



Københavns Universitet



The Concept of 'Radio Music'

Fjeldsøe, Michael

Published in:
Danish Yearbook of Musicology

Publication date:
2016

Citation for published version (APA):
Fjeldsøe, M. (2016). The Concept of 'Radio Music'. Danish Yearbook of Musicology, 40, 69-78.

Danish Yearbook of Musicology

40 · 2016

The Concept of ‘Radio Music’

MICHAEL FJELDSØE

In the late 1920s, young composers and musicians turned towards new fields of activity and new media in order to reach a larger audience.¹ In Germany, this effort was part of the movement of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and for a short period of time, *Radiomusik* was considered the ideal means for a democratic, educational and didactic effort which would enlighten all of society. For a while it seemed that radio music was considered a genre of its own. To fulfil its function, radio music had to consider technical limitations as well as the educational level and listening modes of the new mass audience. Public radio, as discussed by Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith, was at first greeted with great expectations, but soon a more realistic attitude prevailed. Weill, himself a radio critic as well, composed *Der Lindberghflug* (1929) as a piece of ‘radio music theatre’, but then changed some of its features in order to turn it into a didactical play for amateurs, a so-called *Lehrstück*.² The article will present the concept of ‘radio music’ developed within German *Neue Sachlichkeit* and discuss the relevance of such a concept for current research in the field of radio and music.

German public radio was established in October 1923 and it rapidly became a nationwide net of regional radio stations.³ Since the very beginning, the journal *Der deutsche Rundfunk* was published in Berlin with nationwide radio programmes and comments on the broadcasts.⁴ Kurt Weill, one of the young composers who around 1927 played a crucial role in the attempt to redefine the role of the artist according to the ideas of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, was employed as a music critic by this journal from the end of 1924 until May 1929, writing forecasts and reviews, mainly on broadcasts of operas and music theatre. From September 1927 onwards, he mainly wrote forecasts and comments on a range of topics.⁵ Thus, he was well-prepared, when he in 1927

1 This article is a revised version of a paper at the LARM conference ‘Digital Archives, Audiovisual Media and Cultural Memory’ at the University of Copenhagen, 14–15 November 2013.

2 For a discussion of Weill’s *Der Lindberghflug* in the context of Danish musical life, see Michael Fjeldsøe, *Kulturradikalismens musik* (The Music of Cultural Radicalism) (Copenhagen, 2013), 592–99. My argument below on Weill’s changing attitudes towards this piece is partly based on that section of my book.

3 29 October 1923 is considered the birthday of German public radio, marked by the first broadcast of an entertainment programme with live music and wax records by the Funk-Stunde Berlin. Cf. the programme sheet at <http://www.dra.de/rundfunkgeschichte/75jahreradio/anfaenge/voxfunk/index.html> (accessed 14 Oct. 2013).

4 The first issue was published on 14 October 1923, and after a short time it was changed from a biweekly into a weekly journal; <http://d-nb.info/012990337> (accessed 14 Oct. 2013).

5 Kurt Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater. Gesammelte Schriften. Erweiterte und revidierte Neuauflage*, ed. Stephen Hinton and Jürgen Schebera (Mainz, 2000), 208–11 (‘Editorisches Vorwort’) and 412–34 (‘Verzeichnis sämtlicher Beiträge von Kurt Weill für die Zeitschrift “Der deutsche Rundfunk”’).

– as a composer – turned to the possibilities of ‘radio music’ as one of the means to get access to a larger audience for modern music.

‘Radio music’ in this sense was considered a specific genre, supposed to fit the technical and social demands of broadcasts. Early radio equipment had a number of technical limitations, both in the recording technique, the transmission equipment, and the receivers, which had to be addressed. It was a general belief that technical progress would eventually make such considerations obsolete, but nevertheless many composers wanted to contribute to the genre despite the difficulties of the current state of art.⁶ This was a typical attitude of *Neue Sachlichkeit*; musicians strived to fulfil a task of relevance to a contemporary audience.

Social changes were discussed in different ways. At first the fact that the listener could not see the performer was considered the major change, and in public discourse radio music was classified as ‘mechanical music’ in opposition to ‘live music’ of traditional concerts. Later, along with the emergence of early radio theory, attention turned towards the composition of the mass of listeners. Paul Hindemith was among those thrilled about being able to reach ‘everyone’. In the booklet accompanying the 1929 contemporary music festival in Baden-Baden, one of the first venues for a presentation of commissions of radio music, Hindemith stated on behalf of the programming committee: ‘Radio music does not address a specific social stratum, it addresses man as such – it reaches also a group of listeners, in whose lives only the radio impart spiritual and artistic values.’⁷ At the same time, Kurt Weill gave an account of the possibilities and difficulties presented by this situation. On the one hand, he considered it a major step towards democratization, as music could now be heard by all social classes, not just those who could afford concert tickets. On the other hand, this meant that one could not presuppose any level of culture or education on behalf of the listeners:

Radio confronts the serious musician of our times for the first time with the task to create works to which a possible large circle of listeners is receptive. Content and form of these radio compositions must thus be able to be of interest to a large number of people of all kinds, and also the musical means of expression must avoid any obstacles for the primitive listener.⁸

- 6 Michael Stapper, *Unterhaltungsmusik im Rundfunk der Weimarer Republik* (Tutzing, 2001), 125–29.
- 7 Quoted in Josef Häusler, *Spiegel der Neuen Musik. Donaueschingen. Chronik – Tendenzen – Werkbesprechungen* (Kassel, 1996), 103: ‘Die Rundfunkmusik wendet sich nicht an eine bestimmte Gesellschaftsschicht, sondern an den Menschen schlechthin – sie erfaßt auch eine Hörerschaft, in deren Leben erst durch den Rundfunk geistige und künstlerische Werte getragen werden’; all translations by the author. Cf. *ibid.* 102–7; Stapper, *Unterhaltungsmusik*, 136–43. Except for a few singular experiments, commissions from radio stations were initiated during 1928 and the results broadcast from the beginning of 1929.
- 8 Weill, ‘Notiz zum “Berliner Requiem”’, *Der deutsche Rundfunk*, 17.5.1929, in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 410: ‘Der Rundfunk stellt den ernstesten Musiker unserer Zeit zum ersten Male vor die Aufgabe, Werke zu schaffen, die ein möglichst großer Kreis von Hörern aufnehmen kann. Inhalt und Form dieser Rundfunkkompositionen müssen also imstande sein, eine große Menge von Menschen aller Kreise zu interessieren, und auch die musikalischen Ausdrucksmittel dürfen dem primitiven Hörer keine Schwierigkeiten bereiten’.

Michael Stapper, in his book on popular music in the radio during the Weimar Republic, concludes by listing a number of criteria characteristic of radio-specific musical works. These criteria are mainly a reply to technical obstacles. One is the smaller size of the ensemble, as it was very difficult to handle the sound of large orchestras. Another is the composition of the ensemble, where the *sinfonietta* became a kind of model with its solo strings and predominance of wind instruments. Often saxophones were added and the ensembles tended towards the composition of a jazz band. A third is instrumentation and compositional technique. Often musical lines are presented in a few solo instruments, or played unisono by the ensemble; contrapuntal settings of musical lines are preferred to blended chords; *pizzicato* and distinct articulation are preferred, and special attention is focused on keeping bass lines audible; shorter and clear-cut forms are used, like suites or oratorios, or like those used in popular dance music. Other features contributing to a radio style were predominant rhythmic features, 'catchiness', and the choice of texts, and last but not least: a culture of interpretation demanding for strict, *sachlich*, or objective, unsentimental modes of playing, shunning all kinds of virtuosity or romanticism.⁹ One could argue that all these features are common features of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and to a certain degree that is true. What does count for maintaining the category of 'radio music' is that these features are accentuated: they are *necessary* features due to a specific challenge.

How these kinds of considerations on how to arrange the score in order to provide successful broadcasts were internalized can be seen from a quite different case. In 1950, Erik Tuxen was responsible for a new edition of Carl Nielsen's Symphony No. 5. Tuxen was appointed chief conductor of the Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra (today called the Danish National Symphony Orchestra) in 1936 and thus had considerable experience in this field. Remarkably, even with such a work, which one would suppose was sacrosanct – a major symphony by the most revered Danish composer – Tuxen made changes in the score. Some melodic lines were reinforced by adding additional instruments, phrasing and articulation were subject to changes, and even notes were changed in order to provide less blurred and less dissonant harmony. And most remarkably, Tuxen stated in an interview that these changes were made because they had proved to be appropriate for radio broadcasts and recordings: 'If Carl Nielsen is becoming world famous, it is an achievement of radio and gramophone, both of which *requires* thinning out the instrumentation'.¹⁰ It is rare to find such a frank statement and a published score to go with it, but it is possible to

9 Stapper, *Unterhaltungsmusik*, ch. 4.5: 'Kriterien rundfunkeigener Musik', 158–282.

10 Erik Tuxen in William Haste: 'Carl Nielsen ominstrumenteret før festspillene i Edinburgh af komponistpræsten Leif Kayser' (Carl Nielsen re-orchestrated before the Edinburgh festival by the priest-composer Leif Kayser), *Ekstrabladet*, ??..11.1950, emphasis in original, quoted in Michael Fjeldsøe, 'Carl Niensens 5. symfoni. Dens tilblivelse og reception i 1920'erne', *Danish Yearbook of Musicology*, 24 (1996), 51f. In the published score, Tuxen gives a different explanation and plays down the significance of the changes: '... we have made quite a number of dynamic alterations, which have proved to be suitable at performances with a modern orchestra with its great number of strings' (Remark in the full score, *Carl Nielsen. Symfoni no. 5*, Skandinavisk Musikforlag (Copenhagen, cop. 1950)).

use this to indicate that this was a common production practice by radio orchestras at least into the 1950s and to point to orchestral parts and conductors' scores in radio orchestra archives as source material for further investigation.

Let us get back to Kurt Weill. In a short article written in 1929 on the occasion of the upcoming broadcast of his piece *Berliner Requiem*, a commission from the Frankfurt Radio station, he described his way into the field of radio music.

When I, in the fall of last year, received a commission from the Frankfurt Radio station for a piece for the radio [*Berliner Requiem*], I decided to create a vocal composition of the kind that I had tried out a year earlier in the little Songspiel *Mahagonny* [1927]. We are dealing with a genre which can be performed in the form of a cantata in a concert hall, or, as well, due to the spiritual content and the clearness of its form, can be shown in a theatre. Such a form which contains both the possibilities of concert and theatrical performance would easily be equipped for the requirements of radio.¹¹

He argues that since this piece can be performed as a concert piece, without sets or acting, it can easily be transformed into a radio play. He states that until now, 1929, he had written three pieces of this kind: *Mahagonny Songspiel*, which is the 1927 version of what was developed into the full scale 1930 opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, 'the cantata *Das Berliner Requiem* and the musical tableau or radio play [he uses the German term *Hörbild*] *Der Lindberghflug* Both of the latter are specifically intended for the radio'.¹²

What is of interest here is that he talks about these pieces as belonging to a specific genre which is related to the genre of 'music theatre turned into a concert performance', that is, the genre cantata; one step further we find the radio piece, the genre of unseen, or just-heard, cantatas. Further, it is of interest that he talks about 'the demands of the radio' and of 'radio art': a play so convincing that one does not need to see it, but can still perceive due to 'purely musical features', the scenery and the moves of the characters.¹³

He specifies the technical demands but regards them as obvious at this stage of his development, in 1929: One must know the acoustic demands of the studio, the possibilities of the microphone in regard to orchestra and instruments, the

11 Kurt Weill, 'Zu meiner Kantate *Das Berliner Requiem*', *Südwestdeutsche Rundfunk-Zeitung*, 1929, no. 20 (16.5.1929), in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 90–92, at 90f. 'Als ich im Herbst des vorigen Jahres vom Frankfurter Sender den Auftrag erhielt, ein Stück für den Rundfunk zu schreiben, da entschloß ich mich, eine Vokalkomposition in jener Art zu schaffen, wie ich sie ein Jahr vorher in dem kleinen Songspiel *Mahagonny* versucht hatte. Es handelt sich hier um eine Gattung, die im Konzertsaal in Kantatenform aufgeführt werden kann, die aber ebensogut auch durch ihren gestischen Gehalt und durch die Anschaulichkeit ihrer Form auf dem Theater darzustellen ist. Eine Form, die gleichermaßen konzertante und theatralische Möglichkeiten in sich schließt, mußte mit Leichtigkeit für die Erfordernisse des Rundfunks auszugestalten sein'. The text of this article is very similar to the article quoted above, 'Notiz zum "Berliner Requiem"'. Kurt Weill's *Berliner Requiem* had its first (and only) broadcast on the Frankfurt Radio on 22 May 1929.

12 Ibid.: 'die Kantate *Das Berliner Requiem* und das musikalische Hörbild *Der Lindberghflug* Die beiden letzteren Werke sind ausdrücklich für den Rundfunk bestimmt'.

13 Ibid.

distribution of high, low, and middle voices and harmonic limits required for radio compositions.¹⁴ At this point his main considerations are the listeners or audiences. The most important thing for him was to try out an art form which actually met the requirements of 'what radio of today is in need of. First of all one must consider that the audience of the radio is composed of all strata of the population. It is impossible to apply the conditions of the concert hall to radio music'.¹⁵ This leads to the statement already quoted: that one has to create works that are available to as large an audience as possible, choose topics which can interest most people and find a form which will create no or few difficulties to what he describes as 'primitive listeners'.

As a radio critic, Weill was already well aware of the suitability of certain pieces for broadcast. In 1925, he commented on a concert of the German *Novembergruppe*, a Berlin group of artists associated with *Neue Sachlichkeit*.¹⁶ Considering some small pieces for string quartet by Max Butting, he remarked, 'The secure mastery of the small form met the demands of the microphone'.¹⁷ Also the piano pieces by Heinz Tiessen 'had passed the test of broadcasting with honours'.¹⁸ As both pieces were composed as early as 1923 they were hardly conceived as 'radio music'.¹⁹

In 1926, in an article called 'The radio and the transformation of musical life', Weill was considering how this new media was about to develop into a new genre: 'A specific technique of singing and playing for the aims of radio will be developed, ... special instrumentations and compositions of orchestras for the acoustic demands of the radio studios will be invented ... there is no doubt that the grounds for an independent and equal genre are established here'.²⁰ A similar stand was found in Denmark, where Knudåge Riisager in 1928 wrote a feature on radio music, suggesting that one should take on the challenge of providing 'a *specific radio music*' along such lines: 'It might at first sound strange that a composer should write for the radio, but is there a major difference between writing for that specific means of communication, the radio, and that specific instrument, for example, the

14 Ibid. 91.

15 Ibid.: '... was der Rundfunk heute braucht. Dabei war hauptsächlich zu berücksichtigen, daß das Publikum des Rundfunks sich aus allen Schichten der Bevölkerung zusammensetzt. Es ist unmöglich, die Voraussetzungen des Konzertsaaus auch auf die Rundfunkmusik anzuwenden'.

16 Nils Grosch, *Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit* (Stuttgart/Weimar, 1999), 42 ff.

17 Kurt Weill, '[Abend der Novembergruppe]', *Der deutsche Rundfunk* 3 (1925), No. 21 (24 May), 1323, in Weill: *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 258: 'Die sichere Meisterung der kleinen Form kam den Erfordernissen des Mikrophons entgegen'.

18 Ibid.: '[Heinz Tiessens Klavierstücke op. 31] bestanden glänzend die Feuerprobe der Übertragung'.

19 This was the first broadcast of the *Novembergruppe*, which had until then organized 12 'ordinary' concerts; cf. Martin Thrun, *Neue Musik im deutschen Musikleben bis 1933* (Bonn, 1995), 606–8.

20 Kurt Weill, 'Die Rundfunk und die Umschichtung des Musiklebens', *Der deutsche Rundfunk*, 4 (1926), no. 24 (13 June), 1649–50, in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 312: 'Es wird sich eine besondere Technik des Singens und Spielens für Funkzwecke entwickeln, man wird ... beginnen besondere Instrumentationen und neue Orchesterkombinationen eigens für die akustischen Erfordernisse des Senderraums zu erfinden. ... es unterliegt schon jetzt keinem Zweifel mehr, daß hier die Voraussetzungen zur Entstehung einer selbständigen und ebenbürtigen Kunstgattung gegeben sind'.

piano?²¹ At this stage, both Weill and Riisager considered the technical demands (or lack of quality) of the broadcasts and the fact that there was no interaction between musicians and audience to be the main concerns. And also in Denmark, radio or ‘mechanical’ music was often perceived as a threat to concerts with live audiences.²² But another, more optimistic note is also to be seen: Weill regarded radio as a media which can reach ‘that utmost broad public which is the future audience for art’ with ‘a valuable and genuinely productive mass art.’²³ This was a pedagogical project targeted at the audience and meant to create a new audience able to appreciate valuable music, including contemporary music.

Der Lindberghflug was Weill’s most ambitious attempt to fulfil this optimistic prospect, but it was also a sobering experience which eventually made him change his strategy and abandon the idea of being able to reach ‘everyone’ through the means of radio.²⁴ Instead, Weill’s final version of this piece became his first attempt in the genre school opera or *Lehrstück*, and it was followed up by the paradigmatic ‘school opera’, *Der Jasager*, which was premiered in June 1930.

Der Lindberghflug was a commission for the 1929 Baden-Baden festival, which, as already mentioned, had radio music as one of its featured themes. In the call for the festival, the category of radio music was subdivided into chamber music, music for chamber orchestra, vocal music, and ‘musical radio plays’ [musikalische Hörspiele], and *Der Lindberghflug* was intended for this last category.²⁵ The text was provided by Bertolt Brecht. It is the story of the famous Charles Lindbergh who as the first pilot ever made a one-man, non-stop flight from America to Europe. In later versions of the text, Brecht changed his attitude towards Lindbergh, who in the 1930s supported pro-fascist views, but in this first version Lindbergh was presented as a hero along with the other protagonist, his airplane. Initially it was planned that

21 Knudåge Riisager, ‘Radiomusik’ (Radio music), *Radiolytteren*, 4, no. 1 (22 Sept. 1928), 1: ‘Det lyder muligt i første Øjeblik mærkeligt, at en Komponist skulde skrive for Radioen, men er der større Forskel mellem at skrive for det særlige Meddelelsesmiddel Radioen og for det særlige Instrument, f. Eks. Klaveret?’ He suggested a competition to supply such pieces, but that came to nothing. Stapper provides an appendix with quite a long list of radio music by mainly German and Austrian composers, but such an investigation regarding Danish music has not yet been performed. There are examples, though, of Danish ‘radio music’, for example a piece by Otto Mortensen, *Ouverture for Kammerorkester (Radiomusik 1934)* (Overture for chamber orchestra (Radio music 1934)).

22 See, for example, Karl Larsen, *Levende musik. Mekanisk musik* (Live Music. Mechanical Music), (Copenhagen, 1929), which reprinted a number of newspaper chronicles by Karl Larsen and added comments by Finn Høffding and Jørgen Bentzon and a foreword by Carl Nielsen, published by Dansk Tonekunstnerforening.

23 Weill, ‘Die Rundfunk und die Umschichtung des Musiklebens’, 313: ‘jener breitesten Allgemeinheit, die das Kunstpublikum der Zukunft bildet’; ‘eine hochwertige und wirklich fruchtbare Massenkunst’.

24 This is not the place to work out the differences between the strategies of Brecht and Weill; it is during this period around 1930 that they part ways. For a discussion of Brecht’s position, see, for example, Peter Groth and Manfred Voigts, ‘Die Entwicklung der Brechtschen Radiotheorie, 1927–1932’, *Brecht-Jahrbuch*, 1976, 9–46, or Dieter Wöhrle, *Bertolt Brechts medienästhetische Versuche* (Köln, 1988), esp. 45–60.

25 Grosch, *Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit*, 210.

Weill would compose the music alone, but in the end Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith each composed half of the music for this version, which was premiered on stage on 27 June 1927 and broadcast on German radio two days later.

Already prior to the premiere, Weill found Hindemith's contribution 'superficial' and 'too tame for Brecht's texts' and thus he decided to present his own full version.²⁶ This second version of the piece was presented to the public at a concert in Berlin on 5 December 1929. In the process of composing this second version, Weill made it *less* a piece of specific radio music. Working over already composed numbers as well as composing the remaining parts, he removed some of the most 'radio-specific' features of instrumentation by enlarging the ensemble and giving the sound a more symphonic touch by removing the banjo and the saxophone and giving the strings a more prominent role.²⁷ This makes it a textbook case for identifying how Weill rearranged a specific sample of 'radio music' into a piece intended for other purposes, first as a concert cantata, then as a school opera for pupils.

In the second version, it was a piece intended for concert performances. He wrote to his publisher that it was 'a distinct concert piece' and that he was convinced that it would be performed by a large number of orchestras in Germany and abroad, but at the same time he stressed that he was keen on bringing this piece into the schools as well.²⁸ At this moment, though, this was more of a declaration of intent than a fact. What he presented in Berlin was a fully professional concert performance at the Berlin Kroll Opera House conducted by Otto Klemperer. Still, his text for the programme leaflet is revealing because it presents his (and Brecht's) new line of thought, promoting the idea of providing *Lehrstück* school operas, that is, didactical plays for pupils, intended to be performed in a group for the sake of educating the group members rather than being delivered to an audience. Thus, the concert version is a momentary form for a certain purpose, open for further adaptations. It is worth noting that he at this point talks of the radio play as a former version:

Der Lindberghflug by Brecht, which in a former version was composed as a radio play [Rundfunk-Hörspiel], is here present in a musical version which ultimately is intended for performances in schools. In that case the part of Lindbergh must be sung by several boys simultaneously in order to avoid the appearance of a single Lindbergh-performer's personal attitude ... The play in this form is, regarding the music, deliberately designed so simple that the music with sufficient time can be rehearsed by pupils. For this reason, the orchestra, too, is composed in a way which makes it possible to re-

26 Letter from Weill to Hans Curjel, 2.8.1929, quoted in David Farneth (ed.), *Kurt Weill. A Life in Pictures and Documents* (New York, 2000), 95: 'Hindemith's work on Lindberghflug and on the [Hindemith] Lehrstück was of a superficiality that will be hard to beat. It has clearly been proven that his music is too tame for Brecht's texts. What's amazing is that the press has discovered this as well, and they now present me as the shining example of how Brecht should be composed'. His decision to compose the full version was made already in the beginning of June, cf. letter to his publisher, 4.6.1929, in Kurt Weill, *Briefwechsel mit der Universal Edition*, ed. Nils Grosch (Stuttgart/Weimar, 2002), 168.

27 Grosch, *Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit*, 212.

28 Weill, *Briefwechsel mit der Universal Edition*, 205.

arrange it according to the possibilities of a school orchestra. The concert hall is turned ... into a sort of showroom. Thus shall for example *Der Lindberghflug* be 'exhibited', that is: the performance shall prepare for that other application where the piece is no longer presented to an audience but instead is satisfying its practical didactic aim.²⁹

Although signed by Weill, this statement resounds with the diction of Brecht. This is, in fact, the point where Weill and Brecht part, at least regarding *Der Lindberghflug*. Brecht reworked the text several times, stressing the *Lehrstück* features, first as *Der Flug des Lindberghs*, referring to the 'collectivization' and typification of the part of Lindbergh mentioned by Weill, and later in a version called *Der Ozeanflug*. Weill, however, did not compose any of these later texts, nor did he publish any arrangements for school orchestra.

Instead one must regard the next Brecht-Weill piece, the school opera *Der Jäsager*, composed in the spring of 1930, as a piece working out those intended simplifications. *Der Jäsager* is in fact drawn up in a way, which can be handled by musically trained pupils and a school orchestra, and, contrary to *Der Lindberghflug*, it was used for a large number of amateur performances, also in Denmark.³⁰ But still, the use for radio broadcasts was not ruled out. Actually, it should be noted, *Der Jäsager* was premiered as a live broadcast on 23 June 1930 and given its first stage premiere the next day.³¹

In a radio broadcast discussion on school operas in the spring of 1930, Weill reflected on the reasons for turning towards school opera, and it is remarkable that a major argument was his loss of faith in radio music. He no longer considered it possible to reach and, which is the crucial point, to influence such a large and diverse radio audience:

Exactly because the school is composed by different elements, circles and talents, which are compelled to influence each other, schools are in a more advantageous position. It is difficult but it is indeed worth engaging such a pool of maturing attitudes and positions at a meeting point, and while they are still developing. This is why, when I was listing different possibilities for dissemination of music, I left out the radio. Because in the radio you are approaching an anonymous community of adults from highly

29 Kurt Weill, 'Notiz zum *Lindberghflug*', programme note for the concert 5.12.1929, in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 100–1: 'Der *Lindberghflug* von Brecht, die in einer früheren Fassung als Rundfunk-Hörspiel komponiert worden war, liegt hier in einer musikalischen Fassung vor, die in ihrem Endzweck für Aufführungen in Schulen gedacht ist. Dabei soll der Part des Lindbergh von mehreren Knaben gleichzeitig gesungen werden, um die private Haltung eines einzelnen Lindberghdarstellers auszuschalten. ... Die musikalische Anlage des Stückes, wie sie jetzt vorliegt, ist aber mit voller Absicht so einfach gehalten, daß die Musik bei genügend Studierzeit von Schülern gelernt werden kann. Auch das Orchester ist aus diesem Grunde so besetzt, daß es den Besetzungsmöglichkeiten eines Schülerorchesters entsprechend arrangiert werden kann. Der Konzertsaal wird ... zu einer Art von Ausstellungsraum ... So soll zum Beispiel der *Lindberghflug* durch die Konzertaufführung gewissermaßen "ausgestellt" werden, d.h. die Aufführung soll jene andere Verwertung vorbereiten, in der das Stück nicht mehr einem Publikum dargeboten wird, sondern in der es seinen praktischen pädagogischen Zweck erfüllt.'

30 Fjeldsøe, *Kulturradikalismens musik*, 564–72.

31 Farneth (ed.), *Kurt Weill. A Life in Pictures and Documents*, III.

different circles, to which there is hardly anything to be done. ... There is no point of connection there and development is no longer possible.³²

It is this disappointment, following the high hopes for radio just one or two years earlier, that gives Weill's (and Brecht's) efforts to influence an audience a new direction. But this should not lead to the conclusion that the idea of providing specific radio music had no consequences.

What seemed to be the beginning of a new genre eventually dissolved into other genres defined not by the media, radio. But still, the awareness of the technical difficulties and the urge to overcome such problems in order to be able to communicate to a large audience point to the dialectics of production practices within the radio and the work of composers. It is interesting to note that Knudåge Riisager pointed to the production practice of gramophone recordings, when he was looking for a model for specific radio music – it was common practice in 1928 to rearrange musical scores in order to provide good recordings. One must adapt the technology to the music, he stated, or, if that is not possible

one must in similar ways as it is the case with gramophone recordings, rearrange and adapt existing scores for the specific purpose of radio broadcast. I am aware that it will be considered heresy to interfere here but on second thoughts one might admit that on the contrary it is suggested to find an adequate representation which exactly covers the original idea.³³

It is revealing that such practices were still considered acceptable in 1950 when Erik Tuxen commented on his new edition of the Nielsen symphony. Thus, it seems that the concept of radio music does have relevance, not just as a genre that did not really succeed; to music radio research it might be more significant to consider it a concept that provides *criteria* for compositions meant for radio broadcast and thus points to the field in which the production practice and the work of the composer are mediated.

32 'Aktuelles Zwiegespräch über die Schuloper zwischen Kurt Weill und Dr. Hans Fischer' (Apr. 1930), in Weill, *Musik und musikalisches Theater*, 447–54, at 449f.: 'Gerade weil die Schule aus verschiedenen Elementen, Kreisen und Begabungen zusammengesetzt ist, die gezwungen sind, aufeinander einzuwirken, hat sie die größten Vorteile. Es ist schwer, aber sehr lohnend, eine solche Vielheit der allmählich ausreifenden Meinungen und Ansichten im Schnittpunkt und noch in der Entwicklung zu treffen. Deshalb nannte ich vorhin, als ich die verschiedenen Möglichkeiten zur Verbreitung der Musik aufzählte, nicht den Rundfunk. Denn im Rundfunk ist eine anonyme Gemeinschaft von Erwachsenen aus verschiedensten Kreisen vorhanden, mit der wenig anzufangen ist. ... Da ist kein Schnittpunkt mehr vorhanden und keine Entwicklung mehr möglich.'

33 Riisager, 'Radiomusik': '... eller ogsaa maa man paa lignende Vis, som Tilfældet er med Hensyn til Grammofonindspilningerne, instrumentere og tilrettelægge den bestaaende Litteratur for det specielle Radioformaal. Jeg ved godt, at det vil blive betragtet som Helligbrøde at gribe ind her, men ved nærmere Eftertanke vil det dog sikkert indrømmes, at der tværtimod er Tale om at finde en Gengivelsesform, der netop dækker den oprindelige Tanke'. Cf. Mark Katz' argument that also early jazz recordings adapted to the limitations of recording technology and required bands to alter their instrumentation and playing styles. As records became the main source for disseminating jazz, these adapted versions came to define how jazz was expected to sound; Mark Katz, *Capturing sound. How technology has changed music* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 2004), 81–84.

SUMMARY

In the late 1920s, young composers and musicians turned towards new fields of activity and new media in order to reach a larger audience. In Germany, this effort was part of the movement of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, and for a short period of time *Radiomusik* was considered the ideal means for a democratic, educational and didactic effort which would enlighten all of society. For a while it seemed that radio music was considered a genre of its own. To fulfil its function, radio music had to consider technical limitations as well as the educational level and listening modes of the new mass audience. Public radio, as discussed by Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith, was at first greeted with great expectations, but soon a more realistic attitude prevailed. Weill, himself a radio critic as well, composed *Der Lindberghflug* (1929) as a piece of 'radio music theatre', but then changed some of its features in order to turn it into a didactical play for amateurs, a so-called *Lehrstück*. The article presents the concept of 'radio music' developed within German *Neue Sachlichkeit* and discusses the relevance of such a concept for current research in the field of radio and music.