sehnt sich nach Frie - den,  
 nie zu - vor, und der eig - nen Kraft ver - trau - end

Deutsch - land, ei - nig Va - ter - land. Al - te Not gilt  
 reicht den Völ - kern eu - re Hand. Wenn wir Brü - der -  
 steigt ein frei Ge - schlecht em - por. Deut - sche Ju - gend,

es zu zwin - gen, — und wir zwin - gen sie ver - eint,  
 lich uns ei - nen, — schlagen wir des Völ - kes Feind.  
 be - stes Stre - ben — uns - res Volks in dir ver - eint,

denn es muß uns doch ge - lin - gen, daß die Son - ne schön wie  
 Laßt das Licht des Frie - dens schei - nen, daß nie ei - ne Mut - ter  
 wirst du Deutschlands neu - es Le - ben, und die Son - ne schon wie

nie ü - ber Deutsch - land scheint, ü - ber Deutsch - land scheint.  
 mehr ih - ren Sohn be - weint, ih - ren Sohn be - weint.  
 nie ü - ber Deutsch - land scheint, ü - ber Deutsch - land scheint.

Example 1: Hanns Eisler, Nationalhymne der DDR

based on musical-technical telos. At best, they can be – considering the representatives of “socialist realism” – subordinated to the idea of a social “advancement,” by justifying their simplicity in terms of the necessity of being understandable by the putative “simple” person. But by no means can Eisler’s “retracted” tonality be understood only as an affirmative adaptation of the dominant discourse around 1950 of “socialist realism” in the GDR. The following analytical observations attempt to show, by contrast, that – as with some of the aforementioned songs – tonality is *marked* as a medium, one that both draws self-reflexive attention and, in so doing, defamiliarizes itself. In particular, the tonal works call into question the ideological coupling of tonality and “popularity.”

## II

Resulting from a commission in 1949, the East German national anthem – *Nationalhymne der DDR* (“Auferstanden aus Ruinen”) – is one of the first compositions Eisler finished after his move from Vienna to East Berlin.<sup>12</sup> The anthem, undoubtedly, is a tonal composition, since it contains many familiar elements of tonality: pitches of a scale that can be traced back to a tonic (F Major); triads built on different scale degrees (I, ii, IV, V, vi) for the harmonization of its scale-based melody; certain characteristic chord progressions (cadences, for example), and so on. These can be understood – invoking Niklas Luhmann’s distinction between medium and form – as elements of tonality considered as a medium. By the loose coupling of elements, tonality opens up a space of possibilities for ensuing form building, which is based on the strict coupling of the same elements.<sup>13</sup> (For instance, the medium of air provides loosely coupled elements which can, when strictly coupled, take the shape of air vibrations perceivable as sound. Media and forms do not “exist” absolutely, but depend on the perspective of their observers. Sound itself can become a medium for certain forms, for instance, of sound art. Air takes on different forms in the medium of gas pressure – or even as “*Luft von anderem Planeten*”). Tonality can be understood as a medium in which particular forms of music are rendered possible.

The musical form of the anthem arising from the tonal elements already mentioned is very simple, and is related to the limitations of the medium. Certain possible elements of tonality are not used: for example, triads built on scale degree  $\hat{3}$ , altered chords (with the exception of the secondary dominant in the final cadence), chromatic neighbor tones, modulations, etc. At best, one could consider the use of seventh (or ninth) chords, in particular where they occur on scale degrees other than  $\hat{1}$ , as well as the unresolved suspension fourth in the dominant chords (from mm. 20–21 and 24) as “advanced.” Even in its structural design, as a three-part ABA

12 On the genesis of the anthem, see Heike Amos, *Auferstanden aus Ruinen . . . : Die Nationalhymne der DDR 1949 bis 1990* (Berlin: Dietz, 1997), 22–48.

13 See Niklas Luhmann, *Art as a Social System*, trans. Eva M. Knodt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 102–32. Originally published as *Die Kunst der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), 165–214.

form supported by tonal means, the song is conventional: the A and A' sections each close on scale degree  $\hat{1}$ , and the middle section concludes with a half cadence. (However, the subtle energizing arrangement of phrase groups within this formal structure is remarkable: the A section establishes an eight-measure phrase. This is, again, divisible into four-measure groups, which are extended by one bar in measure 17 – perhaps with the function of a transition). The following upbeat leads right into the B section, which starts with a four-measure group (mm. 18–21) and is answered by only three measures. The expansion of the transition from beginning to middle sections and the shortening of the transition from the middle section to the “reprise” compensate one another mathematically. The A' section sets out “regularly” in measure 25, again with an eight-measure phrase, but is for its part shortened by one measure in its second half.<sup>14</sup>

In its motivic material, too, the anthem is neither advanced nor original. The opening motive is not particularly concise, and is a run-of-the-mill phrase: four equal-length notes which, after a pitch repetition, descend in a scale of diatonic steps. It is only through its sequencing one step higher that the motive begins to trace a distinctive contour.<sup>15</sup>

Certainly the phrase is, in many respects, part of an analyzable structural context. Example 2a reduces the anthem to a diastematic framework and shows that the initial motive, in its intervallic structure of three descending tone steps ( $\alpha\downarrow$ ), is used not only for the melodic structure of the A section at the corresponding points of the antecedent and consequent (m. 1 ff. and m. 9 ff.), but is also reversed ( $\alpha\uparrow$ ) in the B section (m. 18 ff.) in direction of motion, and combined with the initial model. The A' section differs from the A section, in particular in the corresponding recurrence of motive  $\alpha\downarrow$  in the consequent (m. 33), which does not equal that of measure 9 ff.,

- 14 In other words, the version of the anthem shown in Example 1 could be complemented by another measure (“measure 40”), in order to produce a consistent answer to the eight-measure group, measures 25–32. Indeed, in the presumably earliest autograph source, a measure 40 can be deduced by a tied quarter note F4 from measure 39, and a following quarter rest. (Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin [Archiv der Akademie der Künste Berlin, Johannes-R.-Becher-Archiv C 59], unaccompanied recording of the melody, dated “7. Nov. 1949,” reproduced in Amos, *Auferstanden aus Ruinen* ..., 187, and at <https://www.dhm.de/typo3temp/pics/ebelae0d6f.jpg> [accessed: 6 June 2015].) Numerous recordings of various arrangements – some executed by Eisler himself – likewise include forty measures. (See, for example, the earliest vinyl recording under the baton of Helmut Koch, ca. 1949 [Lied der Zeit, ET 2240/A-132: Fassung für Orchester, ET 2239/B-132: Fassung für Chor und Orchester. Reproduction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2-o9QB4M4M>]; and the military marching band performance at the “Grand Tattoo” of the National People’s Army directed by Heinz Hacker on October 4, 1989: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFyrZRHcgW8>; 26:55–27:55 [both accessed 6 June 2015].)
- 15 The sequential form of the melody was the subject of a – somewhat absurd – plagiarism allegation, in view of Peter Kreuder’s song, *Goodbye Johnny*, from the 1939 German feature film, *Wasser für Canitoga* (director: Herbert Selpin). See Amos, *Auferstanden aus Ruinen*, 72–76. The sequence can also be understood as a model sentence – for example, a “model parallelism” as defined by Hartmut Fladt (“Modell und Topos im musiktheoretischen Diskurs: Systematiken/Anregungen,” *Musiktheorie* 20 (2005): 343–69, where the slow movement of Mozart’s String Quintet in G minor, K. 516, is identified as “basis for Eisler’s GDR anthem” (at 346).

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but rather, in the varied direction of motion and its combination, resembles the B section. (The sequence of motive variations is, however, reversed: the B section opens with  $\alpha\uparrow$  followed by  $\alpha\downarrow$ ; in the A' consequent, the phrase closes with  $\alpha\downarrow$  following  $\alpha\uparrow$ ). Example 2b shows that the descending motive  $\alpha\downarrow$  and its sequence serve as the starting point of an ascending scale in the opposite direction of the motive. The scale consists of structural tones usually followed by lower thirds, or (in the bass voice) tenths.<sup>16</sup> In the antecedent (mm. 1–8) within section A, the first phrase ranges from scale degrees  $\hat{3}$  to  $\hat{6}$ , mediated via the lower third of  $\hat{6}$  ( $\hat{4}$ ), before leading again to  $\hat{3}$  at the beginning of the consequent (mm. 9–16), which repeats its ascent to  $\hat{6}$ , before rising further to conclude on  $\hat{1}$ . The middle section leads this structural line in two attempts from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{2}$  and finally back to  $\hat{3}$  at the start of the A' section. In the B section, however, the connection of the structural pitches with their lower thirds is more or less resolved. Indeed,  $\hat{1}$  is followed by  $\hat{6}$  in the melody; yet, the bass notes no longer correspond to the established pattern of the A section. The m. 18 bass pitch  $B\flat$  lies only a third below the lower third of the structural pitch  $\hat{1}$ . (In any given performance of the anthem without accompaniment, the harmony would not rely on the IV sonority, but rather on the vi chord.) Scale degree  $\hat{2}$  is not followed by its lower third in the melody or in the accompaniment. At this point  $\hat{7}$  serves as the leading tone in F major.

It is striking how deliberately the leading tone is avoided here. (Avoidance of the leading tone is also a feature of Eisler's *Neue deutsche Volkslieder*.) Instead, two other movements, directed downwards – i. e., in contrary motion to the ascending structural line – govern the structure of the middle section: (i) a linking of scale degrees  $\hat{6}$  and  $\hat{5}$ ; (ii) the repeated emphasis on the motion from  $\hat{3}$  to  $\hat{2}$  (in the B section this appears as a truncated variant of the diastematic structure of the opening motive, only reappearing completely and explicitly at the beginning of the A' section). The A' section then repeats the A section antecedent's structural  $\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}-\hat{6}$  motion as a continuation of the  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}$  ascents of the B section (which, for its part, continues the  $\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  line of the A section's consequent). No new approach to the ascending line is deployed, however, in the A' consequent after m. 33. Instead, the line changes direction (mm. 33–35) against a bass line accentuating the  $\hat{6}-\hat{5}$  motion of the B section. The incomplete  $\hat{3}-\hat{2}$  approach of the B section is clearly foregrounded in mm. 33–34, with further accentuation – in the 7–6 suspension figure of m. 35 – of the descant melody's avoidance of scale degree  $\hat{1}$ . In the final phrase of the melody, the phrase's structural descent continues downwards (see Ex. 2b) from  $\hat{6}-\hat{5}$ , skipping  $\hat{4}$ , to land on  $\hat{3}$ , from which follows the final melodic descent to  $\hat{1}$ , in the last three measures. The A' section can thus be construed as a mediation of melodic differences between the A and B sections.

The end is, moreover, a clear formal closure of the entire song: the three last melodic notes expose, quasi-retroactively, the diastematic structure which underlies the opening motive. This can be conceived not only as a melodic cliché but also, in a more abstract vein, as a replica of the *Urlinie* (fundamental descent) of a Schen-

16 On Eisler's use of (chromatic) structural lines in the so-called *Hollywooder Liederbuch* see Roth, *Der Gesang als Asyl*, 141–42 and throughout.

kerian *Ursatz* (fundamental structure); such a reading highlights structural connections across the song as a whole (Example 2c). Of course, such a reading does not present itself as an adequate analysis of the anthem in strict Schenkerian terms. Although the descending third,  $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ , is articulated in the foreground through the opening motive and the closing phrase, it is nevertheless questionable whether this serves as a plausible structural background for the A section, since those scale degrees clearly appearing in the foreground ( $\hat{4}$  and  $\hat{5}$ ) cannot be explained in such a reading. (An explicit and more canonical Schenkerian analysis of the first 16 measures – or of the entire anthem – would probably recognize an initial ascent to a primary tone  $\hat{5}$ , with a descending line interrupted at  $\hat{4}$  in measure 8, leading to the tonic without articulating scale degree  $\hat{3}$  in the consequent. One might question, though, whether Eisler’s anthem – despite its simplicity – may be called “tonal” in Schenkerian terms.) Eisler – as the following quotation illustrates – was familiar with Schenker’s theories and valued them as analyses of historical music. Schenker’s political views, however, were diametrically opposed to Eisler’s: in a lecture from 1931, the composer characterized Schenker as an exponent of “right wing” bourgeois music with reference to a passage in Schenker’s *Neue musikalische Theorien* unequivocally illustrating his chauvinism. Eisler’s comments, however, also clarify his musical respect for the theorist:

According to these records, I must inform you that I hold Heinrich Schenker to be one of the most important theorists of the bourgeoisie. He is one of the few who can still today analyze Beethoven; one of the very few who can understand Bach. But it is precisely his profound knowledge of classical bourgeois music that leads, inevitably, to such a reactionary formulation that, translated into politics, means fascism.<sup>17</sup>

Eisler’s use of the  $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  third motion (*Terzzug*) as motivic material in the national anthem places a traditional image of tonality in the foreground without conforming entirely to related Schenkerian notions of tonality. The rising structural line – so fundamental to the song’s construction and clearly perceptible in the foreground through the sequencing of the lower-third figure – represents an inversion of the fundamental line of Schenkerian theory (which is necessarily a descending motion).

The antagonism between ascending and descending motion in the musical structure also relates to the text set to music: the first line, “Auferstanden aus Ruinen” (“Risen from ruins”), describes an upward-leading motion, which, however, is set through a downward-tending melodic sequence. The actual “Auferstehung” (“resurrection”) does not track musically through the motive, but rather through the line rising from the “ruins” of old tonality, in this case a rising structural *Urlinie*.

Such an interpretation of the music is not at all self-evident. It is not immediately at hand, nor does it emerge organically from the musical text; it requires mediation and abstraction: the music’s elements are dissociated by the act of analysis

17 Eisler, “Die Erbauer einer neuen Musikkultur” (1931), in *Gesammelte Schriften 1921–1935*, ed. Tobias Faßhauer and Günter Mayer, Hanns Eisler Gesamtausgabe IX/1.1 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2007), 132–52 (144).

– they are understood, in other words, in allegorical terms.<sup>18</sup> An allegorical interpretation does not require that the music be “understood” in order for the song to function as an anthem, or for it to be used as a state symbol. This interpretation derives more from the range of possibilities presented in the composition – and in that sense, the interpretation is not external to the composition – possibilities that are not necessarily limited to univocal readings of specific semantic contents. Seen as allegorical, the proposed interpretation can continue: Eisler’s use of tonality as a medium can also be understood as a latent criticism of the ideological link between tonality and popularity, fulfilling the condition of “understandability” without committing to a practice of tonality that would appear – from Eisler’s perspective – retrogressive, even in a political sense.

### III

After its emergence as a “state symbol,” the *Nationalhymne der DDR* was immediately used and accepted.<sup>19</sup> Its symbolic reference to the state is clear. Less clear is the reference of the anthem to the territory that is claimed by the symbolized state. It is well known that the text line “Deutschland, einig Vaterland” (“Germany, united fatherland”) compelled the GDR leadership to accept the anthem in the early 1970s as an official state symbol only *without* its text, wary of any hint of potential “unification” with West Germany, that might threaten the sovereignty of the East German state.<sup>20</sup> In fact, the text was written by Johannes R. Becher in 1949 with a view to possible reunification, according to expectations of the anthem’s political initiators<sup>21</sup> – admittedly under the utopian condition that, in the event of a unification the West German state would also commit itself to a socialist social order. This implied utopia, at the time of the foundation of the state, probably carried at least the charm

18 “Allegorical” is defined by Walter Benjamin in his study of German tragic drama as follows: “Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things .... If the object becomes allegorical under the gaze of melancholy, if melancholy causes life to flow out of it and it remains behind dead, but eternally secure, then it is exposed to the allegorist, it is unconditionally in his power. That is to say it is now quite incapable of emanating any meaning or significance of its own; such significance as it has, it acquires from the allegorist. He places it within it and stands behind it; not in a psychological but in an ontological sense.” Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 2003), 178 and 183–84 (cf. Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1928) [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978], 156 and 161). Also, as applied by Luhmann: “But all allegories were still mere signs. In a sense, the artwork debased itself unless it aspired to more than allegory; it excluded itself from participating in the essence of things. In so doing, art gained an important advantage: the true/false schema broke down. Allegories were neither true nor false, or they were both true and false, depending on how one looked at them” (*Art as a Social System*, 171).

19 Amos, *Auferstanden aus Ruinen*, 69–91.

20 Ibid., 132–59.

21 Ibid., 60; the quoted letter of thanks of the Prime Minister of the GDR, Otto Grotewohl, to Becher and Eisler from November 19, 1949 reads: “The national anthem that they created for the German Democratic Republic united in tone and word all the benefits and requirements of a common national song of the Germans of all parts of our, still today, divided fatherland.”

of a gesture of provocation. (Or so the polemical reaction in West Germany to this anthem “of separation” [*Spalterhymne*] might be interpreted: as a gesture of provocation.) Most likely, this no longer applied in the 1970s: the provocative element turned into a perceived threat to the more or less dictatorial ruling political class. The dominated population’s desire for unification, as alleged in the state symbol, remained unrealized and could potentially become a reproach to the nation’s leaders. The anthem still continued to function, nonetheless, like any other – even without its text – as a symbol. The symbolic function of the anthem independent of its text may be assumed, however, as early as 1950. And Eisler used this function of his piece to refer to the symbolized state and its ambivalent relationship to its territories in other works.

The model of the ascending third sequence can be traced quite often in various works by Eisler composed after the national anthem, and interestingly it repeatedly occurs in connection with the thematization of “home.” (“A use of similar melodic traits in various songs, if it revolves around similar content”<sup>22</sup> was already pointed out by Heinz Alfred Brockhaus in the first monograph on Eisler, published during his lifetime, in relation to several examples. Brockhaus interprets the connection subjectively: “It has no formal meaning, it merely documents – and not only in the case of Hanns Eisler – that the entire complex of home, Germany, can lead to similar melody formations.”)<sup>23</sup> In the song “Deutschland” from the beginning of 1950, likewise composed to a text by Becher and included in the *Neue deutsche Volkslieder*, the recourse to the model of the national anthem is evident (Example 3a). (The phrase may also be found near the beginning of the same song, in measures 5–8). The ambivalent relationship of problematic popularity and political territory is clearly addressed early on in Becher’s preface to the *Volkslieder* in a reference to “borders, as they are still drawn through our fatherland”:

The past years brought no enrichment to folksong; it was stunted or degenerated to pop.  
... We want to learn to sing again. It should be a song of freedom and peace. We hope that this new folk song will bridge the borders, as they are still drawn through our fatherland, and will rise up to become a song for all Germans. These songs are dedicated, above all, to the youth: to those who are open to the new ...<sup>24</sup>

The text of “Deutschland” stands apart from this proclamation regarding the intention of the *Volkslieder* in various ways. Behind the public avowal of a newly won “peace” here is the evocation of unspecified shadows, while the precise temporal location from which the poetry speaks, amid a “twilight,” remains strangely unclear:

Heimat, meine Trauer,  
Land im Dämmerchein,  
Himmel, du mein blauer,  
du, mein Fröhlichsein.

22 Heinz Alfred Brockhaus, *Hanns Eisler* (Leipzig: VEB Breitkopf & Härtel, 1961), 143.

23 Ibid., 144.

24 Johannes R. Becher, [Preface], in Hanns Eisler and Johannes R. Becher, *Neue deutsche Volkslieder: Erste Folge. Für Gesang mit vereinfachter Klavierbegleitung* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1950), [2].

Einmal wird es heißen:  
 Als ich war verbannt,  
 hab ich dich zu preisen,  
 dir ein Lied gesandt.

War, um dich zu einen,  
 dir ein Lied geweiht,  
 und mit dir zu weinen  
 in der Dunkelheit ...  
 Himmel schien, ein blauer,  
 Friede kehrte ein,  
 Deutschland, meine Trauer,  
 du, mein Fröhlichsein.

It remains an open question whether the “one day” (*einmal*), pointing towards the future in line 5, has already occurred, thereby indicating that the speech act mentioned in the text is fulfilled within the song itself and that the longed-for unification cited in line 9 (*einen*) has been realized; or whether weeping and grieving (*Trauer*) – perhaps over prior conflicts or an existing state of division – persists into the present. The obvious musical reminiscence of the national anthem makes the ambivalent situation even more irritating. Does the “song” addressed in the poem refer only to itself (that is, to the song “Deutschland”)? Or is the national anthem thereby also recognized? In either case, the question of temporal position remains, regarding the musical allusion and its relationship to the text. In a possible reading of the “song” addressed in the text as the national anthem, political interpretation becomes precarious: the “song” arose in exile and was “dedicated” to the country “with you to weep / in darkness ...” (lines 10–12). The state symbolized through the anthem has not yet arrived at its territory.

In the song “Anmut sparet nicht noch Mühe,” also presumably from 1950, which sets a poem by Bertolt Brecht, reference to the national anthem is illustrated through an explicit quotation in the piano accompaniment (Example 3b). The vocal melody itself also contains fairly loose but still noticeable traces of the rising third sequence. The second (fully composed) strophe contains an unambiguous quotation in the accompaniment, beginning in the final bar of an initial four-measure phrase in the voice part and continuing into the first measure of the following four-measure group – in formal terms, then, the quotation relates to the main structure somewhat indirectly. The text delineates the territory of the Germany sung about at this point: “From the sea to the Alps, from the Oder to the Rhine.” On the one hand, the area is, through the mention of the river Oder as eastern boundary, clearly limited to the territorial dimensions subsequent to World War II. On the other, it also extends far beyond the western and southern borders of the GDR, given the references to the Rhine and the Alps. The musical quotation at this point marks the factual contradiction between the territorial boundaries of the state symbolized by the anthem, and the people – that is, the “we” – supposedly articulated in the lyrics.

The allusions and quotations of the national anthem in these and other songs use the already established and well-known form of the anthem and its symbolic function as an additional element of the medium in which the music is shaped, be-

13

3 4 5 6

(1.) hab - ich, dich zu ne - prei - sen, dir ein ge - sandt.  
 (2.) Deutsch - land, mei - ne Trau - er, du, mein Fröh - lich - sein.

I ii IV ii V I I V I

21

3 4 5 6

Und nicht ü - ber und nicht un - ter al - len Völ - kern woll'n wir sein. — Von der See bis zu den Al - pen, von der O - der bis zum Rhein. —

I V I ii I I IV V vi

Example 3: Allusions to the Nationallhymne in (a) "Deutschland" and (b) "Anmut sparet nicht noch Mühe"

## Das Wunderland

Nicht zu rasch!  $\text{♩}$  ca. 104

1. Es soll nun-mehr ein Lied ge-sun-gen  
in der Fer-ne sehn das Land wir

wer-den, das Kun-de bringt von ei-ner neu-en Zeit,  
lie-gen, in un-serm Her-zen liegts, in uns-rer Hand,

und ei-nem wun-der-ba-ren Land auf Er-den, das  
hier liegt es bis es leuch-tend uns ent-stie-gen. In

leuchtendstieg aus der Ver-gan-gen-heit.  
je-dem Land liegt solch ein Wun-der-land.

Wo ist das Land, das Wunderland ge-  
Laßt von dem Land, dem Wunderland uns

Chor  
ad libitum

Example 4: Hanns Eisler, "Das Wunderland" (with the kind permission of Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag GmbH, Leipzig)

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le - gen, von dem das Volk in sei - nen Lie - dern singt, und was ge - reich - te  
 sin - gen, das sich vor al - len Län - dern glück - lich preist! Und gu - te Ta - ten

die - sem Land zum Se - gen, das al - ler Welt so fro - he Bot - schaft bringt?  
 gilt es zu voll - brin - gen, daß die - ses Land auch ein - mal Deutsch - land heißt.

1.

2. Nicht

*fp*

Example 4: cont.

yond its specifically tonal features. The song “Das Wunderland” (Example 4) from the *Neue deutsche Volkslieder* further elucidates links between tonality as a medium – with its contradictory sphere of popularity – and ties to home and political topography. The song’s lyric, as far as the realization of propagandistic contents goes, is formulated in a similarly ambivalent style to that of “Deutschland.” The song brings “word [*Kunde*] ... of a new era” (mm. 6–8) – though, once again, it is unclear whether that era has already dawned or is still awaited. The second part of the first strophe poses the question of topographical location: “Where is the country, the magical country, [...]?” [*Wo is das Land, das Wunderland gelegen ...?*] (m. 16 ff.). Far from asserting the blunt propaganda that this country is the GDR – or, for that matter, the USSR – the second strophe points to necessary events still to come in the future: “And good deeds need to be accomplished, so that this country will also be called Germany one day” (m. 24 ff.). For the present, a location can only be determined metaphorically: “... in our heart it lies, in our hand: here it lies, until it rises brightly from us” (m. 6 ff.) This idealistic perspective – inconsistent in a dialectic-materialistic context, because it either has to be legitimized ideologically or remains suspect – suddenly attains an “international” component: “In every country lies such a wonderland” (m. 13 ff.).

This song too alludes to the sequence of thirds from the national anthem, not least through the rhythmic scheme in measures 28 and 29: it is clearly reminiscent of the model, despite the restriction of scalar motion to an ascent from  $\hat{3}$  to  $\hat{5}$  with a heavily modified harmonic context (Example 5). The actual geographical location of the song, then, in musical terms, seems to be defined unambiguously. The connection of a location to some projected “wonder” – never precisely defined, textually – is called into question, however, through the dissociative use of tonal elements as a medium pointing to the necessary meaning. The song clearly divides into two large sections (A: mm. 2–15, B: mm. 16–32), each comprising two phrases repeated in variation and with melodic parallels (mm. 2–8 and 9–15, 16–23 and 24–32). The B section is followed by an epilogue (m. 32 ff.) which leads back to the introductory measure after the first strophe (m. 1 and m. 37a, respectively), and to the end after the second strophe (m. 37b). The piano introduction begins with octave repetitions of the tonic, which continue even after the entrance of the voice as an accompanying ostinato figure (until m. 8). Relinquishing this tonic, the vocal melody starts with a rising fifth-plus-fourth ascent, so tracing the two intervals of the overtone series beyond the octave, before a complete scalar descent (only briefly interrupted) from  $\hat{8}$  to  $\hat{1}$  (Example 5). The interruption of the scale (m. 6) brings the sequence of thirds of the national anthem in its inversion from  $\hat{5}$  to  $\hat{3}$  (the lower third preceding  $\hat{5}$ , m. 6), hinting at a latent dominant harmony before re-attaining the tonic (m. 8). In Schenkerian terminology, one might speak of an initial arpeggiation (*Brechung*) and a fundamental line (*Urlinie*) descent from  $\hat{8}$  to  $\hat{1}$ , unsupported by a corresponding I–V–I bass arpeggiation in the fundamental structure (*Ursatz*) – though this is evoked through the latent harmony. This seemingly regular tonality – an “intact world?” – is, however, disrupted by the absence of harmonic support: the motoric tonic repetitions in the piano accompaniment stage this absence virtually as a denial. As the melody repeats (m. 9 ff.), the accompaniment leads in an-

m. 6 m. 9 m. 13  
 8 7 6 5 4 3 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
 (V<sup>6-5</sup>) (I) (V<sup>6-5</sup>) (I)

m. 16 m. 24 m. 28 m. 30 m. 32 m. 36a m. 36b  
 8 7 6 5 4 3 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
 (I) (I) (V) (I) (V) (I) (I)

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Example 5: Hanns Eisler, "Das Wunderland," analytic reduction

other direction, fanning out in contrary motion scales (the upper-voice line ascends from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{6}$ , the lower-voice line descends from  $\hat{8}$  to  $\hat{4}$ , interrupted once (by the pitch C in m. 12). The resulting harmonies clearly imply a resolving six-four dominant (m. 13), but this leads (m. 14) to a IV sonority, the linear result of the accompanimental scale lines. The closing cadence of the section in this way acquires a modal-plagal character, with less of an anchoring effect than a clear V–I cadence.

The B section – in contrast to the A section – begins with a four-part phrase (with optional choral parts) in the accompaniment and articulates an altogether denser harmonic scalar passage, beginning on IV. The structural line descending from scale degree  $\hat{8}$  leads to  $\hat{5}$  only (mm. 16–17) – in a form that could be heard to allude to the national anthem of the USSR (mm. 24–25)<sup>25</sup> – and the same B $\flat$ -to-F motion is structurally imitated in the accompanimental bass line (and the choir), creating an astonishing intensification of the vi as an inverted ninth chord at m. 18. The line in the following phrases initially ascends to  $\hat{3}$ , descends to  $\hat{1}$ , before leading to  $\hat{5}$  and again to  $\hat{1}$  (after m. 24). One might interpret the  $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{4}$ – $\hat{3}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $\hat{1}$  motion after m. 30 as continuing the earlier  $\hat{8}$ – $\hat{7}$ – $\hat{6}$ – $\hat{5}$  (mm. 16, 24), thus confirming a structural similarity between the B section and the A section’s complete  $\hat{8}$ – $\hat{1}$  scalar descent. Even allowing for such an interpretation, the relevance of this structure as a possible fundamental line for the entire song – in terms of a “historical” tonality possibly better described using Schenker’s theory – remains unclear. The ascending scale in the postlude after m. 32 can thus also be understood in a critical way: the potential fundamental line is reversed in its direction of motion and thus deprived of any possible function in the context of a Schenkerian fundamental structure. At the same time it is exposed as an element of the medium. The song is formed from the scattered remains of a historically understood tonality; its allegorical landscape only seemingly and contradictorily fits the (symbolic) image of the real political GDR state. Tonality and landscape together conjure – like the cave painting of a hunt – the yet-to-be-formed “wonderland.”

\* \* \*

The Eisler compositions discussed here may be understood as a reaction to the cultural-political circumstances of the GDR after 1948, and to the interrelated demands of popularity. In his essay “Die gegängelte Musik,” Theodor W. Adorno had already set down a reaction to the “Second International Congress of Composers and Music Critics” in Prague at the end of May. As much as he criticized the lack of freedom in an “administered world” [*verwalteten Welt*] in the West, Adorno was also taking a clear stand in a political post-war situation, and not only against “cultur-

25 Sergey Mikhalkov (text) / Alexander Alexandrov (music), *State Anthem of the USSR* (1943/44). See the beginning of the last line of the refrain (m. 19ff.):



al-political measures in the Soviet sphere of influence.”<sup>26</sup> It is interesting to observe what Adorno has to say some years later about Eisler’s compositions written in the GDR. (Adorno and Eisler had known one other since the 1920s and had written the book *Composing for the Films* together while still in exile in the USA, just before their remigration to Europe).<sup>27</sup> In notes – published posthumously – from the years 1965–66, Adorno compares Eisler’s GDR works to his earlier, “advanced” pieces:

Great among the agitprop choruses before ’33, before the *Gleichschaltung*. A chorus-like “Kurfürstendamm” is truly a musical counterpart to George Grosz. The very modern assemblage technique from snippets of conversation; similar also to newspaper clippings. All this later suppressed.

... The striking weakness of the works from the fifties; something happened there. He was obliged to compose badly. It is his honor, how badly he badly composed. Above all, how poor these simple things sound, listened to now; as if he lost the feel for harmonic degrees, for progression.

... What befell him is not so much about the modernity of sounds[,] intervals, etc. as the suppression of differentiation. This is perceived as intolerable by the collective wisdom; it is leveled out as something dull and commonplace, that schrumm schrumm.<sup>28</sup>

And in a 1967 TV interview, Adorno expresses himself similarly with regard to the national anthem:

Someone like Eisler could, of course, declaim brilliantly, that is, set the text to music exactly according to the rhythm of the words. However, here [in the *Nationalhymne*] he had only to be unpretentious and primitive; indeed he intentionally set the text falsely, thus “auf-er-stan-den aus Ru-i-nen,” that “aus” is stressed, although this is incorrect. And since he, in reality, actually reacts much more subtly in rhythmic matters, one notices the intent, and one is disgruntled. In other words, he shows traits of the wolf from the fairy tale, swallowing chalk, so that Red Riding Hood mistakes him for Grandmother.<sup>29</sup>

26 See Theodor W. Adorno, “Die gegängelte Musik” (1948/1956), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), 14: 51–66 (51). Adorno’s text uses – at least in its first published version of 1956 – an extensive “Cold War” lexicon, speaking, among other things, of “dictatorships” (52) from “behind the Iron Curtain” (51).

27 Eisler, *Composing for the Films* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947). On the genesis of this book and the notably lacking acknowledgement of Adorno’s co-authorship in the first edition, see Horst Weber, “*I am not a hero, I am a composer*”: *Hanns Eisler in Hollywood* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2012), 91–113. A reflection of Adorno and Eisler’s fairly close collaboration may also be traced in Eisler’s use of the term “culture industry” (so crucial for Adorno) in his presentation at the Prague Music Congress of 1948. See Eisler, “Gesellschaftliche Grundfragen der modernen Musik,” 13–14 (“The culture industry [...] has made true art [*wahre Kunst*] into art commodities [*Ware Kunst*]”), and throughout.

28 Adorno, “Notizen über Eisler,” in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter VII*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2001), 121–134 (129–131).

29 “‘Adorno im Hymnenstreit.’ 1967 TV interview with Theodor W. Adorno conducted by Dagobert Lindlau,” cited by Albrecht Riethmüller, “‘Gott! erhalte’: National Anthems and the Semantics of Music,” in *Word and Music Studies: Defining the Field*, ed. Walter Bernhart, Steven Paul Scher and Werner Wolf (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 321–336 (332): “Jemand wie Eisler konnte natürlich großartig deklamieren, also Texte genau dem Worhrhythmus nach in Musik setzen. Er hat aber hier, um nur ja schlicht und und primitiv zu sein, absichtlich falsch deklamiert, also ‘auf-er-stan-den aus Ru-i-nen,’ das ‘aus’ betont, obwohl das falsch ist. Und da

This critical review is relatively sophisticated, in comparison to numerous polemics from a West German perspective vis-à-vis Eisler's compositions – in particular, the “separation anthem” slur – in the 1950s and 1960s,<sup>30</sup> and it certainly makes an essential point in observing that alleged deficiencies in the pieces represent a reaction to “what befell him.” Nevertheless, Adorno's virtuosic dialectic-oriented account remains rooted in a narrative of material progress. In contrast, perhaps other perspectives on these pieces would be worthwhile – perspectives not restricted to proving that Eisler could do better “in reality,” by casting the composer as the wolf of the fairy tale.

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er aber in Wirklichkeit rhythmisch viel subtiler reagiert, merkt man die Absicht, und man wird verstimmt. Das heißt, es hat so ein bißchen dann etwas von dem Wolf aus dem Märchen, der Kreide schluckt, damit das Rotkäppchen ihn für die Großmutter hält.” The interview was aired in 1967 in a broadcast of the news magazine “Report,” produced by Bavarian Radio. It is reproduced in excerpts in a film by Henning Burk and Martin Lüdtkke, “*Es gibt kein richtiges Leben im Falschen*”: *Theodor W. Adorno – Philosoph, Soziologe und Kritiker*, Hessen Radio and West German Radio, 1989, ca. 11:40 ff. (see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMrtcGBFdMA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMrtcGBFdMA), accessed 6 June 2015).

- 30 On violent West German reactions to the national anthem of the GDR see Amos, *Auferstanden aus Ruinen*, 70–76.

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