

# Dramaturgical, Theoretical, and Musical Associations between Max Brand's *Maschinist Hopkins* and Alban Berg's Operas

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### ABSTRACT

In the German-speaking countries during the morally uninhibited years of the Weimar Republic, the opposing cultural epochs of Expressionism and *Neue Sachlichkeit* dominated the aesthetic landscape. Opera was a central proponent of both movements, as implemented by the Expressionist practitioners and those who favored the subsequent topical and objectifying *Zeitoper* that sought to move away from representations of psychological distortion to depict social realism that emphasized mechanical technology and lighter, popular narrative themes. Max Brand's famous *Zeitoper*, *Maschinist Hopkins*, will be analyzed to illustrate how it bore fundamental trace elements back to Alban Berg's Expressionist opera *Wozzeck*, and likewise, how *Hopkins* in turn influenced Berg's second opera *Lulu*, to constitute a linear association of narrative, music, and theatrical design that simultaneously conformed to and defied the operatic models that all three operas are historically associated with. It will also be suggested that both composers were consequentially influenced by Richard Wagner, promoting vestiges of an even older lineage, which contributed to this association between the three operas at a time when Wagner was less applicable to the trends of innovation and progress.

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### KEYWORDS

Alban Berg, *Lulu*, *Wozzeck*, Max Brand, *Maschinist Hopkins*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

When Alban Berg's Expressionist masterpiece *Wozzeck* premiered on December 14, 1925 in Berlin, the Weimar Republic (as Germany was unofficially referred to in the years between the two world wars) had already existed for seven years, and had another seven full years left until the National Socialists came to power in January 1933. With Hitler came the end of this cultural era that had influenced a progressive experimentation across all art forms, not least in music. However, musical Expressionism was already on the decline by the time *Wozzeck* had its triumphant world premiere. Indeed, in the years following the First World War, aesthetic musical factions of old vs new were cultivating a greater divide. In the genre of opera, this crisis stemmed from those who looked back to Wagner as a national symbol of past cultural glories, and those who only viewed Wagner through hyper-emotionality, which they sought to move past, as it was seen as no longer representational of the post-war cultural ethos.<sup>1</sup> Outside of opera, this crisis found expression in the discord between Wilhelmine and republican ideals that led to the cultivation of the Weimar Republic cultural epoch of *Neue Sachlichkeit* or "new objectivity," which in turn had its operatic representation in the new *Zeitoper*.<sup>2</sup>

*Neue Sachlichkeit* came to "define a new kind of realism which marked a dramatic 'renunciation of Expressionism.'"<sup>3</sup> The movement was also described as "carrying notions of sobriety, detachment, and unemotional matter-of-factness, which were part of its artistic style, while a commitment to everyday life characterized its subject matter."<sup>4</sup> Frank Mehring described it thus: "In contrast to pre-war Romanticism and Wagnerian mythology, . . . the 'New Objectivity' demonstrated a radical commitment to the modern environment, focusing on visible, objective reality rather than on the emotions of the artist."<sup>5</sup> *Neue Sachlichkeit* came to be seen as anti-Wagner whose later aesthetic was defined as Expressionist and highly emotional at the time (by the influential music critic Paul Bekker).<sup>6</sup> The *Zeitoper* came to epitomize both the new objectivity in general, and the anti-Wagnerian trend more specifically. It is defined as a:

Topical opera that was firstly a comic genre and typically relied on parody, social satire, and burlesque as dramatic tools. They were expressions and celebrations of modern life, where composers tried to incorporate as many attributes of contemporary life as possible into all facets of the operatic production. The libretti were set in the present; characters were typically everyday people or were presented as recognizable modern stereotypes. The action takes place in locales considered either modern or everyday: office buildings, elevators, train stations, cabarets, and private family dining rooms. Along with the modern setting, composers also relied on theatrical properties of the age: characters talk on the phone, play gramophones, take pictures, and shoot movies. The staging

<sup>1</sup>Susan C. COOK, *Opera for a New Republic: The Zeitopern of Krenek, Weill, and Hindemith* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1988), 9–10.

<sup>2</sup>For a comprehensive discussion of the musical representation of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, see Nils GROSCH, *Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler Verlag, 1999).

<sup>3</sup>COOK, *Opera for a New Republic*, 28.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>5</sup>Frank MEHRING, "Welcome to the Machine! The Representation of Technology in 'Zeitopern,'" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 11/2 (July 1999), 159.

<sup>6</sup>COOK, *Opera for a New Republic*, 12.



relied on up-to-date theatrical and cinematic techniques as composers tried to depict life on the stage. Although the musical component of *Zeitopern* took a variety of styles, these scores shared one important feature: the incorporation of idioms borrowed from American dance music and jazz.<sup>7</sup>

The aesthetic splintering into factions of these polarizing views of opera did not completely forsake the structural legacy of opera in favor of a completely unprecedented innovation. For Mehring, composers of *Zeitoper* “embraced contemporary ideas of progress, new technological inventions, modern electronic communication systems, and means of transportation as props, story topics, and artistic vehicles to introduce new sound-effects.”<sup>8</sup> Certainly, the *Zeitoper* “renounced the past in its topical, down-to-earth subject matter and in its musical style which further borrowed from popular music and returned to clearly articulated number-opera schemes.”<sup>9</sup> This last sentiment is crucial, as Berg’s second opera *Lulu* – a piece that is notoriously hard to classify as an example of any one paradigm – was structured on the tenets of number operas, giving it a neo-classical flavor, among other attributes. One of the most important motivations behind the *Zeitoper*, though, was that their inclusion of popular trends and heightened realism at the expense of Expressionism was meant to make them more captivating to audiences.<sup>10</sup>

This aesthetic and moral background established the historical climate to which this study will be devoted. The Austrian composer Max Brand (1896–1980) wrote one of the most popular *Zeitopern* of the time: *Maschinist Hopkins* (1929). Martin Elste noted: “Brand’s opera hit the pulse of the times: It deals with unemployment and stock market speculation, with a fashionable half-world of jazz and tango on the one hand, and solidarity with workers on the other.”<sup>11</sup> As suggested earlier, Alban Berg’s two operas, *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, were conceived of and premiered, respectively, during the Weimar era. This study will endeavor to depict the fundamental chronologically-linear association of *Wozzeck* to *Hopkins* and then to *Lulu* that these three operas had with one another, and peripherally how their composers also appropriated Wagnerian themes of theatrical structures. *Maschinist Hopkins* will be the central opera that is analyzed in order to demonstrate how it simultaneously looked back to *Wozzeck* and forward to *Lulu*. Such an investigation will pivot around a theoretical understanding of both composers’ aesthetic views of opera and the cultural milieu of their time. Subsequently, a detailed analysis of *Hopkins*’ libretto and certain specific musical devices that were aligned with Berg’s operatic approach will be examined, followed by Berg’s explicit opinions of *Hopkins*. These various sections will contribute to an overall understanding of how these three operas converged and how Brand and Berg were indebted to each other to such an extent that they both incorporated

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 3–4.

<sup>8</sup>MEHRING, “Technology in Zeitopern,” 159.

<sup>9</sup>COOK, *Opera for a New Republic*, 30.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>11</sup>Martin ELSTE, “Maschinelle Menschen, Singende Maschinen: Über Max Brands *Maschinist Hopkins* (1929),” in *Alban Bergs Wozzeck und Die Zwanziger Jahre: Vorträge und Materialien Des Salzburger Symposions 1997*, ed. by Peter CSOBÁDI, Gernot GRUBER, Jürgen KÜHNEL, Ulrich MÜLLER, Oswald PANAGL and Franz SPECHTLER (Anif/Salzburg: Müller-Speiser Verlag, 1999), 538. “Brands Oper genau den Puls der Zeit getroffen zu haben: Sie handelt von Arbeitslosigkeit und Börsenspekulation, von modischer Halbwelt mit Jazz und Tango einerseits und Arbeitersolidarität andererseits.” Unless specified, all translations are my own.



features of the other in the narrative, musical, and theatrical designs of their operas in simultaneous accord and defiance of the operatic models that they are historically associated with. However, beyond drawing correlations between three operas that bear significance in their own individual ways, the purpose of this study is to also invariably elucidate on this nuanced sense of causality that will in turn facilitate an historical insight into how these operas evolved in a linear and referential trajectory rather than in an antithetical and purely reactionary way.

## 2. BRAND'S AND BERG'S THEORIES OF OPERA

Brand and Berg were both theatrical dramatists at heart, and were both moral operatic descendants of Wagner in fundamental ways. Both composers demonstrated how the three operas in question, Brand's *Maschinist Hopkins* and Berg's *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, endeavored to simultaneously express their composers' aesthetic theories of opera's theatricality, while also presenting works that conformed to the popular trends of the day, realizing that preserving socially-relevant and "topical" themes – albeit through grotesque abstractions – was an essential ingredient in ensuring success, which was important to them both. This section will therefore look to see how both composers expressed these views, and in what way those views converged between them.

In his 1926 essay "Mechanical Music' and the Problem of the Opera," Brand outlines what he sees as a human problem with opera, and offers solutions. Brand opens his essay by saying: "The call for 'renewal' of the opera is always loud. The extent to which it is justified, indeed compulsory, that it is congruent with the requirements of our time and not just a call from the narrowness of this or that unproductivity, remains to be seen."<sup>12</sup> Brand here immediately emphasizes the profound and often potentially-controversial task of crafting opera to more effectively mirror contemporary values. He continues: "Transposition into a visual manifestation out of musical events is certainly nothing new, and is definitely more primary than the reverse process (see March, dance etc.). However, these are processes which, touching the basis of consciousness, have so far been subject to interpretations, namely interpretations which are anchored in the emotional along a personal grasp. It is precisely in this individual conception and interpretation of a musical event that the fallacy lies in adopting the reverse process, that is, to give human events musical interpretation."<sup>13</sup> This statement initiates Brand's view that basic humanistic tenets (at the time, these were the psychological staples of Expressionism, culminating musically with *Wozzeck*) have up to then been expressed musically via emotion, and that

<sup>12</sup>Max BRAND, "Mechanische Musik' und das Problem der Opera," *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (1926), reprinted in: Thomas BREZINKA, *Max Brand (1896–1980) Leben und Werk* (München: Musikverlag Emil Katzschichler, 1995), 97. "Der Ruf nach 'Erneuerung' der Oper wird immer wieder laut. Inwieweit er berechtigt, ja zwingend, dem Erfordernis unserer Zeit kongruent, nicht nur ein Ruf aus der Enge dieser oder jener Unproduktivität ist, mag dahingestellt bleiben."

<sup>13</sup>"Transposition in visuelle Manifestation aus dem musikalischen Geschehen heraus ist gewiß nichts Neues, ja bestimmt primärer, als der umgekehrte Vorgang (siehe Marsch, Tanz etc.). Allerdings handelt es sich hierbei um Vorgänge, die die Bewußtseinsbasis berührend, bis jetzt Deutungen unterworfen waren, und zwar Deutungen, die mit der persönlichen Erfassung im Gefühlsmäßigen verankert sind. Eben in dieser individuellen Auffassung und Auslegung eines musikalischen Geschehens liegt der Trugschluß begründet, den umgekehrten Vorgang einzuschlagen, das heißt, menschlichem Geschehen musikalische Deutung zu geben." Ibid.



it is a mistake to present humanity musically. Brand proposes to overcome this shortcoming by separating the music and its representative staging from its humanistic correlation. In other words, the music would have to be liberated from human emotion, and refined down to its most basic structure. This, he believed, would constitute an entirely new musical path and its stage potential as well.

Brand continues by saying: “To put it more precisely: an equally important movement of material on stage should correspond to an important musical line, be it by climbing or descending a characteristic piece of decoration or, for example, by opening, closing, moving curtains, or finally by the movement of light.”<sup>14</sup> First of all, this type of corresponding precision between music and stage, with particular emphasis on the usage of curtains, was rendered profoundly explicit by Berg in his two operas and especially in his meticulous directions regarding the role and usage of the curtains. This mutual phenomenon between Brand and Berg will be discussed later in more detail. In the above passage, Brand is advocating for a tighter theatrical homogeneity with the music. For Brand, the outcome of this “strict implementation would result in an equally strong increase in stage performance, as it appears to be justified in the musical process.”<sup>15</sup> Brand equated this concept to a moving stage, which he further claimed to be an organic operation that would be rooted in the music. “These processes would be completely unreal processes. Apart from any realism, they would find their ultimate justification in the purely psychical and thus flow back into the human, but in a figurative and deeper sense, the tragedy of which could be more shocking than the processes known up to now on the stage.”<sup>16</sup> This last passage is fascinating, as it expresses a strong Expressionist ethos in its application of the psychological, but via a different application – one that is humanistically referential, yet derived more from the music and the stage. His admission that such a consequence would yield something tragic and shocking is far less indicative of the morality that the *Zeitoper* projects, and is more aligned with a Bergian morality of turbulent emotional drama. In the next section when the libretto of *Hopkins* is analyzed, these tenets that Brand advances become more explicit as he develops his brutal stage phantasmagoria. Thus, Brand claims, it was “possible to achieve strong effects with means that were born purely out of the musical, that would not include a more or less accurate interpretation of a musical process but its complete shaping on the moving stage.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the stage action is again derived from the music and not directly from human emotion, even though a representation of human emotion will find its way back via the music. To Brand,

<sup>14</sup>“Genauer ausgedrückt: Einer wichtigen musikalischen Linie müßte eine ebenso wichtige Materialbewegung auf der Bühne entsprechen, sei es durch Steigen oder Fallen eines charakteristischen Dekorationsteiles oder zum Beispiel durch entsprechendes Öffnen, Schließen, Bewegen von Vorhängen, endlich auch durch Lichtbewegungen.” Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>“... würde eine strenge Durchführung eine ebenso starke Steigerung rein bühnenmäßig ergeben, als diese im musikalischen Geschehen begründet erscheint.” Ibid., 98.

<sup>16</sup>“Diese Vorgänge wären vollkommen irrealer Vorgänge. Abseits jeder Realistik würden sie ihre letzte Begründung im rein Psychischen finden und somit wieder ins Menschliche münden, jedoch in einem übertragenen und tieferen Sinn, dessen Tragik erschütternder sein könnte, als die bis nun auf der Bühne bekannter Vorgänge.” Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>“Es gelänge somit starke Wirkungen mit Mitteln zu erzielen, die rein aus dem Musikalischen heraus geboren, nicht eine mehr oder weniger zutreffende Deutung eines musikalischen Vorganges beinhalten würden, sondern dessen restlose Formung auf der bewegten Bühne.” Ibid.



“such conflict, derived from the fatefulness of the music, would create the true ‘music drama.’”<sup>18</sup> Equating his vision to a term that is most profoundly associated with Wagner denotes Brand’s faith in instigating an operatic reform that is nevertheless a natural successor to an operatic form that he is clearly indebted to. Brand’s ability to harness music drama is most acutely seen in the two most Wagnerian scenes of *Hopkins* that bear explicit similarities with *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*, respectively. This aspect too will be addressed in the next section.

Brand now arrives at the main point of his essay. After having described in convoluted ways the state of opera, he now comes to a more practical realization of implementation. He reiterates that the primary concern is to reject realism in order to promote “unreal events” (“irreale Vorgänge”), which can “therefore be completely satisfied with visionary hints, without having to lose persuasive power.”<sup>19</sup> Brand offers his primary solution by saying that: “The ‘moving stage,’ that is to say the stage that follows every action restlessly through constant mechanical movement, through material movement, light and film, in such a way that it is able to change its appearance constantly and in every respect, is thus raised from its setting to an important acting function and is enabled to intervene in the action in a most convincing manner.”<sup>20</sup> To Brand, then, the mechanical stage seeks to free the stage from a psychological, humanistic application in order to merge the physical with the musical. He believed that this mechanical/technological precedence over the humanistic would open new avenues of stage production that would create “musical machines” (“Musik-Mechanisierung”), which would transcend humanistic limitations. He asserted that this was the future of opera, even if such an implementation was not yet possible at the time of writing his treatise. Mehring concurs with these assessments of Brand’s meaning, adding that “With light, color, and mechanical stage props he [Brand] intends to create an environment into which the actor is organically placed. Verbal expression might ultimately become superfluous. Music vitalizes the stage both kinetically and visually. Actors respond to the movements of the stage and thus to the music.”<sup>21</sup>

The following year (1927), Brand published another prose work, whereby he summarized and elaborated on his previous essay, “Mechanical Music.” This new document, titled “The Moving Opera Stage” (“Die Bewegte Opernbühne”), opens with another romanticized, Wagnerian ethos: “Any artistic development is a chain of revolutions, interrupted only by brief pauses for the consolidation of newly created laws, which diligently utilizes epigones out of an inability and convenience to build fortifications to secure acquired benefits, while the youthful will to create strikes again powerfully. Creativity in itself involves the need to

<sup>18</sup>“solcher Konflikt, aus dem Schicksalsmäßigen des Musikalischen gewonnen, würde das wahre ‘Musik-Drama’ schaffen.” Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>“... sich demnach mit visionären Andeutungen vollkommen begnügen kann, ohne hierdurch an Überzeugungskraft verlieren zu müssen.” Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>“Die ‘bewegte Bühne,’ das heißt die Bühne, die jedem Geschehen durch konstante maschinelle Bewegung rastlos folgt, also durch Materialbewegung, Licht und Film, und zwar in der Weise, daß sie dauernd und in jeder Hinsicht ihr Aussehen zu verändern in der Lage ist, wird damit aus ihrem Schauplatzrahmen zu wichtiger agierender er Funktion erhoben und befähigt, in überzeugendster Weise in die Handlung bestimmend einzugreifen.” Ibid., 98–99.

<sup>21</sup>MEHRING, “Technology in Zeitoper,” 164.



break up old forms in order to substitute new ones, since the content and purpose of each art is eternally the same and is called perfection, and only the form seeks and finds new ways.”<sup>22</sup> Brand essentially continues where he left off in the previous essay by advocating for a culture of change in the arts that moves away from past aesthetic paradigms. He goes on to say that the genre of opera has stagnated like all the other arts, but that attempts are being made to move beyond the old trends, and that this endeavor must persist. These are mostly re-iterations, and Brand again cites Schoenberg’s short drama *Die glückliche Hand* as an example of the type of work that he is promoting. However, Brand next attributes a characteristic that is far more indicative of Berg and the latter’s philosophy towards opera: “Opera is not just a form that was created solely by convention, but has its deep foundation and necessity in the creative constellation of the creator. For certain individuals, musical theater is an axiom of their work.”<sup>23</sup> As we will see later, this notion was echoed famously by Berg when he described his motivations for composing *Wozzeck*. Brand further Allies himself morally with Berg by saying that “The problem of hearing and vision of the face also involves the great and typical difficulty with which almost all composers struggle when choosing their libretti, since the discrepancy between their own vision and the existing text (even if it is their own) can usually only be bridged with the most difficult of compromises.”<sup>24</sup> In his letter to Schoenberg on August 7, 1930, Berg expressed this very problem when describing the arduous task that faced him in adapting Wedekind’s texts to fit his dramaturgical vision when he was composing *Lulu*.<sup>25</sup> Brand now brings his purpose back full circle by reiterating how:

In my essay “Mechanical Music and the Problem of Opera,” I tried to outline the problem of the transposition of musical events into visual manifestation. It involves the transformation of a particular musical event into the visibility of the stage, with complete detachment from such events and its stage-like substantiation of human relationships. Starting from the fact that a musical work through the guidance of voices, through themes and sound physiognomy, leads to tensions and conflicts purely in the musical, which are based on the direction of the creative will, we get the

<sup>22</sup>“Jedwede Kunstentwicklung ist eine Kette von Revolutionen, unterbrochen lediglich von kurzen Pausen zur Festigung neu geschaffener Gesetze, die Epigonentum aus Unvermögen und Bequemlichkeit emsig nützt, Festungen zur Sicherung erlangter Vorteile auszubauen, während junger Schaffenswille zum kraftvollen Schlag von neuem ausholt. Schaffensvermögen beinhaltet an sich die Notwendigkeit der Sprengung alter Formen, um an deren Stelle neue setzen zu können, da der Inhalt und das Ziel jeder Kunst ewig gleich bleibt und Vollendung heißt, und nur die Form neue Wege sucht und findet.” Max BRAND, “Die Bewegte Opernbühne,” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (January/February 1927), 62.

<sup>23</sup>“Die Oper nicht eine nur durch Konvention allein entstandene Form ist, sondern ihre tiefe Begründung und Notwendigkeit in der schöpferischen Konstellation des Schaffenden hat. Das musikalische Theater ist für bestimmte Individualitäten also ein Axiom ihres Schaffens.” *Ibid*.

<sup>24</sup>“Im Problem der Gehörs- und Gesichtsvision ist auch die große und typische Schwierigkeit zu suchen, mit der fast alle Komponisten bei Wahl ihrer Libretti zu kämpfen haben, da die Diskrepanz zwischen eigener Vision und die vorliegenden Texte (auch wenn es der eigene ist) sich meistens nur mit den schwersten Kompromissen überbrücken läßt.” *Ibid*.

<sup>25</sup>See Juliane BRAND, Christopher HAILEY and Donald HARRIS (eds. and transl.), *The Berg–Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters* (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), 405–406.



opportunity to create a work in advance so that the musical structure, lines, and timbre allow for an adequate projection onto the stage.<sup>26</sup>

In the above passage, Brand summarizes his advocacy for a theatrical stage representation that merges the musical and the visual without dependency on or justification of human emotions. In essence, the music advances the narrative impetus on stage. Brand does subsequently provide a detailed structural framework of how this is to be achieved by describing various technological ploys of stagecraft, but which always remain referential to the music. In one of his most direct and clear elucidations regarding his theories of opera, Brand next proposes how such notions would be presented dramaturgically:

A practical application of the above theoretical discussion would, for example, be as follows: When the music begins and the empty or dark stage is revealed, the overture (“opening”) could create the “scene” of what is happening, and before the eyes of the listener mechanically allow all those parts of the material that determines the plot to grow and become the elemental basis of this “music drama.” There would be a musical and scenic exposure at the same time. In a further intimation of this schematic framework, which, of course, like any other complicated drama, must consist of primitive main elements, there would be the introduction of a man or some people, and eventually the masses. The material of the stage would now create, in strict adherence to the musical, those situations that could manifest themselves in the fact that the material could, for example, grow into a threatening abyss by changing its position, thus triggering the reflex movement of the people or the masses.<sup>27</sup>

Brand goes on to implement this procedure quite accurately in *Hopkins*, which associates him with Wagner in the sense that they both put their vision down on paper and then proceeded to craft their operas accordingly. Berg, likewise, documented his motivations after the fact, as more of a record of why he did what he did, rather than delineating a philosophy first. As for *Hopkins*, indeed, there is an extended prologue-like overture that comprises the opera’s first two scenes before the start of act 1 proper. The narrative plot introduces its characters and builds its dramatic structure just as Brand intimated above, while consistently implementing very detail-

<sup>26</sup>“In meinem Aufsatz ‘Mechanische Musik und das Problem der Oper,’ habe ich versucht, das Problem der Transposition musikalischer Geschehnisse in visuelle Manifestation zu skizzieren. Es handelt sich dabei um die Umsetzung eines bestimmten musikalischen Geschehens in die Sichtbarkeit der Bühne unter vollkommener Loslösung solchen Geschehens und seiner bühnenmäßigen Begründung von menschlichen Beziehungen. Von der Tatsache ausgehend, daß ein musikalisches Werk durch Führung von Stimmen, durch Thematik und Klangphysiognomie zu Spannungen und Konflikten rein im Musikalischen führt, die ihre Urbegründung allein aus der Richtung erfahren, die ihnen der Schöpferwille verleiht, gelangen wir zur Möglichkeit, ein Werk im vorhinein so anzulegen, daß die musikalische Struktur, Linienführung und Klangfarbe eine adäquate Projektion auf die Bühne gestattet.” BRAND, “Die Bewegte Opernbühne,” 62.

<sup>27</sup>“Eine praktische Anwendung der vorstehenden theoretischen Erörterung würde, um nur ein Beispiel anzuführen, etwa folgendermaßen aussehen: Bei Beginn der Musik und Enthüllung der leeren oder dunklen Bühne, könnte die Ouvertüre (‘Eröffnung’) als Schaffung des ‘Schauplatzes’ des Geschehens in ihre Rechte treten, und so vor den Augen des Zuhörers mechanisch alle jene die Handlung bestimmenden Materialteile erwachsen lassen, die die Basis und Elemente dieses ‘Musik-Dramas’ wären. Also eine musikalische und szenische Exposition zugleich. In weiterer Andeutung dieses schematischen Gerüstes, das naturgemäß wie jedes andere noch so komplizierte Drama aus primitiven Hauptelementen bestehen muß, käme die Einführung des Menschen oder einiger Menschen, schließlich Massen. Das Material der Bühne würde nun in strenger Befolgung des Musikalischen jene Situationen schaffen, die sich darin etwa manifestieren könnten, daß das Material durch Veränderung seiner Lage zum Beispiel einen bedrohlichen Abgrund erwachsen ließe, und somit die Reflexbewegung des Menschen oder der Massen auslösen würde.” Ibid., 63–64.





oriented stage directions. Once again, by describing his operatic vision as constituting a music drama, and by suggesting the inclusion of turbulent and heavy imagery through a threatening abyss, Brand is describing a Wagnerian and Bergian approach to opera rather than a light *Zeitoper* romp. Certainly, it is also *Wozzeck* who sings of looking into the abyss, and that is by no means meant to be anything but dread-inspiring.

Brand ends his essay by commenting on the notion that he may be against the paradigm shift that seeks to dismiss interpretations of the “psycho-emotional” (“psychische-seelische”) in opera. He does admit, though, that reality is comprised of vestiges of the subconscious, and that this phenomenon is worth exploring in an artwork. Nevertheless, he is also quick to add that this should only be advisable, at least in opera, in as much as it can be derived from the music. The extent to which Brand advocates for the primacy of music is indicative of Wagner after he abandoned his theories of *Gesamtkunstwerk* in favor of Schopenhauerian aesthetics that also placed greater emphasis on the music over the written word. However, his awareness and willingness to discuss elements of the psycho-emotional and subconscious is strongly associated with the tenets of Expressionism and with Berg’s portrayal of his own operatic characters and dramaturgical preoccupations, especially in *Wozzeck*. These are important factors to keep in mind in order to understand how Brand’s operatic morality was so intrinsically associated with Berg’s.

In 1930, three years after the publication of “The Moving Opera Stage,” Brand published his next prose work, entitled: “About the Situation of Opera” (“Über die Situation der Oper”). This short essay has the benefit of having been written after the premiere and huge success of *Maschinist Hopkins*, as well as those of other operas that have now consolidated the social viability of the *Zeitoper*. Brand begins by presenting his contextualized view of opera within the previous two years, citing the consistent changes that the genre has undergone. Brand stated his belief that it is narrow-minded to demand of an artwork that during its creation the desire of the outcome should be to produce a work that will bear traits of something that is considered permanent. Furthermore, “it is not believable that a work has ever been created that was able to speak to us for centuries and that its creator had consciously tried to make an impression that would extend beyond its present. However, what could be attributed to all the great works that we know as one of the most outstanding properties is the complete synthetic recording of their time in the works. So not a horizontal interpretation, fading away in the foggy distance, but a vertical summary of the characteristics of the epoch.”<sup>28</sup> This is a crucial sentiment in understanding Brand’s view of opera as a cultural reflection of its time, and not as a relic to be held up to represent past eras. He continues:

It is enough for us to create works that shake things up today, grab us today and apply to us today. Because, as every epoch has left its documents, so will ours. The attitude: opera itself is an absurdity, it is made up of components that provide an image that is untrue to life and lead to seeing in it what it was in the pre-Wagnerian era. Thus, one returned to a conventional view in which, for artistic

<sup>28</sup>“Es ist nicht glaubhaft, daß je ein Werk entstanden ist, das befähigt war, über Jahrhunderte noch zu uns zu sprechen, und dem sein Schöpfer bewußt die Profilierung zu geben versucht hätte, über seine Gegenwart hinauszuragen. Was jedoch allen großen Werken, die wir kennen, als eine der hervorstechendsten Eigenschaften zuzusprechen wäre, ist die restlose synthetische Erfassung ihrer Zeit im Werke. Also keine horizontale, in nebelhafter Ferne sich verlierende Deutung, sondern ein vertikales Zusammenfassen der der Epoche eigensten Merkmale.” Max BRAND, “Über die Situation der Oper,” *Blätter der Staatsoper Berlin*, Nr. 10. (1930), reprinted in: BREZINKA, *Max Brand*, 100.



reasons, one tried to invent an action that offered as much opportunity as possible to make music. This path led back to the number opera, which was most succinctly expressed in Hindemith's "Cardillac." And this is how Kurt Weill, together with Bert Brecht, brings about a renewal of the Singspiel by giving an old, also conventional form, content and music appropriate to the present. Without negating the importance, necessity and, above all, effectiveness of these endeavors, it should be noted that all of these ways run counter to a synthetic grasp of musical theater.<sup>29</sup>

Brand's fascinating and perceptive observation about opera denotes his awareness of a linear representation of stylistic trends where he places Wagner as the bridge between these styles. He believes that this inauthentic reflection of reality that opera has been promoting has caused the need to return to older forms that are, as he has been saying in all his essays, predicated more acutely on music. Brand notes how this aesthetic shift back to older forms resulted in a revival of number operas. This is telling, as it is precisely the kind of formal structure that Berg adopted for *Lulu*, with its emphasis on vocal forms and coloratura stylizations. Indeed, as Douglas Jarman concurs, "Lulu is a 'number' opera, using the vocal forms traditionally associated with opera – Recitative, Aria, Duet, Arioso, Quartet and so on. Although the division into different numbers is less aurally distinct in *Lulu* than it is in other works, the beginnings and ends of these separate formal units are clearly articulated, and the different numbers are clearly indicated in the score."<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, although he notes the viability of such a return, Brand also states that this runs counter to an understanding of musical theater. He justified this by saying that: "Theater in general and opera in particular almost entirely lost their great relationship with the public in the post-war years. The objective blame for this fact can only be attributed to the theater, which, failing to recognize its most original meaning, has begun to close itself off to the present and is trying to promote an antiquated art that runs alongside the demands of the present day."<sup>31</sup> Brand, therefore, places the blame on the aesthetic dubiousness of encouraging this simultaneous duality of old epochs and new trends. He concludes his essay with the notion that "All groping attempts, yes mistakes and mistakes, are nothing other than the search for relationships with the larger public. However, anyone who assumes (and many assume it) that the masses can only be won back to the theater through flattering and concessions to cheap taste,

<sup>29</sup>"Es genügt uns, daß Werke geschaffen werden, die heute erschüttern, heute uns packen und heute uns gelten. Denn, so wahr jede Epoche ihre Dokumente hinterlassen hat, so wird es auch die unsere tun. Die Einstellung: die Oper an sich sei ein Unding, sie setze sich aus Komponenten zusammen, die ein dem Leben gegenüber unwahres Bild ergeben, führte dazu, in ihr das zu sehen, was sie in der vor wagnerianischen Zeit war. Man kehrte also zu einer konventionellen Auffassung zurück, in der man aus artistischen Gründen eine Handlung zu erfinden suchte, die eben möglichst viel Gelegenheit bot, Musik zu machen. Dieser Weg führte zur Nummern-Oper zurück, wie sie am prägnantesten in Hindemiths 'Cardillac' Ausdruck fand. Und über diesen Weg gelangt Kurt Weill gemeinsam mit Bert Brecht zu einer Erneuerung des Singspiels, indem sie einer alten, ebenfalls konventionellen Form einen der Gegenwart angemessenen Inhalt und angemessene Musik geben. Ohne die Bedeutung, Notwendigkeit und vor allem Wirksamkeit dieser Bestrebungen negieren zu wollen, sei festgestellt, daß alle diese Wege einer synthetischen Erfassung des musikalischen Theaters zuwiderlaufen." Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Douglas JARMAN, *Cambridge Opera Handbooks. Alban Berg: Lulu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 58.

<sup>31</sup>"Das Theater im allgemeinen und die Oper im besonderen hat in den Nachkriegsjahren fast zur Gänze ihre große Beziehung zum Publikum verloren. Die objektive Schuld an dieser Tatsache ist allein dem Theater zuzusprechen, das in Verkennung seines ursprünglichsten Sinnes sich seiner Gegenwart zu verschließen begann und eine antiquierte, neben den Forderungen des Tages eine herlaufende Kunst zu geben versucht." BRAND, "Über die Situation der Oper," 100.



misunderstands the mission of the theater and the sense of the times.”<sup>32</sup> By saying this, Brand is again placing the blame on those who conform to fleeting popular trends. This is an accusation that both Berg and Schoenberg placed on *Zeitoper*, yet it is this notion to at least partially conform to current tastes that was so intrinsic in both *Maschinist Hopkins* and *Lulu*. Therefore, if Brand and also Berg are to be taken at their word, then their decision to make “concessions to cheap taste,” were made with different motivations: ostensibly to achieve their vision of musical theater rather than to pander to public appeal.

Brand’s final extant prose essay from this period came in 1932, and was titled: “A New Sound Film Attempt” (“Eine neuer Tonfilmversuch”). This essay, as short as his previous one, is far less philosophical or convoluted, and is essentially a treatise of support for the blossoming film industry. When describing film, Brand states that: “Here the imagination could go far beyond the boundaries that the opera composer had in the reality of the stage, the voice, the theater orchestra. The combination of sound and photography gave the musician completely new and magnificent material. But again the same claim: a unified work of art that is formed from a creative vision.”<sup>33</sup> This statement is important in as much as Berg conceptually agreed with it, to the extent that he placed a film in the crucial center of *Lulu* right at the moment that the great palindrome is presented, and a dramatic shift in the dramaturgy ensues. Brand and Berg both saw the potential in harnessing the fledgling medium for the operatic stage, which once again conceptually aligns them in their quest to promote technological novelties in service of the theater. Indeed, as Marc Weiner noted, “In the premiere of the Brand opera [*Hopkins*], a film projection was used, showing images celebrating the machine age accompanied by an off-stage speaking chorus which imitated the machine sounds.”<sup>34</sup>

Between the four essays by Brand that have been analyzed, there are certain large-scale motifs that are emphasized in them all that establish an ideology in the six years separating their publications, which saw the composition of *Hopkins*, its triumphant premiere, and the aftermath. Brand’s major aesthetic themes depict his desire to renew opera in ways that make it more congruent with the values of his day. Part of this renewal consists of the theatrical craft, whereby the action on the stage will correspond to the music, but also be subordinate to the music and detached from human emotion, which will in turn be abstractly depicted in the music. This phenomenon would constitute the new “music drama,” as enacted by the mechanical moving stage. Brand’s theories present a conflation of the dark psychology inherent in Expressionism, the mechanical/technological prevalence that is exemplified by the *Zeitoper*, a need for authenticity and not pandering to popular formal gimmicks, and lastly, a unified theatrical work

<sup>32</sup>“Alle tastenden Versuche, ja Mißgriffe und Fehler sind nichts anderes, als die Suche nach Beziehung zum großen Publikum. Wer jedoch annimmt (und viele nehmen es an), daß ein Zurückgewinnen der Massen für das Theater nur durch Verflachung und Konzessionen an den billigen Geschmack zu erreichen ist, der verkennt ebenso die Sendung des Theaters, wie den Sinn der Zeit.” Ibid., 101.

<sup>33</sup>“Hier konnte die Phantasie weit über die Grenzen hinaus gehen, die dem Opernkomponisten in der Realität der Bühne, der Stimme, des Theaterorchesters gesteckt sind. Die Verbindung von Ton und Photographie gab dem Musiker ein völlig neues prachtvolles Material in die Hand. Aber wieder derselbe Anspruch: ein einheitliches, aus einer gestaltenden Vision sich formendes Kunstwerk.” Max BRAND, “Einer neuer Tonfilmversuch,” *Mein Film* Nr. 350 (1932), reprinted in: BREZINKA, *Max Brand*, 101.

<sup>34</sup>Marc A. WEINER, “Alban Berg, *Lulu*, and the Silent Film,” in *Composing for the Screen in Germany and the USSR*, eds. Robynn J. STILWELL and Phil POWRIE (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 64.



that the new medium of film will help to promote. Mehring agrees, noting that Brand “combined the techniques of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and Expressionism. He shows aspects of big city life with the expressionistic technique of externalizing inner experiences through exaggeration or distortion.”<sup>35</sup> Brand clearly saw himself as an aesthetic revolutionary, yet he borrowed as much from bygone eras and incorporated popular trends into his operatic masterpiece to suggest that his methodology perhaps did not fully embrace his ideology. Nevertheless, Brand took particular care to express his beliefs, and knowing what he advocated for was just as important as tracing whether he successfully implemented everything he said an operatic composer should do. It is now essential to trace how Berg expressed himself literarily in order to determine how much his aesthetic views of opera and society found their way into his own operas, which will in turn inform the various fundamental similarities that were so explicitly inherent when looking at *Wozzeck*, *Hopkins*, and *Lulu* as linearly deterministic of each other.

When one compares the language of Brand’s and Berg’s prose, it instantly becomes apparent that Berg had a much greater propensity for mincing words, although this was not always the case. Berg was acutely aware that his published prose would not just represent his views, but also his teacher Schoenberg by proxy, and this realization had often motivated Berg to guard his public opinion, and then express himself openly in his correspondence. Brand, likewise, was known to be argumentative, opinionated, and virtually friendless, and this disregard for caution has allowed for an extremely uninhibited expression of insight. It is rather more difficult to definitively ascertain Berg’s beliefs as they were often contradictory. An example of this can be seen in his reception and opinion of Brand, which will be discussed later. The most important point of departure, though, should be the awareness that Berg was intimately familiar with every form of public opinion as it related to music, and especially opera. Berg’s own theories of opera are less philosophical than Brand’s.

Berg wrote his article “The ‘Problem of Opera’” in 1927, so precisely at the same time that Brand was publicly presenting his ideas of opera. In the first part of the article, which he called “Pro Mundo,” Berg implicitly described current operatic trends as being vogue, somewhat tacitly condemning them by saying that:

The use of means “suited to the times” – like cinema, revue, loudspeakers, and jazz – proves only that such a work is up-to-date. But this cannot be called real progress because we are already there and cannot go further with such things alone. To say that the art form of opera has developed further – as happened, for example, with Monteverdi, Lully, Gluck, Wagner, and finally in Schoenberg’s stage works – requires other means beyond the simple application of the latest acquisitions and things that are in fashion. But must it always “further develop?” Isn’t it enough to take the opportunity to make beautiful music for good theater, or, better said, to make music so beautiful that – in spite of it – good theater will result?<sup>36</sup>

By naming some of history’s greatest operatic composers, and interestingly, reformers, Berg draws a linear path of the genre to his present day, and cites how these composers developed opera without yielding to popular conventions that were staples of their day. To Berg, progress is made through the inclusion of non-standard tropes at the time of composition, because that

<sup>35</sup>MEHRING, “Technology in Zeitoper,” 161.

<sup>36</sup>Alban BERG, “The ‘Problem of Opera,’” in *Pro Mundo-Pro Domo: The Writings of Alban Berg*, ed. by Bryan R. SIMMS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 216.



which is in fashion is already established and not representational of going any further. In other words, progress to Berg is determined by the unprecedented. However, he quickly disavows the entire argument of developing opera in favor of advocating the simple principle of making good theatrical music. This latter notion bears congruence with Brand, because he too sought to create good theater, albeit through progressive means.

The above sentiments are tied into the second part of Berg's article, which he called "Pro Domo," which includes one of his most famous admissions:

It never occurred to me to attempt to reform the art form of opera when composing *Wozzeck*. However little I intended this when I began to compose, I intended just as little that it should become a model for further operatic creations. . . I had nothing in mind about a technique of composition, nothing in mind at all except to give the theater what belongs to the theater, that is, to create music that *at every moment* fulfills its duty to serve the drama. Furthermore, to create music that provides everything that is needed to bring this drama to reality on stage. And all of this without risking the absolute (purely musical) justification for the existence of the music – without risking its own viability by extramusical obstacles.<sup>37</sup>

This passage is essential in understanding Berg's personal conviction towards operatic reform, or rather the inadvertent outcome of *Wozzeck* being a reformist piece. Regardless of what Berg intended or not, *Wozzeck* exerted a profound influence on other composers, and Brand can certainly be counted amongst those who benefited from knowing Berg's opera before setting out to write their own. However, Berg did express a Brandian ethos in saying that a notion of absolute music must remain applicable in his operatic structure, thereby agreeing with Brand that the stage must retain a referential homogeneity with the music, and indeed even to be informed by what is happening musically in the orchestra pit. The underlying impetus for both Berg and Brand is the same again, despite their slightly-conflicting methodology of implementation.

Berg continued by adding that: "It happened quite by itself that this [i.e. the composition of *Wozzeck*] was done using more or less *old musical forms* (cited as one of the most prominent of my alleged operatic reforms)."<sup>38</sup> He noted that such a formal design was unavoidable, and that the opera demanded it musically. Berg had gone on to use even older vocal forms in *Lulu* to craft his musical dramaturgy in that opera, and even Brand had appropriated earlier vestiges of operatic craft by calling the opening of *Hopkins* an overture, and including extended coloratura vocal passages to denote the Wagnerian love scene between his two lovers. Berg reiterated that the musical forms he used in *Wozzeck* were referential to absolute music. Although Brand's *Hopkins* did not specifically demarcate his orchestral interludes, postludes, and transitions as such, all of the opera's scenes included extended orchestral passages with no vocalization or stage action, signifying his own adherence to absolute musical forms that ultimately served the same purposes of cohesion that Berg intended his orchestral interludes between scenes to denote. Yet, towards the end of his article, Berg is once more inclined to repeat that his musical stylizations did not constitute an operatic reform, and must not be seen as such. It is Berg's prerogative to express this, but the result and reception of *Wozzeck* imply otherwise. These written documents serve as an example to illustrate that theoretical prose, however erudite and

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 217.



legitimate, only constitute one perspective. An artwork, conversely, is an abstract entity onto which varying and even conflicting views can be projected, thereby changing the overall narrative of meaning even if its own author attempts to direct that narrative.

One could argue that Berg's desire to quell suggestions that he reformed opera by composing *Wozzeck* was based on the first part of his article, where he derided the superficial inclusion of popular gimmicks. If he were to actually admit to being an operatic reformer, it would delegitimize his claim of being a linear inheritor and propagator of the German operatic tradition that is such an inherent element of *Wozzeck* and later *Lulu*. By claiming what he said, he is perhaps shrewdly distancing himself from the popular trends that he sees as both unnecessary and ultimately constituting a system that he himself would be unwilling to adopt. Therefore, his entire premise could be interpreted as an advocacy for his best interest, even though *Lulu* definitely had many vestiges of those popular trends that Berg had derided. Simply put, he had more to lose following the immense success of *Wozzeck* than someone like Brand did, who wrote his prose works as a completely unknown composer. Berg's position, despite its directness, is still murky, especially when one considers how much of an opportunist and careerist he was. Nevertheless, trying to extrapolate Berg's truest intentions is incidental to the explicit comparison between his and Brand's views on opera and the contemporary culture that bred those operas. This potential duplicitousness on Berg's part gains traction when considering Bryan Simms' assessment of Berg's above article when he says: "His use of quotation marks [denoting the title "The 'Problem of Opera'"], as always with Berg in such titles, is meant ironically to signify there was really no problem with opera and that the term itself was misleading."<sup>39</sup>

The concept of music drama, the reader will remember, was central to Brand in as much as it was the end result of his conflation of the mechanical moving stage, absolute music, and a detachment from human emotions. This was his vision of the new and reformed music drama. In a way, then, Brand also alluded to the Wagnerian lineage if he (Brand) was willing to simply reform a past paradigm that he clearly admired instead of reinventing the genre proper. Berg too was privy to Wagnerism, and discussed his own associations with music drama. He noted that: "To write entirely symphonic transitions or intermezzi would not have conformed to my idea of musical drama (which despite my respect for absolute music is never out of my mind when I compose for the theater)."<sup>40</sup> Later on, he added: "I admit that the transfer from the realm of absolute music to that of musical drama was intentional. We are in the theater, not a conservatory!"<sup>41</sup> From these brief passages, it is clear that Berg was, like Brand, motivated to create his stage works to conform with his image of music drama. This is less important in and of itself than it is as an indicator that brings Brand closer to Berg conceptually than to the other composers who were also famous for writing *Zeitoper*n, who in turn wished to entertain rather than enlighten. A music drama is anything but vapid entertainment, and the fact that it was so central to Berg and Brand to classify their operas with this structural Wagnerian implication is a defining characteristic of their view of opera as theater, and one that informed both of their motivational inclinations.

<sup>39</sup>See Bryan Simms' commentary on "The 'Problem of Opera,'" in SIMMS (ed.), *Pro Mundo–Pro Domo*, 291.

<sup>40</sup>Alban BERG, "Lecture on *Wozzeck*: The 'Atonal Opera,'" in SIMMS (ed.), *Pro Mundo–Pro Domo*, 235.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 241–242.



In terms of his attitudes towards *Zeitoper*, and more broadly towards *Neue Sachlichkeit*, Berg displayed an implicit ambivalence. Schoenberg was openly hostile to the style, but Berg enjoyed much more popularity as an opera composer than his former teacher, so he could not afford to oppose so overtly the trend that had captured the public's interest. Berg's pejorative jabs are subtle and sudden. In his well-known open letter to Schoenberg in 1925 where he discusses some (but not all) of the hidden symbolism in his *Chamber Concerto*, Berg at one point notes: "I have smuggled into these three movements the adherents of program music – if there are any left – would be delighted, and the [representatives and defenders of the 'New Classicism,' and 'New Objectivity,'] the 'linearists,' 'physiologists,' the 'contrapuntists,' and the 'formalists' would fall upon me in indignation at such 'romantic' tendencies – if I did not make them aware that they too, if they wanted to look, would have their hearts' desire."<sup>42</sup> In this passage, Berg is clearly expressing how he sees his music as standing antithetically to the proponents of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Simms concurs with Berg's divisive position, noting how "On one side were the modernists allied to Schoenberg, on the other side a diverse group of generally younger composers whom Berg earlier had identified disdainfully,"<sup>43</sup> when he referenced the above quote. In his famous 1930 "Lecture on *Wozzeck*: The 'Atonal Opera,'" Berg is at one point discussing a specific structural phenomenon in one of the opera's scenes, and then says: "A similar example of this sort of musical exploitation of material, this 'objectivity' – earlier applied to a specific note as object, here to a rhythm – arises also in the next scene. You see, this term 'objectivity' is older than the current buzzword!"<sup>44</sup> Once again, Berg is referencing his propensity for utilizing older musical forms, and he devalues the current application of the term "objectivity" by relegating it to the status of a passing fancy.

Another jab at *Neue Sachlichkeit* was made by Berg in his 1932 "Commemorative Address for Emil Hertzka." Berg's lecture did not constitute a standard eulogy for the deceased, but had rather taken a turn to describe the aesthetic state of the current times. In another tongue-in-cheek subtle display of disdain, Berg said: "I would not bring up this commonplace about the split between artist and salesman, between idealism and realism, if we today did not live in a time when it is perhaps no longer a commonplace, when nearly the opposite is taken as self-evident. The artist is the one who has to be 'objective' while the salesman is 'inspired.'"<sup>45</sup> Berg here clearly labels the New Objectivists condescendingly as salesmen, but notes that, based on the tastes of the time, they are the ones that are deemed as the profound artists, while the more-authentic artists have to conform just to be seen as what they truly are.

Berg's most overt declaration of his general disapproval of *Neue Sachlichkeit's* tenets was expressed in his 1929 response to a newspaper survey that asked the question, "Should Wagner Stagings be Modernized?" After noting his agreement with maintaining a perpetually innovative renewal of stage works, as both Wagner and Mahler condoned, he added: "But if you mean by

<sup>42</sup>Alban BERG, "Alban Berg's Chamber Concerto: An Open Letter," in SIMMS (ed.), *Pro Mundo–Pro Domo*, 198. The collection's editor, Bryan Simms, stated in a footnote that the bracketed text was probably added or approved by Berg after the article's publication.

<sup>43</sup>See Bryan Simms' commentary on "Committed Responses to a Noncommittal Survey," in SIMMS (ed.), *Pro Mundo–Pro Domo*, 283.

<sup>44</sup>BERG, "Lecture on *Wozzeck*," 255.

<sup>45</sup>Alban BERG, "Commemorative Address to Emil Hertzka," in SIMMS (ed.), *Pro Mundo–Pro Domo*, 265.



‘modernization’ to put on *Tristan und Isolde* as New Objectivity, and do *Siegfried* in white tie and tails, and *Die Meistersinger* – where the connections of verse and industry (it need not be just the shoe business) is easily maintained – as *Zeitoper*, then the answer to your question is *no*.”<sup>46</sup>

For Berg the subtle disapprovals that he expressed in his various quoted passages amount to a fundamental opposition of the style that operas like Brand’s *Hopkins* came to be known for. Despite many small similarities between Berg and Brand that pivoted around their joint belief that the music of an opera should be in the service of creating good theater (which was the ultimate desire for Brand, irrespective of his convoluted theories), the dividing point between them hinged on Berg’s view that he was perpetuating a specific operatic lineage that had strong ties to the past, whereas Brand wrote extensively of how he wished to be liberated from the past and to renew opera – a term that Berg vehemently denied in his own endeavors. However, despite what their prose indicates, their actual practice of operatic composition (and treatment of the libretto as will be seen with *Hopkins*) displayed a system that was far less strict than what was conveyed in prose. Indeed, as it will be plainly seen in the next section, Brand and Berg derived significant dramaturgical and musical ploys that resembled what the other had done already, again when looking at a linear progression of association between *Wozzeck*, *Hopkins*, and *Lulu*.

### 3. NARRATIVE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN MASCHINIST HOPKINS AND BERG’S OPERAS

After tracing the parallels that exist regarding Brand’s and Berg’s theoretical views on the nature of opera, this section will endeavor to investigate the fundamental similarities that followed a linear path of association between *Wozzeck*, *Maschinist Hopkins*, and finally *Lulu*. The similarities between *Hopkins* and *Lulu* are explicit, and, as we will see later, Berg was both familiar with and receptive to the qualities in *Hopkins* that made it a resounding success. However, there are several implicit characteristics in *Hopkins* that suggest trace elements of *Wozzeck* in the textual treatment of the libretto, the music, and other theatrical considerations. There are also well-documented instances of Wagnerian influences in Berg’s operas,<sup>47</sup> but Brand was certainly also uniquely predisposed to fundamental tenets that were initially to be found in Wagner’s music dramas. These include elements of metaphysical imagery; vestiges of the Expressionist cultural epoch; the use of a leitmotif system; their shared desire to revolutionize opera by presenting the genre in a new social idiom as expressed in their published prose; and most overtly, their shared distinction of writing both the libretto and music of their stage works. Indeed, Alexandra Monchick concurs with this last notion: “By writing his own libretto, which was uncommon but not unprecedented in the post-Wagnerian generation, Brand was able to carefully detail stage directions and set designs, akin to writing a screenplay.”<sup>48</sup> Berg’s own

<sup>46</sup>Alban BERG, “Should Wagner Stagings Be Modernized?,” in SIMMS (ed.), *Pro Mundo–Pro Domo*, 392.

<sup>47</sup>Vanja LJUBIBRATIĆ, “Wagnerian Aesthetics as Expressionist Foundations of Alban Berg’s Music and the Russian Silver Age,” *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 42/1 (2018), 24–53.

<sup>48</sup>Alexandra MONCHICK, “German Silent Film and the ‘Zeitoper’: The Case of Max Brand’s *Maschinist Hopkins*,” *German Life and Letters* 70/2 (April 2017), 211.





inclinations towards many of these notions characterize a three-part operatic congruence that constitutes a circle: *Wozzeck* started the trend of innovation that nevertheless looked back to Wagner,<sup>49</sup> *Hopkins* then built upon the groundwork that *Wozzeck* established, and then *Lulu*, with its combination of even older vocal forms in the configuration of the eighteenth-century number opera and twelve-tone harmony, simultaneously brought the operatic genre back full circle while perpetuating its innovative foresight. Therefore, an analysis that primarily focuses on *Hopkins*' libretto will be conducted to demonstrate how, depending on the instance, these constituent elements of Brand's opera either look back to *Wozzeck* or forward to *Lulu*.<sup>50</sup> The only other previous study that compared Berg and Brand in any capacity was Clive Bennett's short and trivial comparison of *Hopkins* and *Lulu*, citing similarities and influences that Brand's opera could have had on *Lulu*. These depictions are few, and Bennett does not make any mention of *Wozzeck* or the inverse influence that Berg's first opera had on certain elements in *Hopkins*. Bennett's work is, nevertheless, an important introductory study of at least two of the operas that the present study is investigating.

Similarly to *Wozzeck*'s 15 distinct scenes, *Hopkins* incorporates 12 scenes throughout its three-act structure, referring to them as *Bilder* (pictures or images). There is a heightened sense of cohesion and development between these scenes, as Brand numbers them in order from 1 to 12, rather than reverting back to one at the start of each new act. However, *Hopkins* opens with a prelude that bears a striking resemblance to the Prologue in *Lulu*. Indeed, both the opening sections in the latter two operas take place before the events that open act 1 (although *Lulu*'s Prologue occurs completely out of the opera's linear time as it directly addresses the audience). Curiously, though, the *Hopkins* prelude consists of two independent, yet related scenes. Just as in the *Lulu* Prologue, these two scenes introduce motivic elements of the narrative, and set up the defining tones of their respective operas like proper historical overtures, denoting the theatrical sensitivity to tradition that Brand and Berg were both consciously looking to preserve, yet expand. This theatrical sensitivity is also inherent through both composers' detailed use of stage directions. The opening directions in both operas briefly refer to the curtain – a phenomenon that will be discussed in detail later – while describing what is visible on the stage. Brand's description, however, is far more extensive, and describes the actions of the protagonist Bill, as well as the buildings around him (including the introduction of the significant “Bondy's Bar”), the weather, and the introduction of the opera's heroine, who is presented not by name but by her physical features, most strikingly her blond hair, which is the first instance of a thematic and objectifying reference to her character.<sup>51</sup> This opening direction also sets up thematic depictions of Bill, as it describes him as someone who “sneaks quickly and decisively.”<sup>52</sup> There is a symmetry to the character *Wozzeck* here, who also moves around quickly, to the annoyance of the

<sup>49</sup>Douglas Jarman noted that “The novelty of *Wozzeck* lies in its use of such specifically ‘instrumental’ forms in a work that adheres to the aesthetic and employs the continuous musical flow and the leading-motive technique of the Wagnerian music drama.” Douglas JARMAN, *The Music of Alban Berg* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 194.

<sup>50</sup>Frank Mehring noted that “Brand's libretto features a mixture of crime and passion, high tech fantasies, and social issues like the conflict of capital and labor.” MEHRING, “Technology in *Zeitopern*,” 160.

<sup>51</sup>Max BRAND, *Machinist Hopkins: Oper in Einem Vorspiel und Drei Akten (12 Bildern)* [German Libretto] (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1928), 5.

<sup>52</sup>“schleicht rasch und entschlossen.” Ibid.



Captain, whose famous opening lines and motivic message urge him to go slowly: “Langsam, Wozzeck, langsam!” The heroine in *Hopkins*, Nell, is introduced as a “motionless” and “absent”<sup>53</sup> individual, who is the physical antithesis of the fast-moving Bill. This dynamic between them is instantly presented, as he tells her to hurry up (“Beeile dich”). Two other important thematic features are presented in this initial exchange: Nell’s first iteration (the first of many) of “What do you want from me?” and the moral/physical strength that Bill draws from the light, when he says: “Out of this darkness. In light! In joy! There is life there!”<sup>54</sup> Bill’s obsession with light presents him as an anti-Tristan, who consistently sought the darkness/night as metaphysical salvation from the oppression of the light. As we will see, Bill is no Wagnerian hero, so this antithetical characteristic warrants noticing.

In the second half of the opening scene, Bill further expresses his beliefs by railing against the proletarian values of Nell’s husband Jim and his ilk, ultimately accusing them of being afraid, while saying of himself: “But I’m not afraid. I know that happiness and joy – that life – can only be found where courage and strength spare no means.”<sup>55</sup> This depicts how Bill rebels against the accepted values and paradigms much like *Wozzeck*, in the sense that they both feel out of place and perhaps exploited. It is a disillusionment that prompts them both to resort to crime when they feel they have no other choice, where conformity has done nothing for them. Incidentally, by using names such as Bill, Nell, and Jim, Brand observes the *Zeitoper* characteristic of promoting Americanisms in his opera. It is at this time that Bill suggests to Nell that they should rob the machine factory where Jim is the foreman, and that with the key that Nell provides “turn off every chime with a turn.”<sup>56</sup> This last line stands as the first allusion to Bill’s desire to silence machines, and from an understanding of the opera’s narrative evolution it can be argued that this early expression signified Bill’s ultimate fatal mistake. When Nell expresses misgivings, Bill exhibits his motivic rushing nature, bordering on naïve irresponsibility, by saying: “Yes, Nell! Just quickly, just don’t waste time!”<sup>57</sup> Once again, this text represents a temporal implication that is strongly indicative of the opposing values of *Wozzeck*’s Captain.<sup>58</sup>

Scene 2 of the prelude is of critical importance for a variety of reasons. The scene opens with a description of the machine hall (factory) at night, when the huge machines appear like “fantastic mythical creatures;” and “Every now and then, a smooth metal part flashes naked, like a malicious eye.”<sup>59</sup> This stage description introduced the motivic representation of the machines as fantastical, and also personifies them with humanistic traits, thus obscuring the notion of what is man and what is machine. This phenomenon of personifying machines in *Hopkins* bears

<sup>53</sup>“unbeweglich”; “abwesend.” Ibid., 6.

<sup>54</sup>“Was willst du von mir?”; “Heraus aus diesem Dunkel. In Licht! In Freude! Es gibt ein Leben!” Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>“Doch ich habe keine Angst. Ich weiß, daß Glück und Freude, daß Leben nur dort zu finden ist, wo Mut und Kraft kein Mittel scheut.” Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>“... stellt mit einer Drehung jedes Läutewerk mir ab.” Ibid., 7.

<sup>57</sup>“Ja, Nell! Nur rasch, nur keine Zeit verlieren!” Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Vanja LJUBIBRATIĆ, “‘A soul, rubbing the sleep from its eyes in the next world’: Dramaturgical Aspects of Metaphysical Temporality in the Libretti of Alban Berg’s Operas,” *Musicologica Austriaca – Journal for Austrian Music Studies* (September 7, 2019), 1–43.

<sup>59</sup>“... phantastische Fabelwesen;” “Hie und da blinkt ein glatter Metallteil nackt, wie ein bösariges Auge, auf.” BRAND, *Machinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 8.



a similarity to the way in which the Animal Tamer personified animals as people in the Prologue of *Lulu*. Both composers, therefore, utilize this ploy in the sections that precede their operas proper. The obfuscation of man and machine in *Hopkins* will signify greater implications when Hopkins himself is introduced and portrayed. The description also suggests that the machines are evil and see everything. This notion is confirmed when the machines start chanting to each other (in *Sprechstimme*), expressing their unhappiness and disdain with personified text, such as: “Captive power, enslaved mind, frozen to form, hard in iron, must gather, gather; Oil! Oil! Our hard limbs cooling, soft oil; In vain to want to escape this great force that whips us forward every day.”<sup>60</sup> When they sense that humans are approaching, the machines invoke the night/day motif by exclaiming: “It’s night; the day is done.”<sup>61</sup> This realization gives way to hostility and hatred when they chant: “Awake! Kill! Mash! Kick!”<sup>62</sup> These expressions of violence defy the general tenets of *Zeitoper*’s light and comedic stylizations. However, the propensity for violence and murder is quite Bergian. Furthermore, by calling the machines “fantastic mythical creatures,” Mehring notes that “Brand’s goal of liberating opera from Romantic conventions and of overcoming the stifling influence of Wagner’s mythological, monumental works thus runs the risk of exchanging one myth for another. Instead of mysterious caves, dragons, and romanticized heroes, fantastic factory floors, gigantic machines, and larger than life machinists confront the audience.”<sup>63</sup> Once again, Brand’s dramaturgical approach evokes implicit Wagnerian models: Like his predecessor, Brand created his own operatic gods, which he presents with flawed humanistic traits, while giving them great power over mankind.

Bill and Nell enter the factory, preparing to commit their robbery, and Nell is the first to notice the machines, describing them as: “Ghosts! Monsters look at me. What is it?” At this point the stage direction reads: “She points to a mechanical arm stretched out like a grasping hand.”<sup>64</sup> The significance of the machines’ personification is to symbolize the damning foreshadowing of the protagonists who encounter them, and the destructive intent that the machines harbor towards those who wish to use and exploit them rather than be humbled by them. The machines realize a possible advantage when they whisper: “You are afraid. You are afraid.” And later: “Do you hear? Your courage is dead at night!”<sup>65</sup> Nell’s temporal sensitivity senses these threats, and she utters: “Something terrible will happen tonight!”<sup>66</sup> Her premonition goes unheeded as Bill only continues to rush the proceedings with single-minded determination and obliviousness. Nell shares with *Wozzeck* these traits of a temporal foreboding where no one else notices what both characters feel metaphysically. These characters do not solely react to what is being experienced in the present, but infer their assumptions as a temporal predetermination of the future. Nell reiterates her grave misgivings by ascribing ominous personification and saying:

<sup>60</sup>“Gefang’ne Kraft, Versklavter Geist, Zu Form erstarrt, In Eisen hart, Muß rafften, rafften; Öl! Öl! Uns’rer harten Glieder Kühlung, Weiches Öl; Vergeblich, dieser tollen Kraft entrinnen wollen, Die uns täglich vorwärtspeitscht.” Ibid., 8–9.

<sup>61</sup>“Nacht ist; Tag fern.” Ibid., 9–10.

<sup>62</sup>“Erwachtet! Tötet! Stampfet! Tretet!” Ibid., 10.

<sup>63</sup>MEHRING, “Technology in *Zeitopern*,” 171.

<sup>64</sup>“Gespenster! Ungeheuer Sehen mich an; Sie zeigt auf einen, wie eine greifende Hand ausgestreckten Maschinenarm.” BRAND, *Machinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 10.

<sup>65</sup>“Sie fürchten sich. Sie fürchten sich;” “Hört ihr? Ihr Mut ist tot bei Nacht!” Ibid., 11.

<sup>66</sup>“Es wird was Furchtbares geschehen diese Nacht!” Ibid.



“How they whisper, threaten, whisper! (Points to the machines.); (in the greatest fear) Terrible things will happen! They take us!”<sup>67</sup>

In the ensuing moments, Jim appears, confronting Bill and Nell, which leads to the two men fighting in the factory. An interplay of light/dark imagery is infused to signify the power that this dichotomy holds in various applications, this time when Bill and Nell try to hide in the darkness, but since this is not their natural element, they are instead captured by the light of Jim’s lantern, “whose narrow beam of light relentlessly illuminates the two,”<sup>68</sup> as the stage direction reads, and then continues: “They linger for a moment, then try to escape from the pursuing light.”<sup>69</sup> Similarly to the murder scene in *Wozzeck*, a knife is wielded in this scene by Jim, who stabs Bill but does not kill him – only leaving behind a physical trace of the night’s events. In the next moment, a hysterical Nell searches in the dark for some way to help, and then the direction reads: “Collapsing, she unconsciously pressed the main switch with her hand.”<sup>70</sup> This moment is replete with meaning: Nell’s unconscious action implies that it was not her choice to set in motion the action that ended up killing Jim when she pressed the main switch, but that it was a compelling manifestation of the machines’ desire to kill as they chanted previously. Furthermore, the important distinction that the main switch is what caused Jim’s death will be crucial when the actions of Bill’s own death occur at the end of the opera. And as the machines come to life upon Nell’s unknowing initiative, the stage directions read: “At the same moment the machines start to move, the invisible voices are heard again.”<sup>71</sup> Once more they begin chanting of death as the flywheel grinds up Jim’s body. At this moment, Bill, “in a toneless voice” (“mit tonloser Stimme”) utters “dead” (“tot”), in a similarly bland and emotionless way that *Wozzeck* utters the same word when he realizes that Marie is dead. In a symbolically palindromic repeat of Jim’s introduction at the opening of the opera, his text, which closes this scene and the prelude, now reads: “Come on, we have to get out of here quickly. It’s getting light.”<sup>72</sup> This line represents Bill’s need to do everything quickly, again like *Wozzeck*, and also emphasizes the light motif. The palindromic quality of quickness at the start and end of the prelude is reminiscent of the first and last words of the opening scene of *Wozzeck*, “langsam” uttered by the Captain.

The first act opens five years after the events of the prelude. Bill is a successful businessman, and scene 3 is laden with *Zeitoper* mechanical imagery of electric lights, telephones, and dashboards. There is also a business-related dialogue between Bill and his secretary that is reminiscent of the banking business dialogue in the opening scene of act 3 in *Lulu*. It is a signification of the contemporary lifestyle, and creates another narrative association between Brand’s and Berg’s operas. This connection is further established when Bill is discussing the stock market and the stocks associated with the factory in which Jim was killed. These were the same concerns which the analogous scene in *Lulu* dealt with. However, the scene in *Hopkins* has

<sup>67</sup>“Wie sie raunen, drohen, flüstern! (Weist auf die Maschinen.);” “(in höchster Angst) Fürchterliches wird geschehen! Sie fassen uns!” Ibid., 11–12.

<sup>68</sup>“... deren schmaler Lichtkegel unbarmherzig die beiden beleuchtet.” Ibid., 13.

<sup>69</sup>“Sie verweilen einen Augenblick starr, wollen dann aus dem sie verfolgenden Licht flüchten.” Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>“Zusammensinkend hat sie unbewußt mit ihrer Hand den Hauptschalter niedergedrückt.” Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>“Im selben Augenblick, in dem sich die Maschinen in Bewegung setzen, werden die unsichtbaren Stimmen wieder laut.” Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>“Komm, wir müssen rasch weg von hier. Es wird hell.” Ibid., 14.



a decidedly more proletarian emphasis, as the unrest that ensues from Bill's greed and fear is the motivation that perpetuates Hopkins' desire for retribution.

The entrance of Hopkins in scene 3 establishes a plethora of symbolic subtleties that will recur throughout the opera as his character is developed. When Bill is told that a worker's intermediary wishes to speak with him, and that he is a machinist, Bill is instantly drawn back into his tortured psyche that resulted from the events of the prelude when he exclaims: "Oh! the fear, the haste that whips forward. The Thousand-headed monster reaches for me and wants to pull me back! I do not want it! I do not want it! There are no ghosts!"<sup>73</sup> This text is reminiscent of what Nell described when she and Jim were in the presence of the machines, and acts as a reminder of her prophetic foreshadowing, and its ultimate inevitability. When Hopkins appears, he is portrayed as an imposing figure who always moves slowly, and when Bill invites him to sit, Hopkins replies: "Better to stand" ("Stehe lieber"). These initial moments display Hopkins as the antithesis of Bill: they move at different speeds, and this is the first instance of Hopkins insisting on always standing as a representation of both his enslavement by the machines (as will be elucidated later) and of his machine-like personal credo of constantly working and never resting. This emphasis on behavioral opposites is similar to the character interactions in *Wozzeck*, where the Captain and Doctor are constantly parodied through harmless maliciousness as antithetical beings. In *Hopkins*, this phenomenon between Bill and Hopkins has a more sinister connotation in signifying how their opposition will battle to the death, which will ultimately lead to their final and fatal confrontation at the end of the opera. Their initial meeting, however, turns ominous rather quickly as Hopkins wastes no time in expressing his disdain for Bill and his morality that stands against the interests of the workers. Hopkins issues a nebulous warning, followed by a poetical and somewhat prophetic accusation that Bill does not comprehend when he (Hopkins) explains: "the power of work, the power of machines, the power that keeps everything moving in order to abuse it for one's own benefit!"<sup>74</sup> Bill angrily expels Hopkins from his office, just as Nell enters. Hopkins and Nell exchange glances, and when Nell and Bill are alone, she utters to herself that "he looked at me as if he wanted to tear everything away from me."<sup>75</sup> This is precisely what Hopkins ends up doing to her. Bill then tells Nell of his plans to acquire the factory where Jim was killed in order to expunge any trace of their illegal past on the premises. Nell is not convinced and expresses her fear, but then supplants these misgivings with her Lulu-like desire to be a dancer after an exploitative-type financier expresses interest in her. She tells Bill, in a moment also reminiscent of *Lulu*, of her desire to "go up there. I want everyone to admire me, want to show myself to everyone, everyone."<sup>76</sup> Although Bill initially expresses misgivings about Nell's desires, she entices him to submit, and he seems powerless to resist, much like all the characters in Lulu's periphery who succumb to her feminine powers of suggestion.

<sup>73</sup>"Oh! die Angst, die Hast, die vorwärtspeitscht. Tausendköpfig Ungeheuer greift nach mir und will zurück zu sich mich ziehen! Ich will nicht! Ich will nicht! Gespenster gibt es nicht!" Ibid., 17.

<sup>74</sup>"... die Kraft der Arbeit, die Kraft der Maschinen, die Kraft, die alles in Bewegung hält, um eigenen Vorteils willen zu mißbrauchen!" Ibid., 18.

<sup>75</sup>"Er sah mich an, als ob er mir alles vom Leibe reißen wollte." Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>"... möchte da hinauf. Ich will, daß alle mich bewundern, will mich zeigen, allen, allen." Ibid., 19.



In the fifth and final scene of act 1, the scene direction reads: “Wide terrace stairs. Night. Round horizon. One imagines a garden. Nell lies on the steps flooded with moonlight. Bill is somehow beside her and bending over her.”<sup>77</sup> What ensues is a highly-sensual love duet that is reminiscent of the equivalent scene in *Tristan und Isolde* act 2, scene 2, which also takes places in a garden, at night, and between lovers. The events of this scene in Wagner’s drama constitute his most explicit metaphysical depiction excluding that in *Parsifal*. In essence, the lovers sing of transcending the empirical enslavement of the daylight, and embracing the nightly realm of death and the eternity of the metaphysical to live forever in love. In *Hopkins*, this scene is virtually inexplicable in the imagery that it presents in the context of the wider narrative. It once again demonstrates how Brand’s opera is a veritable hodgepodge of symbolism that creates these fleeting moments of music drama in *Hopkins* that once again bears an association with Wagner and Berg more than with the connotations of the *Zeitoper*. Nell’s opening line in this scene reads: “Silence, silence. Only the rush of our blood. I see, beloved, the stars of heaven shine around your head and sink, drink me into yourself. . .”<sup>78</sup> Bill replies with: “Silence, silence, I see only the throbbing of your heart and the stars shining in your eyes, the entire sky shines with stars, and I drink your lips’ sweet fragrance. . .”<sup>79</sup> In Wagnerian rapture, they repeat elements of these statements, while the direction stipulates that a chorus sings: “from far away, with closed lips,”<sup>80</sup> which could be seen as the analogous allusion to Brangäne, who is present at a distance, and interjects empirical warnings to the lovers. So too could this wordless chorus in *Hopkins* exist to similarly keep one foot anchored in reality for the oblivious lovers. Nell’s next line reads: “Do you hear? Now she begins to give her songs to us: blossoms of wondrous gardens, which send their fragrance to us from afar, heralding the consent of all the world’s love.”<sup>81</sup> This expression reflects Isolde’s *Liebstod* where she asks “don’t you see?” before describing living images of the dead Tristan. In this instance, both Nell and Isolde are singing metaphysics as representational of a temporal suspension where a character is taken out of the linear narrative of time, and portrayed in a quasi-metaphysical state where he/she is no longer affected by the empirical rules of time and is able to see these other-worldly images. This is a device that both Wagner and Berg used to great effect and that Brand is now employing to depict a depth of love that only a composer who creates for philosophical theatricality and not for superficial artifice can conjure. Indeed, Berg was highly privy to *Tristan*-related imagery in his operas, as well as in his love letters to Hanna Fuchs. At the height of their ecstasy, Bill and Nell sing together – the first and last instance of identical and simultaneous textual symmetry – like Tristan and Isolde, exclaiming as one: “Love! You are love. You the desire and you the fulfillment. You the light and you the night. You are flower, leaf, and Earth, stars, you, sun, moon. You the power, the limitless

<sup>77</sup>“Breite Terrassentreppe. Nacht. Rundhorizont. Man ahnt einen Garten. Auf den, von Mondlicht überfluteten Stufen liegt Nell. Neben ihr und etwas über sie gebeugt Bill.” Ibid., 22.

<sup>78</sup>“Stille, Schweigen. Nur das Rauschen Unsres Blutes. Ich sehe, Geliebter, Um dein Haupt Des Himmels Sterne strahlen Und sinke, trinke, Mich in dich. . .” Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>“Stille, Schweigen, Nur das Pochen Deines Herzens Ich sehe in deinen Augen aller Himmel Sterne strahlen Und trinke deiner Lippen Süßen Duft. . .” Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>“aus weiter Ferne, mit geschlossenen Lippen.” Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>“Hörst du? Nun beginnt sie, ihre Lieder uns zu schenken: Blüten wundersamer Gärten, Die von weiter Ferne ihren Duft uns senden, Kündend Einverständnis aller Welten Liebe.” Ibid.



space, the distance, and you, only you, I am and I am you.”<sup>82</sup> This passage cannot be more Wagnerian in scope, denoting every essence of Schopenhauerian metaphysical philosophy that Wagner embraced and used to depict his idealization of love. The dichotomies of light and dark are unequivocally Tristanesque, and the concept of limitless space is irrefutably the metaphysical realm above space and time. Bill and Nell also sing “I am and I am you,” just as Isolde tells Tristan “You Isolde and I Tristan,” and Tristan replies “You Tristan and I Isolde.” This moment is purely Wagnerian, but when one considers what it will yield between Bill and Nell, it will morph into pure Bergian chaos, hopelessness, and agony. And just like the following scene in *Tristan*, the very next scene in *Hopkins* breaks the metaphysical illusion abruptly in an anti-theatrical return to reality, where both Wagner’s and Brand’s operas make explicitly clear that it is now day, and with it, a return to the empirical world. Indeed, Michael Heinemann noted how the esteemed critic Alfred Einstein called the dodecaphonic music of this scene “Tristanizing” (“tristanisierend”).<sup>83</sup>

Act 2 of *Hopkins* opens in the factory with Hopkins directing the machines and workers who, like Hopkins, are noted in the scene direction to be standing. This scene is reminiscent of *Parsifal*, whose first act also ended in metaphysical splendor and solemnity, only to have the second act open to a wild flurry of the evil sorcerer Klingsor’s opposing realm of seduction and corruption, depicting him as the puppeteer of insidious intentions. Like Klingsor in his own realm of the factory, presiding over proceedings, Hopkins stands at the main switch – the root of the machine’s power. The workers chant: “No rest, no rest” and “a whole life without rest.”<sup>84</sup> Hopkins appears here like a conductor-priest among the machines and machine-like people, controlling every element of production and existence. This priest-like imagery of near-religious dogmatic fervor will be made even more symbolically explicit in the opera’s final scene.

Scene 7 opens with Nell in a position reminiscent of Marie in *Wozzeck*. Indeed, act 2, scene 1 opens with Marie gazing at herself in a broken piece of mirror, reflecting on her social standing in life, while act 3, scene 1 opens with Marie reading pages from the Bible to her son, reflecting on her adulterous guilt in an abstract representation. Similarly, Nell is reflecting on how “Mirrors are mysterious things. You see yourself inside and you don’t feel. It is as if strange images are facing each other, which have strangely familiar, embarrassing features. This comes from the fact that everything you carry inside remains hidden. And that’s good. Oh that is good! It would be terrible if one had to carry on the outside what tears one apart inside. What bores and torments in unspeakable desire are things that are without a name. Have I not achieved everything I ever dreamed of in unimaginable fulfillment? Am I not separated from the others, soaring to the highest heights? But heights are depths and depths

<sup>82</sup>“Liebe! Du bist Liebe. Du der Wunsch Und du Erfüllung. Du das Licht Und du die Nacht. Du bist Blume, Blatt und Erde, Sterne, du, Sonne, Mond. Du die Kraft, Der grenzenlose Raum, Die Ferne, Und du, nur du, bist ich Und ich bin du.” Ibid., 22–23.

<sup>83</sup>Michael HEINEMANN, “Mythische Maschinen. Zu Max Brands *Maschinist Hopkins*,” in “*Wohin geht der Flug? Zur Jugend*”: Franz Schreker und seine Schüler in Berlin, ed. by Markus BÖGGEMANN und Dietmar SCHENK (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2009), 66.

<sup>84</sup>“Keine Ruhe, keine Rast.” “Ganzes Leben ohne Ruh.” BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 24–25.



are heights for those who burn inside.”<sup>85</sup> This passage depicts the inner conflict and guilt that Nell shares with Marie through introspective and abstract reflection. It adds a dimension to her character that tempts the observer to perhaps even view her situation with sympathy. Berg contrived the same character depiction with Marie and, like Marie, Nell will not find redemption from her guilt, but a horrifying demise at the hands of the man she loved, or at the very least the man she trusted not to kill her. Moments later, an abstract reverie is again broken by the entry of Hopkins. It has become symptomatic to vary these emotional moments, that are rather indicative of humanistic feelings, with the cold, mechanical, remorselessly-logical purview of Hopkins, who represents a dichotomy of humanistic expressions. This notion will be made even more overt in the third act, as Brand widens this dichotomy even further as the opera develops, ultimately yielding the final, inevitable conflict. But now, when Hopkins appears, the stage direction reads that Nell first realizes his presence when she sees him in her mirror. This is somehow poetic, as she just noted how mirrors reveal things that you see and do not feel, and Hopkins is as unfeeling as anyone can get. What ensues in the rest of the scene is Hopkins revealing to Nell that he knows about Jim, and that he intends to blackmail her if she does not comply with his wishes. He tells her: “From now on you will follow the light.”<sup>86</sup> This moment is significant because it constitutes a paradigm shift for Nell. Her *Tristan*-like metaphysical nocturnal world is to be supplanted with Hopkins’ light, which signifies her change in fortune and her perpetual decline. This is reminiscent of the great palindrome in act 2 of *Lulu* during the film music interlude that represents Lulu’s complete reversal of good fortune, and depicts her control by others and likewise perpetual decline resulting in her murder. After further subjugating Nell, Hopkins exclaims: “Now you are mine! All mine! Do you hear?”<sup>87</sup> This sadistic decree can be seen as a motivic representation of man’s possessiveness of women. This is similar to how the Drum Major breaks Marie’s will and essentially deems her to be his property, and how the various pimps and social dregs also end up feeling entitled to own Lulu. Whether or not these three women deserved their fate is inconsequential to the narrative arc that Brand and Berg construct to signify this elaborate reversal of social standing that acts as a circular structure, which was certainly of prime importance to Berg. The final scene of *Hopkins* will demonstrate how Brand chose to close his narrative and temporal circle.

Scene 8 is significant for two reasons. First, it depicts Nell, again like Lulu (and in some ways like Marie), amidst her social and moral decline. Nell is dancing, and is being manipulated by the director and conductor who praise her, but in an exploitative way that also sexually objectifies Nell via their libido, like the Marquis and Athlete look to do to Lulu. There is further congruence here as none of these greedy, despicable, sexually-predatory characters in *Hopkins*

<sup>85</sup>“Spiegel sind geheimnisvolle Dinge. Man sieht sich darinnen und fühlt sich nicht. Es ist, als ob ein fremdes Bild entgegensähe, das seltsam bekannte, peinliche Züge trägt. Das kommt davon, daß alles, was in sich man trägt, verborgen bleibt. Und das ist gut so. Oh, das ist gut! Es wäre fürchterlich, wenn man nach außen tragen müßte, was mich im Innersten zerpfückt. Was wühlt und quält in unaussprechlichem Verlangen, nach Dingen, die ohne Namen sind. Hab’ ich nicht alles, was ich je erträumte, in ungeahnter Erfüllung erreicht? Bin ich nicht auserwählt vor den anderen, emporgeschnellt zu höchsten Höh’n? Doch Höhen sind Tiefen und Tiefen sind Höh’n für die, die innerlich verbrennen.” Ibid., 29.

<sup>86</sup>“Von nun an werden Sie dem Lichte folgen.” Ibid., 30.

<sup>87</sup>“Nun bist du mein! Ganz mein! Hörst du?” Ibid., 31.





and *Lulu* who seek to control the central women has a name, but is only referred to by his/her vocation. The connection to Marie is more implicit in the way that the director and conductor refer to Nell as “A devil woman” (“Ein Teufelsweib!”) by the conductor and in confirmation “A veritable devil woman” (“Ein veritables Teufelsweib!”) by the director. When the Drum Major was at first trying to seduce the resisting Marie, he referred to her as having the devil in her eyes. This represents yet another example of the sordid, male-dominated depiction of show business that both Brand and Berg subjected their female protagonists to. The second significant moment of this scene is the rising tension between Hopkins and Bill, when the former informs the latter that he knows about Bill’s involvement with Jim’s death and the scar he bears from that event, thereby extending his agenda of blackmail now to Bill as well. The event of Bill’s weakening is first symbolically portrayed in Brand’s libretto in the stage direction that reads: “The light suddenly becomes weaker and weaker, as if it were switched off until it is almost completely dark.”<sup>88</sup> In an acknowledgment of his seemingly-doomed fate, Bill replies to the fireman who comments on all the lights being off, by saying: “Yes, it is dark. And no light shines anymore.”<sup>89</sup> With this demoralized admission, the curtain falls on act 2 with Hopkins now having the upper hand over both Bill and Nell, who are seemingly becoming enveloped by the darkness of the machine world with the absence of the protective light.

By the start of act 3 in scene 9, one year has elapsed from the end of act 2. Nell is shown to be entirely subjugated by Hopkins, and pathetically accuses him of abandoning her when she has given up everything for him. This is not elaborated, but it presumably refers to her rupture with Bill and even further personal decline. In a symbolic exchange of dialogue, Nell says: “I know you abused me! Commonly abused for your horrific plans! Only, – only, – it is only a trivial matter, hardly worth mentioning, isn’t it? – that I am going down with you and yet I’m forged to you! Now you send me away, leave me alone! Oh what are you? Are you an animal, a terrible animal? No, no, no animal is so hard, so pitiless. You are iron, as cold and rigid as iron. Yes!”<sup>90</sup> The mechanical imagery of Nell first asserting that she is forged to Hopkins, and then using a simile to accuse him of being cold, rigid, and like iron, is significant in tracing the dissipation of any humanity that Hopkins might have had, and depicting him as purely a machine. Hopkins does not deny any of this, and rather poeticizes his position, noting that: “You may be right. I only love iron. I only serve the machine. The creative spirit that I have to follow works in it. Don’t you understand that I have to go my way alone and carefree now?”<sup>91</sup> Here Hopkins is like Wagner’s character Alberich from *The Ring*: He forsakes love (or his humanity) for power. Michael Heinemann concurs, stating that “Grasping criminal activities forbids him the same work ethic that makes it impossible for him to enjoy love.”<sup>92</sup> He may express being enslaved, to

<sup>88</sup>“Das Licht wird ruckweise immer schwächer, so, als ob es abgeschaltet würde, bis es fast ganz dunkel wird.” Ibid., 35.

<sup>89</sup>“Ja, es ist dunkel. Und kein Licht leuchtet mehr.” Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>“Ich weiß, daß du mich mißbraucht hast! Gemein mißbraucht zu deinen entsetzlichen Plänen! Nur, – nur, – es ist ja nur eine Kleinigkeit, kaum der Rede wert, nicht wahr? – daß ich mit untergehe und doch geschmiedet bin an dich! Jetzt schickst du mich fort, läßt mich allein! Oh, was bist du? Bist du ein Tier, ein fürchterliches Tier? Nein, nein, so hart, so mitleidlos ist kein Tier. Du bist Eisen, so kalt und starr wie Eisen. Ja!” Ibid., 37.

<sup>91</sup>“Mag sein, daß du Recht hast. Nur Eisen liebe ich. Nur der Maschine diene ich. In ihr wirkt der schaffende Geist, dem ich folgen muß. Begreifst du nicht, daß ich allein und unbeschwert meinen Weg nun gehen muß?” Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>“Zu kriminellen Machenschaften zu greifen verbietet ihm dasselbe Arbeitsethos, das ihm den Genuss auch der Liebe nicht möglich macht.” HEINEMANN, “Mythische Maschinen,” 69.



the extent that he cannot willingly deviate from his path but, as the final “temple” scene of *Hopkins* indicates, he rapturously enjoys his role as master of the machines/workers as their conductor. His admission also shows Nell that there is no further reasoning with Hopkins as if he was a human. All attempts to appeal to his humanity are futile, only robbing her of some redemptive hope even further. She does, however, make one last vain attempt by telling Hopkins to “do what you want with me,” (“Tu’ mit mir, was du willst”), as long as he does not abandon her. The pleas fall on deaf ears.

The last three scenes of *Hopkins*, starting with scene 10, bear many similarities to the final three scenes of *Wozzeck*. The most significant one is the respective first scene in both operas. They both open in a tavern: in *Hopkins*, this is a return to “Bondy’s Bar,” and in *Wozzeck*, it is also a return to his tavern. The most important detail in this scene in both operas is the presence of the out-of-tune upright piano, playing diegetic music on stage in both instances. This was an explicitly focal feature in the tavern scenes of *Wozzeck*, so for Brand to use the same effect in *Hopkins*’ bar scenes instantly invites comparison. Bill is drinking schnapps at the bar, which was the drink of choice in *Lulu*, culminating in the well-known line from one of Lulu’s clients in the final scene who exclaims that “schnapps is good.” While drinking, Bill is listening to a girl sing, and it is made known in her lyrics that she is 15 years old. This is symmetrical with the 15-year-old girl who is present in act 3, scene 1 of *Lulu*, for whom Berg had raised her age of 12, as Wedekind originally had her, by three years. Other implicit similarities are revealed: In *Wozzeck*, in the tavern scene of act 2, scene 4, one of the apprentices sings: “The whole wide world is rosy red,” while in this scene in *Hopkins*, the bar chorus sings: “The beautiful world is colorful” (“Die schöne Welt ist bunt”). The 15-year-old girl also sings of a boy who just graduated from school, which is reminiscent of the schoolboy who was one of Lulu’s adoring followers. As the scene develops in *Hopkins*, random men in the bar begin boasting of one particular woman’s skill at prostitution and her physical charms, and who ends up being named as Nell within Bill’s earshot. This instantly invokes a jealous rage within him, an emotion similar to how *Wozzeck* felt with Marie and Alwa with Lulu. As *Wozzeck* had at various times cried “Marie! Marie!” in simultaneous expressions of longing, grief, disappointment, and pain, so too does Bill exclaim “Nell! Nell!” at this emotionally-tumultuous moment. As Bill exits, Hopkins enters – they had avoided bumping into each other – and triumphantly shares the success that his blackmail has procured with the reopening of the factory: “All the wheels are starting to spin! All the machines are starting up again!”<sup>93</sup> The chorus echoes Hopkins’ words, signifying the gradual evolution of humans-to-machines, and the nearly-complete mastery over the human Bill, and in turn, Nell.

The first suggestion of a temporal circle being closed, and possibly signifying a repeat in *Hopkins* like the one that is strongly implied in *Wozzeck*, is made in scene 11 – the opera’s penultimate scene – in the opening scene direction: “Alley as in scene 1. It is night. The door of Bondy’s Bar opens. Bill rushes out. One can hear a roaring laugh from the bar as long as the door is open. Bill stops for a moment and looks desperately around on all sides. Hopeless grief fills him. Bitter remembrance of days gone by, past wanting.”<sup>94</sup> The significance of reiterating

<sup>93</sup>“Alle Räder beginnen sich zu dreh’n! Alle Maschinen wieder zu geh’n!” BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 41.

<sup>94</sup>“Gasse wie im 1. Bild. Es ist Nacht. Die Tür von Bondys Bar öffnet sich. Bill stürzt heraus. Aus der Bar hört man, so lange die Türe offen ist, dröhnendes Lachen. Einen Augenblick bleibt Bill stehen und sieht sich verzweiflungsvoll nach allen Seiten um. Hoffnungslose Trauer erfüllt ihn. Bitteres Erinnern an vergangene Tage, vergangenes Wollen.” Ibid., 41–42.



that this scene resembles the opening scene is to again suggest a repetition of events from the beginning, which are further compounded with Bill's repeated action of exiting Bondy's Bar quickly. This time, however, he carries with him the experience of defeat and disappointment and, like Alwa in *Lulu*, pines for the days of the past. Instead of looking around inquiringly as in the opening scene, he now does so with desperation. Instead of being filled with resolve, this time he is full of grief and dread for what he intends to do. And as in the opening scene, he finds himself again standing before Nell's window. The subsequent events of the scene noticeably mirror the events of the final scene in *Lulu*. Bill even prophetically exclaims: "It started here and it ends here." ("Hier begann's und hier geht es zu Ende.") The circular imagery in this statement is quite Bergian in its symbolism.

In the next moment, Nell, like Lulu, approaches with a gentleman client, prompting Bill, like Alwa, to hide in order to observe them without detection. Nell, again like Lulu, implores the client to enter her home with her and, just as in Berg's opera, both women go off-stage for the last time to be seen alive. Like Alwa, Bill emerges from his hiding place, and goes inside the house. The stage direction plays once again to the dichotomy of light and dark, noting how the light presents the vision of a silhouette where "two greedily huge shadowy hands" ("zwei riesengroße Schattenhände gierig drehen") reach up towards the "shapeless figure of a woman" ("hüllenlose Gestalt einer Frau") before the light goes out again, signifying the destructive power of the dark and Bill's murder of Nell. When Bill leaves the house again, similarly to *Wozzeck*, Brand notes in the direction how "his face is twisted in madness" ("Sein Antlitz ist wahnsinnsverzerrt"), and he stumbles away in a stupor similar to *Wozzeck's* after he murders Marie.

The last scene of the opera opens with a highly Wagnerian description:

Machine hall at night, similar to the second scene, but with the following major differences: The machines are arranged so that large parts of the glass background are visible to the audience. The main control panel is built high up in the middle of the background on a pyramid-like iron structure. A straight iron staircase leads up from both sides. Despite all objectivity, the construction of the main control panel and its structure should appear symbolic and altar-like. It is completely dark in the hall. A single moonbeam breaks through the bars of the glass roof, casts its magical light on the main switch, which glitters like a tabernacle. The whole picture should be seen as completely unrealistic. The soft, bluish, glowing glass background and the fantastic outlines of the machines, enhanced by the luminous effect of the main switch, are intended to convey the fusion of the machine hall and the temple. Bill stumbles in like a madman. He scans the machines, dragging himself from one to the other.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup>“Maschinenhalle bei Nacht, ähnlich wie im 2. Bild, jedoch mit folgenden wesentlichen Unterschieden: Die Maschinen sind so angeordnet, daß große Teile des Glashintergrundes dem Zuschauer sichtbar werden. Die Hauptschalttafel ist in der Mitte des Hintergrundes auf einer pyramidenartigen Eisenkonstruktion hoch oben aufgebaut. Von beiden Seiten führt je eine gerade Eisentreppe herauf. Trotz aller Sachlichkeit soll die Konstruktion der Hauptschalttafel und ihres Aufbaus symbolhaft und altarartig wirken. Es ist vollkommen dunkel in der Halle. Ein einziger Mondstrahl, durch die Gitterstäbe des Glasdaches durchbrochen, wirft sein magisches Licht auf den Hauptschalter, der wie ein Tabernakel glitzert. Das ganze Bild soll vollkommen unrealistisch sein. Der sanft bläulich leuchtende Glashintergrund und die phantastischen Umriss der Maschinen, erhöht durch die leuchtende Wirkung des Hauptschalters, sollen die Verschmelzung von Maschinenhalle und Tempel vermitteln. Bill taumelt herein wie ein Wahnsinniger. Er tastet die Maschinen ab, von einer zur anderen sich schleppend.” Ibid., 43.



Firstly, the above description must be seen as the quintessential representation of Brand's theory on opera as presented in his prose work: "Mechanical Music' and the Problem of the Opera," where he states: "These processes would be completely unreal processes. Apart from any realism, they would find their ultimate justification in the purely psychical and thus flow back into the human, but in a figurative and deeper sense, the tragedy of which could be more shocking than the processes known up to now on the stage." The scene description mirrors this phrase extensively, and we are presented with yet another example of the psychological Expressionistic distortion that Brand embraced to implement his opera's denouement, and how he remained faithful to the conviction expressed in his prose.

Once more, as in the previous scene, Brand's reiteration that this scene resembles the opera's second one implies that a similar outcome is to be expected: the death of a human. By noting that an element of the scene is visible to the audience, Brand invariably signals his intention to draw the observer into the narrative, similarly to how Berg did by having the Animal Tamer address the audience directly in the Prologue of *Lulu*. Inserting the words "despite all objectivity" is a curious statement, perhaps acting as a direct reference to the zeitgeist of that time – to *Zeitopern* and the broader application of "new objectivity." This would further imply that even though Brand is aware of this overarching paradigm in his opera, nevertheless, the final scene is meant to convey something magical, akin to a religious ceremony that he describes using synonymous imagery such as "altar-like, tabernacle, and temple." These words further confound us, as they blend both Christian idioms with Jewish symbolism, with which tabernacle and temple are more synonymous. However, this should not detract from the overall spirituality of the scene description, which is most certainly an homage to the grail temple of Wagner's *Parsifal*.<sup>96</sup> Mehring agrees, noting that "In contrast to the first stage set in the prelude, the factory floor now resembles a Church of technology, where the modern Parsifal of the machine age worships the altar of the main switchboard. Brand tries seamlessly to merge technological and religious symbols."<sup>97</sup> As it is night in Brand's temple, and in the realm of the powerful machines, light is absent from the scene. However, the power of spiritual illumination is present in the description of the moonbeam, which is significant. In *Parsifal*, during the Grail scene of act 1, a beam of light shoots down above the Grail when it is uncovered at the height of the ceremony. The light of the moon will have to do for Brand, as it shines on the all-powerful main switch – the heart of the machines, and their spiritual leader to whom Hopkins also morally genuflects in subservience. And like the Grail scene, Bill enters in his *Wozzeck*-like madness, where he is clearly also the Parsifal-like figure in this scenario as the out-of-place fool who has no conception of where he is or what his place is. Moreover, Wagner was generous and only banished Parsifal for his shortcomings, but in the merciless world of Brand and Berg, violent death is the only destiny for a protagonist. The imagery of the moon was significantly linked with both the deaths of Marie and then *Wozzeck*, and it is with moon-imbued power that the main switch will also kill Bill later in the scene. In addition, there is congruence in this religious symbolism in the final scene of *Lulu* where the Countess Geschwitz is symbolically presented in

<sup>96</sup>A subtler allusion to *Parsifal* is made in *Lulu*, as Elizabeth Boa construes, when Lulu says "I do not know" seven times towards the beginning of the opera, which is the same repetitive phrase that the eponymous character utters when he, too, is questioned towards the beginning of *Parsifal*. See Elizabeth BOA, *The Sexual Circus: Wedekind's Theatre of Subversion* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1987), 63.

<sup>97</sup>MEHRING, "Technology in *Zeitopern*," 163.



devout prayer before Lulu's portrait, moments before her own brutal murder. Michael Heinemann views this final scene as reminiscent of another Wagnerian model:

This finale of an opera, the plot of which is rather simple in its basic features, certainly suggests a socio-political interpretation – as close as in the *Ring of the Nibelung*, at the end of which a liberated workforce can take control of their own destiny: A social utopia that George Bernhard Shaw already recognized in Wagner's tetralogy, which was now very topical to show on stage during the Great Depression. But this intention is only indirectly present.<sup>98</sup>

Heinemann further posits that despite these perceived similarities with *The Ring*, and the fact that Hopkins himself is a liberator of the oppressed working class, he is far too brutal to be seen as a Lohengrin or Siegfried-type figure.<sup>99</sup> As Bill stumbles around, the machines begin to speak to him threateningly, and in his Parsifal-like capacity, Bill begs for pity “O Mitleid,” which is the motivic characteristic of compassion that Wagner's Parsifal is imbued with. Bill is naturally shown no mercy. As Bill continues, it is revealed that the main switch speaks to him in Nell's voice, as Brand directs. This is significant, as it represents a *Lulu*-like return of a dead victim (in Berg's opera, it was the return of Lulu's dead husbands in the form of her clients in the final scene) to exact revenge upon the transgressor. Bennett describes this phenomenon thus:

In the Prologue, the switch admitted that she was just a switch, requiring human help to unleash her life-giving force. Now she underlines the point, except that she sings with Nell's voice and uses the phrase with which Nell had persuaded Bill to let her go on stage many years before. As the scene proceeds, recapitulating much of the Prologue's material, Nell's melodic line is heard again, always sung by the main switch, always with Nell's voice. Nell – the woman Bill loved, who betrayed her husband for him and for power, who through their money became a star, who then betrayed Bill and went off with their enemy, who sank into prostitution and who was finally murdered by Bill in a jealous fury – haunts Bill through her disembodied voice. The music makes it clear that at a psychological level Bill's driving force was Nell even more than a lust for power and money.<sup>100</sup>

Bennett's poignant comment is invariably reminiscent of the doomed love of Alwa and Lulu in the sense that the latter exerts a hypnotic psychological power over the former in much the same way as Nell does over Bill. When Bill finally reaches the main switch, he senses its power, as Brand describes: “He sees the glowing main switch and sinks to his knees with his arms stretched out.”<sup>101</sup> When Bill desperately calls out for help, the main switch poetically replies: “I cannot help you. Because above me is the spirit who created me to follow his high will; and to give birth to his power again in my womb!”<sup>102</sup> The God imagery in this text is extravagant,

<sup>98</sup>“Dieses Finale einer Oper, deren Plot in seinen Grundzügen eher schlicht ist, legt eine gesellschaftspolitische Interpretation gewiss nahe – so nahe wie im Ring des Nibelungen, an dessen Ende eine befreite Arbeiterschaft ihre Geschicke selbst in die Hand nehmen kann: eine Sozialutopie, die bereits George Bernhard Shaw in Wagners Tetralogie erkannte und die nun, zu Zeiten der Weltwirtschaftskrise, auf der Bühne zu zeigen hohe Aktualität hatte. Doch ist diese Intention nur mittelbar präsent.” HEINEMANN, “Mythische Maschinen,” 68.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Clive BENNETT, “Maschinist Hopkins: A Father for Lulu?,” *The Musical Times* 127/1722 (September 1986), 483–484.

<sup>101</sup>“Er erblickt den leuchtenden Hauptschalter und sinkt mit emporgestreckten Armen in die Knie.” BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 44.

<sup>102</sup>“Ich kann dir nicht helfen. Denn über mir wacht der Geist, Der mich erschaffen hat, Zu folgen seinem hohen Willen; Und seine Kraft In meinem Schoß Von neuem zu gebären!” Ibid., 45.



giving more fantastical irrationality to the kind of blind devotion that the machines exhibit, further justifying the zealousness that Hopkins has been promoting in even greater fervor leading up to this encounter between the unworthy Bill and the prophet-like main switch.

In a final act of defiance, Bill attempts to fight the machines with his bare fists, as he continues a maddening dialogue with them. In a textual mirror of scene 2 where Nell believed a machine had grabbed her, so too does Bill now imagine that he has been caught in the machine's grip. In this moment, Brand's stage direction reads: "He hits the machine with his fists; fighting with her in his delusion as if she were alive."<sup>103</sup> This moment is a bit cryptic, as it alludes to all of the events in the scene as being imaginary, noting the delusion, and also blurring the realization of whether he is fighting the main switch, or the murdered Nell, by referring to his adversary "as if she were alive." Bill is able to escape the hold of his real or imagined foe, and makes his way up the iron staircase to the main switch. As he does so, the light/dark dichotomy is once again presented in the form of the changing light from darkness to emerging daylight. As Bill approaches "her," the main switch, again in Nell's voice, utters: "Back! Something terrible will happen!" ("Zurück! Es wird was Furchtbares geschehen!"). This text directly quotes the real Nell from scene 2, thereby fulfilling her prophecy from that earlier moment, and signifying that the narrative temporal circle is near to closing. When Bill reaches the top of the staircase and is about to pull the main switch off, the machines cry out to the "enslaved spirit" ("Versklavter Geist") for help. This is to none other than Hopkins – the enslaved entity who admitted as much to Nell. He appears from the small door that was mentioned in scene 2, and in his customary subservient worker's manner "stands tall" ("steht groß") before Bill, easily overpowering him. He pushes Bill down the stairs, where the latter disappears behind a machine, and presumably dies. Bill and Wozzeck both die by a falling disappearance: Bill from a height, and Wozzeck by drowning below the surface of the water. As the direction for Hopkins now reads: "Aware of his responsibility to start the machines, he closes his hand, as on a relic, on the main lever."<sup>104</sup> Mehring describes the final confrontation between Hopkins and Bill as: "Symbolically, the new messiah of the machine drives Bill out of paradise; pushes him down the staircase where he is swallowed up by a machine. Bill fails in his effort to control and revolt against the machines and is thus finally destroyed by the combined efforts of man and machine."<sup>105</sup> Martin Elste draws another parallel between Bill's and Wozzeck's psychological dispositions, describing how both characters went to great lengths to protect their secret, as well as how both were meant to feel inferior and dehumanized by the women that they loved, leading them both to kill their respective love interests in premeditated fits of jealousy. Elste states that:

Analogous to Wozzeck's search for the murder tool "The knife? Where's the knife?" Bill tries, throughout the opera, to remove traces of the deed; first through the purchase of the Lixton works, where the deed happened, and the intended subsequent decommissioning, then, in the final scene, through an attempt to destroy the machines by hand. In desperation, when he realizes that he was

<sup>103</sup> "Er haut auf die Maschine mit seinen Fäusten ein; in seinem Wahn mit ihr kämpfend, als wäre sie lebendig." *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>104</sup> "Bewußt seiner Verantwortung, die Maschinen in Gang zu setzen, legt er seine Hand fest, jedoch wie auf ein Heiligtum, auf den Haupthebel." *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>105</sup> MEHRING, "Technology in Zeitopern," 167.



just one of hundreds for Nell and is now nothing more than an anonymous man on the street, he kills his former life partner.<sup>106</sup>

Although there is no scene change, the next moment describes the morning and the rays of light that hit Hopkins and the main switch. As the workers enter the factory, Hopkins announces the start of a new work day and awakens the machines that are ready to work. As the workers mechanically chant “Work!” (“Arbeit!”), Hopkins “presses the main lever down with a mighty movement, causing all the machines to start. He stays upright and looks into the distance.”<sup>107</sup> In regard to this moment, Mehring comments: “The new religion Brand advocates in his opera is found in the representation of technology as a generator of work. As a means of making a living, the machines ultimately serve the human cause.”<sup>108</sup> The curtain falls and the opera ends. The timeless, circular, and perpetual mechanical motion of the machines can metaphorically depict a palindromic quality of repetition, which was a central tenet of *Wozzeck* and its narrative repetition at the end of that opera. Therefore, both *Wozzeck* and *Hopkins* instill this quality of inevitability and endlessness, and with it the type of desolate bleakness and hopelessness that is entirely associated with Expressionism and not *Neue Sachlichkeit/Zeitoper*. The ostinato figurations at the end of *Hopkins* represent this notion of everlasting repetition, like the rotating mill wheel of time that the Captain in *Wozzeck* fears, or a rotating mechanical gear in *Hopkins*.

In a narrative summation, the three acts of *Hopkins* and *Lulu* can both be perceived in large-scale depictions based on their respective heroines: In act 1, Nell is strong and successful, like Lulu. Act 2 illustrates a downward slide and change of fortune for both women, whereas act 3 presents the full collapse into prostitution of both women and the eventual death by murder of each at the hands of a man. Martin Elste notes the similarities between Nell and Lulu, as well as one fundamental difference, saying:

Much of Nell’s personality is reminiscent of Wedekind’s Lulu and, of course, Berg’s second opera. Although Nell’s path is similar to that of Lulu, in one sense it is the opposite. Certainly, like Lulu, she experienced an ascent to become the theater’s star; like Lulu she could live in luxury thanks to her husband’s business; like Lulu she fell, from a petty-bourgeois point of view, to the lowest level a woman could reach, becoming a prostitute. But unlike in *Lulu*, it is not the men who run after the woman. It is she, Nell, who falls in step with the men. As the wife of the machinist Jim, she succumbs to Bill, and as Bill’s life partner, she succumbs to the charisma of Hopkins.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106a</sup> “Analog zu Wozzecks Suche nach dem Mordwerkzeug ‘Das Messer? Wo ist das Messer?’ versucht Bill durch die Oper hindurch, die Spuren der Tat zu beseitigen; zunächst durch den Kauf der Lixton-Werke, wo die Tat geschah, und die intendierte anschließende Stilllegung, dann, im Schlußbild, durch den Versuch der eigenhändigen Zerstörung der Maschinen. In der größten Verzweiflung, wenn er erkennt, daß er nur einer unter Hunderten für Nell gewesen ist und nun nichts mehr ist als ein anonym Mann auf der Straße, bringt er seine ehemalige Lebenspartnerin um.” ELSTE, “Maschinelle Menschen,” 539.

<sup>107a</sup> “. . . drückt mit mächtiger Bewegung den Haupthebel nieder, wodurch sich alle Maschinen in Gang setzen. Er bleibt hoch aufgerichtet und in die Weite schauend stehen.” BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 48.

<sup>108</sup> MEHRING, “Technology in Zeitopern,” 168.

<sup>109a</sup> “Manches in der Person Nells erinnert an die Wedekindsche Lulu und damit natürlich auch an Bergs zweite Oper. Wenngleich der Weg Nells Ähnlichkeiten mit dem der Lulu hat, ist sie in einer Hinsicht deren genaues Gegenteil. Gewiß: Gleich Lulu erlebt sie einen Aufstieg zum Theaterstar, gleich Lulu kann sie in Luxus dank der Geschäfte ihres Mannes leben, gleich Lulu gerät sie auf die, aus kleinbürgerlicher Sicht, niedrigste Stufe der Frau, wird zur Prostituierten. Doch im Unterschied zu Lulu sind es nicht die Männer, die der Frau nachlaufen. Sie, Nell, ist es, die den Männern reihenweise verfällt. Als Ehefrau des Maschinisten Jim erliegt sie Bill, als Lebenspartnerin Bills erliegt sie dem Charisma Hopkins.” ELSTE, “Maschinelle Menschen,” 539.



Michael Heinemann presents a slightly different view, believing that “The protagonist of Brand’s opera does indeed possess male-killing potential, and like Wedekind’s Lulu Nell is only a victim of a horny male world.”<sup>110</sup> A similar fate befalls *Wozzeck*’s Marie, as her destiny too follows an arc of increasing depravity; albeit for her it is more psychological, but results in her murder at the hands of a man as well. Even the male character associations between *Hopkins* and *Lulu* plausibly align with Jim as Dr. Schön; Bill as Alwa; and Hopkins as a nebulous conflation of abstract symbolisms found in all three operas. He represents a vindictive and exploitative character whose sense of moral relativism prompts him to condone a brutal sense of judgment, and who is ultimately the living embodiment of the machines themselves, characterizing his simultaneous ability to influence local outcomes within a larger scope of rules that he is powerless to resist or subvert himself. In essence, Hopkins hated Bill for everything, starting with the murder of Jim, who possessed ideals that conformed with Hopkins’ own. Hopkins can therefore be looked upon in equal measure as an individual seeking retribution for Jim’s death, which is congruent with Lulu’s dead husbands returning at the end of Berg’s opera to seek their own retribution against their culpable murderess. Hopkins, ultimately, can arguably be seen as the most complex character in all three operas for willingly invoking a narrative that he knows is an inevitability. No Bergian character progressed through his/her experiences with a clear realization that it was all inevitable. That inability rendered the characters’ fates more tragic, whereas one could sense with Hopkins that his calculated machinations were never in any doubt. Yet, Brand’s opera instills unease precisely in the notion that resistance is futile, and that the emotional human will is no match for the merciless determination of the machines – as Brand claimed in his prose was his ambition when seeking to divorce human emotionality from his theatrical stage representation.

#### 4. MUSICAL ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN *HOPKINS*, *WOZZECK*, AND *LULU*

After tracing the manner in which Brand’s libretto bore strong resemblances at times to both Berg and to a lesser extent Wagner, this section will focus on large-scale musical structures that *Hopkins* had in common with Berg’s operas. An essential detail of this association is to focus on how the musical moments informed the stage action, constituting a narrative homogeneity that both composers used to elevate seemingly unimportant facets like the stage curtain to significant characteristics that were meant to be seen as intrinsic contributions to the overall theatricality.<sup>111</sup> Other elements that will be addressed across all three operas are ostinato figures, vocal and dance forms, the use of diegetic music, and *Zeitoper*-related musical idioms. Indeed, Gundula Kreuzer describes the multifaceted dramaturgical functionality of the operatic curtain and Wagner’s association with it, which will be applicable to the method and meaning of how Brand and Berg incorporated this practice, and which once again draws parallels with Wagnerian paradigms:

Operating in a limited space between stage and auditorium, architecture and performance, machinery and effect, the curtain became a commentator on the staged action. Its deliberate use allowed

<sup>110</sup>“Zwar weist auch die Protagonistin von Brands Oper faktisch ein männermordendes Potential auf, und ähnlich der Wedekindschen Lulu ist Nell lediglich Opfer einer geilen Männerwelt.” HEINEMANN, “Mythische Maschinen,” 68.

<sup>111</sup>A harmonic analysis of any sort would not be conducive to promoting these interests and will therefore be avoided.





for the temporary dissociation of sound and vision and, thus, a newly expressive relation between auditory and visual media. Wagner, then, built on contemporary practices when he began to prescribe tempi for curtains, although he did so more frequently than other composers, and his curtains became crucial atmospheric indicators.<sup>112</sup>

Thomas Brezinka effectively encapsulates the overall musical structure of *Hopkins*, which this section will subsequently elaborate on, in particular how it bears congruence with Berg's musical style:

Brand uses the musical elements with regard to the atmosphere of the respective scenes, and are primarily designed for external effects. The music has great dramatic impact and is stylistically colorful. Broadly speaking, three stylistic groups can be distinguished: lyrical-expressive passages with a late romantic character, sound music in the factory scenes, and the use of fashionable dances of light music in the social scenes. These three areas are linked to each other by recitative passages. The lyrical-expressive area harmoniously follows a tonal arrangement, which is often heavily veiled and expanded: through extreme chromatics, numerous alterations of triad tones, polytonal sound combinations, tritone and fourth layers, and through twelve-tone elements.<sup>113</sup>

One of the most important musical structures that *Hopkins* and *Wozzeck* share is their prevalent and strategic use of ostinato figurations. In Brand's opera, this motivic device is associated with the machines and ominous implications that are tied to foreshadowings of doom. The first instance of this figuration is seen in scene 1 in bars 98–100 when Nell tells Bill that she is scared to death. Short, staccato accented repeated notes punctuate the winds, while only the violins play their own repetitive figure of four notes in this phrase.<sup>114</sup> Similar textures abound when Bill next discusses how common it is to feel fear. The ostinati build in textural density and rise in tempo several bars later when Bill sings of guilt and suffering. The opera's most motivic ostinato figures arrive at the end of scene 1, 3 bars before the curtain drops. These 3 bars are comprised of tutti textures, but once the curtain drops, the textures become thicker, faster, and more frenetic with the inclusion of trills and more accented beats.<sup>115</sup> These are the sounds of the machines: mechanical, cold, and repetitive. This purely orchestral transition between scenes sets up scene 2 in the factory with the machines taking on their personified roles. Likewise, in *Wozzeck*, the first example of an ostinato figure is a short 2-bar phrase that is a near-mirror image, which accompanies the Captain's impression of a turning mill wheel.<sup>116</sup> Both

<sup>112</sup>Gundula KREUZER, *Curtain, Gong, Steam: Wagnerian Technologies of Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 22–23.

<sup>113a</sup>“Die musikalischen Elemente werden von Brand in Hinsicht auf die Atmosphäre der jeweiligen Szenen verwendet und sind vornehmlich auf äußeren Effekt angelegt. Die Musik hat große dramatische Schlagkraft und ist stilistisch buntgewürfelt. Im Großen lassen sich drei Stilkreise unterscheiden: lyrisch-expressive Passagen in spätromantischem Charakter, Geräuschmusik in den Fabrikszenen und Verwendung von Modetänzen der Unterhaltungsmusik bei den Gesellschaftsszenen. Diese drei Bereiche werden durch rezitativisch angelegte Passagen miteinander verknüpft. Der lyrisch-expressive Bereich folgt harmonisch einer tonalen Anlage, die häufig stark verschleiert und ausgeweitet wird: durch extreme Chromatik, zahlreiche Alterationen von Dreiklangstönen, polytonale Klangkombinationen, Tritonus- und Quartens Schichtung sowie durch zwölftönige Elemente.” BREZINKA, *Max Brand*, 29.

<sup>114</sup>Max BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Full score], vol. 1 (München: Musikproduktion Höflich, 2018), 23.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, 45–47.

<sup>116</sup>Alban BERG, *Wozzeck* [Full score] (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1955), 13.



Brand and Berg instruct slow curtain movements over multiple bars of instrumental playing between their scene changes: The curtain rises slowly onto scene 2 in *Hopkins* over 3 bars, and likewise drops slowly over 4 bars to begin the orchestral interlude between scenes 2 and 3 in *Wozzeck*.

Vast sections of scene 2 of *Hopkins* are pure ostinato figurations, as it emphasizes the discussion of the machines amongst themselves. The texture of line increases in independence when Bill and Nell enter the scene, but becomes repetitive and mechanical once again when machines and humans vocalize at the same time, albeit not to one another. The heavily accented, quickened tutti ostinati of scene 1 motivically return at the end of the second when the machines kill Jim, denoting another frenzied display of mechanical imagery. Brand's stage direction at the end of this episode during an empty-bar fermata before the very end of the scene denotes his priority for theatricality: "The whole orchestra is silent until Nell and Bill hurry from the platform to the flywheel. Only after the two of them have looked horrifyingly into the hollow in which Jim's body has disappeared does the orchestra resume."<sup>117</sup>

A short motivic ostinato appears in scene 3, with subito stringendo repeated triplet figures in the strings, when Bill sings of fear again as in scene 1.<sup>118</sup> It is another example of rhythmical word-painting that Brand employs to mirror returning imagery in the text. Later in the scene, when Hopkins enters for the first time to meet Bill, he says his own name, and Bill says it back to him – at that moment, a 2-bar phrase of repeated staccato 16th notes in the clarinets plays with only light accompaniment from the oboes.<sup>119</sup> The first musical representation of the title character is via the rhythmical motif of machines. A much more pronounced tutti ostinato figure enters a few bars later as word painting when Hopkins speaks of the factory workers, who are ultimately depicted textually as machines at the end of the opera but are introduced here musically through the rhythmic motif of the machines.<sup>120</sup>

Another prevalent theatrical trait that *Hopkins* shares with both of Berg's operas is the incorporation of diegetic music for narrative purposes. In *Wozzeck*, this first occurs with the military band that plays offstage, and begins with the curtain lowered, then continues, in its designated March tempo, over the indicated 2-bar curtain rise, and into scene 3.<sup>121</sup> Short, lyrical ostinato figures ensue in this scene, first with the 2-bar orchestral mirror lullaby that Marie sings to her son in bars 380–384, and then in the purely orchestral passage in bars 417–422.<sup>122</sup> In both passages, the lyricism is predicated on the harp, whereby in the second passage the celesta plays the arpeggiated figure above the block chords of the harp. In both instances, tied dotted half notes in the strings with similar rhythms in the winds accentuate the ethereal poignancy of these passages.

The first example of diegetic music in *Hopkins* occurs after the curtain has dropped on scene 3. With the curtain still down, the "Black Bottom Jazz Band" performs an extended set. Kreuzer

<sup>117</sup>“Das ganze Orchester schweigt solange, bis Nell und Bill von der Plattform zum Schwungrad geeilt sind. Erst nach dem die Beiden einen Augenblick entsetzt in die Mulde geblickt haben, in der Jims Körper verschwunden ist, setzt das Orchester wieder ein.” BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Full score], 109.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 135–136.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 139–140.

<sup>121</sup>BERG, *Wozzeck* [Full Score], 68–69.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 82; 88–89.



notes how “Precisely when concealing the source of already audible diegetic music, the curtain, a membrane between both media (visual and auditory), became porous; its eventual rise signaled less the long-expected arrival of the dramatic world than the visual revelation of something already aurally present (or, in fact, acoustically created).”<sup>123</sup> Brand, therefore, creates anticipation and focus by first presenting this music with the curtain down. This quintessential *Zeitoper* configuration of black musicians playing jazz is accompanied by the requisite instruments, such as saxophones, jazz trombone, jazz tuba, banjo, and jazz percussion. It is a purely instrumental interlude that continues into the start of scene 4 when the curtain rises quickly, and includes this in the elaborate scene direction: “The audience turns its attention to the dance production on the floor, which consists of six negroes sitting on improbably high chairs in a row: three banjo players and three saxophone wind instruments. In front of them, a row of girls dances a rhythmic, constant dance. The negroes sing and play alternately.”<sup>124</sup> The jazz band continues to sing, in English, with text written by the American composer George Antheil. The pandering to *Zeitoper*’s Americanism in this extended passage is obvious through the incorporated imagery of jazz, black people, modern dance styles, and singing in English. Mehring concurs, noting that “Brand blends in aspects of contemporary entertainment, such as images from movies and elements from revues, as well as American dance music, to address large audiences.”<sup>125</sup> The diegetic scene ends with the stage direction of applause coming from the stage, where the orchestra is instructed to start up again *attacca* during the applause. After a brief return to the action, where Nell is in her Lulu-like guise as a salacious dancer, the music turns into an extended tango instrumental passage, with the same diegetic jazz instruments as before returning to play on stage. While all the main protagonists stay on stage, Brand’s direction reads: “A couple appears, in eccentrically sophisticated costume, and tango. The chorus is sung by a baritone and tenor backstage. Gradually the chorus is taken over by the whole choir [‘audience’ and soloists].”<sup>126</sup> This extended tango instrumental passage continues until the curtain falls, at which time the regular orchestra immediately reenters and plays an orchestral interlude to the curtain rise and start of scene 5, continuing uninterrupted through the new scene, which is Bill’s and Nell’s *Tristan*-like love duet. Thin textures of quiet playing with frequent string tremolos and dynamic hairpins musically reinforce the sensuous stage action, once more attesting to Brand’s sensitivity of homogenizing the music and the stage. As Bennett concurs, “Brand’s use of light music is for dramatic realism.”<sup>127</sup> The end of the scene, and with it the first act, is expressed with a distinct 4-bar slow curtain drop, where an arrow indicates the precise place before the new phrase begins where the curtain is to reach the floor. The curtain fall accompanies a 4-bar string slur and tied timpani roll. The practice of using arrows to align the curtain movement

<sup>123</sup>KREUZER, *Curtain, Gong, Steam*, 72.

<sup>124</sup>“Das Publikum wendet seine Aufmerksamkeit der Tanzproduktion auf dem Parkett zu, Folgendem besteht: Sechs Neger sitzen auf unwahrscheinlich hohen Stühlen in einer Reihe: drei Banjo-Spieler und drei Saxophon-Bläser. Vor ihnen tanzt eine Reihe Girls ihren rhythmischen, immer gleich bleibenden Tanz. Die Neger singen und spielen abwechselnd.” BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 20.

<sup>125</sup>MEHRING, “Technology in Zeitoper,” 160.

<sup>126</sup>“Ein Tanzpaar tritt auf, in exzentrisch mondänem Kostüm, Tango. Den Refrain singt ein Bariton und ein Tenor hinter der Bühne. Nach und nach wird der Refrain vom ganzen Chor [‘Publikum’ und den Solisten] übernommen.” BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 21.

<sup>127</sup>BENNETT, “A Father for Lulu,” 482.



with a musical passage is something that Berg did repeatedly in both operas, but to a greater extent in *Wozzeck*. Berg demonstrated that the curtain can be used to great theatrical effect, and as it was Brand's propensity to desire the same outcome, it stands to reason that he incorporated this device after seeing it in Berg's first opera. Indeed, one of the most theatrical displays of curtain usage in *Wozzeck* occurs at the end of act 1, scene 4, where Berg indicated with text and dashes of prolongation above the music how the curtain was to coincide with the music. It appears as: "The curtain falls at first quickly, then suddenly slowly – and – at last closes – quite – gradually."<sup>128</sup> George Perle described the dramaturgical phenomenon of this specific curtain instruction, noting that "It reflects the change in the Doctor's behavior at the conclusion of the scene, where he becomes 'suddenly quite calm' as he begins his examination of Wozzeck after his ecstatic outburst."<sup>129</sup> Once again, we see in this symmetry of curtain and text the homogenous relationship between music and stage that dramatically aligned Berg and Brand. Perle continues, stating the general observation that "The rise and fall of every curtain is 'composed,' in terms of extra-musical as well as musical correspondences. Thus, the curtains, too, are an aspect of the 'formal design.'"<sup>130</sup> Kreuzer draws general attention to this practice that Berg employed, noting that "In creating anticipation, however, the curtain reinforced its own subsidiary essence. After all, it was a placeholder or blank space, a promise of something yet to come, and its chief purpose was to be eventually – and inevitably – removed to disclose the 'real' show behind it."<sup>131</sup>

As mentioned above, Brand was keen on incorporating dance styles that were very jazz/swing-oriented, such as the tango, foxtrot, and shimmy. Berg, similarly, incorporated dance tempos into *Wozzeck*, but these were traditional, and reminiscent of the "older forms" (which were also folk-oriented) that he alluded to in his prose. On several occasions, Berg infused his tempo indications with marches, *ländler*s, and his most prolific indication, the waltz. The opposing styles of Brand's and Berg's dance allusions are incidental to their mutual incorporation in their respective operas, further accentuating the stylistic congruence that exists between the two operas, and underlining the aesthetic theatrical meaning to their two composers, who liberally saturated their scores with these indications.

In scene 6, the first scene of act 2, Brand uses an arrow to indicate the exact moment that the curtain rises on the third bar of music to coincide with the accented entrance of the choir of machines.<sup>132</sup> A rhythmical uniformity ensues again to denote the machines, albeit not in the motivic ostinato manner as seen in the first act. This uniformity is emphasized even more when Hopkins enters and Brand indicates the tempo as: "äußerst straffer Rhythmus" ("in an extremely tight rhythm"). After the vocal lines drop out to denote the working machines, more complex ostinato phrases enter the orchestral texture, which then dissipates into a *ritardando* when Hopkins turns the machines off, leading to a grand pause bar. The curtain drops on the scene in coordinated movement with a harp glissando, which is exactly what Berg did at the end of act 2,

<sup>128</sup>"Der Vorhang fällt anfangs sehr schnell, dann plötzlich langsam, um sich ganz allmählich zu schließen." BERG, *Wozzeck* [Full score], 151–152.

<sup>129</sup>George PERLE, *The Operas of Alban Berg*, vol. 1: *Wozzeck* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 91.

<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>131</sup>KREUZER, *Curtain, Gong, Steam*, 57.

<sup>132</sup>BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Full score], vol. 2, 3.



scene 1 when the curtain drops quickly over the length of a bar (indicated with arrows and durational dashes), to coincide with a downward harp glissando of the same duration.<sup>133</sup> He incorporates the exact same device at the end of the ensuing orchestral interlude, when he indicates the curtain rise with dashes to coincide with an upward harp glissando.<sup>134</sup> Perle observed the complex dramaturgical implications at this point in *Wozzeck*, and in particular how the use of the curtain manipulated perceptions:

The curtain does not fall at once, though both the music and the “action” of act 2 are at an end. The curtain that rises upon the remorseful Marie reading her Bible at the beginning of the next act is given the same duration of silence for its ascent as the falling final curtain of the preceding act was given for its descent, and the same duration of silence that intervened between the conclusion of the music of act 2 and the falling of the curtain intervenes before the music begins after the curtain has risen upon act 2. This “delayed” fall and “premature” rise of the curtain seem to blur the distinction between the staged world and the “real” world, by prolonging beyond its conventional limits the view that the audience is given of that staged world.<sup>135</sup>

Similarly to Berg, Brand directs the curtain to drop on scene 7 in act 2 on the third beat of a  $\frac{4}{4}$  bar (indicated with an arrow), to coincide precisely with Nell’s dejected cry of complete subservience to Hopkins.<sup>136</sup> The accompanying stage direction reads: “The two [Hopkins and Nell] are standing very close to the divan. Hopkins leans over Nell so that they would have to sink down on the divan if the curtain did not fall.”<sup>137</sup> Kreuzer generally comments on this very ploy by noting how “[i]f, for example, the curtain fell before the main characters ‘have entirely disappeared from the eyes of the spectators,’ this might foster audience identification with these (often troubled) personas, functioning like a dramatic cliffhanger.”<sup>138</sup> This is another example of Brand’s sensitivity to drama, and is a reiteration of his prose about representing musical elements on the mechanical stage, to which the curtain certainly belongs. Therefore, these similar curtain effects in *Wozzeck* would doubtfully have gone unnoticed by Brand when he was conceiving of his own curtain synchronizations between the music and the stage. This practice of coordinating the curtain with specific beats was something where, “from the *Ring* on, Wagner followed the Meyerbeer of *Le prophète* in placing curtains by the beat. This specifically correlated with an increasingly intricate music-dramaturgical choreography of the curtain.”<sup>139</sup> As seen so often before, a fundamental element employed by Berg and Brand was first used by Wagner.

Scene 8 of *Hopkins* opens with a diegetic scene direction for the curtain at the theater where Nell is dancing. Part of it reads: “Clapping hands and shouting behind the curtain. Curtain up. Behind the scenes of a theater. In such a way that you probably cannot see the stage, but for a

<sup>133</sup>BERG, *Wozzeck* [Full score], 202.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 209.

<sup>135</sup>PERLE, *Wozzeck*, 77.

<sup>136</sup>BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Full score], 88.

<sup>137</sup>“Die beiden stehen ganz nahe am Diwan. Hopkins beugt sich über Nell, so daß sie auf den Diwan hinsinken müßten, wenn nicht der Vorhang inzwischen fiel.” BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 31.

<sup>138</sup>KREUZER, *Curtain, Gong, Steam*, 78.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., 80.



small section of the curtain and the auditorium. The curtain is raised and lowered outside.”<sup>140</sup> The instruments in the orchestra proper include saxophones, a banjo, and a jazz mute for the trombone. All of this creates the backstage theater effect similar to the scene in *Lulu* where Lulu was backstage at the theater she performed at while the music on the imaginary stage was playing. Mentioning the mechanics of the curtain in the scene direction demonstrates its importance to Brand, and reflects his own use of it in his opera as well as the *Lulu*-like “opera-within-an-opera” configuration. Berg also incorporated diegetic music on stage during a dance sequence, such as in the tavern scene of act 2, scene 4 where he has a “fiddle,” an accordion, a guitar, and a bombardon performing the waltz that the characters dance to.<sup>141</sup> These non-standard instruments characterize a similar desire between Berg and Brand to depict diegetic sounds that are exotic and theatrically-stimulating.

Later on, when the curtain drops on scene 9 (the first of act 3) of *Hopkins*, the orchestral interlude gives way to a section with a “shimmy” tempo indication that continues into scene 10, which takes place at Bondy’s Bar. This is another example of Brand incorporating a *Zeitoper*-influenced jazz dance to set up the bar scene, which, as in *Wozzeck*, features an out-of-tune piano (appropriately, an electric instrument in Brand’s opera) that plays diegetic music. Bennett notes that “when, in act 3, Bill leaves the bar and the events of the Prologue are repeated, so too is the music.”<sup>142</sup> The curtain drops quickly on this scene (with an arrow indicator) after the second beat of a bar, which signifies the end of a moving musical figure, but before the third beat, which is a loud tutti fortissimo crash.<sup>143</sup> And as before, the curtain rises on scene 11 in coordination with a chromatic harp run.<sup>144</sup> In this scene, Bill murders Nell, and in the immediate aftermath, Brand presents virtually the same orchestral effect that Berg does directly after *Wozzeck* has murdered Marie: A full orchestral tutti of tied whole notes in the winds and brass, while percussion and strings trill and tremolo, respectively, in *Wozzeck* with the curtain down,<sup>145</sup> whereas in *Hopkins*, the entire orchestra trills and tremolos with a massive tutti crescendo that culminates on an *fff* eighth-note downbeat with immediate silence, at which point Nell dies and there is a grand pause.<sup>146</sup> Bennett again notes that when Bill murders Nell, it is to the same music that was heard when Nell first gave him the master key in the Prologue, signifying then that “this is no ordinary key but the key to the future,”<sup>147</sup> implying an instance of temporal predetermination that was fulfilled at the moment of Nell’s murder. Unlike in *Wozzeck*, though, in *Hopkins* this powerful moment does not end the scene, because, as is Brand’s practice, the orchestra reenters and the curtain drops quickly right when the familiar mechanical ostinato figures from act 1 enter for the first time since the opening act to lead into

<sup>140</sup> BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Libretto], 31. “Händeklatschen und Bravorufe hinter dem Vorhang. Vorhang auf. Hinter den Kulissen eines Theaters. Und zwar so, daß man wohl nicht die Bühne sieht, jedoch einen kleinen Ausschnitt des Vorhanges und des Zuschauerraumes. Der Vorhang wird draußen hoch-und niedergelassen.”

<sup>141</sup> BERG, *Wozzeck* [Full score], 304.

<sup>142</sup> BENNETT, “A Father for Lulu,” 483.

<sup>143</sup> BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Full score], 203.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>145</sup> BERG, *Wozzeck* [Full score], 418.

<sup>146</sup> BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Full score], 222.

<sup>147</sup> BENNETT, “A Father for Lulu,” 483.



the opera's final scene, which is, as stated earlier, indicated to resemble the opera's second scene, implying a temporal repeat of deadly consequences. Once again, Brand indicates the curtain rise on bar 5 of scene 12 with arrows pointing in between beats.<sup>148</sup> (Berg also indicated curtain rises on offbeats with arrows, such as at the start of act 2, scene 3 where the arrows denote the rhythmic relation to the music, as the curtain rise has notated rests.)<sup>149</sup>

Returning to this post-murder moment in *Wozzeck*, the curtain rises quickly after the *fff* tutti with the diegetic music of a fast polka (another non-standard folk dance), playing on the out-of-tune piano on stage. The absurdity of this jarring sound after the horrific event that has just taken place is meant to add further emotional and psychological instability, as reflected in the opera's Expressionistic distortion. Berg does, though, deliver a form of serious reflection on what has transpired in the final D-minor interlude of the opera, but delays this until after *Wozzeck*'s own death for maximum effect, and to set up the interlude as a pseudo-overture for the opera's temporal repeat.<sup>150</sup> Douglas Jarman points out how mechanical ostinati were presented at the time of *Wozzeck*'s death, which in turn depicts the opera's penultimate application of the structural device, signifying its importance to both Berg and Brand by its use at strategic narrative points throughout, and especially at the ends of their respective operas. Jarman states: "It is, as the mechanically repeating ostinati that represent the croaking of the toads around the pool before and after *Wozzeck*'s death demonstrate, a universe that continues on its pre-determined course untouched by the human tragedy that unfolds."<sup>151</sup> The last curtain rise in *Wozzeck* occurs at the end of the overture-like interlude, and is again precisely coordinated with an upward harp glissando.<sup>152</sup>

In *Hopkins*, the choir of machines vocalizes in *Sprechstimme* as the scene of Bill's death unfolds. Short ostinato phrases ensue through the various instrumental families as Bill and the machines verbally duel. Agitation in the orchestration rises to thicker and faster textures, reflecting the word-painting of hatred that is exhibited in all the textual parts. A massive tutti glissando erupts when Bill reaches the main switch and is about to pull it, while exclaiming death upon the machines. In the last moment when Hopkins stops Bill from achieving his objective, the orchestration instantly dies down to present his final words to Bill with deadly clarity before pushing him down the steps behind the machines, at which moment the orchestra roars back, but not with the same tension as before. Bennett notes that at the moment of Bill's death, "the music again directly repeats material from the Prologue, but now the psychological position is reversed. Bill's death is not as cataclysmic as Jim's had been in the Prologue. Instead, when Hopkins pushes him into the machinery to be ground to death the music parodies the Magic Fire Music in *Die Walküre*. The machines have had their revenge; only a superman can supplant them."<sup>153</sup> The purely orchestral section, reminiscent of an interlude, plays until Hopkins reengages to announce the start of the next workday as the workers flood into the

<sup>148</sup>BRAND, *Maschinist Hopkins* [Full score], 228.

<sup>149</sup>BERG, *Wozzeck* [Full score], 266.

<sup>150</sup>cf. Misha DONAT, "Mathematical Mysticism," *The Listener* 83 (April 2, 1970), 458.

<sup>151</sup>Douglas JARMAN, "Remembrance of things that are to come: Some Reflections on Berg's Palindromes," in *Alban Berg and His World*, ed. by Christopher HAILEY (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 217.

<sup>152</sup>BERG, *Wozzeck* [Full score], 478.

<sup>153</sup>BENNETT, "A Father for Lulu," 484.



factory. Fittingly, the opera ends in powerful tutti ostinato figures as the workers mechanically chant “Arbeit” (“work”) in *Sprechstimme*, signifying their conversion to becoming human machines, like Hopkins. *Wozzeck* also ends with ostinato figures that abruptly stop as in *Hopkins*, but less violently, and with more tragic implications. Indeed, in *Wozzeck*, the final curtain fall is stretched over the opera’s final 4-bar phrase where the ostinato figure in the flutes and celeste play for half a bar longer after the strings cut out, falling away with the final beat of the opera.

Many of the stylistic effects that have been discussed in regard to *Wozzeck* also found their way into *Lulu*, but it is necessary to draw attention to some features in Berg’s second opera, because unlike that of *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*’s genesis had the distinction of having been exposed to *Hopkins*, where Berg witnessed at first hand the immense success that Brand’s opera enjoyed. The same characteristics of *Zeitoper* (in terms of jazz elements, old vocal forms, and the use of technology), diegetic music, and utilization of the curtain will be analyzed to trace the tighter congruence between *Lulu* and *Hopkins*, which strongly suggests Berg’s stylistic imitation of the latter opera in some distinct features. Furthermore, Berg also adapted a more non-restrictive application of the twelve-tone technique in *Lulu*. Thomas Brezinka notes that in *Hopkins*, “Brand uses the twelve-tone technique in an independent way, which some strict twelve-tone speakers might even consider contrary to style.”<sup>154</sup>

As stated earlier, *Lulu* opens with a Prologue, which acts in much the same way as the two-scene overture of *Hopkins*: Both establish important narrative and stylistic motifs before the primary events take place, beginning in act 1 of both operas respectively, and the events of these opening gestures for both operas also constitute referential themes that are addressed throughout the opera. In *Hopkins*, this was the secret of Jim’s murder that Bill and Nell strove to protect, as well as the presentation and motivation of the machines. In *Lulu*, the Prologue represents Lulu’s true nature as the temptress snake, as described by the Animal Tamer, and subtly alludes to major themes in the opera, such as fate and temporal dubiousness, as indicated by the Animal Tamer’s direct appeal to the audience. Musically, the Prologue also initiates two important *Zeitoper*-related themes: The alto saxophone – a predominant jazz instrument – and the vibraphone, which is the musical representation of an electric doorbell (a technological allusion), when instructed to prolong its vibrato.

Scene 1 of act 1 is defined as a Recitative, which already establishes the predisposition towards old vocal forms that will be presented throughout the opera. Brezinka had also labeled Brand’s orchestral interludes in *Hopkins* earlier as recitative-like. Later in the scene, Berg calls a section a melodrama (bars 196–257b) typified by the text, which is either spoken or presented in *Sprechstimme*. This old operatic device is immediately followed by a Canzonetta (bars 258–283), another Recitative (bars 284–300), a 5-bar transition to a Duet (bars 305–328), an Arioso (bars 329–350), and an Interlude starting at bar 351 that leads to the curtain drop that is indicated with dashes to last a duration of 3 bars. The music continues, though, as a transition to the canonic Trio, which lasts until the curtain rise of scene 2.<sup>155</sup> Scene 2 opens with a spoken dialogue, akin to the structure of an eighteenth-century number opera, which leads into another

<sup>154</sup>“Brand verwendet die Zwölftontechnik auf eigenständige Weise, die mancher strenge Zwölftöner sogar als stilwidrig betrachten könnte.” BREZINKA, *Max Brand*, 13.

<sup>155</sup>Alban BERG, *Lulu* [Full score], Acts I and II (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1985), 27–104.





duet. A gavotte ensues later in the scene within a large sonata structure, constituting the first dance form in the opera. The rest of the scene is about 300 bars of what Berg called the *Monoritmica*, which is virtually entirely sung in *Sprechstimme*. As will become apparent, in *Lulu* Berg placed a priority on vocal forms, whereas in *Wozzeck* the priority was on dance forms.

Scene 3 opens with a jazzy Rag-time, and is the first presentation of diegetic music in *Lulu*, where a jazz band plays offstage (or more specifically on the imagined stage of the narrative while the actual scene takes place backstage).<sup>156</sup> Like the Black-Bottom Jazz Band in *Hopkins*, Berg's band uses saxophones, jazz trumpets and trombones, piano, and a banjo, but differs with the inclusion of a sousaphone. The full notation of a jazz band in *Lulu* is an essential characteristic that aligns this opera with *Hopkins*. The instrumentation used is far greater than any of the diegetic combinations that Berg used in *Wozzeck*, which strongly suggests that he was compelled to increase the size of these forces to conform with popularized *Zeitoper* trends that have proven successful in other operas of the time.<sup>157</sup> However, Berg's jazz band was offstage, and he did not incorporate vocals, so he did not expand the imagery as explicitly as Brand had done. The band continues in the Rag-time indication until it changes into an English waltz which, although not strictly an Americanism, is nevertheless not the typical waltz that Berg employed in *Wozzeck* so abundantly. Directing a jazz band to play an English waltz further suggests his willingness to conform to *Zeitoper* paradigms. Dave Headlam noted that this English waltz was originally used as the tango music from Berg's concert aria for soprano and orchestra, *Der Wein*.<sup>158</sup> It is widely known that the aria was used by Berg as a study for *Lulu*, and that many jazz-related instrumentations and idioms in the aria found their way into the opera, which draws a parallel between Brand's use of the tango in *Hopkins* and Berg's adaptation of it as the English waltz in his opera. The jazz band stops playing, and after a transition, a Chorale is indicated, which leads back to the offstage jazz band and the Rag-time, now notated as a trio. This reprise is short, as Berg indicates in the score that "The musicians arrange themselves back into the orchestra. The music of the jazz band suddenly becomes inaudible."<sup>159</sup> The final forms presented in this scene, which closes act 1, are: a sextet, a sonata-like section characterized as a "Sonaten-Durchführung," the last sonata reprise, a brief duet in the quasi tempo of a gavotte, which leads into the gavotte proper, and the lento coda that ends the first act.

Act 2 opens with a few nondescript formal indications, until the entry of the Cavatina – another popular device of eighteenth-century opera and Italian bel canto tradition. The next significant section is Dr. Schön's five-strophe aria, which leads directly to the famous "Lied der Lulu." An arietta ensues, leading immediately into the opera's most significant section, which is punctuated by ostinato figures on both sides. The first 4-bar ostinato figure includes a fast curtain fall in its final 2 bars, signifying this as the first "curtain music."<sup>160</sup> This phrase leads into

<sup>156</sup>For a detailed discussion of the diegetic music in *Lulu*, see Derek R. STRYKOWSKI, "The Diegetic Music of Berg's *Lulu*: When Opera and Serialism Collide," *Journal of Musicological Research* 35/1 (2016), 1–22.

<sup>157</sup>For a detailed analysis of Berg's overall understanding and application of jazz theory and structure, see J. Bradford ROBINSON, "Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany: In Search of a Shimmy Figure," in *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic*, ed. by Bryan GILLIAM (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 129–134.

<sup>158</sup>Dave HEADLAM, *The Music of Alban Berg* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 212.

<sup>159</sup>"Die Musiker ordnen sich ins Orchester ein. Die Musik der Jazzband wird plötzlich unhörbar." BERG, *Lulu* [Full score], Acts I–II, 276.

<sup>160</sup>*Ibid.*, 499.



the Film Music Interlude (FMI), which at its center contains the all-important fermata that presents the opera's large-scale palindrome, and bisects the opera into two distinct halves: The action leads to the fermata, and then the reversal that, as in *Hopkins* (albeit without the palindromic effect), represents at once a complete reversal of fortunes that result in multiple deaths at the end of both operas. Indeed, as Alexandra Monchick notes, "[w]hile Brand built on musical conventions used by Wagner and his successors, his music and dramaturgy were also tied to silent film music practice."<sup>161</sup> This quote supports the *Zeitoper* ploy of incorporating silent films into opera as being applicable to both Brand and Berg. Berg (returning to *Lulu*) uses arrows to signify where each narrative event of the film takes place in the score. The FMI ends and the ostinato returns, this time in a 3-bar figure which coincides with the 3-bar curtain rise, framing the second instance of "curtain music."<sup>162</sup> Towards the end of the act, another melodrama occurs with prevalent *Sprechstimme*, and later on, spoken dialogues. A hymn ensues later, acting as the last distinct vocal presentation. There was a significant reduction in the preponderance of the old vocal forms after the palindrome, which suggests a diametric shift musically as well as narratively to the treatment of the score before the palindrome. This type of structural homogeneity between music and stage was seen in both *Wozzeck* and *Hopkins*, again referencing Berg's and Brand's sensitivity to their operas' theatrical needs as bearing an integral responsibility in the music.

The curtain rises on act 3 on the last eighth note offbeat of bar 11, with an arrow indicating that it is to begin rising with the accented note of the trumpets, and finish rising on the downbeat of bar 14.<sup>163</sup> Berg perpetuates the long-standing dramaturgical function of the curtain in this, the last operatic act of his career. The vocal form numbers of bygone eras begin with the first vocal ensemble (bars 26–82), which then leads into the concertante choral variation (the first choral variation), which also includes a return of the English waltz. The previous time Berg has incorporated an English waltz was during the performance of the jazz band in act 1. Although the band is not playing now, the presence of the alto saxophone in the orchestration provides a subtle allusion to that previous usage. This gives way to the second choral variation; the first intermezzo: "Lied des Mädchenhändlers;" a second intermezzo; a return to the "Lied der Lulu" from act 2; the third and fourth choral variations in succession; a return to the English waltz (with the saxophone still present); choral variations 5 to 12 in succession; the second vocal ensemble; a pantomime; a cadenza; recitative; parlando; cantabile; back to the recitative; then multiple sequences of the parlando and cantabile; followed by the third vocal ensemble, which is the final form that lasts to the end of the opening scene. The prevalent reintroduction of the vocal forms in act 3, scene 1 may constitute a large-scale recapitulation of the opera by reviving the vocal forms of the first act. Indeed, as Bennett notes, "Not until the third act of *Lulu* surfaced in the late 1970s was it clear that Berg had also used the structural device of recapitulation for psychological and dramatic inversion. Brand's opera contradicts George Perle's claim that in this respect *Lulu* 'had no precedent'; most of the last 20 min of *Hopkins* is a direct if extra-layered recapitulation of material heard earlier in the opera."<sup>164</sup> Perle himself elaborates on this latter

<sup>161</sup>MONCHICK, "German Silent Film and the 'Zeitoper,'" 214.

<sup>162</sup>BERG, *Lulu* [Full score], Acts I–II, 526.

<sup>163</sup>Alban BERG, *Lulu* [Full score], Act III, 652–653.

<sup>164</sup>BENNETT, "A Father for Lulu," 484.



point, while also drawing a parallel to Wagner: “The overall basis of formal unification is a series of recapitulative episodes, which become increasingly extensive as the work progresses, until in the final scene of the opera it dominates the material completely. In this respect *Lulu* represents a revolutionary elaboration of Wagner’s famous device, in *Tristan und Isolde*, of returning at the conclusion of the work to an extended musical episode of the preceding act.”<sup>165</sup> The curtain goes down on *Lulu* act 3, scene 1 with the accompanying stage direction: “Whereupon the groom threatens to burst out laughing, but is cut off from the falling curtain (and picked up by the music).”<sup>166</sup> Berg once again, like Brand, uses the curtain to advance a theatrical moment in the narrative by demonstrating the crucial interplay between the curtain, music, and action onstage. And like Brand in the scene where Hopkins and Nell are cut off from sinking onto the divan by the curtain, so too does Berg here use the curtain to create dramatic anticipation by denying visual confirmation, and letting the music depict what is happening behind the curtain. This event proceeds directly into the transitional orchestral variations, of which there are four, leading straight into the second and final scene. Scene 2 opens with the diegetic playing of the barrel organ on the street below Lulu’s attic room in London. Although incorporating no instruments associated with jazz, the use of the barrel organ, like the jazz band, is meant to enhance the theatrical symbolism of the scene, as Brand had also done frequently throughout *Hopkins* with his diegetic music.

The majority of scene 2 passes without the inclusion of vocal forms, much like act 2 following the palindrome, whereas the previous scene had been laden with formal vocal structures, similarly to the pre-palindrome scenes. However, some 200 bars later, a vocal quartet is introduced, which lasts for about 60 bars. The final hundred bars or so of the opera start with a cavatina that fluctuates rhythmically until the final formal presentation of the opera: a nocturne. Although this is not a vocal form, it is more evocatively associated with a character piece, but is primarily seen as a romantic device of the nineteenth century. Apart from that, its association with night is more symbolic for what is about to happen dramaturgically with the murders of both Lulu and the Countess Geschwitz. In the context of the opera’s larger homage to stylistic features of the past, yet with a primary emphasis on vocal forms, the implementation of a nocturne still conforms to the overall structural paradigm of the opera, and is perhaps more fittingly used at the tragic ending to denote the romanticized imagery of not just Lulu’s death, but what has come to be colloquially known as Geschwitz’s *Liebested*. Stylizing these features as a nocturne, therefore, seems most appropriate. In addition to that, there is no final curtain drop at the end of *Lulu*. The stage merely stays visible while the final two textless bars of music end in an ostinato figure, in which the last bar is a rhythmic mirror of the final bars of both act 1 and act 2. However, the closing music in those two previous acts is not ostinato figures, as there is no repetition until act 3, which has an additional bar of the figure, constituting more of a phrase. Such an ending also contrives a structural symmetry with *Wozzeck* and *Hopkins*, as all three operas end with ostinato figures, denoting temporal implications for all of them, alluding to their narrative continuation beyond what is presented onstage. It is another testament to Brand’s and Berg’s shared instinct for musical theater. As a final word on Bergian curtains, Kreuzer stated

<sup>165</sup>George PERLE, *The Operas of Alban Berg*, vol. 2: *Lulu* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 69.

<sup>166</sup>“Worauf der Groom in ein heftiges Gelächter auszubrechen droht, was aber vom fallenden Vorhang abgeschnitten (und von der Musik aufgegriffen) wird.” BERG, *Lulu* [Full score], 835.



that “Berg notated his curtains in the score like dynamic signs or other musical directions. He thus drew the logical consequence from the growing music-dramatic integration of the curtain, not only in close alignment with the music but also becoming part of the music itself, its agogic movements being subsumed into the musical flow and notation to such an extent that its physical manifestation remained secondary.”<sup>167</sup>

## 5. BERG’S PERSONAL VIEWS OF BRAND AND HOPKINS

After investigating various shared symbolic meanings in the text and music of the three operas that have been subjected to comparative scrutiny, it is helpful to provide a personal context for the reception of *Maschinist Hopkins* that Berg expressed in the orbit of the premiere of Brand’s opera. This information is valuable, because it depicts Berg’s inconsistent views of *Hopkins*, which are more telling in the aftermath of the analyses of the operas. This enhanced effectiveness will characterize how Berg’s initial support was supplanted by a derisive attitude that could be seen as a representation of his jealousy over *Hopkins*’ success, seemingly as performances of *Wozzeck* waned in favor of Brand’s newer opera. Furthermore, we saw how Berg’s prose was also subtly disparaging towards the aesthetic movement that *Hopkins* represented, further constituting an ideological rift between the two composers. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, Berg was initially supportive of *Hopkins* before the opera had achieved its widespread success. Indeed, early on in an undated recommendation to the ADMV (Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein), Berg wrote: “Brand is a composer independent of parties, position and unencumbered by material and personal worries. At present he is unknown, but after his opera *Maschinist Hopkins* is premiered in Duisburg he will be talked about with high regard. I believe that in recommending this young man, who is well known to me, music will have been well served.”<sup>168</sup>

Berg’s first mention of Brand was in a letter to Schoenberg dated November 6, 1928. At the time, Berg was on the jury of the ADMV festival, and complained to Schoenberg about the massive quantity of scores that he had to look through. Regarding Brand, he perfunctorily reported: “The Duisburger opera house will contribute *Maschinist Hopkins* by the Viennese Brand, of whom you will have heard (from Stein, with whom he studies, and from Hertzka, who considers the work very promising).”<sup>169</sup> As is frequently the case with Berg, the meaning of his words often goes deeper than their initial impression. Despite the fact that Brand was the most unknown composer of whom Berg reported, he was also the only composer he referred to by nationality, his teacher and, crucially, that his opera was praised by Emil Hertzka, the head of Universal Edition and Berg’s own publisher. It could scarcely have escaped Berg’s intuition that due to this support *Hopkins* could ultimately become a rival to *Wozzeck* in opera houses. However, it was still five months away from its world premiere, so Berg had seemingly chosen to maintain an aloof attitude so as not to presume anything prematurely.

The next instance of intrigue is a letter that Berg wrote to Brand on July 24, 1929, three months after *Hopkins*’ premiere. Its cordial yet somewhat dutiful tone belies Berg’s true opinion,

<sup>167</sup>KREUZER, *Curtain, Gong, Steam*, 102.

<sup>168</sup>Quoted in BENNETT, “A Father for Lulu,” 481.

<sup>169</sup>BRAND, Hailey, and HARRIS, *The Berg–Schoenberg Correspondence*, 376–377.



which is more transparent and honest in other letters to his friends. Regardless of this, reproducing it in full is a revealing indication of Berg's deceptiveness:

My dear Mr. Brand,

now that the premiere is long over, and the much stricter examination of the music festival has been passed so brilliantly, you can also see from the newspapers what a great success your "Machinist" has had beyond Duisburg. It is time for me to congratulate you too. Perhaps the last to do so, but no less sincerely, congratulations. After everything that came to my attention, I have the impression that it really turned out as we, your Viennese friends, had hoped for your work, which was hardly finished at the time – and hoped for you too, dear Mr. Brand.

Today, however, I also hope that this tremendous event has also made you mentally well, that where there was only grief and pain in the last few months of your life, joy and happiness have returned again.

I tell you all of this on behalf of my wife. Greetings and congratulations again from both of us. Yours,  
Alban Berg

P. S. Hopefully you are in the country! A card from there with a hint of what you are working on would make me very happy.<sup>170</sup>

Berg's letter to Brand is a standard, congratulatory letter that in no way expresses his personal view of *Hopkins*, but rather only his awareness of the success that the opera has enjoyed. The personal reference to Brand's mental health is in conjunction with the death of Brand's wife, which occurred just prior to *Hopkins*' premiere. Brand's opera was certainly on Berg's mind, as just two weeks later, he sent two successive letters to important confidantes where his true opinion pushes through the duplicitous veil of public conventionality. Conversely, these communications to Soma Morgenstern and Theodor Adorno put his letter to Brand in a similar context of the subtlety of his prose essays where he guarded his opinion, but presented hints of the truth. The subterfuge of his letter to Brand only becomes evident in light of what he wrote to other people.

Berg's true opinion of *Hopkins* emerged in a letter to Soma Morgenstern, dated August 6, 1929. Berg begins by saying:

But I also had another experience during these summer weeks. Namely, once again the experience of being right when it is no longer a joy. I am referring to the experience of "Maschinist Hopkins."

<sup>170a</sup> "Mein lieber Herr Brand, nun wo nicht nur die Uraufführung länget vorüber ist, sondern die viel strengere Prüfung des Musikfestes so glänzend bestanden wurde, man wo man aber auch aus den Zeitungen ersehen kann, welch großen, weit über Duisburg hinausgehenden Erfolg Ihr 'Maschinist' hatte, ist es auch für mich Zeit, Ihnen zu gratulieren. Für mich vielleicht letzten, aber nicht minder herzlicher Aufrichtigkeit sich aussprechenden Gratulanten. Ich habe nach all dem, was mir darüber bekannt wurde, den Eindruck, daß es wirklich so ausgefallen ist, wie wir Wiener Freunde es für Ihr Werk, das damals noch kaum fertig war, erhofften – und auch für Sie erhofften, lieber Herr Brand. Heute hoffe ich aber auch, daß Ihnen dieses so gewaltige Ereignis auch seelisch wohlgetan hat, daß dort, wo in den letzten Monaten Ihres Lebens nur Trauer und Schmerz wohnten, nun auch wieder Freude und Glücksempfinden eingezogen ist. Ich sage Ihnen das alles auch im Namen meiner Frau. Seien Sie herzlichst begrüßt und nochmals beglückwünscht von uns beiden. Ihr, Alban Berg P. S. Sie sind hoffentlich auf dem Land! Eine Karte von dort mit einer Andeutung, was Sie arbeiten und sonst würde mich sehr freuen." Alban Berg's letter (I.N. 217.436) to Max Brand, Handschriftensammlung der Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Thomas Brezinka for providing me with a reproduction of this unpublished letter, which I believe is the first time it has been quoted in full.



So this work has actually achieved the success that I prophesized for it – a prophecy based on my knowledge of audiences and their current desires, and of the way in which this “work” met these filthy desires in every respect and in the most skillful of ways. You, who are well acquainted with the theater and the newspaper, will no longer claim that this is merely a provincial success bridged by U. E. Remember that even the Frankfurt newspaper wholeheartedly castigated the other filth of this opera week. From this you may also see, dear Soma (of which I could never convince you in an argument), what is possible as an opera text, about whose content and dramatic conception every music reviewer and music writer actually speaks in a serious and not an ironic, let alone destructive tone, and furthermore, that your rock-solid assumption that the success of this opera will be due to the jazz music it contains (you know what I mean) is wrong, and my assumption, even in such details, that the music was just as worthless, is, like the rest, even less inspired than some of the other lyrical or dramatic passages. [After citing further newspaper reviews of *Hopkins*]: Which proves – even if there is no performance – that even a stage of the stature of the theater seems to perceive this Brand nonsense as proper theater and finds it suitable for the most spoiled audiences in the world. [After citing *Hopkins*’ performances all over Germany]: So it happens that I am not only right, but also at my expense (from which you alone can see that I am not pleased at all), that those theaters which have for years scheduled “Wozzeck” [and are now performing *Hopkins*], also theaters in Frankfurt and Moscow again this year, must now retract in favor of this trash.<sup>171</sup>

Berg ends his diatribe in this letter by stating his belief that *Hopkins* will only be remembered for five quarters (“Fünfviertel”) of a year; between one and five years for the Jonnys (*Jonny spielt auf*) and the *Three Penny Opera*; and 500 years for Schoenberg’s operas.<sup>172</sup> Morgenstern’s reply on August 18, 1929 is placating to Berg, but he interestingly notes to the composer: “Incidentally, it will certainly hurt you to hear that people in Germany believe that you considered the work and the author [*Hopkins* and Brand] to be important. I was able to convince three people

<sup>171</sup>“Aber auch eine andere Erfahrung habe ich in diesen Sommerwochen gemacht. Nämlich wiedereinmal die Erfahrung, Recht zu behalten, wenn es keine Freude mehr ist. Ich meine die Erfahrung im Falle ‘Maschinist Hopkins.’ Dieses Machwerk hat also tatsächlich den Erfolg erzielt, den ich ihm prophezeit habe, prophezeit auf Grund meiner Kenntniss von Publikum und seinen augenblicklichen Wünschen, und von der Art, wie in diesem ‘Werk’ diesen dreckigen Wünschen in jeder Beziehung und auf geschickteste Weise Rechnung getragen wird. Du, der Du Dich in Dingen des Theaters und der Zeitung doch gut auskennst, wirst jetzt nicht mehr behaupten, daß es sich hier lediglich um einen von der U. E. aufgezäumten Provinzerfolg handelt, der in Nichts zusammenfällt. Bedenke, daß selbst die Frankfurter Zeitung, die anderen Dreck dieser Opernwoche rückhaltlos geißelt. Daraus magst Du, lieber Soma, aber auch ersehen (wovon ich Dich im Wortstreit nie überzeugen konnte), was als Operntext möglich ist, über dessen Inhalt und dramatische Konzeption tatsächlich jeder Musikrezensent und Musikschriftsteller in ernsthaftem und nicht etwa in ironischem, geschweige vernichtendem Ton referiert, und weiters, daß Deine felsenfeste Annahme, der Erfolg dieser Oper werde der darin enthaltenen Jazzmusik (Du weißt, was ich meine) zu verdanken sein, falsch ist, und meine Annahme, selbst in solchen Details, die richtige war daß diese Musik ebenso wertlos ist, wie die übrige, ja noch weniger inspiriert als die mancher anderen lyrischen oder dramatischen Stellen. Womit – selbst wenn es nicht zur Aufführung kommt – bewiesen ist, daß selbst eine auf solcher Höhe des Theaters stehende Bühne diesen Brand’schen Blödsinn als richtiggehendes Theater zu empfinden scheint und es geeignet findet, damit dem verwöhntesten Publikum der Welt. So geschieht dies nicht nur, damit ich Recht behalte, sondern auch auf meine Rechnung (woraus Du allein ersehen kannst, daß mich dieses Rechthaben gar nicht freut) indem ausgerechnet in Frankfurt und Moskau der dort seit Jahren und auch heuer wieder angekündigte ‘Wozzeck’ zugunsten jenes Schundes zurücktreten muß.” Soma MORGENSTERN, *Alban Berg und seine Idole: Erinnerungen und Briefe* (Germany: zu Klampen Verlag, 2009), 225–228.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid., 228–229.



who asked me about it that it was not true.<sup>173</sup> Berg's reply on August 25, 1929 to Morgenstern's above comment now borders on the childish, referring to *Hopkins* as a "fart" ("Furz"), and ridicules a positive review of *Hopkins* as having been written in "one of those major journals (for excrement and flatulence)", ("großen Fachzeitschriften (für Exkrememente und Blähungen)").<sup>174</sup> Berg goes on to lament further over *Hopkins*' widespread fame beyond Germany, noting that "[w]ell, of course, directing options, machines, jazz elements, crime, social issues, and other things are part of making the fart [*Hopkins*] so fragrant to the contemporary world."<sup>175</sup> When addressing Morgenstern's mention of Berg's having publicly supported *Hopkins* at the festival before its premiere, the composer somewhat smugly brushed it off to the effect that it was of little consequence and that he just as easily might not have done so.<sup>176</sup>

Berg's only other letter that presents an element of his disdain for *Hopkins* was written to Adorno on August 8, 1929, two days after his first diatribe to Morgenstern. Berg did not go on such a tirade this time, but mockingly referred to "Einstein's hymn to 'Der Maschinist Hopkins.'" Incidentally, your Frankfurt also chooses to put on 'Der Maschinist Hopkins' instead of the repeatedly announced 'Wozzeck' – just like [theatrical directors in] Moscow, who do not find the latter sufficiently revolutionary."<sup>177</sup> The "hymn" that Berg referred to is the positive review that Alfred Einstein gave for *Hopkins* in Frankfurt. The composer again complained of *Wozzeck* having been overlooked in favor of *Hopkins*, and interestingly called his own piece – seemingly sarcastically – as not revolutionary enough, where it will be inferred from his prose that Berg distinctly did not compose *Wozzeck* to be revolutionary.

From his initially supportive recommendation, to his detached tone to Schoenberg, as well as his fiery disdain to Morgenstern, and finally in his sarcastic mention to Adorno, it is plainly obvious that Berg grew to despise *Hopkins* musically and aesthetically, and was deeply jealous of the popularity that it was enjoying, which came at the expense of *Wozzeck*, in Berg's view. Nick Chadwick concurs with this in a review of a book where Berg's draft letter to Morgenstern was quoted, saying that: "Berg's jealousy of the sensational success of Max Brand's opera *Maschinist Hopkins* found expression in an irritable letter to Soma Morgenstern. Berg had recommended the work for performance but was clearly piqued over its extraordinary success, which for a time overtook that of *Wozzeck*."<sup>178</sup> Berg's general hostility towards *Hopkins* is nothing new in the reception of rival compositions. Indeed, the closest parallels to Berg/Brand can be seen a century earlier when Wagner crusaded against Meyerbeer. *Zeitoper*n, like Meyerbeer's French grand operas, were opulent stage spectacles that were musically somewhat simplistic and straightforward. Wagner rebelled against Meyerbeer because he found the latter's operas superficial and

<sup>173</sup>"Übrigens wird es Dich gewiß schmerzen, zu hören, daß man in Deutschland glaubt, Du hieltest Werk und Verfasser für bedeutend. Ich habe drei Menschen, die mich darnach gefragt haben, überzeugen können daß es nicht wahr sei." Ibid., 230.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid., 231–232.

<sup>175</sup>"Na ja natürlich gehören Regiemöglichkeiten, Maschinen, Jazzelemente, Kriminalität, Soziales und sonst noch einiges dazu, daß der Furz so wohlriechend für die Mitwelt wurde." Ibid., 233.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid., 232.

<sup>177</sup>Theodor W. Adorno and Alban Berg: *Correspondences 1925–1935*, ed. by Henri LONIZ, transl. by Wieland HOBAN (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 156.

<sup>178</sup>Nick CHADWICK, "Alban Berg: *Zeitumstände, Lebenslinien*. By Herwig Knaus and Wilhelm Sinkovicz," *Music & Letters* 92/2 (May 2011), 313.



pandering. Berg was seen by many (including Kurt Weill), as the twentieth-century culmination of Wagner, and it is clear that Wagner and Berg were aesthetically aligned in their theories of opera, despite Berg's trying to incorporate elements of *Zeitoper* into *Lulu*. The point is that composers of the heavier opera as music drama opposed popular and simplified trends that they found to be vapid and insufferably favored over their own serious operas. Wagner and Berg were both deeply incensed by this, but Berg's mastery of subterfuge made his genuine views nearly impenetrable to public scrutiny.

Berg's honesty in his reception of Brand's opera is significant for the perspective and context that it casts after having analyzed the intrinsic ways in which Brand's opera resembled Berg's own operas. That he never once mentioned any of these, despite having been familiar with the score and seeing at least one staged performance, attests to the strong emotional reaction that he had when viewing Brand's opera as a direct threat to his own operatic renown and financial wellbeing. It is therefore even more curious that Berg would send such a letter of support to Brand himself, which can now be viewed as a contrivance of pure fiction on Berg's part. As Bennett noted: "Berg knew Brand's opera well; he even possessed a copy of the Universal Edition vocal score with a dedication to him from the composer. Berg's initial perusal of Brand's score coincided with his decision to start work on *Lulu*. Just as the film sequence in Weill's *Royal Palace* (performed seven times in Berlin in 1927 and revived for two performances in Essen two years later) anticipates closely Berg's use of film in *Lulu*, so do large parts of Brand's score prefigure almost uncannily events and treatments in *Lulu*."<sup>179</sup> Nevertheless, these personal associations only add value and depth to the analyses of the operas and their composers' prose works regarding their theories of opera and the aesthetic culture of their time, bringing attention to the constantly-fluctuating nuance of overarching consonance and dissonance between these two composers.

## CONCLUSION: HOPKINS AS EXPRESSIONISM – LULU AS ZEITOPER

If the Weimar era has signified anything, it is that the aesthetics of art are highly volatile, divisive, and unpredictable. Indeed, the interwar years were replete with cultural epochs that defined a variety of approaches in expressing social and moral paradigms of the time. The two great movements of this era that sought to represent opposing ideals within this cultural framework were Expressionism and *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The latter was a reaction to the former, and strove to steer art in a different direction. The three operas that comprised this study – *Wozzeck*, *Maschinist Hopkins*, and *Lulu* – are generally associated with one of these movements (the sole exception being *Lulu*, which is harder to classify), despite much literature that has advocated the possibility for a cross-pollination of sorts. Certainly, where past historians have applied micro categorizations, the operas of Brand and Berg have demonstrated that they constitute a spectrum of application that was served first and foremost by the needs of producing good theater, and only secondarily as a reflection of current trends. Both composers were doubtlessly influenced by current trends, but they incorporated elements into their operas that were unorthodox for the broad categories in which they are generally placed. The theoretical prose of both composers illustrated just how attuned they were to the operatic lineage of what

<sup>179</sup>BENNETT, "A Father for Lulu," 484.





they explicitly or implicitly sought to evolve in their stage works. The logical question is now: To what extent were these operas indicative of their generally-opposing cultural movements? *Wozzeck* is less stimulating for this discussion as it was firmly ensconced in both the time and archetype of Expressionism before *Neue Sachlichkeit* gained noticeable traction. *Hopkins* and *Lulu* were conceived and composed when Expressionism had already been supplanted by the new objectivity, yet for these composers it was not as simple as forgoing an aesthetic ethos that had been with them (and particularly with Berg) for a longer period of time, as they both made clear in their prose texts. No, they would appropriate rather than rebuild to ensure commercial success as much as artistic integrity.

*Lulu* is a far more famous and frankly better opera than *Hopkins*. No one would argue against this assertion. Therefore, the discourse of Berg's operatic swansong has ensued more or less perpetually even from the composer's lifetime. However, to understand what *Lulu* may constitute, it is first necessary to draw attention to what it is not: namely, another *Wozzeck*. Douglas Jarman effectively summarizes what the present study has presented in terms of distinguishing Berg's two operas musically and symbolically. To this end, Jarman states:

The musical design of *Lulu*, like that of *Wozzeck*, is based upon traditional formal structures. In *Wozzeck* each scene consists of a self-contained, "absolute" musical form, each act of the opera consisting of five such related forms (a cycle of character pieces in act 1, a cycle of inventions in act 3 and a five-movement symphonic structure in act 2); in *Lulu*, on the other hand, each scene consists of a sequence of numbers of a kind traditionally associated with pre-Wagnerian opera (aria, arietta, cavatina, canzonetta and so on), many of the numbers being labelled with their appropriate title in the score of the opera and linked to one another by passages entitled "Recitative." In *Lulu* Berg is attempting something quite different from and far more difficult to achieve than that which he attempted in *Wozzeck*. In *Wozzeck* the listener is forced to identify with and involve himself in the fate of *Wozzeck*. In *Lulu* the overwhelming emotional impact of *Wozzeck* is replaced by something more complex and more deeply disturbing. Far from encouraging the spectator to identify with the characters involved, the structure of the work is designed to alienate the spectator and to encourage him to view the events and to consider their significance without emotional involvement. Whereas *Wozzeck* is overtly concerned with the inhumanity and the injustice of society, *Lulu* is primarily concerned with personal, and only incidentally with social, hypocrisy.<sup>180</sup>

This assessment is not only crucial in distinguishing the large-scale differences between Berg's two operas, but also in emphasizing how that which makes them different, in equal measure, makes them similar to *Hopkins*. Indeed, the hyper-emotional nature of *Hopkins*'s characters incites sympathy, compassion, or even loathing, as the audience grapples with the dramatic, psychologically-laden implications of the narrative. These are not tenets that are readily associated with *Zeitoper*, but rather with Expressionism. Furthermore, Jarman states that in *Lulu* Berg forces the audience to judge the narrative without emotional involvement. This is quite the objectification that renders the overall attitude less psycho-tumultuous and more in line with *Zeitoper*. However, this should not suggest that *Lulu* is devoid of psychological turmoil – it is not –, but it is indicative of Jarman's structural schematic that separates it from the paradigmatic focus that those ideals received in *Wozzeck*.

<sup>180</sup>JARMAN, *The Music of Alban Berg*, 200–201 and 234–235.



Jarman further makes the subtle case of *Lulu's* *Zeitoper* persuasion by focusing on its moral scope. He again reiterates that “The aesthetics of *Wozzeck* are those of nineteenth-century operas and of the Wagnerian music drama; his allegiance is to the Wagnerian aesthetic.”<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, he continues, “*Lulu* has much more in common with the music of Weill and Brecht’s ‘epic opera.’ As a man of the theatre Berg could not afford to ignore, and could not fail to be interested in, what was happening in the ‘new opera.’”<sup>182</sup> By this, Jarman is referring to *Zeitoper*, but this passage could be applied to Brand as well, for as a kindred man of the theater, he too could scarcely be disinterested in what was happening in opera, and more specifically what was good theater. This phenomenon enhances the notion that just as Berg took notice of effective trends in new opera, so too was Brand aware of the Expressionistic elements that made *Wozzeck* such effective and comprehensive theater. In reference to his prior statement that *Lulu* took emotionality out of the equation, Jarman now draws attention to how this ploy explicitly “amounts to a reversal of the Expressionist aesthetic.”<sup>183</sup> Jarman saw *Lulu* in the context of Weill’s desire to ensure that what was seen on the operatic stage was not “real life.” This objectification was promoted by depicting absurdist scenarios that could never be construed as symbolizing real life. This desire was not just shared by Brand, but was even developed further as Brand went so far as to directly state in the final scene direction of *Hopkins* just how absurd and unbelievable the ambient setting of the final factory scene is meant to be. Berg, therefore, took this *Zeitoper* tenet, which he could have noticed in Weill or Brand due to his intimate familiarity with both (despite the fact that it is known that Berg was directly familiar with the score of *Hopkins*, but that there is no indication that he knew Weill’s music beyond attending rehearsals and performances), and incorporated it into the narrative and dramaturgical fabric of *Lulu*. As many Bergian scholars have stated in the past, *Lulu* is an opera within an opera: It makes the audience deliberately aware that we are disconnected observers by speaking to us directly in the Prologue, and then inviting us to bear witness to the story that is about to unfold. This further objectifies *Lulu* as being non-real, and renders it in closer proximity to *Hopkins* than to *Wozzeck*.

Furthermore, unlike Weill, Berg and Brand share distinct Wagnerian implications that Weill could not fathom to perpetuate even satirically. *Wozzeck* was highly contingent on Wagnerian leitmotif structures; *Hopkins* referenced *Tristan* and *Parsifal* strongly through associative imagery regarding love and religiosity, and the *Ring* to a lesser extent with some idiosyncrasies in the character of Hopkins; and *Lulu*, which incorporated its own famous *Liebstedt* at the end with the dying Geschwitz proclaiming her eternal love for Lulu. All of this signifies that although Weill was certainly a man of the theater too, he did not draw from the operatic lineage of the past – with particular emphasis on Wagner – as Berg and Brand did.

Arguments have been made, though, for *Hopkins*’ generalized symmetry with the tenets of *Wozzeck*. As Frank Mehring notes about Brand: “The composer also utilized Expressionist techniques of distortion and surreal visualizations of inner experiences, especially in the scenes where technology appears as a threat to the human imagination.”<sup>184</sup> Indeed, as Susan Cook

<sup>181</sup>JARMAN, *Lulu*, 94.

<sup>182</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>184</sup>MEHRING, “Technology in *Zeitoper*,” 177.



stated earlier, *Zeitoper* are meant to be popular expressions of comedy and parody, and *Hopkins* with its dark imagery of hatred, violence, prostitution, and above all murder, aligns it with the Expressionist bleakness of *Wozzeck* more than any *Zeitoper* of the time. Martin Elste adds to this by noting that “[d]espite all the external modernity and topicality – features of the *Zeitoper* – *Maschinist Hopkins* is also a late romantic offshoot. Brand’s music leaves no doubt about the emotional representation. Composed tonally, this is music after Wagner and not against Wagner. There is no humor in *Maschinist Hopkins*. Here, the treachery of possession and love is a constant theme. Every note of topical light music is presented on the stage, and serves to illustrate the scene.”<sup>185</sup>

The final remaining question now is: Did Brand succeed in establishing machines operatically in the way that he had wanted? In the decades following the premiere of *Hopkins*, when Brand’s opera had become a farcical footnote in general *Zeitoper* surveys, one would think that there were no examples of influence on posterity stemming from Brand’s original theories. Likewise, Berg also quickly fell out of fashion in the immediate decades after his death when total serialism looked more to Webern as a forbearer. However, Berg made a resounding resurgence, and all of his mature works are now firmly established in the standard repertoire. *Hopkins*, though, remains in near-total obscurity. Nevertheless, the groundbreaking theories that Brand put forth could be seen not through specific operatic compositions that mimic vestiges of *Hopkins*, but rather in the way that more famous operas are now staged and produced. The practice of representing musical events via mechanical ploys on stage was adopted by directors in the twenty-first century, seemingly independently from Brand’s reformist inclinations.

At the end of her book, Gundula Kreuzer describes the 2010–2012 production of the *Ring* at the Metropolitan Opera by the Canadian director Robert Lepage. The ensuing discussion validates the Wagnerian technologies that Kreuzer had been advocating throughout, but the manner in which she described various elements of the production’s mechanization are profoundly referential to Brand’s operatic theories. Indeed, she notes that:

Lepage unambiguously sided with cinematic media, sporting ample video projections and occasional mimed flashbacks while taking literally Wagner’s stage directions. All the while, colorful projections enhance the machinery’s geometric suggestions of Wagner’s natural settings, thus completing its presentation (or concealment) as medium. The idea to populate the stage with one enormous machine had its radical appeal. We might, for instance, consider that machine a technical supplement not to realize the *Ring* but to enrich Wagner’s theoretical concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Twisting and turning, the machine seems to show that it is merely a matter of perspective who dominates and who is dominated; that even Wotan is only a puppet in the machine’s grand theater. Lepage thereby draws attention to the fact that the master narrator of this *Ring* is not the composer and his music but the director and his technology. Lepage made stagehands operate them manually: humans became implements of the machine. The videos themselves sometimes let anthropomorphic

<sup>185</sup>“Bei aller äußerlichen Modernität und Aktualität – Merkmalen der *Zeitoper* – ist *Maschinist Hopkins* auch ein spätromantischer Ausläufer. Brands Musik läßt in dem an Gefühlsdarstellung keinen Zweifel. Tonal komponiert, ist dies Musik nach Wagner und nicht gegen Wagner. Komik gibt es bei *Maschinist Hopkins* nicht. Hier ist der Verrat an Besitz und Liebe durchgängiges Thema. Jeder Ton aktueller Unterhaltungsmusik ist quasi Musik auf der Bühne und dient der Illustration der Szene.” ELSTE, “Maschinelle Menschen,” 545.



shapes emerge from a torrent of digital imagery: simulated flames may momentarily take the form of miniature bodies.<sup>186</sup>

These descriptions of Lepage's production are replete with identical imagery both to *Hopkins* and Brand's theoretical advocacy: Video projections, an enormous machine, and anthropomorphic imagery relate to *Hopkins's* staging, whereas humans appearing as subservient to the machines is a concept taken right out of the narrative of Brand's opera. Furthermore, to name this practice as an enrichment of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* theory is also in alignment with Brand's overall synthesis of music and the mechanical stage. From all of this, it becomes apparent just how applicable Brand's theories have become nearly a century later.

The fact that Lepage or other directors are most likely oblivious to Brand's advocacy of such techniques in the 1920s is incidental to the practice itself. Unlike Wagner, Brand never implicitly named himself as the individual who was meant to enact his theories. Instead, he presented his views as a way forward for the genre of opera by observing the general aesthetic values of his time, and surmising that mechanizing opera was the logical evolutionary step, as if it was an inevitability as much as a hope for progress. In that sense, Brand's work and ideology should be seen as a success. It is impossible to know what would have happened to *Zeitoper* as a whole had the National Socialists not come to power and banned all tonally-advanced music. Perhaps Brand would have succeeded in stringing together more operas like *Hopkins* that would have consolidated his worth as a composer beyond a single, fleeting success. This did not happen, though, and the *Zeitoper* died in 1933 and was never revived. In truth, *Maschinist Hopkins* was never good enough to stand on its own next to Wagner and Berg. Yet, to call its composer untalented would be as much of an injustice as placing Wagner's operatic legacy solely in the hands of his earliest stage attempts with *Die Feen* and *Das Liebesverbot*. Granted, Brand went on to compose more operas after *Hopkins*, but the circumstances of life and tragedy had diminished their composer's powers to such an extent that they can hardly be considered as coming from the same mind that conceived and created *Maschinist Hopkins*. Brand, like Berg, looked to the past for inspiration to create for the future. If Brand's music is not up to the challenge of standing the test of time, then it has a fitting existence in the mechanical stagings of at least Wagner, allowing that great German composer from whom so many have drawn inspiration to experience a renewed viability in today's mechanical/technical world in no small part thanks to the revolutionary imagination of Max Brand.

<sup>186</sup>KREUZER, *Curtain, Gong, Steam*, 227, 230, 232, and 235.

