

## Paul Hindemith 1895-1965

Hindemith was a German composer well-known for an extensive output of works in Neoclassical style. Hindemith worked hard and fast and his compositional pragmatism created an association with the term *Gebrauchsmusik*. (utility music) Throughout his life, he was also known as a consummate performer and music educator. Troubles with the rise of the Nazi party and fascism in Europe brought Hindemith to the United States, where he became a citizen in 1946.



Though he was known as a proficient violinist, pianist, and clarinetist, Hindemith was primarily a violist, founding the Amar Quartet.

He was appointed Professor of Composition at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin until the Nazi party deemed his work 'degenerate' in 1934. This led to three years spent in Turkey working to reestablish music education programs, followed by two years in Switzerland before coming to America to teach at Yale in 1940.

Hindemith is commonly associated with **Neoclassicism**, a label also applied to many other composers, including some of Stravinsky's work. Other saxophone works that are commonly associated with this style include Bernhard Heiden's *Sonata*, and Jacques Ibert's *Concertino da Camera*. Heiden was a student of Hindemith's at the Hochschule in Berlin.

### Characteristics of Neoclassicism in music:

- Use of Classical and Baroque forms (French Overture, Sonata Allegro, etc.)
- Motor rhythm accompaniment parts - expansion of basso continuo concept
- Harmonically, avoidance of vertical 3rds and 6ths

Hindemith was also frequently associated with **Gebrauchsmusik**, a term he reportedly disliked. *Gebrauchsmusik* is music written to serve a function such as an event, or a commemoration, rather than music written simply for its own purpose. Hindemith was notorious for writing quickly and largely 'to order.' He once wrote a work for an event he was traveling to in the buffet car of the train he was taking to the event. The work was then quickly rehearsed and performed that day.

### Characteristics of Hindemith's music:

- often avoids major and minor triads
- often features 4ths and 2nds melodically, as well as harmonically
- frequent use of compound meters and hemiola
- fugal textures, counterpoint

-music is tonal, but non-diatonic (Hindemith ranked the intervals of the 12 chromatic pitches into 6 categories from most consonant to most dissonant in relation to a root pitch)

### **Sigurd Rascher and Paul Hindemith — *Konzertstück für zwei Altsaxophone***

Rascher went to Berlin in the 1930's to pursue a career as a concert saxophonist. At this time, Hindemith was teaching at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. Rascher performed in the orchestra for Hindemith's opera, *Cardillac*. Rascher approached Hindemith in 1933 with a request for him to write a work for saxophone. Hindemith agreed and composed the *Konzertstück für zwei Altsaxophone*. (Rascher attempted to perform the work several times with his students but was never satisfied with the progress so it remained unperformed until 1960 when Sigurd and his daughter, Carina, performed it at the Eastman School of Music.)

### **Sonate for Alto Horn in E (or Alto Saxophone)**

Composed in 1943, exemplifies Neoclassical style, composed at the same time that Stravinsky was in his Neoclassical period.

### **Trio for Piano, Viola, and Heckelphone or Tenor Saxophone, Op. 47 (1928)**

Though Hindemith wrote only a few works prominently featuring the saxophone as a soloist or in a chamber setting, he used the saxophone in many of his orchestrations for his operas as well as his symphonic and stage works.

Other Hindemith works that use the saxophone:

*Cardillac* (opera)

*Neues vom Tage* (News of the Day) (opera)

Der Lindberghflug (radio play)

Hin und Zurück (There and Back) (1 act stage work)

Kantate "Ite angeli veloces" (Cantata)

Konzertmusik für Streichorchester und Blechbläser op. 50 (Concert music for string orchestra and brass)

Lehrstück (opera)

Ludus tonalis

Regimentsmarsch der "Tipopo"

Symphonic metamorphosis of Themes by C.M. von Weber

Mathis der Maler (symphonic suite)

Symphony in B-flat (wind symphony)