

**Siegfried Matthus' Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani and Wind**

**Instruments –**

*A new transcription of a concerto in the context of East Germany and  
2019.*

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## Abstract

In 1983 the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra performed the world premiere of Siegfried Matthus' Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani, and Orchestra, written for the orchestra's 100th anniversary and its Principal Trumpet Konradin Groth and Principal Timpanist Oswald Vogler. The East German composer Matthus was one of very few artists with unhindered access to the Western World. He is until today one of Germany's most performed contemporary composers. Interviews with the composer and time witness Rainer Auerbach provide insider information about the unique historical circumstances during the creation and premiere of this work. This thesis researches the symbolic and historical significance of Siegfried Matthus' concerto and his work in general. Matthus is found to be a successful example of the existence of a timeless music scene and exceptional artistic infrastructure in the German Democratic Republic, despite the country's ideological limitations before the unification with West Germany in 1990. Sergio Ortíz wrote a transcription of Matthus's concerto for Wind Instruments to grant broader access to this work, especially in the Americas. The composer authorized his new version. Its Canadian and American premiere in Montreal, Quebec, was performed on February 2, 2019, by the author on trumpet, Fabrice Marandola on timpani and the McGill Wind Orchestra under Alain Cazes.

En 1983, l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Berlin a présenté la première mondiale du Concerto pour trompette, timbales et d'orchestre de Siegfried Matthus. Matthus avait écrit ce Concerto pour le centième anniversaire de l'Orchestre et pour son trompette solo Konradin Groth et son timbalier solo Oswald Vogler. Matthus, un compositeur d'origine est-allemande, était l'un des rares artistes bénéficiant d'un accès sans encombre au monde occidental. Jusqu'à aujourd'hui, il est l'un des compositeurs contemporains allemands dont la musique est la plus jouée. Des entrevues avec le compositeur et témoin de l'époque Rainer Auerbach nous offrent des informations privilégiées sur les circonstances historiques uniques entourant la création et la présentation de la première de cette œuvre. Cette thèse porte sur la signification symbolique et historique du concerto de Siegfried Matthus et de l'ensemble de son œuvre. Matthus est un exemple évocateur de l'existence d'une scène musicale intemporelle et d'une infrastructure artistique exceptionnelle dans la République démocratique allemande, en dépit des contraintes idéologiques du pays avant sa réunification avec l'Allemagne de l'Ouest en 1990. Sergio Ortíz a transcrit le concerto de Matthus pour les instruments à vent pour la rendre plus accessible, particulièrement dans les Amériques. Le compositeur a autorisé cette nouvelle version. Sa première canadienne et nord-américaine a été présentée le 2 février 2019 par l'auteur à la trompette, Fabrice Marandola aux timbales et l'Orchestre d'instruments à vent de McGill sous Alain Cazes.

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My special thanks are extended to the composer Siegfried Matthus, who unconditionally provided all necessary information and materials, opened his house for a passionate conversation about his work and approved the new transcription of this composition.

Many thanks to Rainer Auerbach, for his particular time-travel testimony about the arts in East Germany, and his wisdom about music and life. My acknowledgment goes to Konradin Groth and Hannes Läubin, who both performed the world and GDR premieres of Matthus' trumpet and timpani concerto and never stopped to inspire me with their art. A particular acknowledgment goes to Sergio Ortíz for his vision and sonorous imagination, creating the new transcription of Matthus' concerto.

Without the unconditional support of my wife and children during the months of absence, this research would not have been possible. Last but not least, I want to thank my parents, who gave me a very happy childhood under very limited and politically challenging circumstances.

I dedicate this research to all my teachers.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Leipzig, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1981

On December 1st, 1981 a historical performance took place at the *Großer Saal* of the Gewandhaus in Leipzig<sup>1</sup>: The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (BPhO) gave their first and only concert in the German Democratic Republic (GDR).<sup>2</sup> Herbert von Karajan, the orchestra's chief conductor for life, lead the performance of that evening. The program consisted of Robert Schumann's Symphony number 4 in D minor, op. 120 and Richard Strauss' Alpine Symphony, op. 64.

The musicians of the world-famous orchestra had arrived on the same day in busses from West Berlin. Apart from officials of the socialist party, the public had no access to the backstage area, except for some musicians, among them the Gewandhauskapellmeister Kurt Masur and the composer Siegfried Matthus.<sup>3</sup> The latter had been a member of the West Berlin and Munich Academies of the Arts since the late seventies, which had opened him the impassable East-West border. His successful and productive writing as well as his constant presence in the West German music scene had brought him frequent commissions from renowned orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic. In 1981 Matthus had been commissioned to compose a work for the orchestra's 100th-anniversary celebration starting in 1982.<sup>4</sup> In this context, Oswald Vogler, the principal timpanist of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, had approached Matthus to write a

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<sup>1</sup> [German: grand hall of the Gewandhaus concert hall]

<sup>2</sup> Richter, R. (2017) Als Herbert von Karajan im Gewandhaus war. *MDR Klassik*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rundfunkschaetze.de/mdr-klassik/mdr-rundfunkchor/09-schallplattenaufnahmen/09-04-karajan/rolf-richter-der-chor-ist-das-beste-an-leipzig/>

<sup>3</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>4</sup> Matthus, 2019

concerto for him, a concerto for timpani and orchestra.<sup>5</sup> Matthus was not sure: “I am honest, I was afraid to write a concerto only for solo-timpani, I had my doubts. It had to be for timpani and something else, for timpani solo I was not brave enough, not yet.”<sup>6</sup> This “something else” was decided during the earlier mentioned concert of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in Leipzig. Richard Strauss’ Alpine Symphony is a work that engages the brass section in abundance. Listening to Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra principal trumpet Konradin Groth playing the first trumpet part inspired Matthus to write a concerto for trumpet, timpani, and orchestra. He approached Groth backstage, who was enthusiastic about the idea.<sup>7</sup>

During the following year, Groth visited Matthus several times in East Berlin. The world-premiere of Matthus’ concerto on January 18th, 1983, in the West-Berlin Philharmonie, was the result of this collaboration. Charles Dutoit conducted the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Oswald Vogler on timpani and Konradin Groth on trumpet were the soloists.

## 1.2. Leipzig, October 9<sup>th</sup> 1989

On October 9th, 1989, the Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig performed a concert under its chief conductor Kurt Masur, which later has been remembered as the *Historisches Konzert am 9. Oktober 1989*<sup>8</sup>. While the orchestra was playing, protesters were shouting “*Wir sind das Volk*” [We are the people] on the streets of Leipzig and in front of the

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<sup>5</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>6</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>7</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>8</sup> [The historic concert on October 9<sup>th</sup> 1989] Masur, K., Männel, A. & Mehlig, K. (1990). *Wir Sind Das Volk · Historisches Konzert Am 9. Oktober 1989*. Retrieved from: <https://www.discogs.com/Gewandhausorchester-Leipzig-Kurt-Masur-Armin-M%C3%A4nnel-Karl-Mehlig-Wir-Sind-Das-Volk-Historisches-Konzert/release/6606031>

city's prestigious concert hall, the Gewandhaus.<sup>9</sup> The protests of that day were the biggest mass protest in the GDR since the 1950s and the most significant uprising in a socialist country since the Prague Spring in 1968.<sup>10</sup> More than 80,000 people had come together and were walking through the city's streets, observed by the East German police and Army, ready to strike.<sup>11</sup> This day in Leipzig had a significant impact on the events of the following month, not only in Germany. It led to the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th, 1989, and thus to the end of the 40-year existence of the German Democratic Republic.<sup>12</sup> The collapse of the GDR accelerated the demise of the Eastern European Socialist Bloc.

One of the works performed during the concert on that night in Leipzig was Siegfried Matthus' concerto for trumpet, timpani, and orchestra.

### 1.3. Separated Germany

2019 will see the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. This monument, which separated West Berlin from East Berlin and the German Democratic Republic, lasted from August 13th, 1961 until November 9th, 1989 and received by far more media attention than the inner-German border between the two German Republics. The Berlin Wall became the most famous symbol of separated Germany. It exposed two opposed political systems and two different philosophical approaches to life; it drew a line

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<sup>9</sup> Curry, A. (2009). 'We Are the People' A Peaceful Revolution in Leipzig. *Spiegel Online*. Retrieved from <https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/we-are-the-people-a-peaceful-revolution-in-leipzig-a-654137.html>

<sup>10</sup> Canby, P. (2018). The Day the Soviets Arrived to Crush the Prague Spring, in Rarely Seen Photos. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/the-day-the-soviets-arrived-to-crush-the-prague-spring-in-rarely-seen-photos>

<sup>11</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>12</sup> [The Berlin Wall falls on Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 1989]



between two countries, which developed a completely different understanding and development of culture and art.

Political doctrines, including the arts, ruled most aspects of life in East Germany.<sup>13</sup> In the German Democratic Republic music had been composed and widely consumed in remarkable quantities and surprising variety, continuing a historical tradition in performance numbers, which are without comparison until today.<sup>14</sup>



Image 1: Poster of BPhO concert in Leipzig, December 1, 1981  
[with permission of Konradin Groth, private Archive]

<sup>13</sup> Staad, J. (Ed.). (2011). *Die Eroberung der Kultur beginnt!“. die Staatliche Kommission für Kunstangelegenheiten der Ddr (1951–1953) und die Kulturpolitik der Sed.* Frankfurt am Main: Lang.

<sup>14</sup> Falk, H. (2015). *Zu Gast in der Welt - Die Welt zu Gast: die Künstleragentur der Ddr - Fakten und Anekdoten zum internationalen Kulturaustausch.* Berlin: Nora, 24-25.

#### 1.4. Siegfried Matthus

One name that stood out during this time was Siegfried Matthus, a very successful and prolific East German composer.<sup>15</sup> His work has been performed on either side of the political borderline since the 1970s and is an exceptional example for a very inventive and creative arts scene under historical circumstances in the German Democratic Republic.

The creation process and performance history of Matthus' "Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani and Orchestra" are unique witnesses of these circumstances. They also involve a significant number of personal contacts, former teachers, and mentors of mine. Having grown up in East Germany and being a trumpet player myself, I had a natural interest in exploring this particular work. At the age of fifteen, I attended a performance of Matthus' opera "*Graf Mirabeau*"<sup>16</sup> at the Berlin State Opera. My mother sang in the Choir, and the name Siegfried Matthus was a frequent subject in family talks back in the day. These facts, my personal experiences, and the interest in the cultural heritage of my birth country lead to this writing.

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<sup>15</sup> Varga, B. A. (2017). *The courage of composers and the tyranny of taste: reflections on new music*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 133.

<sup>16</sup> [German: Count Mirabeau]

## **2. Research Questions**

1. Who was this East German composer, who was commissioned and performed by a West German orchestra during the time of the cold war, while the borders between East and West were closed, and why did he refuse to leave his country, as he could have, in spite of political restrictions?
2. What were the unique historical circumstances of that time and is there a symbolic or historical significance of Matthus' works in general and his Concerto for trumpet, timpani, and orchestra in particular?
3. What justifies a new transcription of Matthus' Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani and Wind instruments?

### 3. The German Democratic Republic and the Arts

Siegfried Matthus, as a composer, was educated in East Germany. He created a significant part of his life's work in this country; including the Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani and Orchestra. The political environment before 1989 was unique, as the East German Republic had a socialist government system, which from today's point of view requires explanation.

#### 3.1. GDR

East Germany is a synonym for the socialist country that was called *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* or *DDR [GDR]*.<sup>17</sup> As a result of Germany's defeat in World War II, the country was divided into four zones, which corresponded to the occupied territory by the four winning forces USA, the allies Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Occupation Zone included the Eastern land between the rivers *Elbe* in the West and the *Oder* in the East; from the Baltic Sea in the North to Czechoslovakia in the South, slightly more than a third of all post-war Germany. The Western Occupation Zone was the part between France and the Eastern borderline at the river *Elbe* and between Denmark and Austria, occupied by the USA, Great Britain, and France; it became the Federal Republic of Germany in 1948. The German Democratic Republic was founded on October 7th, 1949.

The allies applied a similar separation into occupation zones to the city of Berlin, located within East Germany. The Western Occupation Zones (USA, Great Britain, and France) became West Berlin. In 1961 the German Democratic Republic

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<sup>17</sup> [German for: German Democratic Republic]

Government decided to build a wall around West Berlin. The purpose of the Berlin Wall as taught officially in GDR schools was that of an “antifascist bulwark” between East and West Berlin to keep “Western fascists,” spies and intruders from entering East Germany. However, the actual reason that led to the elevation of the Berlin Wall [and closing the East-West German border] was the emigration of approximately 3.8 million East Germans from East to West between 1945 and 1961.<sup>18</sup> This fact was not part of the content in GDR schools. As these numbers threatened to destroy the economic viability of the GDR, the Berlin Wall was indeed a bulwark or barrier; it was a barrier to prevent East Germans’ access to West Germany [and West Berlin, comment of the author].<sup>19</sup> East German citizens could not travel, into a non-socialist country, including West Berlin. Exceptions applied for diplomats and individual artists and athletes, to represent the country internationally. It was, however, possible for citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), including West Berlin, to travel into the GDR at any time.

The GDR was governed by the SED [Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands]<sup>20</sup>, a result of the Unification of the Communist Party and the Social Democrats in 1946. In spite of the existence of a multi-party parliament, the Volkskammer (people’s chamber),

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<sup>18</sup> Laar, M. (2009). *The Power of Freedom: Central and Eastern Europe after 1945*. Brussels: Center for European Studies, 58.

<sup>19</sup> Bauer, P., Duignan, B., Eldridge, A., & Zelazko, A. (2019). Berlin Wall. In A. Augustyn (Ed.), *Berlin Wall*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. . Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/editor/The-Editors-of-Encyclopaedia-Britannica/4419>

<sup>20</sup> [German United Socialist Party]

elections were not held democratically, as the election system was designed to determine an overwhelming SED win since the first elections on October 15th, 1950.<sup>21</sup>

The German Democratic Republic stopped existing on November 9th, 1990, the date of the Unification of Germany, which was a direct result of the fall of the Berlin Wall on the same day one year earlier.

### 3.2. GDR and the arts

To say that the GDR was a dictatorship, which relentlessly suppressed and censored its artists and performers, would be only partially correct and incomplete. On the other hand, to glorify the cultural achievements, based on the overwhelming numbers of culture and arts institutions, festivals and world-class artists in relation per capita, without discussing them within the unique context of this state, which existed for only 40 years, would be inappropriate and biased as well.

If we want to approach this chapter of history correctly, it is necessary to differentiate between very different subjective experiences and diverse points of view. As follows, I will give an overview of the cultural-political situation in the GDR. Further, I will refer to testimonies and finally add personal experiences.

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<sup>21</sup> Kutschke, M., Sponholz, S., Lüders, A. & Engel, R. (2012). Wahlen in der DDR. *Das Bundesarchiv*. Retrieved from : <http://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Content/Virtuelle-Ausstellungen/Wahlen-In-Der-Ddr/wahlen-in-der-ddr.html>

### 3.2.1. Definition of arts in the GDR

According to the East-German cultural doctrine of *Sozialistischer Realismus* [Socialist Realism], decided through the SED<sup>22</sup> party program, the primary purpose of the arts was to demonstrate and illustrate the social growth of society from capitalism towards socialism and the superiority of the socialist society opposed to imperialism. The constitution of the GDR defined in its Article 18<sup>23</sup> the arts as “national and socialist arts,” which results from an active link of the *Kulturschaffenden* [art creators] with the ordinary people. Art was supposed to support the socialist idea; it was expected to educate and convince through political statements and content. In the early years of the German Democratic Republic, the socialist party SED decided that art was limited under the act of *Formalismus* [Formalism] and had clearly to be separated from any form of Western art. This excluded Expressionism, Cubism, and any abstract way. Otto Grotewohl, former chairman of the Social Democrats, declared at the 5. *Plenum des Zentralkomitees der SED*<sup>24</sup> on March 17, 1951: “Literature and Fine Arts are subordinate to politics, but it is clear that they have a strong influence on politics. The idea of the arts must follow the marching direction of the political fight.”<sup>25</sup>

So-called 5-year plans planned and ruled all political decisions in this country. One of the first 5-year plan goals for culture was, for example:

Elevation of the cultural education of the population, Maintenance of peace and the cultural heritage of the German people, fight against cosmopolitanism and formalism and

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<sup>22</sup> Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED [Unified Socialist Party of Germany]

<sup>23</sup> Verfassung der DDR (1968). *Ökonomische Grundlagen, Wissenschaft, Bildung und Kultur*. Kapitel 2, Artikel 9. Retrieved from: <http://www.documentarchiv.de/ddr/verfddr1968.html#lk2>

<sup>24</sup> [Plenum of the Central Committee of the Unified Socialist Party of Germany]

<sup>25</sup> Otto Grotewohl: *Die Kunst im Kampfum Deutschlands Zukunft. Rede zur Berufung der Staatlichen Kommission für Kulturangelegenheiten am 31. August 1951*, in: Schubbe, E. (1972). *Dokumente zur Kunst-, Literatur- und Kulturpolitik der Sed*. Stuttgart: Seewald, 208.

for the realistic method of the arts, change of all curricula at the universities, improving the general working discipline and self-responsibility [...]<sup>26</sup>

Composers were ordered to write mass songs; the content of works was expected to represent the fight of the working class. For example in 1948 the composer Ottmar Gerster wrote the “*Festouvertüre*,” which had the 1848 revolution as its content and consisted in *Kampflieder* [working class fight songs], arranged and composed in a symphonic way.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of the strictness during the early years of the republic, the policies taken by the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei* [SED] led further on to the creation of multiple initiatives that fostered a strong artistic infrastructure and extensive musical activities. That includes i.e., free musical education, contemporary music platforms, vivid popular music and jazz life, record labels, etc. As follows, I will explore some of them.

### **3.2.2. Musical infrastructure in the GDR**

Hermann Falk was the director of the *Künstleragentur der DDR* [GDR Artist Agency]. He was personally responsible for every invitation of a guest artist into the country; he oversaw the logistics of all significant cultural events and organized international presentations of GDR artists all over the world, he even picked up Herbert von Karajan from the airport. In his book “*Zu Gast in der Welt. Die Welt zu Gast*.” [Invited into the world. Inviting the world.]<sup>28</sup> he states:

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<sup>26</sup> Staad, J. (Ed.). (2011). “*Die Eroberung der Kultur beginnt!*”. *die Staatliche Kommission für Kunstangelegenheiten der Ddr (1951–1953) und die Kulturpolitik der Sed*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang.

<sup>27</sup> Weißen, D. Z. (1999). *Komponieren in der Ddr Institutionen, Organisationen und die erste Komponistengeneration bis 1961: analysen*. Köln: Böhlau Vlg.

<sup>28</sup> Falk, H. (2015). *Zu Gast in der Welt. Die Welt zu Gast – die Künstleragentur der DDR, Fakten und Anekdoten zum internationalen Kulturaustausch*. Berlin: Nora Verlagsgemeinschaft.



No country in the world invited more international artists than the GDR. No country in the world maintained a more significant number of symphony orchestras, opera houses, theatres, ballets and choirs in comparison to the number of its population. No country invested more money and infrastructure in its arts education<sup>29</sup>.

Falk's declarations might seem challenging, however, in the context of a country with a population of 16 million inhabitants and the surface of a sixth of Texas<sup>30</sup> the numbers show an extraordinary musical infrastructure; in 1985 the GDR had 88 professional State Orchestras<sup>31</sup> [in comparison: Canada, a country with a population of 37 million, has 45 orchestras and opera houses].<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the country had 150 professional and semi chamber orchestras, 2370 choirs, 4500 wind and folklore orchestras, and 4800 dance orchestras. Contemporary music was not an elitist art form; it was a natural and essential part of music life.<sup>33</sup>

Of the more than 60 theatres most were *Drei Sparten-Theater* [three division theatres; opera, drama, and ballet].<sup>34</sup> An example of the complex and rich musical infrastructure of that time is the testimony of Fritz Wendrich, *Generalintendant* [General Director] of the *Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar* [German National Theatre Weimar] in 1990:<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> [Education and medical care were free in the GDR]

<sup>30</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2010). *20 Jahre Deutsche Einheit. 10.*

<sup>31</sup> Falk, H. (2015). *Zu Gast in der Welt. Die Welt zu Gast – die Künstleragentur der DDR. Fakten und Anekdoten zum internationalen Kulturaustausch.* Berlin: Nora Verlagsgemeinschaft, 24.

<sup>32</sup> retrieved from <https://www.musicalchairs.info/canada/orchestras>

<sup>33</sup> Dietrich, G. (2018). *Kulturgeschichte der Ddr.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

<sup>34</sup> Schriftenreihe des Deutschen Bühnenvereins. (1990). *Die deutsch-deutschen theaterbeziehungen. fragen und probleme in der zusammenarbeit der theater der Ddr und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.* (Vol. 5), 33. Retrieved from <http://www.buehnenverein.de/de/publikationen-und-statistiken/buecher-und-broschueren/schriftenreihe.html>

<sup>35</sup> Schriftenreihe des Deutschen Bühnenvereins. (1990). *Die deutsch-deutschen theaterbeziehungen. fragen und probleme in der zusammenarbeit der theater der Ddr und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.* (Vol. 5), 26-27. Retrieved from <http://www.buehnenverein.de/de/publikationen-und-statistiken/buecher-und-broschueren/schriftenreihe.html>

I come from the relatively small *Freistaat Thüringen*.<sup>36</sup> We have eight theatres and five independent symphony orchestras. Each of these eight theatres is a multi-division theatre. We know that it won't be possible to maintain this. No Free State or City can do this...For example, this little city of Weimar with this fantastic theatre, this battleship in a bathtub, the people in this town don't even know that they have a National Theatre because they had never to worry about it. The only time I had to oppose was when I needed an apartment for an artist or extra paint, but everything was subsidized. The 'war' was mainly about one particular theatre piece, which the party office wouldn't allow to be performed in one city because it was on the program in another one, they would decide this in a feudal manner. But the artists themselves were secured by the subsidy support.

### 3.2.3. Contemporary music in the GDR

Since the mid-'50s, the state created numerous platforms for contemporary music through its festivals exclusively dedicated to modern composers: for example, *Internationales Festival der Zeitgenössischen Musik* [International Festival of Contemporary Music], *DDR-Musiktage* [GDR Music Days], *Biennale*,<sup>37</sup> and *Hallesche Musiktage* [Halle Music Days]. "Nova", one of six state-owned record labels [Amiga, Eterna, Litera, Schola], was an open resource for contemporary composers and artists in the GDR.<sup>38</sup> The *Komponistenverband der DDR* [GDR Composers Association] supported its composers like Reiner Bredemeyer, Jochen Kunad, Georg Katzer, Paul Dessau, Hanns Eisler,

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<sup>36</sup> [Free State of Thuringia; 16,171 km<sup>2</sup> - in comparison: Connecticut, 14,357 km<sup>2</sup>]

<sup>37</sup> [The Biennale established itself after 1989 as a worldwide renowned contemporary music festival]

<sup>38</sup> Brüll Mathias. (2003). *Jazz auf Amiga: die Jazz-Schallplatten des Amiga-Labels von 1947 bis 1990*. Berlin: Pro Business.

Günther Kochan, Hannes Zerbe, and Siegfried Matthus, etc. Composers from ethnical minorities like the Sorbian Alfred Janka received preference in support of their folkloric and traditional works. The state facilitated for their compositions to be performed and recorded with the three international top orchestras, the Staatskapelle Berlin, Staatskapelle Dresden, and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra.<sup>39</sup>

Art is education, and the socialist state understood education as the pillar of society. This was evident as well in musical traditions and a general connection with the German cultural heritage in a way, which is unique until today. The exposure to classical music was not exclusively for a sophisticated elite audience or connoisseurs only. The *Staat der Arbeiter- und Bauernklasse* [The Workers' and Peasants' State],<sup>40</sup> as the SED party called the GDR, did enhance musical access to its workers and agricultors. Opera houses and theatres were most of the time full as it was common for *Volkseigene Kombinate* (people's owned manufacturers) and *Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaften* [agricultural production collectives] to send their employees to attend cultural events regularly.

During December, a large number of churches all over the country produced performances of Johann Sebastian Bach's Christmas Oratorio, a tradition, which has been maintained until today [in Berlin it is not uncommon to find 50 performances of this work during the Christmas time].<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Auerbach, 2018

<sup>40</sup> Major, P., & Osmond, J. (2002). *The workers and peasants state: communism and society in East Germany under Ulbricht, 1945-71*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>41</sup> Tarnow, V. (2010, November 25). Weihnachtsoratorium-in-Berlin-50-Mal-aufgefuehrt. *Berliner Morgenpost*. Retrieved from <https://www.morgenpost.de/kultur/article104904936/Weihnachtsoratorium-in-Berlin-50-Mal-aufgefuehrt.html>

### 3.2.4. Popular Music in the GDR

In the 1950s Rock 'n' Roll and Boogie Woogie were still disdained as “barbaric poison of the Americanism, threatening the intellect of the working class people to awake their lowest instincts.”<sup>42</sup> However, the German Democratic Republic was the country with the largest density of jazz clubs in the world,<sup>43</sup> even though, or maybe mainly because jazz was a non-desired but tolerated art form. In 1988, the East-German musicologist Georg Knepler said about the cultural politics in the GDR:

Fortunately, we abandoned the rejection of popular music in our country; however, its support is limited; the available technology is insufficient, rare are opportunities to perform. The same syndrome of idiosyncrasy seems to govern, which made me once suspect of Jazz music.<sup>44</sup>

With Erich Honecker taking over the leadership of the party in 1970,<sup>45</sup> the party decided to support young rock artists. One requirement to receive a working permit to perform popular music was proof of university graduation.<sup>46</sup> The other unofficial condition was a political pro-GDR-attitude in artistic content or personal statement.<sup>47</sup>

The most dramatic restrictions and professional prohibitions happened in the popular music environment. Songwriters were especially vulnerable to have their lyrics censored

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<sup>42</sup> Meyer, E. H. (1952). *Musik im Zeitgeschehen*. Berlin: Henschel.

<sup>43</sup> Bratfisch, R. (2005). *Freie Töne: die Jazzszene in der Ddr*. Berlin: Links.

<sup>44</sup> Knepler, G. (1988). *Musikalischer realismus - neue überlegungen zu einem alten problem. Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft*. Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik.

<sup>45</sup> Spittmann-Rühle, I., Helwig, G. (1990). *Die DDR unter Honecker*. Köln: Edition Deutschland Archiv im Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik B. von Nottbeck.

<sup>46</sup> Gesetzblatt der DDR. Teil II, Nr. 112: *Anordnung Nr.2 über die Ausübung von Tanz und Unterhaltungsmusik vom 1. November 1965*. Retrieved from <https://www.gvoon.de/gesetzblatt-gbl-ddr-teil-2-1965/seite-777-382757.html>

<sup>47</sup> Auerbach, 2018

and not allowed in live concerts when not matching the official party doctrine, as the following line from the album ‘Casablanca’ by the Band City:

*Im halben Land und der zerschnittenen Stadt, halbwegs zufrieden mit dem, was man hat.*

*Halb und halb.*

[In the half country, in the cut city, halfway satisfied with what we have, half and half.]

– City, *Halb und halb*<sup>48</sup>

When singer and songwriter Rolf Biermann was expatriated in 1976, many artists signed a petition in protest.<sup>49</sup> Numerous actors, songwriters, and singers got punished with occupational bans, for example, the famous singer and actor Manfred Krug. Like many other artists, he filed an *Ausreiseantrag* [application to receive permission to leave the country and move to West Germany]. He left the GDR after it was granted in 1977.<sup>50</sup> Since the resulting protests of the Biermann episode stricter restrictions and control of the artistic content would be applied.

### 3.2.5. Leaving the country

Being tired of political restrictions and economic limitations made many artists leave their country either in protest or in the hope of a different life. Similar scenarios happened in classical music. Several officers of the *Staatssicherheit* or *Stasi* [state security officers] accompanied the orchestras during international tours, as it was common for orchestra members to stay behind. The musicians who decided to leave their country approached

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<sup>48</sup> Hentschel, C. (2000). *Du hast den Farbfilm vergessen und andere Ostrockgeschichten*. Berlin: Schwarzkopf und Schwarzkopf.

<sup>49</sup> Florath, B., & Tüchel, J. (2013, February 5). Gegen Diktatur. Widerstand und Opposition in der DDR. *Gegen Diktatur. Widerstand Und Opposition in der DDR*. Retrieved from [https://www.gegen-diktatur.de/beispiel.php?beisp\\_id=437](https://www.gegen-diktatur.de/beispiel.php?beisp_id=437)

<sup>50</sup> Krug, M. (1996). *Abgehauen. Ein Mitschnitt und ein Tagebuch*. Düsseldorf: Econ, 122–125.

the West German embassy in the country where the orchestra had a tour. The embassy transferred them to the Federal Republic of Germany. They did not have a different choice than leaving their families behind in the GDR, hoping for the approval of their *Ausreiseantrag* [application to move to the FRG]. In many cases, this never happened. The “big three” orchestras; the *Staatskapelle Berlin*, *Staatskapelle Dresden*, and the *Gewandhausorchester Leipzig* toured internationally yearly, at least one or two musicians would not come back. When smaller orchestras, for example, the *Komische Oper Berlin* [Comic Opera Berlin] went on tour, which did not happen that frequently, it could happen that five to ten musicians stayed behind during one tour.<sup>51</sup>

### 3.3. Testimonies

The testimonies from personal interviews,<sup>52</sup> which I include, have the purpose of emphasizing how subjective this topic is and that no general circumstances existed, which would apply for all artists in the same way. Censorship, political, and labor restrictions could be the case for some artists and others not, it could depend on the regional party officials, or it happened on a random basis.

One of the subjects that could lead to restrictions was the question of party membership in the SED, the Socialist Unified Party. Membership in the SED was expected or at least highly suggested. Not being a party member could show, for example in not being permitted to international competitions, receiving low evaluations in national competitions or close other doors, as the example of Rainer Auerbach illustrates. He was

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<sup>51</sup> Falk, H. (2015). *Zu Gast in der Welt - Die Welt zu Gast: die Künstleragentur der Ddr - Fakten und Anekdoten zum internationalen Kulturaustausch*. Berlin: Nora, 310.

<sup>52</sup> Interviews: Siegfried Matthus, Stolzenhagen, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Rainer Auerbach, November 23, 2018

the Principal Trumpet of the Staatskapelle Berlin since 1974 and was never a party member; he remembers:

Joachim Gruner, a percussionist of the *Komische Oper* and member of the *Komponistenverband* wrote a concerto for trumpet and orchestra for me, which he wanted to use for an application for a composition competition in Switzerland. Overnight we recorded a demo tape with piano and trumpet. After the successful competition, the work got permission to be performed in the GDR. Gruner achieved for the work to be premiered with the Finnish Radio Orchestra. However, I did not receive permission to play it, as I could not be involved with a 'West Orchestra.' Gruner sent my tape to Finland so that the Finnish principal trumpet Jouko Harjanne could prepare it the way the composer had intended it. The Finnish Radio Orchestra with Harjanne as a soloist performed the work in the end at the Schauspielhaus in Berlin. I sat in the audience and was not even granted access to the backstage area to congratulate my colleague.<sup>53</sup>

Siegfried Matthus, on the other hand, is an example of the contrary; not being a member of the socialist party did not affect his career at all:

Our Government did give a lot of money for culture and new music; we can't pretend that wasn't so," he said. "But performance and success were what counted, not politics. Naturally, we artists were being used. But I didn't have to sell myself. My premieres won my wife and me the privilege to travel."<sup>54</sup>

Another form of limitations could be stylistic restrictions, which were enforced in different ways at different times. As mentioned before, the political debate about

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<sup>53</sup> Auerbach 2018

<sup>54</sup> Rockwell, J. (1990, July 22). Siegfried who? the limits of fame. . *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/07/22/arts/music-siegfried-who-the-limits-of-fame.html>

Formalism in the early 1950's had forbidden all contemporary forms of artistic expression.<sup>55</sup> It disappeared after only a few years. However, one cannot say that there was a general rejection of specific musical styles at all times during the forty years of the existence of the GDR. As Siegfried Matthus remembered, it happened cyclically:

For example, the twelve-tone musical scale was vilified in the '60s because it supposedly embodied capitalistic ideology. How idiotic! The GDR propaganda vilified as well electronic music.<sup>56</sup>

Later in the '80s, twelve-tone music became a normal part of the performed repertoire; I attended a performance of a very successful production of Arnold Schönberg's opera *Moses und Aaron* [a 12-tone music opera] at the Berlin State Opera. Political decisions and their targets changed over the years.

About his musical upbringing in the 1960' Siegfried Matthus tells the following:

Before the Wall went up in 1961, it was even possible to go over to the West and hear concerts. But of course we were also very much under the influence of our mentors and, let's face it, Eisler and Brecht were totally devoted Socialists, albeit remarkably critical and questioning. Much of that rubbed off on us youngsters. We were caught up in such paradoxes as, for example, the idiotic idea that one could not express feelings and ideas in serial music! (Eisler always spoke of Schoenberg with vast knowledge and respect, but he distanced himself from his politics.) We often grappled with such questions, but there were many things we could not say openly. We had to be crafty and cunning.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Wendermann, G. (2003). *Zwischen den Blöcken. Heinz Trökes und die Formalismusdebatte in Weimar 1947 bis 1948*. In: Irmtraud von Andrian-Werburg. (Ed)(2003). *Heinz Trökes: Werke und Dokumente*. Nürnberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 31–43.

<sup>56</sup> Böhme-Mehner, T. (2011). Interview with Siegfried Matthus, 20 February 2009, Stolzenhagen. *Contemporary Music Review*, 30(1), 53–60. doi: 10.1080/07494467.2011.624305

<sup>57</sup> Sturm, G (2002). Encounters. siegfried matthus. *Music Associates of America*. Retrieved from



The main concern of the SED was about contents. There were clear preferences for socialist-inclined materials. Artists who used communist lyrics or wrote about historic events in the context of the socialist society or the fight of the working class, had a green card to be performed and supported in a particular way, for example Ernst Hermann Meyer with his “*Mansfelder Oratorium*”, a work that praises the spirit of socialist workmanship.<sup>58</sup> Musicians became very inventive to do what they intended to, without opposing the general rules or playing by them. For example, Hannes Zerbe, a Jazz bandleader, facilitated permissions for international tours by recording and playing improvisations and compositions based on themes by leading socialist composers Paul Dessau and Hanns Eisler,<sup>59</sup> as well using soviet songs and socialist context, as he did in “*Die Eisengießerei*” [The iron foundry].<sup>60</sup>

The reception and censorship of arts and its approval or denial never happened linearly or continuously. There existed certain arbitrariness, which was typical for the higher party elite. It was considered normal to relocate conductors or stage directors from one theatre to another by *Befehl von oben* [order from above], not considering their personal preference or plan, as it happened for example in the case of Professor Rolf Reuter, who conducted the world premiere of Siegfried Matthus’ opera Judith in 1985.<sup>61</sup> After being the Assistant Musical Director of the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, he became the chief

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<http://www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Gur, G. (2015). Classicism as Anti-Fascist Heritage: Realism and Myth in Ernst Hermann Meyer’s *Mansfelder Oratorium* (1950). In Frackman, K., & Powell, L. (2015). *Classical music in the German Democratic Republic. Production and reception*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 34-57. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt13wztbg.7>

<sup>59</sup> Bratfisch, R. (2205). *Freie Töne. Die Jazzszene in der DDR*. Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag.

<sup>60</sup> *Blechband*. (0AD). Berlin. Retrieved from <https://www.discogs.com/Hannes-Zerbe-Blech-Band-Hannes-Zerbe-Blech-Band/release/2472179>

<sup>61</sup> Blech, V. (2007, September 12). Blech, V. (2007). Dirigent Rolf Reuter 80jährig gestorben. . *Berliner Morgenpost*. Retrieved from <https://www.morgenpost.de/printarchiv/kultur/article103292165/Dirigent-Rolf-Reuter-80jaehrig-gestorben.html>

conductor of the *Staatskapelle Weimar* [State Orchestra Weimar], a post he liked very much. In 1981 the party had other plans for him and wanted him to be the chief conductor at the Komische Oper in Berlin, where Harry Kupfer was a stage director. Ursula Rackwitz, the chief officer of the culture department in the central committee of the SED, communicated to him that his new post would be in Berlin from now on. When Reuter refused, he received the answer: “Reuter, you will start this new position. Otherwise, we don’t know a conductor and professor Reuter anymore.”<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, the GDR party elite indeed spoiled their preferred artists, at least those, who brought international fame and international currency into the country. Artists, as the famous tenor Peter Schreier, the bass Theo Adam, the trumpeter Ludwig Güttler, famous artists like Gisela May, Rock groups like The Puhdys, Karat and others could move between East and West in a usual manner.<sup>63</sup> Privilege showed not only in material commodities but also in professional and practical possibilities. When the Berlin State Opera premiered Paul Dessau’s opera “Einstein” in 1974,<sup>64</sup> Dessau went to West Berlin and bought a set of “Vincent Bach” Bb and C trumpets, because he preferred his music to be played on piston instruments of this particular brand.<sup>65</sup>

It was impossible to purchase this brand for anybody who could not travel to a non-socialist country.

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<sup>62</sup> Auerbach, 2018

<sup>63</sup> Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk. (0AD). Oststars auf Gastspiel im Westen. *MDR Zeitreise*. Leipzig. Retrieved from <https://www.mdr.de/zeitreise/stoebern/damals/artikel92252.html>

<sup>64</sup> Neef, S., & Neef, H. (1992). *Deutsche Oper im 20. Jahrhundert: Ddr 1949-1989*. Berlin: P. Lang. 79–90.

<sup>65</sup> Auerbach, 2018

### 3.4. Personal Experience

I was born in East Germany and lived there for 15 years until the country ceased to exist in 1990.<sup>66</sup> Growing up in a musical family<sup>67</sup> and receiving lessons from the Principal Trumpet of the *Staatskapelle Berlin*,<sup>68</sup> I witnessed the *Zeitgeist* of the GDR arts community through my first-hand experience. I met opera singers, conductors, virtuosos, and composers at my parents' dinner table. I observed that a political system might very well impose restrictions, censorship, and limitations to the arts; however, the passion for creating and for communicating through the arts is basic human needs and flourishes under any circumstances. I have vivid memories about the advantages of the system and as well about the incomprehensible limitations.

Since the 1950s, the party officially interpreted classical music and music history through their relationship with the working class. As composers would be interpreted in the context of their working-class upbringing or social environment, Beethoven became a revolutionary, and Bach became a socialist visionary.<sup>69</sup> That was most visible in the university and school education. As mentioned before, subjective experience can differ; there might be a vast number of former GDR citizens who never encountered any experience like that, yet I did. For example, I remember to have been asked in grade seven to discuss Beethoven's fifth symphony in the context of the battle of the working class. A standard course was called *Staatsbürgerkunde* [civics education], which had the primary purpose of preparing the students to the *Marxistisch-Leninistische*

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<sup>66</sup> [On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1990 the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR merged through the unification]

<sup>67</sup> [My mother was an opera singer at the Berlin State Opera, my father a pianist and musicologist]

<sup>68</sup> [The *Staatskapelle* is the Orchestra of the Berlin state Opera]

<sup>69</sup> Meyer, E.H. (1957). *Johann Sebastian Bach – kein Ende, ein Anfang. Aufsätze über Musik*. Berlin: Henschelverlag.

*Weltanschauung* [Marxist-Leninist ideology]. A question during a visit of a General of the *Nationale Volksarmee* [National Peoples Army, NVA] in grade six is very present in my memory: "Why is it justified for a soldier of the *Nationale Volksarmee* to shoot a West German soldier and why is it murder the other way around?" We had to form discussion groups, and only one conclusion was viable; any version opposed to the official GDR version was false, the BRD [Bundesrepublik Deutschland]<sup>70</sup> was an *Unrechtsstaat* [a state of injustice]. Even in the active use of language, it could happen that one had to re-interpret semantics, according to ideological conveniences. I recall how we were repeatedly asked to explain, why the use of the words *Arbeitnehmer* (work-taker = employee) and *Arbeitgeber* (work-giver = employer) as used in the West German news was utterly false. The argument was as follows; the *Arbeitnehmer* was the one who gave his working force and therefore, would be the *Arbeitgeber* (work-giver). From today's point of view, discussions like that might seem laughable, yet it was a reality then. Following or rejecting these instructions could open or close doors. In my adolescence, I was permanently confronted in school with the rhetoric question; "You do want to pass onto high school and later to university, don't you?"

My mother traveled the world with the Berlin State Opera. It was normal in my home to add to the content of family talk: "This is just for at home, at school, you know what to say." I remember my mother mentioning after each *Gastspiel* [international engagement] into a none-socialist country that someone of the orchestra or opera choir had "left to the West."

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<sup>70</sup> FRG, Federal Republic of Germany [the official name of the West German Republic]

I remember the only two days of my childhood vividly when we could buy watermelons. They did not even make it from the truck into the shop. It was until I was 16 years old that I ate an avocado for the first time. The average waitlist time to get a home telephone line was eight years; it could take 20 years to get a car. Life in East Germany indeed had limitations, which are not acceptable from today's perspective. On the other hand, by age ten I had seen approximately 30 operas, my entire musical education was for free, my school class went to the theater regularly and, my parents never paid a cent for medical care, etc.

Although I grew up with the general idea that I would never see Paris, London or New York, I can say that none of the earlier described experiences harmed my later life. The restrictions of my childhood and adolescence most likely enhanced my yearning for travel, languages, and cultures.

I believe that a society, which is not built on material possessions and consuming goods,<sup>71</sup> as it was the case for East Germany, might have a higher potential to fill this “missing gap” with human contents and utter connection to cultural traditions. I believe that based on this fact, a cultural environment with the structure, as it existed in the GDR, is explainable. If the purpose of being an artist is not distracted by financial ambitions,<sup>72</sup> if international recognition is not on the list of goals,<sup>73</sup> then the purpose of the artistic activities goes inevitably back to its origin, the art itself. I find this phenomenon particularly interesting seen from today's social media society, which, in my opinion, prioritizes public relations and marketing before the actual content.

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<sup>71</sup> [because of the lacking economy] Steiner, A. (2010). *The Plans that Failed: An Economic History of the GDR*. Translated by Ewald Osers. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

<sup>72</sup> [because of lack of buying power and commercial market offer]

<sup>73</sup> [because of the general inability to travel into non-socialist countries]

Maybe this is part of an explanation why the GDR had such a vivid and high numbered art scene, and perhaps this explains why a small city like Meiningen, with 25,000 inhabitants, maintained a four-division theatre [music theatre, ballet, symphony concerts, and puppet show] based on the great tradition of Wagner operas and conductors like Richard Strauss and Max Reger. I believe that the GDR sustained these structures because of a vivid consciousness to the nation's cultural tradition, and in spite of economic discrepancies. The cultural infrastructure in the GDR was not feasible under today's standards of ticket sales and public budgets. Once more I cite Fritz Wendrich, *Intendant* of the Weimar State Theatre, who said in 1990, during the last months of the GDR, that the East German theatres were missing 900 musicians, and some ballet companies covered only a fourth of their needed capacity.<sup>74</sup> This example shows the discrepancy between the artistic ideal and the economic reality in the GDR.

However, although it was not possible to maintain the infrastructure precisely as it was, the GDR heritage had a significant influence on the cultural life in Unified Germany, which until today subsidizes hundreds of theatres and orchestras with a public budget and where theatre or opera tickets are as affordable as attending the cinema is elsewhere.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Schriftenreihe des Deutschen Bühnenvereins. (1990). *Die deutsch-deutschen theaterbeziehungen. fragen und probleme in der zusammenarbeit der theater der Ddr und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. (Vol. 5), 34. Retrieved from <http://www.buehnenverein.de/de/publikationen-und-statistiken/buecher-und-broschueren/schriftenreihe.html>

<sup>75</sup> Hamerow, T.S., Leyser, K.J. & Turner, H.A. (2019). Germany. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany/The-arts#ref58067>



Image 2: Siegfried Matthus, photo: Carla Arnold  
[With permission of Carla Arnold and Siegfried Matthus]



## 4. Siegfried Matthus

### 4.1. Matthus, an outlier

Of the East German composers, Matthus was one of the very few, who would develop a broad international reputation since the '70s. His success was based on his exuberant musicality and curiosity for ways to explore performance possibilities, without asking what official cultural doctrines would have expected of him. He was East Germany's most successful opera composer,<sup>76</sup> his diversity in musical genres, including his opera librettos, and his trajectory before as well after the political changes in 1989 are unique. The most renowned conductors, orchestras, singers and soloists have continuously and successfully performed Matthus' compositions; for example by the Berlin, Vienna and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, conducted by Kurt Masur, Charles Dutoit, Herbert Blomstedt and Simon Rattle.<sup>77</sup> His vocal compositions were performed for example by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and René Pape, and his operas directed by renowned directors as Harry Kupfer, Ruth Berghaus, and Götz Friedrich, etc.

He is a composer of big opera scores and vocal music, expressive symphonic works, and virtuosic solo concertos. The creative elements in Matthus' music are so abundant that each of his compositions only shows one aspect of his musical language. There are "dramatic rhetoric, passionate emotions, lyrical gesture, serious topics of life like the contrasts of war and peace, death and love, and there is as well a very light and 'digestible' Matthus, who writes for pleasure and expresses joyfully and humorously, charming the audience into his musical

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<sup>76</sup> Rockwell, J.(1990, July 7). Siegfried who? the limits of fame. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/07/22/arts/music-siegfried-who-the-limits-of-fame.html>

<sup>77</sup> Möller,T. (2009). Siegfried Matthus in conversation with Tobias Möller (in German only). *Digital Concerthall*. Retrieved from: <https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/interview/36-4>



ideas.”<sup>78</sup>

#### 4.2. Mentors and supporters

Like probably most successful composers, Matthus owes part of his success to the support of conductors and directors. His success also derived from his natural ability to establish professional and human relationships with conductors and theatre directors, in many cases before they became famous.

For example, Matthus showed a work for soprano and orchestra to the young conductor Kurt Masur, who was so impressed that he arranged for its first performance under his direction. A strong friendship developed between both. Until the end of his life, Masur supported Matthus’ music passionately and devotedly, before and after he became the music director of the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig, and later in 1991 the principal conductor of the New York Philharmonic. Masur called Matthus “One of the great composers of our century.”<sup>79</sup>

Influential East German opera directors - Götz Friedrich, later Intendant at West Berlin’s Deutsche Oper; Harry Kupfer at the East Berlin Komische Oper, Ruth Berghaus and Joachim Herz at the Staatsoper Berlin and Semper Oper in Dresden - have staged his operas. Conductors like Gunther Herbig (Detroit, Toronto)<sup>80</sup> and Herbert Blomstedt,<sup>81</sup> who was not an East German but at that time the music director of the Dresden Staatskapelle and later in San

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<sup>78</sup> Schneider, F. (1997). Über Siegfried Matthus. Retrieved from <http://www.siegfried-matthus.de/12-1/Person-01.html>

<sup>79</sup> Rockwell, J. (1990, July 7). Siegfried who? the limits of fame. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/07/22/arts/music-siegfried-who-the-limits-of-fame.html>

<sup>80</sup> Kaylor, H. (Ed.). (OAD). Günther Herbig. Retrieved from <http://www.kaylormanagement.com/guethner-herbig.html>

<sup>81</sup> Refsbeck, R. (2017, July 12). Herbert Blomstedt at 90: The Sabbath Gives His Life Rhythm. *Spectrum*. Retrieved from <https://spectrummagazine.org/article/2017/07/12/herbert-blomstedt-90-sabbath-gives-his-life-rhythm>

Francisco and Leipzig) have certainly advanced his cause.<sup>82</sup>

#### 4.3. Musical upbringing

Siegfried Matthus was born in 1934 in the small village of Mallenuppen [now Zadorozhye], which used to be East Prussia and is currently part of Russia. The first time he was in contact with piano studies, and names like Mozart or Bach was around 1944. His early childhood was marked by the constant fleeing ahead of the advancing Russian army.

The composers Rudolf Wagner Régeny and Hanns Eisler were his teachers at the Musikhochschule in Berlin. Two other famous artists were Matthus' early mentors: the poet-playwright Bertolt Brecht and the legendary theatre director and producer Walter Felsenstein. Matthus remembers:

Brecht was the personification of intellectual, politicized art, the theatre of alienation; the latter [Felsenstein] the consummate aesthete. We youngsters were simultaneously exposed to these two extreme camps. Eisler, too, was just tremendous, a great personality, fantastically literate. He had been a Schoenberg student and knew as much about philosophy and literature as he did about music. He always complained about Wagner, but he knew all his music by heart.

While working as a free-lance musician and composing *Gebrauchsmusik*<sup>83</sup> Matthus' wrote his first opera "*Lazarillo vom Tormes*" (1963). Walter Felsenstein heard this work and invited Matthus to become composer-in-residence at his Komische Oper Berlin, which the composer had been affiliated with ever since. About Walter Felsenstein he says:

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<sup>82</sup> Rockwell, J.(1990, July 7). Siegfried who? the limits of fame. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/07/22/arts/music-siegfried-who-the-limits-of-fame.html>

<sup>83</sup> [Film scores and music for radio plays, note of the author]

His analyses of opera were among the great highlights of my development. He would question everything. He started from scratch. Who was Mr. Schikaneder? What could the composer have had in mind with that mezzo forte? How can one portray all those fast notes on the stage? Walter Felsenstein was no composer and never taught opera composition, but I learned how to compose operas from him.<sup>84</sup>

#### 4.4. Matthus and West Germany

Matthus was a member of the *Akademie der Künste* in East Berlin since 1969.<sup>85</sup> Being as well a member of the *Akademie der Künste* in West Berlin since 1976 and the *Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste*<sup>86</sup> in München since 1978<sup>87</sup> allowed him to cross the border without limitations. Therefore he could actively establish contact with West German and European composers, for example, Luigi Nono, Pierre Boulez, and Karl Heinz Stockhausen.<sup>88</sup> By inviting them to his discussion forum *Kammermusik im Gespräch*,<sup>89</sup> which he held at the Komische Oper in East Berlin between 1966 and 1988, he certainly provoked the patience of the party officials, because of such a frequent presence of West German and West Berlin composers. According to Matthus himself, Walter Felsenstein convinced the doubtful party officials with encouraging words as “Trust Matthus, what he does is good.”<sup>90</sup>

About the relationship to the West German composer community he said:

It always offended all the composers of my generation and me that our renowned colleagues in West Germany, with whom we were all very familiar, still kind of overlooked us and me.

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<sup>84</sup> Sturm, G. (2002). Encounters. siegfried matthus. *Music Associates of America*. Retrieved from [www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html](http://www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html).

<sup>85</sup> [Academy of the Arts Berlin]

<sup>86</sup> [Academy of the Fine Arts]

<sup>87</sup> [Bavarian Academy of the Fine Arts in Munich]

<sup>88</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>89</sup> [Chamber music conversation series]

<sup>90</sup> Matthus, 2019

When I then had the opportunity—relatively early on—to travel to West Berlin or Munich that got a little better. But generally, they looked more in the direction of Warsaw, even in that of the Soviet Union. But they didn't acknowledge us. Of course, there were also political reasons for that. There was the prejudice: 'They're all somehow stupid or backward, or they're all some kind of socialist realists.' Very few recognized the real problems; for most, we didn't exist. Just as the GDR did not exist for the Federal Republic, it was the same for the composers, which was unfair and aggravating.<sup>91</sup>

#### 4.5. Genre, style and musical language

Stylistically Matthus maintained independent of avant-garde trends and timely fashion of taste. He developed alertness for what the opera and concert audience could possibly put up with without losing an understanding of the composer's message. His intentions were not indifferent to audience reactions; in fact, the audience received most of his works very well.

His work can be reviewed by genres.<sup>92</sup> The first place undoubtedly and supported by wide success, takes the *Musiktheater* [music theatre] with thirteen operas and musical plays since the premiere of "*Lazarillo vom Tormes*" (1963).<sup>93</sup>

The second emphasis of his repertoire is the orchestral music and a series of solo concertos and other works for several solo instruments with orchestra,<sup>94</sup> some of them extremely successful like his concerto for orchestra "*Responso*" or the timpani concerto "*Der Wald*" [The

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<sup>91</sup> Böhme-Mehner, T. (2011). Interview with siegfried matthus, stolzenhagen. *Contemporary Music Review*, 30 (1), 53-60.

<sup>92</sup> Schneider, F. (1997). Über Siegfried Matthus. Retrieved from <http://www.siegfried-matthus.de/12-1/Person-01.html>

<sup>93</sup> Matthus, S. (OAD). Werke-Musiktheater. Retrieved from Retrieved from: <http://www.siegfried-matthus.de/12-1/Werke-musiktheater.html>

<sup>94</sup> Matthus, S. (OAD). Werke-Orchester. Retrieved from Retrieved from: <http://www.siegfried-matthus.de/12-1/Werke-musiktheater.html>

Forrest]. Matthus' violin concerto for example had far over 100 performances.<sup>95</sup> These two genres take such an important place in Matthus repertoire that one can say that he is primarily a composer of operas and large-scale, dramatic orchestral scores.

Furtheron Matthus wrote large vocal works, some with theatrical background and others with symphonic expression, and many smaller vocal miniatures in the tradition of cantata and Lied as well as choral works. Another focus of his writing is chamber music for all kinds of combinations. He also composed applied music for film scores and political Chanson.

As suggested by Schneider (1997), a different way of cataloging Matthus' work is to roughly measure it in decades in order to discuss pivot points of his stylistic and creative production.<sup>96</sup>

Matthus experienced an early phase of vivid involvement with the technical possibilities of modern and avant-gardist ways of musical expression. A special place in his repertoire takes his composition "Galilei", composed for vocalist, five instruments and electronic sounds. The GDR did not have access to the technical equipment as the sound studios in Cologne or Darmstadt did. The only available instrument for Matthus to use was a subharchord.<sup>97</sup>

Just as many composers in West and East Germany went through a shift in style in the seventies, Matthus began to feel constricted by the abstract and formalist idiom of his serialism period. He portrays his conversion as "not a capitulation to fashion but the result of a profound and personal inner awakening."<sup>98</sup>

"The 80's and following decades were the creative phase of a solid craftsman."<sup>99</sup> In order to

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<sup>95</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>96</sup> Schneider, F. (1997). Über Siegfried Matthus. Retrieved from <http://www.siegfried-matthus.de/12-1/Person-01.html>

<sup>97</sup> Böhme-Mehner, T. (2011). Interview with Siegfried Matthus, 20 February 2009, Stolzenhagen. *Contemporary Music Review*, 30(1), 53–60. doi: 10.1080/07494467.2011.624305

<sup>98</sup> Rockwell, J. (1990, July 22). Siegfried who? the limits of fame. . *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/07/22/arts/music-siegfried-who-the-limits-of-fame.html>

<sup>99</sup> Schneider, F. (1997). Über Siegfried Matthus. Retrieved from <http://www.siegfried-matthus.de/12-1/Person-01.html>

find and systematically apply his personal language Matthus used traditional patterns and forms of musical expression. The composer describes the shift in his writing style as follows:

In “*Judith*” and “*Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke*“ [1985], I began to notice that, although my music was rhythmically complicated, it lacked meter. Furthermore, although serial music was so strictly organized, the harmonic dimension was chance. I wanted to get back to a logical harmonic structure that could be heard, as in the old tonal music. With *Judith* I discovered or developed an eight-tone scale — not a row, but a scale like the chromatic scale, a melodic-harmonic system — that would enable me to expand tonal principles, but that was conceptually steeped in serial procedures. I am able to base my harmonies on this scale and, of course, by way of transposition achieve the entire twelve-tone scope. The vertical element in *Cornet* is absolutely demonstrable. With the last production in Hamburg, the chorus master surprised me by saying that there was a note in one chord that must be wrong. He was quite right; I had made a mistake in the score. I'm proud of the fact that one can detect wrong notes in my harmonies. There's no doubt that tonality remains an undeniable force to this day in the whole world. I think that those of us who seek other expressive means — while we should not make an about-face in our search — should not overlook it.<sup>100</sup>

Matthus communicates a musical language, which clearly seeks to be thoughtful at the same time as understandable in its colors. He seeks clarity and an effective way to communicate to today's audience. This strategy has been misinterpreted as an alignment to a postmodern trend, for which composer colleagues criticized him.<sup>101</sup> Describing his compositional techniques<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Sturm, G. (2002). Encounters. siegfried matthus. *Music Associates of America*. Retrieved from [www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html](http://www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html).

<sup>101</sup> Varga, B. A. (2017). *The courage of composers and the tyranny of taste: reflections on new music*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 133.

<sup>102</sup> Sturm, G. (2002). Encounters. siegfried matthus. *Music Associates of America*. Retrieved from

Matthus feels that “the important thing is what the listener hears and whether it works in the theatre, not how the music is made”. He also points to the absurdity of contemporary works that are performed once in the presence of a tiny cluster of listeners, to tidal waves of critical commentary and reams of analyses, but then are never heard again. "I do hope that none of my pieces fall in that category."

#### 4.6. Music theatre

Matthus fell for the music theatre since Walter Felsenstein engaged him at the *Komische Oper Berlin* [Comic Opera Berlin] in 1964, after listening to the composer's opera prima *Lazarillo vom Tormes*. Matthus ideal of communicating, convincing, and mediatory music got sufficient experimental soil in the environment of Felsenstein's interacting and illuminating ensemble of the arts. To the question of what exactly he learned from the famous director, Matthus answered: “Everything.”<sup>103</sup>

As the arts were inevitably linked to political content in the GDR creative world, it does not surprise that Matthus chooses for his second opera “*Der letzte Schuß*” “[The last shot] in 1966/67, a revolutionary drama about the tension between individual love and high politics during the Soviet October Revolution.<sup>104</sup> It was a first synthesis of the current political context and Matthus' very own language in music and his libretto.

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<http://www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html>.

<sup>103</sup> Peattie, A. (1993, October 2). Taking the fur out of mothballs: Siegfried Matthus is that rarity, a popular modern opera composer. Antony Peattie met him. . *The Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/opera-taking-the-fur-out-of-mothballs-siegfried-matthus-is-that-rarity-a-popular-modern-opera-1508080.html>

<sup>104</sup> Matthus: *Der letzte Schuss*. (OAD). Retrieved from <https://www.breitkopf.com/work/4166/der-letzter-schuss>

This work shows for the first time Matthus' concise expressionist and passionate sound; it exposes the topic of conflict between polar principles as in Woman vs. Man, Love vs. Politics and Life vs. Death, which would reappear continuously in Matthus' future work.<sup>105</sup>

The year 1985 takes a special place in his biography. Matthus premiered two operas, which influenced his writing further on. "*Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke*",<sup>106</sup> which had its highly successful premiere at the inauguration of the Semperoper Dresden in 1985, directed by Ruth Berghaus, and "Judith," premiered and directed by Harry Kupfer in Berlin as well in 1985. Matthus explained how "*Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke*" came into existence:

Harry Kupfer, who ran Dresden's opera house, commissioned me to write an opera for the reopening of the theatre. I composed Judith, the story of Judith and Holofernes. But suddenly Harry went to run Berlin's Komische Oper and took Judith with him. As I had a contract with the Semperoper Dresden, I had to write another work at short notice. I couldn't think what text to use and was running my eyes along my bookshelves when I saw a book I hadn't read since I was at school, Rilke's cycle of prose poems about his ancestor, Cornet Rilke. It cried out to be set to music: it already calls for drums and horn, the rest soon fell into place.<sup>107</sup>

These two operas brought more than wide recognition and success and were a milestone of the composers writing style. Matthus succeeded to express powerful human messages within the political context of his time. He used the resources of his artistic medium to make a statement about the world and the human condition. "It would have been inconceivable for my mentors,

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<sup>105</sup> Schneider, F. (1997). Über Siegfried Matthus. Retrieved from <http://www.siegfried-matthus.de/12-1/Person-01.html>

<sup>106</sup> [Song of Love and Death of Cornet Christoph Rilke]

<sup>107</sup> Peattie, A. (1993, October 2). Taking the fur out of mothballs: Siegfried Matthus is that rarity, a popular modern opera composer. Antony Peattie met him. . *The Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/opera-taking-the-fur-out-of-mothballs-siegfried-matthus-is-that-rarity-a-popular-modern-opera-1508080.html>



a Walter Felsenstein, for example, to think of art as focusing only on itself.”<sup>108</sup>

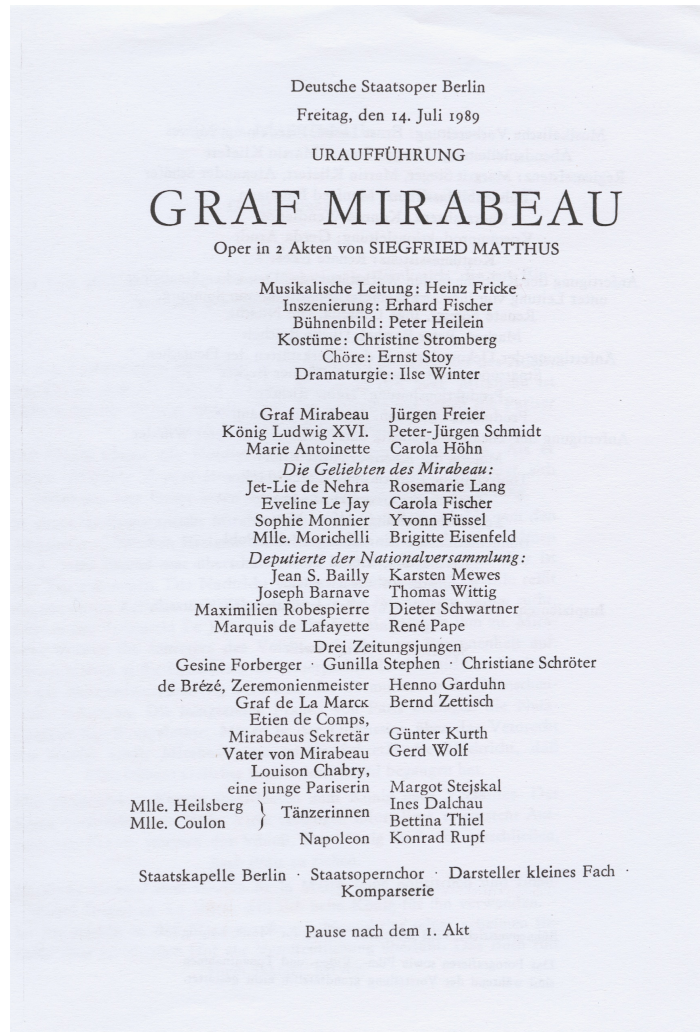


Image 3: Poster of program booklet of World Premiere of the opera “Graf Mirabeau” [private archive of the author]

<sup>108</sup> Sturm, G (2002). Encounters. siegfried matthus. *Music Associates of America*. Retrieved from [www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html](http://www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html).

#### 4.7. Press and media

The opera “Graf Mirabeau“ was written at the invitation of Rolf Liebermann to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Bastille Day and premiered on July 14th, 1989. Four opera companies, as well as two television networks in East and West Germany, launched it simultaneously. It was a huge audience success but received a generally unfriendly press. Also, the musical play “*Desdemona und ihre Schwestern*“ [Desdemona and her sisters, 1992] was widely successful.<sup>109</sup>

His opera “Judith” received similar reactions at the US premiere at the Santa Fe Opera in 1990. It was well received by the audience, yet the media were not in favor.<sup>110</sup> The composer regrets that “the gulf between the critical establishment and the public seems to be growing larger.”<sup>111</sup>

Qualifying the German composers Wolfgang Rihm and Siegfried Matthus as an essential voice in contemporary repertoire, Eckhard Bernstein considered Matthus’ operas “*Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke*”<sup>112</sup> and “*Graf Mirabeau*” [Count Mirabeau] as “accessible and at the same time musically complex and challenging.” Erik Levi concluded:

In charging the turbulent history of German music over the past hundred years, the precedent of such considerable musical talent in Unified Germany augurs well for the future.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Schneider, F. & Dibelius, U. (1997) *Neue Musik im geteilten Deutschland*. Dokumente und Kommentare in vier Bänden. Berliner Festspiele, 1993–1999.

<sup>110</sup> von Rhein, J. (1990, August 12). Despite brave effort, ‘judith’ ends up a bloody bore. *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1990-08-12-9003070596-story.html>

<sup>111</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>112</sup> [The lay and of love and death of cornet Christoph Rilke, 1985]

<sup>113</sup> Bernstein, E. (2004). *Culture and customs of Germany*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. 151.

#### 4.8. Leipzig, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1989

Matthus describes the events of that day as follows:

The police on the outskirts already controlled my wife and me when entering the city. Being the composer and part of the audience of that night's concert gained us to access. On the way to the Gewandhaus concert hall, we found the streets filled with people, manifesting, and marching in protest. The side streets were blocked by the military, ready to strike. The only way to get to the hall was by joining them, which we did with pleasure. It was a dangerous situation. Then we heard the voice of my dear friend Kurt Masur through the radio, asking the protesters and the military to keep calm and peaceful. It was a moment of my life without comparison. At the concert, young people gave him flowers and showered his car with flowers afterward.<sup>114</sup>

#### 4.9. After 1989

On November 9th, 1989, the very day on that the Berlin Wall opened, Matthus was about to finish a Concerto for Three Trumpets and Strings. He was so moved that he subtitled his work '*O namenlose Freude*' [Oh untold joy], quoting the great duet before the finale to Beethoven's *Fidelio*.<sup>115</sup>

One of the most impactful activities in the years after 1989 was his position as the founder and artistic director of the Opera Festival *Kammeroper Schloss Rheinsberg*.<sup>116</sup> With this festival,

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<sup>114</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>115</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>116</sup> [Chamber Opera at Rheinsberg Castle, since 1991].

he created a venue for very successful performances of his operas like “*Kronprinz Friedrich*” [Crown Prince Frederic], in addition to earlier mentioned works. He founded one of the most significant platforms for contemporary opera in Germany, a well-recognized international opera competition, which held auditions all over the world, including the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The festival created a professional space for hundreds of young opera singers from all over the world and had more than 500 applications from 25 countries in record years. On the board of directors of the Rheinsberg Opera Festival Matthus collaborated with musical figures like conductor Christian Thielemann and the directors Harry Kupfer and August Everding.<sup>117</sup>

Resuming his career before and after 1989 Siegfried Matthus emphasizes that conductors and orchestras of “both sides,” independently of political background, have always performed his compositions in both political systems. He says that he never considered or observed any differences in his performances or his writing. After the political change in 1989, he did not purposely change his style and couldn’t find any differences in the audience reception to his works before or after 1989.

The only difference I do notice drastically is that in the current international concert world there are far fewer performances of contemporary composers in comparison to the years before 1989.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> K. S. R. (Ed.). (n.d.). Geschichte. Retrieved from <https://kammeroper-schloss-rheinsberg.de/geschichte/>

<sup>118</sup> Matthus, 2019

#### 4.10. About his heritage

When asked about his relationship with cultural heritage, the composer stated:

I have been mindful of my cultural heritage since I was a child. I am obviously not an 'East German composer' because that country existed for a scant 40 years, not sufficient time to generate traditions. But I certainly am a German composer. I very keenly feel a cultural continuum that differs in its make-up from the heritage of other lands. I don't say it's better or worse. I have the greatest admiration and respect for different cultures, but we all have our own sensibilities, our own traditions. Take Bach. For me, his passions are the greatest operas ever written, and they reflect the human conflict in a way that could only have been created by a German composer. I regard it as very desirable that people recognize my national origins through my music. To me it's awfully boring, in all too much contemporary music, to hear a type of international blandness that reveals nothing about the composer's ethnicity.<sup>119</sup>

Why did Matthus never stay in the West in spite of having had so many opportunities? In an interview with George Sturm the composer explained:

You see, there are basically two types of people: idealists, and opportunists who turn whichever way the sun shines. And there are all the gradations in between. Lots of people have asked me why I didn't just leave East Germany. After all, owing to my funny career, which permitted me to travel, I could simply have failed to return one day. Although I felt the regime to be all wrong, I am also tremendously loyal to my family and friends, my profession, my heritage and, yes, my country.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Sturm, G. (1990, February). Encounters Siegfried Matthus. Retrieved from <http://www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html>

<sup>120</sup> Sturm, G. (1990, February). Encounters Siegfried Matthus. Retrieved from <http://www.musicassociatesofamerica.com/madamina/encounters/matthus.html>

## 5.The World Premiere and the GDR premiere of Matthus' Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani and Orchestra

### 5.1. World Premiere

As mentioned in the first chapter, Siegfried Matthus' Concerto for Trumpet and Timpani was commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and originally requested by its solo timpanist Oswald Vogler as a timpani concerto. After the Leipzig performance of the BPhO in 1981, Matthus decided on a "Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani, and Orchestra," which is the original title of the score. However, looking at the poster of the world-premiere on January 18th in Berlin, the work appears as "*Konzert für Pauken, Trompete und Orchester*" [Concerto for Timpani, Trumpet, and Orchestra], which inverts the order of the two solo instruments and puts the timpani first. It somehow honors Oswald Vogler's original wish for a timpani concerto and only appeared this way in the first-ever two performances of January 18th and 19th 1983.

The composer recalls about the rehearsal process "frequent interruptions and very little time".<sup>121</sup> The rehearsals fell into the moment of hottest conflict between the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and its chief conductor, Herbert von Karajan, about principal clarinet, Sabine Meyer, who Karajan wanted to hire against the orchestra's votes.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Matthus, 2019

<sup>122</sup> N. Y. T. (Ed.). (1983, January 8). Karajan and Orchestra Clash Over Clarinetist. *New York Times*, p.16. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/01/08/arts/karajan-and-orchestra-clash-over-clarinetist.html>



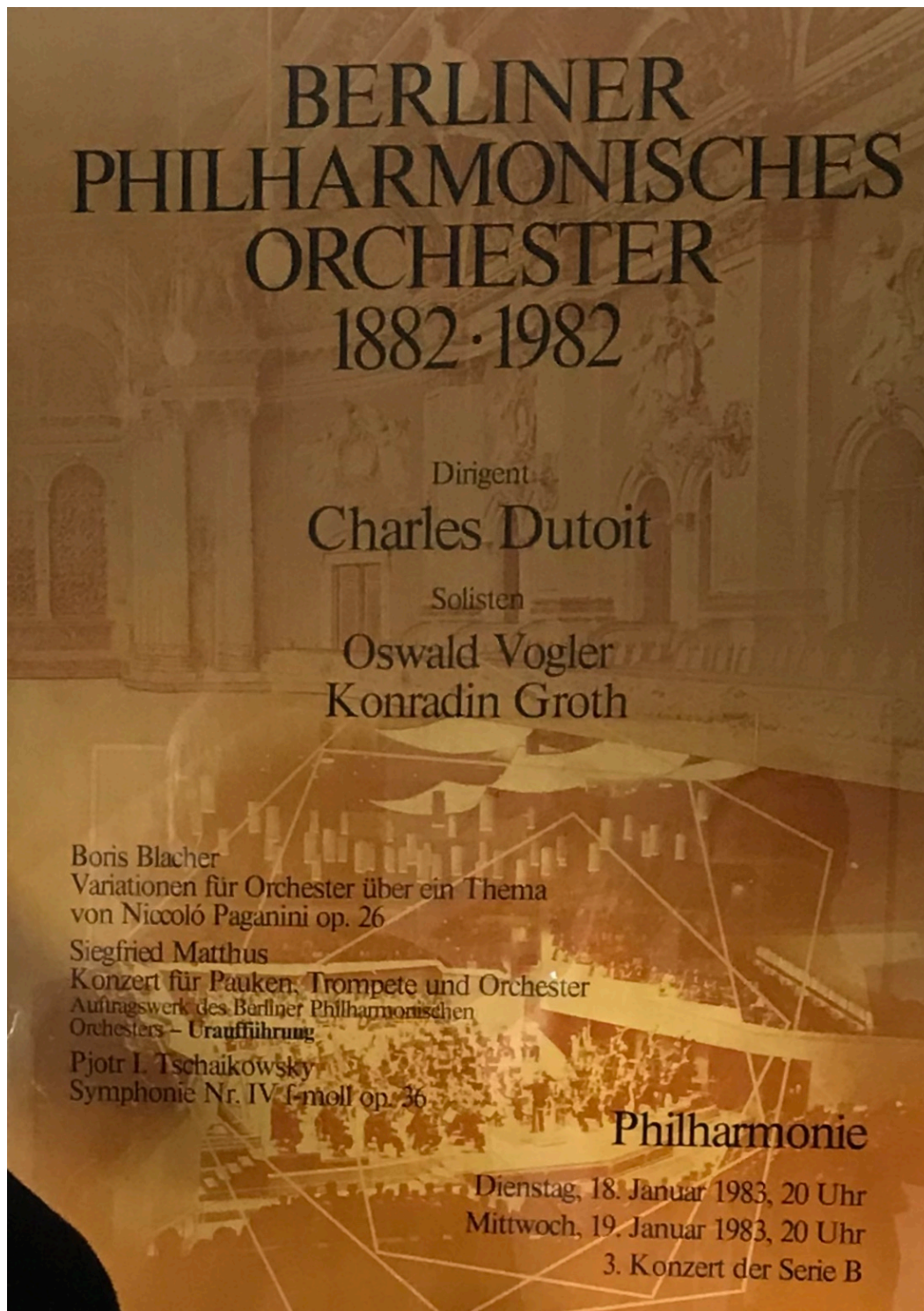


Image 4: Poster of the World-Premiere [with permission of Konradin Groth, private archive]

## 5.2. Hamburg Premiere

One year later, on February 1984, Charles Dutoit took Matthus' concerto for a second performance to Hamburg where he conducted the NDR Radio Symphony Orchestra. Hannes Läubin on trumpet and Heinz Haedler on timpani were the soloists, and the composer and his wife were present at the performance. The recording of that concert became the first LP.

## 5.3. East German Premiere

The GDR premiere of Matthus' concert was planned to take place one week later during the “*DDR- Musiktage*”<sup>123</sup> in Berlin from February 20th-28th, 1984, performed by the prestigious Staatskapelle Berlin.<sup>124</sup> Apart from Matthus' ambitions to have his work performed in the German Democratic Republic, a strong impulse for the performance came from Andreas Aigmüller,<sup>125</sup> at that time Solo Timpanist of the Berlin Staatskapelle. Being a composer himself he was a composition student of Siegfried Matthus and a member of the *Komponistenverband der DDR* [GDR composer's association note from the author]. Aigmüller suggested his colleague Rainer Auerbach, the Principal Trumpet of the Staatskapelle Berlin.

One day Aigmüller contacted Auerbach “I'm very sorry, but it had been decided for Ludwig Güttler to play the GDR premiere of the Matthus concerto.”<sup>126</sup> Ludwig Güttler was the “official” trumpet soloist of the GDR. Being one of the East German artists who

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<sup>123</sup> [GDR Music Days, a contemporary music festival]

<sup>124</sup> Bolzen, T. (n.d.). Chronik der DDR 1984. Retrieved from [https://ddr-lexikon.o90.de/Chronik\\_der\\_DDR\\_1984](https://ddr-lexikon.o90.de/Chronik_der_DDR_1984)

<sup>125</sup> Aigmueller, A. (2019). Andreas Aigmueller Komponist und Musiker. Retrieved from <http://www.aigmueller-music.de/en/biography/>

<sup>126</sup> Auerbach 2018



were literally exported into the “*Nichtsozialistische Ausland*”,<sup>127</sup> he was well connected with the party officials and had a strong say in the decisions about who would perform what, when and where in the trumpet scene of the GDR.<sup>128</sup>

Güttler canceled his performance one day before the GDR premiere for health reasons. The first performance of Matthus’ work in the GDR was about to be canceled. According to the composer he had prepared for this scenario and contacted Hannes Läubin, who “had given this wonderful performance under Dutoit in Hamburg just one week earlier.”<sup>129</sup>

In 1984, the telephone and transportation logistics between East and West Germany were at the best complicated. The composer remembers the following odyssey:

My wife achieved to reach Läubin by phone, which had been a challenge as he was in recordings with a brass ensemble in Stuttgart. After she explained our emergency, he agreed to fly to West Berlin the next day. It was beyond fortunate that he had not only the score of the concerto at hand but also the special trumpet he needed for it [a G –trumpet]. We booked a flight for him from Stuttgart to West Berlin. My wife picked him up with a taxi at the Grenzübergang [border check point] between West and East Berlin. At this time, I was already sitting in the audience at the concert where my concerto was about to be performed. When their taxi arrived at the Staatsoper Berlin, the concert had already begun. As Läubin had been recording in Stuttgart. Therefore he didn’t bring concert clothes, so we had asked for three tails, which were waiting for him in his dressing room. Fortunately, one of them fit. When he closed the bow tie, my wife said they heard the applause of the first piece. Läubin walked on stage without having seen his percussion

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<sup>127</sup> [non-socialist foreign countries, note from the author],

<sup>128</sup> Auerbach 2018

<sup>129</sup> Matthus 2019

colleague or the conductor before, let alone having rehearsed. It was a fantastic performance.<sup>130</sup>

#### 5.4. Recordings

The Hamburg Recording with the NDR Symphony Orchestra under Dutoit and Läubin and Haedler as soloists was released in 1984 under the Label Norddeutscher Rundfunk and manufactured by Teldec.<sup>131</sup> The concerto was re-recorded in 1986 and released in 1988 under the East German Label NOVA. Herbert Kegel conducted the Philharmonic Orchestra Dresden, Ludwig Güttler and Andreas Aiglmüller were the soloists on trumpet and timpani.<sup>132</sup> A third recording was released in 2004 for the composer's 70th birthday by the label *Perc.Pro* with the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Saarbrücken under Michael Stern, with Robert Hofmann on trumpet and Michael Gärtner on timpani.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> (Matthus, 2019)

<sup>131</sup> *Konzert Für Trompete Pauken Und Orchester / Klarinettenkonzert Kv 622*. (1984). Hamburg. Retrieved from <https://www.discogs.com/Siegfried-Matthus-W-A-Mozart-Sinfonieorchester-Des-NDR-Konzert-Für-Trompete-Pauken-Und-Orchester-Kl/release/8514838>

<sup>132</sup> *Konzert Für Trompete Pauken Und Orchester / Klarinettenkonzert Kv 622*. (n.d.). Hamburg. Retrieved from <https://www.discogs.com/Siegfried-Matthus-Konzert-Für-Trompete-Pauken-Und-Orchester-Hyperion-Fragmente/release/2667237>

<sup>133</sup> *Manhattan Concerto*. (2004). Hochspeer. Retrieved from <http://libcat.bucknell.edu/title/manhattan-concerto/oclc/220318127>



Image 5: NDR recording LP [private archive of the author]



Image 6: LP cover from the GDR label NOVA  
[private archive of the author]

## 5.5. Structure

It is not the purpose of this writing to analyze the work in detail. However, for further understanding, I want to give an overview of the orchestration and structure of the movements, and some background ideas from the composer.

By suggestion of Konradin Groth, the trumpet part, written in C [concert pitch], is performed on a trumpet in high G, which is an instrument of the piccolo trumpet family. The G trumpet sound is closer to an Eb trumpet than to a piccolo trumpet in high A or Bb. As the solo part is written continuously in a very high register, the use of this instrument allows the soloist to play the demanding virtuosic parts elegantly and light.

The timpani part is written for six timpani, while the orchestral score consists of strings, harp, brass, and percussion. The composer refrains from using woodwinds. The strings give the score its symphonic color and drastic contrast to the characteristic brass and percussion colors of the solo instruments and their respective sections.

Matthus' idea is a dynamic score of several conversation parties; the orchestra appears in the role of an equal dialogue partner beside the two soloists. An eleven-piece brass choir supports the solo trumpet. The solo timpanist has two percussion batteries on his side, although it would be more accurate to say, on each side of the orchestra.

Orchesterbesetzung:

4 Hörner (F)	Schlagzeug (2 Spieler)
3 Trompeten (C)	Kassie (kann auch doppelt besetzt werden)
3 Posaunen	Gitarrist
Tuba	

Aufstellung und Nummerierung des Pärken:

Das erste Schlagzeug (Batterie I) besteht aus Xylophon, im hängenden Becken (L), 3 Tomtoms und eine große Trommel.

Das zweite Schlagzeug (Batterie II) aus Xylophon, im Becken R (H), 3 Tomtoms und eine große Trommel.

Die Batterie I steht links von den Pärken (vom Dirigenten aus gesehen), die Batterie II rechts.

Die Aufstellung der Tomtoms und der großen Trommel im linken Satz spiegelsymmetrisch.

Batterie I

Pärken

Batterie II

Die drei Tomtoms müssen sehr große und voluminöse, im Abstand etwas kleiner als optimales Instrumente sein (jedoch mit hoch gespannten Fell).

Beide Batterien möglichst mit gleichen und gleich optimierten Instrumenten.

Die Partitur ist in C notiert.

Image 7: Page from the original score with instruction for percussion battery set up  
[private archive of the author]

Dialogues are established between orchestra and soloists, trumpet and brass and between solo timpani and percussion batteries.

The interaction between the two soloists is that of two intimate conversation partners whose lines cross alternately but who are rarely interacting as a “couple.” The solo parts are like two parallel “showcases” of the technical possibilities of both instruments and the musical finesse of their performers. The composition is written in a free atonal and tonal language in 5 movements. The movements are contrasting in tempo and character in the tradition of the classical concertos:

I. Intrada

II. Adagio und Passacaglia

III. Vivace

IV. Adagio Lamentoso

V. Stretta con collera



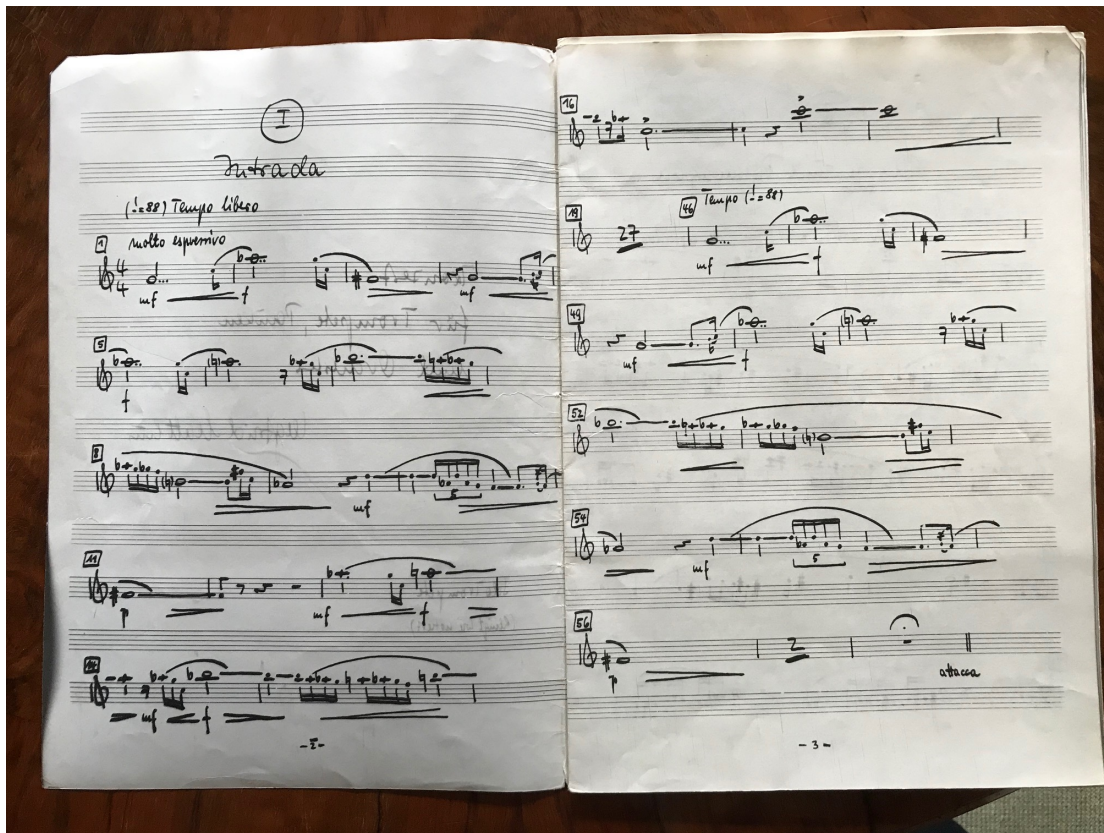


Image 8: Intrada, original manuscript of the trumpet part, written in C  
[With permission of Konradin Groth, private archive]

### 5.5.1. Intrada

Without promising a detailed description of each movement, I want to look deeper into the first movement. It carries the significance of two completely different moments in German history. There is a German saying “*Mit Pauken und Trompeten*” [with timpani and trumpets], which is influenced by Bach’s cantata BWV 214 “*Tönet, ihr Pauken! Erschallet, Trompeten!*” [Sound, you drums! Ring forth, trumpets!]. In German language, it became a synonym for anything festive and majestic, a symbol for a grand entrance as well as for important celebration, in other words, the perfect description for

something with pomp and intensity.<sup>134</sup> It does not surprise that Matthus chose this motto, as the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra commissioned this concerto for its 100th-anniversary celebrations.

However, the idea of a festive fanfare appears only in the first movement, the Intrada. The majestic Intrada stands for itself in sound and expression because of its orchestration. Introducing both soloists in dramatic opening monologues the score only uses brass and percussion for the orchestra's response to establish the typical sound of both solo instruments.

Matthus lets the trumpet expose the theme of the fanfare,<sup>135</sup> and achieves an almost identical response in the timpani in bar 19.

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<sup>134</sup> For example: "The festival was opened *mit Pauken und Trompeten*," means, there was a great festivity and celebration, music, fireworks etc.

<sup>135</sup> see image 138



Handwritten musical score for a brass band, featuring parts for 1. Trp. 2. Trp., 3. Trp., 1. Tenor, Solo Trp., and Pk. (Percussion). The score is divided into measures, with dynamic markings (f, mf, pp) and tempo markings (Tempo libero, a tempo). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and articulation marks.

Image 9: Intrada, bar 19; timpani entrance imitating the trumpet opening

The composer tells how he got inspired for the opening call of the Intrada as follows:

Konradin Groth and his wife were at our New Year's party at the beginning of the '80s, I believe in 1981. Our apartment was in a big town mansion right across the Schlosspark Pankow [the park of the castle in Berlin-Pankow]. At midnight the fireworks started, and Konradin went to the balcony and played one fanfare after another, Beethoven's "Freude schöner Götterfunken"<sup>136</sup> and an endless list of calls and melodies. Our son was visiting from the army during this time. He told us later that his friend was on duty during that night in the Wachregiment "Felix Dzerzhinsky" [a paramilitary unit of the State Security "Stasi" with 10,000 troops, which was also stationed in Berlin Pankow to protect government and party officials]. When he heard the sound of the trumpet, he knew it came from us.

This story illustrates the irony of the political situation in the German Democratic Republic. With very few exceptions East German citizens could not travel to West Berlin, for example, to attend a concert by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.<sup>137</sup> On the other hand, Konradin Groth, principal trumpet of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, could visit Matthus's family in East Berlin without difficulties, accompanied by his wife. Not only was he able to travel unhindered, but he also played his instrument in public and could be heard by soldiers of the Stasi [State Security]. The official purpose of the Stasi was to "locate and arrest subversive elements with ideas or attitudes that deviated from the SED" [socialist party] and which were "a result of the influence of enemy headquarters in the West."<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> [The chorus of the final movement of Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony, based on Schiller's "Ode to Joy"]

<sup>137</sup> [West Berlin belonged politically to the Federal Republic of Germany, note from the author].

<sup>138</sup> The Federal Commissioner. (OAD). Retrieved September 26, 2019, from <https://www.bstu.de/en/the-agency/the-federal-commissioner/>.

Konradin Groth from West Berlin, standing on Matthus' balcony in East Berlin, was the personification of the political and historical irony of the Berlin Wall.<sup>139</sup>

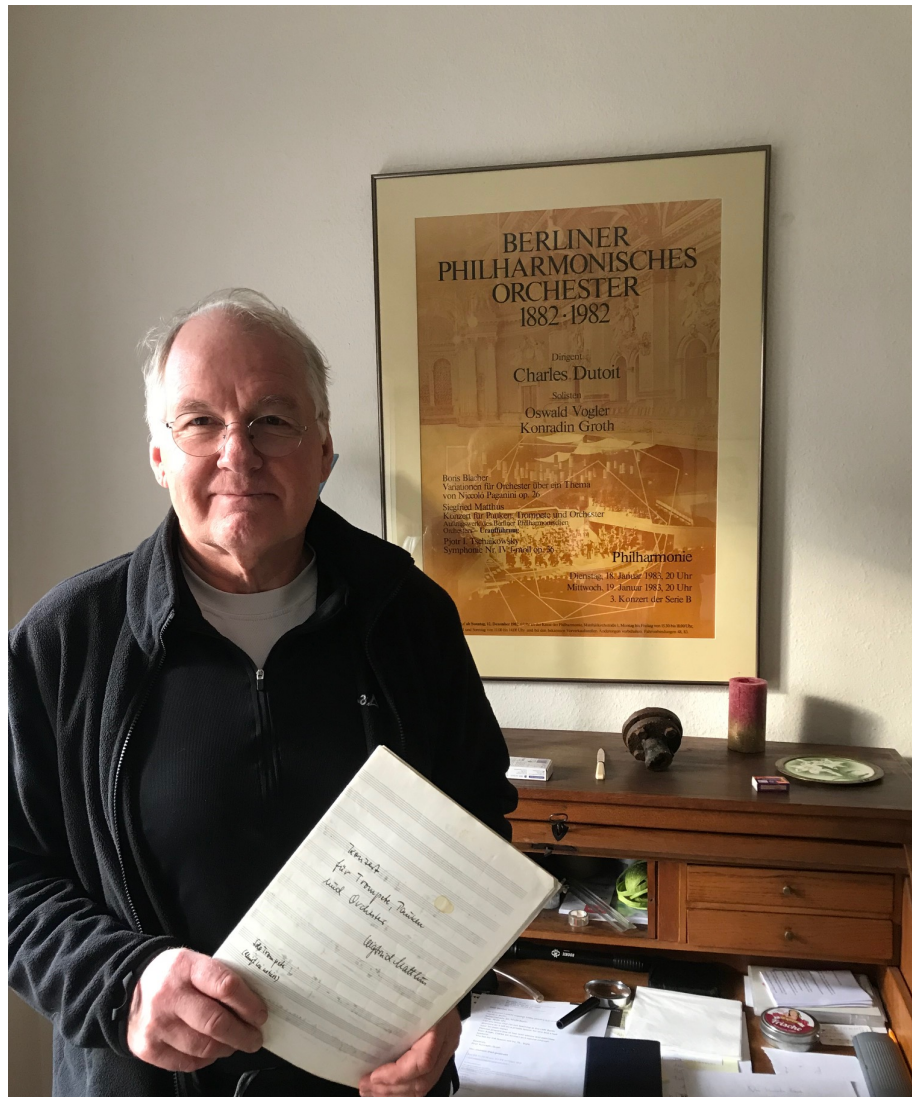


Image 10: Konradin Groth in front of the original poster of the world premiere with the original manuscript of the trumpet part of Matthus' concerto for trumpet, timpani and orchestra [private archive of the author, with permission of Mr. Groth]

<sup>139</sup> [compare chapter 3.1.]

### 5.5.2. Adagio und Pasacaglia

The other four movements are written for the full orchestra score.

The two Adagios, with the Vivace in between, are the most substantial portion of the concerto. They are majestic movements and define the main sound of the concerto; broad and symphonic string and brass tuttis in contrast to the solo parts with very subtle and lyrical-melancholic lines, alternating with highly virtuosic passages.

The second movement, *Adagio und Passacaglia*, opens with a powerful string replica of the Intrada theme. After the first seven bars, it transitions into a very virtuosic and technically complicated part in the strings, like an improvisation on the intervals of the Intrada. The solo timpanist enters alone with a soft, mysterious fragmented marching rhythm, which opens a dialogue with similar rhythmical responses in the strings. The solo trumpet plays a lyrical and very soft line above the strings as contrast, which then involves the brass to respond in lyrical phrases. A constant crescendo leads into a wild and expressive technical section, which converts the soloists into conversation partners in a statement-reaction pattern that leads into a furious and demanding trumpet cadenza, responded by the strings. The Passacaglia rounds the movement up with the lyrical idea of its beginning, now pairing the timpani rhythm with the brass and supporting the lyrical lines of the trumpet in the strings.

Matthus plays with all possible options of creating dialogues...timpani-strings, trumpet-brass, strings-brass, trumpet-strings, and timpani-brass, but as well in pairing the main musical tools; rhythms-lyrical phrases, rhythm-rhythm, lyrical-lyrical, etc.



Handwritten musical score for Bar 17 of movement II Adagio und Passacaglia. The score is written on multiple staves, including Solo Tmp., Pk., 1. VI, 2. VI, Tr., and Vc. The tempo/mood is marked *molto espressivo*. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending at bar 16 and the second system starting at bar 17. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

**System 1 (Bar 16):**

- Solo Tmp.:** Solo Timpani part, featuring a long note with a fermata.
- Pk.:** Percussion part, featuring a series of eighth notes.
- 1. VI:** First Violin part, featuring a series of eighth notes.
- 2. VI:** Second Violin part, featuring a series of eighth notes.
- Tr.:** Trumpet part, featuring a series of eighth notes.
- Vc.:** Violoncello part, featuring a series of eighth notes.

**System 2 (Bar 17):**

- 3. Horn:** Third Horn part, featuring a long note with a fermata.
- Solo Tmp.:** Solo Timpani part, featuring a long note with a fermata.
- Pk.:** Percussion part, featuring a series of eighth notes.
- 1. VI:** First Violin part, featuring a series of eighth notes.
- 2. VI:** Second Violin part, featuring a series of eighth notes.
- Tr.:** Trumpet part, featuring a series of eighth notes.
- Vc.:** Violoncello part, featuring a series of eighth notes.

- 14 -

Image 11: Bar 17 of movement II Adagio und Passacaglia;

### **5.5.3. Vivace**

The center movement is a nervous Vivace, which starts attacca like an explosion with a very articulated rhythm of triplets in the solo trumpet. The general character of this movement is quite similar to the highly energetic Stretta. In its general conception, the movement features the rhythmical virtuosity of the whole ensemble. It is interrupted by two very short Adagios, of which both lead into a majestic and contrasting, also very short trumpet cadenza. Matthus's concept of pairing contrasts develops an overlapping rhythmical complexity, converting the basic triplets into duplets and quadruplets. The Vivace increases its intensity through an enormous and almost continuous crescendo towards the end. It intensifies the density of the rhythmical figures into a seemingly chaotic, but structured polyphony of all exposed rhythms. [Image 12 ]

### **5.5.4. Adagio Lamentoso**

This movement features the two soloists in an intimate, soft, and lyrical conversation. It creates an exotic atmosphere that resembles the Arabic tonal language of Richard Strauss' opera "Salome." The orchestra score is minimalistic; it appears in the function of a *Klangteppich* [German: sound carpet, consisting of chords and simple rhythms to support the soloists]. It creates a vast space for the soloists to reveal their sensitivity. Similar to the second movement, the Adagio Lamentoso is shortly interrupted but two three-bar sections, citing the vivace movement. [Image 13]





Handwritten musical score for Movement IV, Adagio Lamentoso. The score is on a single page with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are 4. Fls., 1. Fl., 2. Fl., 3. Fl., Tuba, Solo Trp., 4. Fl., 2. Vt., Tr., and Vc. The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The Solo Trp. part features a melodic line with a long note and a trill. The 4. Fl. part has a melodic line with a trill. The 2. Vt. part has a melodic line with a trill. The Tr. part has a melodic line with a trill. The Vc. part has a melodic line with a trill. The score is marked with 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'smile' (smile). The page number is - 60 -.

Image 13: Movement IV, Adagio Lamentoso;  
Lyrical conversation of soloists with minimalist accompaniment



#### **5.5.5. Stretta con Collera**

This final movement is a literal “showdown” of Matthus’ extensive score. A twenty-one bar cadenza of the two percussion batteries and the timpani soloist explores the percussion in all its dynamic and rhythmical complexity. The cadenza leads into an *attaca tutti*, led by the solo trumpet with intense rhythmical passages and abundant scales. The entire movement demands all technical abilities from both soloists and orchestra. In a constant crescendo, similar as in the *Vivace*, dynamics grow drastically, and the density of the score increases and culminates into an effect-rich *fff* triple *Fortissimo*, the ending of the concerto.

As stated in the original manuscript, this final movement was completed on May 31, 1982.

23

1. Trp.

2. Trp.

3. Trp.

1. Horn

2. Horn

3. Horn

Bass I

Bass II

Solo Trp.

Pia.

molto

f

Stolzenhagen

Pfingstsonntag, d. 31. Mai 1982

- 83 -

Image 14: Finale of movement V, Stretta.  
Handwriting of the composer: Stolzenhagen, Pfingstsonntag d.31.Mai 1982 [Pentecost, May 31 1982]

## 6. The new transcription by Sergio Ortíz: Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani and Wind Instruments

Initial talks with the composer started in March 2018. It became clear soon that Matthus' concerto had not yet been performed in the Americas. Prof. Alain Cazes, director of the McGill Wind Orchestra, inspired the original thought of a new transcription for symphonic wind orchestra. I had approached him with the idea of a Canadian premiere of the work. He suggested a performance of the work by his ensemble, which created the necessity of a score for wind orchestra. The infrastructure of the American music world was another logical argument. Different than in Europe, in North America, the symphonic wind orchestras outnumber the symphony orchestras by tradition.<sup>140</sup>

The composer was intrigued by the reasoning that a wind orchestra version could be an efficient way for his work to be performed in North America more frequently than in the original text.

The conversation about the details of the transcription between Matthus, Cazes, and I initiated in July 2018. Alain Cazes chose February 2, 2019, as the concert date and Pollack Hall at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec as the venue for the Canadian [and North American] premiere of the new transcription.

Siegfried Matthus authorized the project and remarked that the result of this transcription would stand as a new version of his work and will be published as such. He also suggested that the brass and percussion parts of the original score should not be changed.

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<sup>140</sup> [2500 community bands exist in the US] Anderson, L.E. (2014). The Community Band: An American Institution. *Alive Magazin*, June 7 2014. Retrieved from: <https://aliveeastbay.com/archives/the-community-band-an-american-institution/>

Therefore, the main task of the transcription would be the conversion of the strings and harp parts into woodwind parts.

Taking this statement as a starting point, Alain Cazes suggested the following orchestration:

Piccolo

Two flutes

Two oboes

Six clarinets (three parts)

Bass clarinet

Two bassoons, contrabassoon

String-bass

Piano (if desired mainly for very technical wind parts).

Brass, percussion & harp remain unchanged.

### 6.1. The arranger

This entire research project connects many pivot points and artists of my musical journey. After thorough consideration, I decided to entrust the transcription to Sergio Antonio Ortíz from Mexico, where I lived for fifteen years. Being a trumpet player and a composer himself, he was very passionate about Matthus' work, which promised a successful result. Ortíz grew up in the Purhepecha region of the state of Michoacán, a part of Western Mexico with a vivacious wind band and orchestra tradition. He is a band director, passionate educator and very experienced arranger for orchestra, chamber

music, and wind orchestra. As follows, I will describe the process and choices of his transcription, based on interviews with him in March 2019.<sup>141</sup>

## 6.2. The approach of the transcription

At first, the main challenge for the transcription was the fact, that the original score abstains completely from the woodwinds, which are, ironically, a predominant group in a modern symphonic wind orchestra. As the composer had suggested, Ortíz remained the brass and percussion parts unchanged. He applied the same for the double bass part, which would only be supported by the tuba in some places of the score, but remained untouched. The solo parts were not to be altered.

Considering the typical and feasible orchestration of a symphonic wind orchestra, made it necessary to convert the harp part into a piano part.

Sergio Ortíz states:

The main challenge was to adapt the idiomatic treatise of the strings to the technical characteristics of the woodwinds. I had to find sonorous similarities and potentiate certain musical lines by duplicating instruments where it would be necessary. Matthus' concerto has grand proportions, and its sonorous achievements are colossal. Its magnanimous esthetic is the result of a great work of art. The great disposition and communication of Alain Cazes made it easy to get a clear idea of the needed characteristics of the transcription.<sup>142</sup>

One remarkable choice of Ortíz' transcription was to omit the use of saxophones. In the wind orchestra, the saxophones create an important cohesion between brass and

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<sup>141</sup> Interview: Sergio Ortíz 2019

<sup>142</sup> Ortiz, 2019

woodwinds. The color of the saxophones is an efficient element to amalgamate the sonorous possibilities of both instrumental groups. However, in Matthus' original score strings and brass are used to create a sonorous contrast. Ortíz was looking for a traditional symphonic woodwind sound, which finally lead to this decision.

### 6.3. Details of the transcription

The first stage was to create the score as close as possible to the composer's original text and color. In the following, according to Ortíz' description, I will outline some details about the chosen orchestration in the wind orchestra version.

#### **6.3.1. I Intrada**

No adaptations were necessary in this movement as the brass and percussion parts remained unchanged.

#### **6.3.2. II Adagio und Passacaglia**

The main focus here was to adapt the string parts. The immense range of the violins in the bars 6, 7 and 8 had to be covered mainly by the piccolo flutes, as they are the only instruments that naturally possess the same high register. Ortiz based his approach on a thorough analysis of the individual register of each symphony orchestra and wind orchestra instrument to detect sonorous similarities and compatible range.

In the Mexican band tradition, it is common to find transcriptions of symphonic works by Verdi, Rossini, Wagner, Weber, Beethoven, Mozart, etc. for wind band. Observing the traditional procedure to adapt symphonic works for wind band, Ortíz developed a table of equivalence for adequate instrumentation.

The clarinets are the pre-eminent instruments of the wind band with very similar idiomatic possibilities as the violins. Their technical abilities permit large intervals, arpeggios, fast scales, and high range, which lead to the conclusion to use the clarinets in the adaptation as the primary color.

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	WIND ORCHESTRA
Violin I	Clarinet 1
Violin II	Clarinet 2
Viola	Clarinet 3
Cello	Bassoons
Double Bass	Contrabassoon (and Tuba, if necessary) <sup>143</sup>

Further considerations were about the balance and colors, which the original text demanded. Naturally, the wind orchestra has a more significant number of instruments with a soprano-like tessitura: the flutes, oboes and Eb clarinet. The contralto tessitura can be found in the English horn and the bass in bass clarinet, bassoon, and contrabassoon.

It proved to be natural and efficient to reinforce the double bass line with the contrabassoon. The next table shows the added instruments to the basic pattern from table 1 to enrich the sound color of each part.

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	WIND ORCHESTRA
Violin I	Clarinet 1, Flute 1 and 2, Eb Clarinet, piccolo flute (for very high register)
Violin II	Clarinet 2, Oboe 1 and 2 (English horn, sometimes)
Viola	Clarinet 3, (English horn)
Cello	Bassoons, bass clarinet
Double Bass	Contrabassoon (and tuba, if needed) <sup>144</sup>

The decision to add flute 1 and 2 for the part of violin 1 and oboe 1 and 2 for violin 2 created a color distinction within the violin parts.

<sup>143</sup> Orchestration Table 1, Sergio Ortíz 2019

<sup>144</sup> Orchestration Table 2, Sergio Ortíz 2019

Violin I – Clarinet 1, Flutes 1 and 2

Violin II – Clarinet 2, Oboes 1 and 2

Exceptions in this general concept were necessary, where the register of the strings was so high, that the original range had to be adapted to an instrument-typical range, for example in bar 36 and 37.<sup>145</sup>

A handwritten musical score for two pages, labeled 36 and 37. The score is written on multiple staves. The top section includes staves for Trumpets (Tup. 1, 2, 3), Horns (Hr. 1, 2, 3, 4), and Percussion (1. Per.). Below these are staves for Solo Trumpet (Solo Tup.) and Trombones (Tr.). The bottom section includes staves for Violins (1. Vl., 2. Vl.), Viola (Vi.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The notation is dense, featuring many notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The handwriting is in black ink on aged paper. The score is for the Adagio and Passacaglia sections of a work.

Image 15: Bar 36 and 37 Adagio and Passacaglia

<sup>145</sup> Image 15: Bar 36 and 37 Adagio and Passacaglia



SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	WIND ORCHESTRA
Violin I	Piccolo, Flute 1 and 2
Violin II	Oboe 1 and 2
Viola (divisi) 1	E♭ clarinet and clarinet 1
Viola (divisi) 2	English horn, Clarinet 2 and 3 <sup>146</sup>

To achieve the richest wind orchestra sound, Ortíz found a way to double [reinforce] similar sonorous characteristics as follows:

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	WIND ORCHESTRA
Bassoon 1	Bass clarinet
Bassoon 2	Contrabassoon
Oboe 2	English horn
Clarinet 1	E♭ clarinet <sup>147</sup>

### 6.3.3. III Vivace

The difficulties of this movement are complex and irregular rhythms. Within a 6/8 bar we find quarter note duplets, eight note quadruplets and quintuplets while the compositional material increases tremendously from bar 107 to bar 132. Ortiz answered the question about how to adapt the tremolos to the woodwinds by merely keeping the quadruplets as they appeared before [example: bar 128].<sup>148</sup> In other places, he replaced the tremolo with potent long notes to achieve the required intensity [example: bar 141-142, 153-154].

<sup>146</sup> Orchestration Table 3, Sergio Ortíz 2019

<sup>147</sup> Orchestration Table 4, Sergio Ortíz 2019

<sup>148</sup> Image: bar 128 Vivace

## 25

Image 16: Bar 128 Vivace

### 6.3.4. IV Adagio lamentoso

The same basic idea of orchestration was applied. One spot, in particular, is remarkable, as it shows an exception to the earlier mentioned method. The original score has a *divisi a 4* for cellos between bar 62 and 71.<sup>149</sup> Instead of keeping the cello parts in the bassoons, Ortíz decided to write it for the trombones and tuba, which resulted in a color reminding on the chorales of Brahms and Mahler.

The image displays a page from a musical score titled "IV Adagio lamentoso". The page number "14" is at the top left. The score is for a large orchestra, with staves for various instruments listed on the left: Adm. C. Tpt., Tmp., Pic., Fl. 1, Fl. 2, Ob. 1, Ob. 2, E. Bb., E. Cl., Bb. Cl. 1, Bb. Cl. 2, Bb. Cl. 3, B. Cl., Bsn. 1, Bsn. 2, C. Bb., C. Tpt. 1, C. Tpt. 2, C. Tpt. 3, Hrn. 1, Hrn. 2, Hrn. 3, Hrn. 4, Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2, Tbn. 3, Tuba, Xyl. 1, Xyl. 2, Pm., and D. B. The coral part is marked with "pp" and "f" dynamics.

Image 17: Coral divisi à 4 trombones [original for 4 celli]

<sup>149</sup> Image 17: Coral divisi à 4 celli in transcription for trombones

### **6.3.5. V Stretta con collera**

All the earlier described techniques were applied entirely to adapt the compact sonorous and rhythmic structure of the sophisticated original score. The constant appearance of divisi in violin I and II between the bars 43 and 56 made it necessary to use the resource of re-arranging the range of the wind parts and add soprano instruments to the standard orchestration to achieve a balanced orchestra sound.

On a personal note, Sergio Ortíz emphasized as follows: “The work represents to me the continuation of a symphonic tradition with its roots centuries ago. It is an example of the possibilities to create new compositions that melt contemporary musical language with traditional sonorous elements. As a trumpet player, I believe that this concerto should be essential in the repertoire. Its performance requires not only very developed instrumental technique but also mature, expressive skills and historical awareness. It is like a master class in composition, orchestration and esthetic creation.”<sup>150</sup>

### **6.4. Performance and publication**

The Canadian and North American premiere of Siegfried Matthus’ “Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani and Wind Instruments” in the authorized transcription took place on February 2, 2019, at 8 pm in Pollack Hall at the Schulich School of Music, McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. Alain Cazes conducted the McGill Wind Orchestra, Fabrice Marandola and Alexander Freund were the soloists on timpani and trumpet.

At the moment of this writing, the new score is subject to final revisions to be published by the ‘composer’s edition “Interklang Musikverlag.”

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<sup>150</sup> Sergio Ortíz, 2019

## 7. Conclusion

Siegfried Matthus is a successful contemporary composer, whose work has enjoyed high-performance numbers with renowned orchestras and widely positive audience rapport for more than 50 years. On the other hand, he is a witness of a significant chapter of German history between 1945 and 1989, which had an extraordinary creative artistic production. As a composer and musical entrepreneur, Matthus is a vivid example that creativity and artistic vision can grow under challenging socio-political circumstances. The composer is also a successful example of the existence of very authentic music in the German Democratic Republic, which was timeless and stylistically independent enough to be continuously performed after 1989. The 40 years existence of the GDR as a country may be short, the country's political and ideological contents may be questionable, and however, the support for musical creation and the educational initiative to maintain the significant German music tradition were exceptional.

The fact, that Matthus composed it for the 100th anniversary of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra makes his Concerto for Trumpet, Timpani, and Orchestra a composition with historical significance. Matthus' atonal-tonal language, the complex rhythmical figures, and the particular orchestration for strings, brass, and percussion create a specific and recognizable sound. It is a magnificent grand style composition that explores both solo instruments to the maximum of their technical possibilities and invites them to express a profound sensitivity.

Its creative history connects to several significant historical events. Therefore, symbolically, this composition represents two crucial chapters of recent German history; the cold war relationship between the two Separated German states before 1989 and Unified Germany after 1989. In my opinion, this concerto should be part of the known and standard repertoire for both solo instruments. Matthus does not only stand as an icon of the East German music scene. He stands for himself as one of the most performed contemporary German composers.

The transcription for Wind Instruments by Sergio Ortíz is a new version that will grant broader access to this work, especially in the Americas. The Symphonic Wind Orchestra has an extended tradition in North America, Mexico and most of the Latin American countries. Adding the version for soloists with wind instruments to the catalog may not only enhance the repertoire for the two solo instruments but also create a wide field of additional performance opportunities for Matthus' concerto. Symphonic college, military, and community wind orchestras may welcome this work as a contemporary work with the rich sound of classical orchestration.

In my personal experience, the new transcription generally has a significantly brighter sound, which challenges the trumpet soloist to produce a very distinctive tone color to create a contrast to the high register of the woodwind instruments. The score is technically very demanding, yet the musical language is never just about technique or experiment. Matthus' work communicates using the artistic tools of every great musical composition: sound, sensitivity, and harmonic and rhythmical contrast.

*Alexander Freund*

Atlanta, GA, September 25, 2019

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