



Hans Werner Henze, Ritratto, Manchester 1998

HANS WERNER HENZE

GÜTERSLOH 1926 – DRESDA 2012

LE 42 COMPOSIZIONI DI HANS WERNER HENZE NEL PROGRAMMA
DEL CHIGIANA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL & SUMMER ACADEMY 2026 "ISOLE"

THE 42 COMPOSITIONS BY HANS WERNER HENZE IN THE PROGRAM OF THE
CHIGIANA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL & SUMMER ACADEMY 2026 "ISOLE"

Amicizia!

(1976)

per clarinetto, trombone, violoncello, percussioni e pianoforte

An Brenton

(1993)

per viola sola

Being Beauteous

(1963)

per soprano coloratura, arpa e quattro violoncelli

Cadenza

(1966)

per oboe solo

dal Doppio concerto per oboe e arpa e archi

Cantata della fiaba estrema

(1963)

per soprano, coro da camera SATB e tredici strumenti

Canzona

(1982)

per oboe, arpa, pianoforte, 3 viole e violoncello

Canzoni da un'isola

(1964)

per coro da camera, trombone, 2 violoncelli, contrabbasso, organo portativo,
percussioni e timpani

Capriccio

(1976; rev. del 1981 come capriccio per Paul Sacher)

per violoncello solo

Cherubino

(1980-81)

Tre miniature per pianoforte

HANS WERNER HENZE 100

Compases para preguntas ensimismadas

(1969–70)

per viola sola e 22 strumentisti

Divertimenti

(1964)

Per due pianoforti. Intermezzi dall'opera "Il giovane Lord"

Epitaph

(1979)

per violoncello solo

Euridice

(1978-1981 / 1992)

frammenti per clavicembalo. Dall'opera "Orfeo"

Five Scenes from the Snow Country

(1978)

per marimba

Le miracle de la rose

(1981)

per clarinetto solo ed ensemble strumentale

Madrigale dei pazzi

(1974–76)

per coro, dall'opera "We come to the River"

Minette: Canti e rimpianti amorosi

(1998)

per due chitarre

Minotauros Blues

(1996)

per sei percussionisti

Orfeo dietro il filo spinato

(1981–83)

per coro misto a cappella a 8–12 voci da "Orpheus"

Toccata senza fuga

(1979)

per organo solo

Präludien zu "Tristan"

(2003)

per pianoforte solo

Prison Song

(1971)

per percussioni e tape

Quartetto n. 3

(1975–76)

per quartetto d'archi

Quartetto n. 5 – In memoriam di Benjamin Britten

(1976)

per quartetto d'archi

Requiem

(1990–1992)

nove concerti sacri per pianoforte solista, tromba, concertante e grande orchestra da camera

Royal Winter Music I

(1975–76 / 2022)

per chitarra sola (Prima Sonata)

Royal Winter Music II

(1979 / 2022)

per chitarra sola (Seconda Sonata)

San Biagio 9 agosto ore 12.07

(1977)

per contrabbasso solo

Sechs Gesänge aus dem Arabischen

(1997-98)

per tenore e pianoforte

Serenata

(1949)

per violoncello solo

Serenata

(1949 / trascr. 1980)

per contrabbasso

Serenata notturna

(1996)

per due pianoforti a quattro mani

Six Absences

(1961)

per clavicembalo

Sonata

(1959)

per pianoforte

Sonata

(1976-77, Rev. 1992)

per violino solo, "Tirsi, Mopso, Aristeo"

Sonata

(1978-79)

per viola e pianoforte

Sonatine

(1947)

per flauto e pianoforte

Souvenir à Albert et Lil

(1950)

per violoncello e pianoforte

Tema e variazioni op. 13

(1949)

per pianoforte solo

Toccata mistica

(1994)

per pianoforte solo

Trio

(1998)

per violino, viola e violoncello

Wesendonk-Lieder

(1976)

di Richard Wagner, orchestrato da H.W. Henze, per voce femminile e orchestra da camera

Film di Nina di Majo
Hans Werner Henze: La Musica, l'Amicizia, il Gioco (2016)
Produzione Red Velvet Media in collaborazione con Istituto Luce, Cinecittà

11 luglio – Cortile di Palazzo Chigi Saracini, Siena – ore 21.30
Introduzione: Nina di Majo

Film di Francesco Leprino
Inside El Cimarrón – In fuga per la libertà (2016–2021)
basato sull'opera di H.W. Henze, **El Cimarrón** (Cuba, 1969–70)
Produzione Al Gran Sole

6 agosto – Cinema Alessandro VII, Siena – ore 21.30
Introduzione: Francesco Leprino

Film di Holger Preusse, Philipp Quiring
Hans Werner Henze - Composer, Communist, Dandy (2026)
Produzione Sounding Images, WDR

26 agosto – Cortile di Palazzo Chigi Saracini, Siena – ore 21.30

* * *

Incontro pubblico – Hans Werner Henze 100

Conversazioni con
**GASTÓN FOURNIER-FACIO, MICHAEL KERSTAN, VERA GRUND,
SANDRO CAPPELLETTO, SUSANNA PASTICCI, KARSTEN WITT**
Conduce: STEFANO JACOVIELLO

con la proiezione del documentario
“Hans Werner Henze tra Italia, Germania e Inghilterra”
Idea, progetto e realizzazione di **Gastón Fournier-Facio e Anton Giulio Onofri.**
Produzione Actamovie

8 luglio – Cortile di Palazzo Chigi Saracini, Siena – ore 18.00

con il patrocinio di



in collaborazione con



HANS WERNER HENZE 100



Hans Werner Henze at the opening of the *Internationalen Meisterkurse der Staatlichen Hochschule für Musik* at Brühl Castle (Cologne), 7 June 1960

THE COMING TO AWARENESS. THE DENUNCIATION. THE UTOPIA OF A BLUMENFEST

by Gastón Fournier-Facio

GREAT WRITERS SET TO MUSIC BY HENZE

In November 1944, towards the end of the Second World War, Henze, aged just eighteen, was called up to a barracks in Magdeburg where he worked as a radio operator in a tank division; until he was selected to take part as a soldier-actor in the production of propaganda films about military life at the front.

In secret (for a tenor friend of his, accompanied on the organ by Henze himself) he composed music - among his very first scores that he would hear performed live - to poems by **Georg Trakl**. The writer, who died at the start of the First World War, was one of the most tragic voices of Austrian Expressionism. His visionary verses, laden with a sense of existential anguish, of inevitable decay and death, stood in stark contrast to Nazi ideology, which was devoted to promoting a vitalistic and celebratory art. Trakl was therefore banned by the Nazis, considered one of the “degenerate” writers.

In 15 and 16 October 2012, during a *Henze-Focus* at the Semperoper in Dresden, the composer attended the performance of his **Sebastian im Traum** (Sebastian in a Dream, 2004), inspired by the poem of the same name by **Georg Trakl** and commissioned by the Eduard van Beinum Foundation, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Tonhalle Orchestra Zürich and the New York Philharmonic. Although the score does not feature any singer, Henze evoked the poem’s melancholic, dreamlike imagery and its sorrowful, resigned atmosphere, unwittingly composing his own farewell music: in the period leading up to the world premiere (on 22 December 2005 in Amsterdam, with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Mariss Jansons), Henze fell into a coma for three months. And that is not all: *Sebastian im Traum* would be the very last piece of his own he would hear performed live. He died in Dresden on 27 October 2012.

This curious synchronicity in the composer’s life – framed by his

compositions based on poems by the same eminent writer – prompts us to recall here that many of Henze’s scores arose from a fruitful relationship with the texts of great writers:

Euripides, Virgilio, Torquato Tasso, Miguel de Cervantes, Giordano Bruno, William Shakespeare, Abbé Prévost, Carlo Gozzi, Friedrich Hölderlin, Friedrich de la Motte-Fouqué, Heinrich von Kleist, Heinrich Heine, Honoré de Balzac, Fyodor Dostoevskij, Arthur Rimbaud, Franz Kafka, Georg Trakl, Franz Werfel, Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Anna Seghers, Grete Weil, W.H. Auden, Jean Genet, Elsa Morante, Yukio Mishima, Ingeborg Bachmann, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Edward Bond, Miguel Barnet, Gastón Salvatore e Hans-Ulrich Treichel.

BOULEVARD SOLITUDE: A MODERN RETELLING OF MANON LESCAUT

In 1952, whilst serving as director of the dance season at the Wiesbaden Theatre, at the age of twenty-five Henze achieved his first major international success in Hanover with ***Boulevard Solitude***: an “opera-ballet” with a libretto by **Grete Weil** based on **Abbé Prévost**’s masterpiece, *Histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* (1731, previously set to music by composers such as Auber, Massenet and Puccini). Henze’s work was highly praised by Stravinsky in 1954, on its Italian premiere at the Teatro dell’Opera in Rome.

Grete Weil was a leading figure in post-war German literature, recognised for her ability to give voice to the existential trauma of Holocaust survivors. In her libretto for Henze’s opera, Weil transforms a classic love story into a modern lyrical drama, deeply rooted in the context of post-war Europe. She shifts the action from the 18th century to post-war Paris, in a setting devoid of romanticism that lends itself well to Henze’s partially atonal and jazz-infused music. In characterising the raw cynicism and isolation of the characters in the “road of solitude” of the title, his score employs contrasting musical codes such as tonality – used to set the scene of the old world in decline – and dodecaphony (which Henze had learnt from **René Leibowitz**, a former pupil of Schönberg and Webern) – here used to express the anti-bourgeois love of the two young protagonists. The lack of communication between these two worlds inevitably leads to the opera’s dramatic finale.



Ingeborg Bachmann and Hans Werner Henze 1952

THE ENCOUNTER WITH INGEBORG BACHMANN.

A DEPARTURE FROM THE RIGID SERIALISM OF THE DARMSTADT SCHOOL

In 1952, during a meeting of the literary circle **Group 47** at Berlepsch Castle (near Göttingen), Henze met the Austrian poet **Ingeborg Bachmann**: “an enchanting being, with magnificent large eyes, fluttering eyelashes and splendid hands, whose aura exuded sensitivity, the very embodiment of quality, a creature of pure grace and charm, as if born of a nightingale”. “She was six days older than me, but her knowledge of the world, of people and of art was so far superior to mine that she might as well have been two thousand years my senior. In her I found support; her spirit lifted me in my weakness.” That year, Henze composed **The Idiot** for the Berliner Festwochen, a mime-drama based on the novel of the same name by **Fyodor Dostoevsky** and on a poem by **Bachmann**, *A Monologue by Prince Myshkin*.

In 1953, Henze left Germany and settled in Italy, on the island of Ischia, where he spent time with W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman and where he was later joined by Bachmann. In 1955, he took part for the last time in the **Darmstadt Summer Courses**, where he taught composition alongside **Boulez** and **Maderna** and met **Stockhausen**.

In 1957, following the Berlin premiere of his *Maratona di danza* (a neorealist ballet based on a story by Visconti and performed in his presence, with sets by Renzo Vespignani), Henze moved with **Bachmann** from Ischia to Naples, where he composed:

- **Nachtstücke und Arien** (Nocturnes and Arias) based on two poems by the Austrian poet, framed by three instrumental pieces. It was a farewell to the rigidity of the twelve-tone serialism. As Henze himself observed, “with this score I had reached a position that could scarcely have been further removed from that of the so-called **Darmstadt School**. So, it is hardly surprising that at its first performance in Donaueschingen...three representatives of the other faction – **Boulez**, my friend **Gigi Nono** and **Stockhausen** – jumped to their feet after the first few bars and left the hall in protest, turning their backs on the beauty of my latest creations”.

As Franco Serpa so eloquently recalled (2019), Henze made no secret of “his own serious technical, aesthetic and *moral* conception of the ‘inhuman’ nature of avant-garde art, which can become a fashionable artifice”. He always believed in his ‘poetics’ linked to the Romantic roots of early Viennese Expressionism: his faith “in the content of music, in its perceptible meanings and therefore also in the ‘social’ and political

effect....of any music composed on a non-musical content". Right from the start, in the height of the Romantic era, "the cultural energy of this music was anti-academic and progressive, and its artists - revolutionary in their ideas and often in their public lives too - sought to expand the *expressive faculties* of the world of sound beyond the boundaries of all the arts". Henze "was not swayed by the esoteric allure of dodecaphony or abstract experimentalism as a law that establishes a language and its content in and of itself. For him, music - and not just *his* music - *expresses* emotions, images, values and characters, each time according to *individual* needs, drawing upon psychological symbols, mythical figures and ancient tales. But he expresses them *through music*, to which alone symbols and tales yield their essence, and thus *constructs* his form according to meaning, even when he makes no use of words. And *it was for all this that Henze had come to Italy*".

The collaboration with **Bachmann** developed into the theatre world with:
- ***Der Prinz von Homburg*** (The Prince of Homburg, 1959, commissioned by the Hamburg State Opera), based on the play of the same name by **Heinrich von Kleist**.

It is an emblematic text on the dichotomy between obeying orders and doing what is morally right; highlighting the cruel contrast between formal rules (the reason of state) and the common good (the transgression of law and order by a courageous man who opposes the violence of the established power), in which Henze finds "a message for our present". "The conflict between dream and reality, freedom and constraint, which lies at the heart of Kleist's drama, has been reinterpreted in this work as a clear contrast between rigorously organised serialism (extended to rhythm and dynamics) and free tonality." With his independence and pathos, Homburg, the "young somnambulist who speaks with tongues of fire, a German Hamlet who plays with life as with death", goes beyond established norms, embodying "lofty sentiments that nobody wants to promote any more today, but which my music sought!".

In 1964 Henze composed:

- ***Songs from an Island***, *choral fantasies* for chamber choir, trombone, cellos, double bass, portative organ and percussion, based on poems by **Bachmann** [12 july*]

These songs reflect their shared love for Italy (Ischia, Naples, Rome) and transform the Mediterranean landscape into an intimate poetic dimension, through a lyrical yet complex musical language capable of

integrating neoclassical elements with the demands of modernity, whilst maintaining a strong expressive and sensual component.

Henze's final collaboration with **Bachmann** will prove highly significant:

- **Der junge lord** (The Young Lord, 1964, commissioned by the Deutscher Oper in Berlin) [16 July*].

This was his first comic opera: a sarcastic satire on the hypocrisy, conformism and cruelty of bourgeois society, expressed through the story of a monkey trained to behave like an English lord. The opera demonstrated for the first time Henze's keen interest in social criticism, which would become a defining feature of his work from 1968 onwards.

TWO OPERAS WITH W.H. AUDEN

In 1951, during his first trip to Italy (at the invitation of Grete Weil, the librettist of his opera *Boulevard Solitude*, and her husband), Henze discovered the island of Ischia, where he met for the first time W.H. Auden, one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. From 1953 onwards Henze settled there, where he was joined by Ingeborg Bachmann. He regularly socialised with **W.H. Auden** and his partner **Chester Kallman** (who had previously written the libretto for Stravinsky's opera *The Rake's Progress*, 1951), who would go on to write the librettos for two of Henze's most important operas:

- **Elegy for Young Lovers** (1961, commissioned by the Bayerische Staatsoper), a seminal work of contemporary musical theatre.

Set in the early 20th century, it is an exploration of the conflict between art and life: a condemnation of the cynical aestheticism of the protagonist, Gregor Mittenhofer, a famous poet who exploits the emotions and very lives of others to achieve perfection in his artistic creation.

The libretto by Auden and Kallman is of exceptional literary quality, giving scope to both dramatic action and the psychological depth of the characters. Henze employs a chamber orchestra to create transparent and ethereal sounds, rich in emotional and psychological tension. The opera is a reflection on moral decay and the "illusions" of the bourgeoisie, highlighting some cruelties hidden behind artistic creation.

- **The Bassarids** (1965, commissioned by the Salzburg Festival).

It is a modern reinterpretation of Euripides' *The Bacchae*: a reflection on the ancient Nietzschean antinomy between human rationality and the control of emotions – represented by the King of Thebes, Pentheus – and unbridled human passion – represented by the god Dionysus, the

embodiment of vitalistic and irrational drives. The work revisits the problem of the difficult balance between revolution and reaction; between the importance of recognising and not suppressing instinctive drives and the danger of their uncontrollable degeneration.

Henze employs a large orchestra to create a dense and richly varied sound-palette to explore the tragedy and horror of the dramatic subject, playing on the contrast between the rational linearity of Pentheus (often associated with more rigid musical forms) and the unleashed sensual intoxication of Dionysus.

In 1966, at the opera premiere at the Salzburg Festival, Henze was accompanied by **Fausto Moroni** who had agreed to take on full-time the practical organisation of his life. Henze had purchased a plot of land near Marino, in the Castelli Romani region. Thanks to the major commission received to compose *The Bassarids* he managed to complete the financing of the construction of Villa *La Leprara*, which became his permanent home until his death in Dresden on 27 October 2012, whilst attending a *Henze-Focus* at the Semperoper. As he had decided years earlier, he was buried in the Marino Cemetery.

CANTATAS BASED ON TEXTS BY ARTHUR RIMBAUD AND ELSA MORANTE

- *Being Beauteous* is a cantata for coloratura soprano, harp and 4 cellos, composed in 1963 based on the poem of the same name from *Les Illuminations* (Illuminations, 1873) by **Arthur Rimbaud** [28 july*].

Here Henze makes a very personal use of the twelve-tone technique – distancing himself from the harsh sounds typical of the rigid Darmstadt school of total serialism – bending it instead towards a certain cantabile quality, a sensual lyricism. The soprano is treated almost as an instrument, with a virtuosistic writing that reflects the “divine” nature described in the poem; accompanied by an instrumental blend of harp and strings that enhances the dreamlike character of the text. It is considered one of the most refined chamber cantatas of the 20th century, capable of uniting Rimbaud’s intellectual eroticism with a contemporary musical language of rare elegance and expressive tension.

Among Henze’s vast output, there are only a few notable works for choir and orchestra. The 1968 oratorio *Das Floss der Medusa* is certainly the most famous. But two cantatas dating from the first half of the same decade bear witness to the delicate balance the composer sought

between music intended for the general concert-going public and more sophisticated works:

- ***Novae de infinito laudes*** (1962) is the most imposing, composed on texts by the 16th-century monk and heretical philosopher **Giordano Bruno** concerning the nature of the universe and the unity between life and God.

- ***Cantata della fiaba estrema*** (1963) for soprano, chamber choir and 13 instruments, based on the poem *Tu sei la fiaba estrema* by **Elsa Morante** (from *Alibi*, 1958, her first collection of poems). It is considered one of his most ecstatic works [9 july*].

Using the recurring motto “Only those who love know”, the text explores themes dear to Morante such as innocence, the good/evil dialectic and destiny, often associated with a fairy-tale and mythical vision of reality. The adjective “extreme” in relation to “fairy tale” has been interpreted as suggesting an ultimate limit, an absolute truth, or a desperate need for myth and magic.

Morante’s text evokes in Henze that sensuality found in other vocal works of the period – *Being Beauteous* first and foremost – as well as a vein of melancholic retrospection that not even the subsequent period of intense political engagement would eradicate entirely.

MUSICAL THEATRE AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT

In 1967, Henze began to associate with leading figures of the far-left movement in Berlin. The writer **Hans Magnus Enzensberger** introduced him to several leaders of the movement including **Gastón Salvatore** and **Rudi Dutschke** with whom he would form a particularly close bond. Henze then began to develop a strong political commitment and in February 1968 he helped organise a major Congress on Vietnam in Berlin which was also attended by Luigi Nono, Titina Maselli and Giangiuseppe Feltrinelli. In the summer of that year a scandal erupted when the press reported that Dutschke was staying at Henze’s Villa *La Leprara*, where he was convalescing following a serious attack in Berlin.

Amidst the controversy sparked by such radical political stances, the world premiere of one of Henze’s most controversial works was scheduled for 9 December 1968 at the grand Planten und Blumen Theatre in Hamburg:

- ***Das Floß der Medusa*** (The Raft of the Medusa), an oratorio for soprano, baritone, narrator, mixed choir, 9 child sopranos/altos and orchestra. Libretto by **Ernst Schnabel**.

In memoriam Ernesto Guevara.

Hans Werner Henze
Cantata della fiaba estrema (1963)

3
4 Andante ma non troppo (♩ ca 80)

Un Flauto
Un Corno Inglese (Do)
Un Clarinetto basso (Do)
Un Fagotto
Un Corno (Do)
Una Tromba (Do)
Un Trombone
Una Chitarra (suona all'ottava bassa)
Un' Arpa
Soprano Solo
Discanti
Mezzo-soprani
Tenori
Bassi

So - lo chi a - ma co - no - sce.
So - lo chi a - ma co - no - sce.
So - lo chi a - ma co - no - sce.
So - lo chi a - ma co - no -

3
4 Andante ma non troppo (♩ ca 80)

Violini
Viola
Violoncelli
Contrabbassi (a cinque corde)

con sord.
ppp con sord.
ppp

x) voci bianchi

© B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz, 1965

Hans Werner Henze – *Cantata della fiaba estrema* (1963), for soprano, chamber choir and 13 instruments. Poem by Elsa Morante – page 9 of the score.

© 1965 B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz.

Courtesy of SCHOTT MUSIC, Mainz.

In 1816, the French ship *Medusa* was shipwrecked. The raft built to save the sailors was untied from the officers' lifeboats and began to drift for two weeks on the open sea. Only one-tenth of the 150 men were rescued by the brig *Argus*. The twenty-six-year-old painter Théodore Géricault, deeply moved by the account of two survivors, painted the great canvas in which, amidst corpses and dying bodies, the mulatto Jean-Charles stands out, waving a red shirt towards the ship *Argus*.

Henze recounts: "Whilst composing this music, the outside world—and thus a reality distinct from that of my music - effectively entered the work: feeling compelled by the artistic engagement with the burning theme of our subject matter and forced in depicting betrayal, misery, suffering, agony and delirium to identify with the victims who find a voice in this work, I felt myself growing ever closer to them and within me grew compassion, love and solidarity for the persecuted, for human beings who suffer, who lie in mortal anguish, for the minorities who are in reality majorities, for the humiliated and the wronged".

A red banner was also at the centre of the unfortunate chaos that led to the premiere of the oratorio (which was due to be broadcast live by 22 European radio stations) being cancelled. Left-wing students had hung a large red flag beneath the podium of the conductor/composer Henze bearing the image of **Comandante Ernesto "Che" Guevara** – to whom the oratorio was dedicated (and who had been killed in the jungle on 9 October 1967 by the Bolivian army whilst, as a guerrilla fighter, he was attempting to export the Cuban Revolution to South America). Henze was not against such significant display, given that the score had been dedicated to Guevara himself. But the choir refused to sing unless the red flag was removed. The event ended with a violent police intervention marking the beginning of Henze's public phase as a committed artist.

Following these events and for reasons linked to his political choices a very difficult period began for him during which he found himself progressively isolated and opposed by much of the musical world.

It was at this time that the professional collaboration between Henze and the writer **Hans Magnus Enzensberger** took shape thanks to Cuba, where the latter lived for a time, stimulating the composer to make his first visit to the island from 21 March to 16 April 1969; and again from 8 November until the end of January 1970. Thanks to their friendship, Henze was received by the leading Cuban cultural authorities.

From that experience on the Caribbean island came what is probably his masterpiece in the field of music-theatre:

Hans Werner Henze – *Das Floß der Medusa* (1968/rev. 1990) (*The Raft of the Medusa*), oratorio for soprano, baritone, speaker, mixed chorus (with nine children's voices, sopranos/altos) and orchestra (German). Poem by Ernst Schnabel – page 15 of the score.

© 2000 Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz.

Courtesy of SCHOTT MUSIC, Mainz.

- **El Cimarrón** (1970). *Biography of the runaway slave Estéban Montejo*. Recital for four musicians. Text based on the *Biography of a Cimarrón* by **Miguel Barnet**, translated into German and adapted for music by **Hans Magnus Enzensberger** [6 august*]

World premiere at the 1970 Aldeburgh Festival at the invitation of the festival's founder and director, **Benjamin Britten**.

During his stays in Havana, Henze met Miguel Barnet as well as Estéban Montejo himself (the runaway slave, namely "el Cimarrón") whom Henze met when the latter was already 108 years old. The account of his life spans much of Cuba's history: the abolition of slavery (1886), the war of independence from the Spanish (1895–98), the onset of the American influence and Montejo's disillusionment with the new "Republic", prior to Castro's Revolution.

Henze composed this score for an unusual, multi-ethnic ensemble in which the four musicians (baritone, flutist, guitarist, percussionist) play a vast variety of instruments and in which the baritone-narrator's part involves new and highly elaborate vocal techniques.

In Henze's poetics, music becomes political when it aims to communicate, to inform and to inspire action. As he himself stated: "Through words, music arrives at a confession it could not otherwise make. It becomes responsible, delineates the explicit meaning of yes and no, becomes full of participation, engaged, and makes itself a living part of our destiny".

In 1973, Henze composed another highly politically charged score:

- **Voices**, for two voices (mezzo-soprano and tenor), electronic operator and 15 instrumentalists who play 70 multi-ethnic instruments alongside transistor radios, microphones and a tape collage featuring real-life sounds and noises, to transport the listener into concrete situations, thereby enhancing his critical faculties and social awareness. For Henze sounds are a language whose semantic possibilities have yet to be explored but which, together with words, can become a particularly effective means of communication.

Described by Henze as his *Das Lied von der Erde* (a reference to Mahler's *The Song of the Earth*), *Voices* is a collection of 22 political songs whose lyrics - with the exception of that by **Heinrich Heine** - are all from the 20th century: from **Bertolt Brecht**, the **Italian poets of the Resistance** and **Ho Chi Minh** of the early 20th century, to the **German, Greek, African-American** and **Cuban poets** of the late 20th century. The songs reflect on the plight of the oppressed worker, the isolation of the individual, the victims of imperialist war and the rebellion of the colonised world.

The collection culminates in **Das Blumenfest**, a pre-Columbian Aztec poem rewritten by **Hans Magnus Enzensberger** which heralds the sudden blossoming of the revolution: a promise of happiness in a new life of social fulfilment.

(See No. 2: **Prison Song**, based on a text by **Ho Chi Minh**) [17 july*]

In 1974 **Enzensberger** collaborated with Henze one last time on the libretto for:

- **La Cubana oder Ein Leben für die Kunst** (*La Cubana* or *A Life for Art*). Initially conceived as a 'television opera', it is set in Havana, Cuba, between 1900 and 1958. It tells the story of a singer and dancer, *the little Cuban girl*, who lives through the country's historical and social transformations dedicating her life to art, right up to the eve of Fidel Castro's 1959 Cuban Revolution.

TWO OPERAS AND A BALLET WITH EDWARD BOND

- **We Come to the River** (1976)

Actions for music by **Edward Bond**. Commissioned by the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, to mark the composer's 50th birthday

[11 august*]

It is an opera against the horrors of war, the most significant fruit of the collaboration between Henze and the famous English playwright.

In an imaginary empire, a general, devoid of any ethics, indiscriminately executes dissidents and deserters. However, having just learnt that he has a disease that will leave him blind, and sickened by the bloody images of war, the general critically questions the purpose of all that violence and resigns from his command. Locked away in a mental asylum, he refuses the authorities' request to resume power and is blinded by the police. Tormented by nightmares about his victims, he is finally murdered by the other inmates.

With its wide variety of compositional styles, ranging from neoclassical harmony to atonal music, this score features no fewer than 111 different roles performed by more than 50 singers, accompanied by three different instrumental ensembles. It is an avowedly anti-war work. Yet in the words of the song of the oppressed, a glimmer of hope can still be glimpsed:

"We shall reach the other shore.

We have learnt to move forward,
we shall never drown again".

In 1956, Henze had composed **Maratona di danza** for the Berlin Stadtheater, a neorealist ballet based on a story by **Luchino Visconti** with

sets by **Renzo Vespignani**.

In 1957 he composed the grand ballet **Undine**, choreographed by **Frederick Ashton** (loosely based on the novella of the same name by **Friedrich de la Motte-Fouqué**), commissioned by the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, *in honour of Dame Margot Fonteyn* (the pre-eminent prima ballerina of her time).

It was one of Henze's greatest international successes, remaining to this day – in its original production – in the Covent Garden repertoire.

In 1978, after 14 years away from the world of ballet, Henze returned to it with:

- **Orpheus** (Orpheus). A story in six scenes by **Edward Bond**.

Choreography by **William Forsythe** (a revolutionary star of contemporary ballet).

Henze writes: "Orpheus defies the gods, unmasks them and strips them of their power with his song, freeing mankind from the terror of death, the loss of love and mortality".

- **The English Cat** (1983) [24 august*]

A story for singers and instrumentalists by **Edward Bond**, based on the short story *Peines de coeur d'une chatte anglaise* (The Sorrows of an English Cat, 1842) by **Honoré de Balzac**.

Composed for a chamber orchestra, in this his final collaboration with Bond Henze recreates elements of the 18th- and 19th-century comic genre (marches, arias and cabalettas), as well as folk songs and dances (waltzes, tangos, polka), setting his work in London around 1900 where "the atmosphere is Victorian, rather severe, somewhat inflexible", lending the whole "a deliberate veneer of bigotry and hypocrisy and at the same time of eccentricity". All their characters are cruel, humanised animals that the authors use to highlight the flaws of the human world, creating an opera imbued with a caustic and compelling social critique: a ruthless portrait of capitalist society in which ethical principles and the most sincere emotions are overwhelmed by an unstoppable greed for money and a thirst for power.

In 1983 Henze met the stage-director **Michael Kerstan**, who would assist him in his work and daily life until the end of his days. After the composer's death, Kerstan became President of the **Hans Werner Henze-Stiftung** (Hans Werner Henze Foundation) which is dedicated to preserving and promoting the composer's work, managing his artistic legacy, maintaining the official website and catalogue of his works, and

promoting research into his music.

ARABIC THEMES

- ***Sechs Gesänge aus dem Arabischen*** (Six Songs from the Arabic, 1998)
Poems by **Hans Werner Henze**. A song cycle written for the tenor **Ian Bostridge** [[18 august*](#)].

The subtle Eastern influence that permeates these profound poems is reflected in the sparkling colours of the piano part, which is multifaceted and highly virtuosistic.

1. *Selim und der Wind* (Selim and the Wind)
2. *Die Gottesanbeterin* (The Praying Mantis)
3. *Ein Sonnenaufgang* (A Sunrise)
4. *Cäsarion*
5. *Fatumas Klage* (Fatuma's Lament)
6. *Das Paradies* (The Paradise)

“Why look for suitable texts when you can write them yourself?”, asks Henze.

(In fact, only the sixth song is the work of another author, namely the Persian poet **Hafiz**, in a translation by **Friedrich Rückert**).

- ***The ‘Upupa’ (the Hoopoe) and the Triumph of Filial Love*** (2003),

a German comedy in eleven scenes, adapted from the Arabic.

Libretto by **Hans Werner Henze**.

Commissioned by the Salzburg Festival in co-production with the Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Teatro Real in Madrid.

Based on “a Syrian legend as old as the world itself”, the story recounts the initiatory journey of the young Kasim, who sets out in search of the magical bird with golden feathers that has escaped from his father's garden. The boy, aided by a helpful demon, faces dangers in distant lands, encounters love, learns of human wickedness and, thanks to his courage, brings the hoopoe home.

The choice of the subject matter demonstrates (as in the case of the earlier *Sechs Gesänge aus dem Arabischen*) Henze's interest in Muslim culture, which developed following long winter stays on the island of Lamu, in Kenya.

The dialectic with the Western world is, however, evident. As the subtitle indicates, the opera is a “German comedy”, almost a modern *Singspiel* with its taste for the fantastic and the theme of the journey of self-discovery.

Alongside the fairy tale, Henze does not overlook the contradictions of

contemporary society: two years after the Twin Towers attacks, the Muslim protagonist Kasim rescues the young Jewish woman Badi'at from the clutches of a tyrant. The Islamic faith is presented in all its goodness and ancient wisdom.

THE STRING QUARTETS

Henze composed five string quartets - a chamber music form that has always been regarded as a testing ground for any composer - in a period of 30 years (1947–1976) [[13 july*](#) and [26 july*](#)].

Written in 1976 in memory of his friend, the composer **Benjamin Britten**, who passed away at the end of that year, the *Fifth Quartet* represents a moment of sombre mourning and a reflection on the idea of this musical form as a place of introspection and contemplation. The last of the six Movements, entitled *Morgenlied* (Morning Song), represents the light of the new day driving away the creatures and fears of the night, as if they had never existed.

HENZE ORCHESTRATES WAGNER

Still in 1976 Henze revisited **Richard Wagner** reorchestrating his:

- **Wesendonck-Lieder** (*Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme* - Five Poems for a Female Voice), which Wagner had composed for female voice and piano in 1857–58, based on texts written at that time by **Mathilde Wesendonck**. Together with the *Siegfried-Idyll* (1870), these are his two most frequently performed non-operatic scores.

Two of the five Lieder were called by Wagner *Studies for 'Tristan und Isolde'*:

No. 3: *Im Treibhaus* (In the Conservatory) and No. 5: *Träume* (Dreams).

Of the five Lieder Wagner orchestrated only No. 5 (1857).

In 1893, **Felix Mottl** – conductor and assistant to the composer – orchestrated all five Lieder for a full orchestra.

Henze's orchestration, by contrast, was written for a small ensemble: ten wind instruments, harp and a small string section, transforming the cycle into a more agile and clear chamber music experience, yet also one that is more intimate and refined. Each instrument has a distinct part, allowing for a sonic transparency that highlights Wagner's refined harmonies and chromaticism (often hidden in Mottl's version for large orchestra) as well as its erotic tensions and nocturnal sound-atmospheres [[12 july*](#)]

DRAMAS WITHOUT WORDS

The works of **William Shakespeare** have inspired much of Henze's music. His ***Eighth Symphony*** (1992), which has no text, was inspired by a re-reading of the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And Shakespeare's "narrative poem" ***Venus and Adonis*** (1595) inspired in 1995 a Henze work of the same title (with a libretto by **Hans Ulrich Treichel**).

But surely the composer's most original work inspired by the great English writer (despite the complete absence of any words) is:

- ***Royal Winter Music I and II***.

It is a monumental work for solo guitar, divided into two Sonatas, deeply connected to the Shakespearean universe. It is not a mere musical description of the plots of the source texts, but rather a sonic transposition of the characters' personalities, emotions and psychology. The work was composed at the suggestion of the great English guitarist **Julian Bream**, who also encouraged the composer to explore the instrument's vast timbre potentials.

Henze describes Shakespeare's characters as "Sonic masks", presences that emerge from the sound of the guitar "as through a veil". The guitar becomes a dramatic voice capable of expressing passion, sadness, comedy and madness. It serves as a bridge between Elizabethan aesthetics and modernity, uniting the dramaturgy of the spoken word with pure contemporary guitar technique.

Sonata I (1976) [[3 august*](#)]

- Gloucester (from *Richard III*, inspired by the monologue "Now is the winter of our discontent", from which the title of the entire work is derived),
- Romeo and Juliet,
- Ariel (from *The Tempest*),
- Ophelia (from *Hamlet*),
- Touchstone, Audrey and William (from *As You Like It*),
- Oberon (from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*).

Sonata II (1979) [[20 august*](#)]

- Sir Andrew Aquecheek (from *Twelfth Night*),
- *Bottom's Dream* (from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*),
- Mad Lady Macbeth (from *Macbeth*).

- ***Le miracle de la rose. Imaginary Theatre II*** by **Jean Genet**

for solo clarinet and 13 instruments (1981) [[9 july*](#)]

It is directly inspired by Genet's autobiographical novel of the same name, *Miracle de la rose* (1946): a fantasia or a series of musical variations, without words, based on the themes and atmospheres of the literary text



Hans Werner Henze – Announcement postcard for the television broadcast of *Requiem* on 3SAT (9 December 1993) and the radio broadcast on WDR III (23 January 1994).

which recounts the author's experiences in the Fontevault Prison and his memories of the Mettray Reformatory. As in Genet's book, Henze's work explores themes related to homosexuality, prison life, loneliness and redemption, functioning in fact as an "imaginary theatre".

- Requiem (1992) [7 July*]

Nine Spiritual Concertos for solo piano, concertante trumpet and large chamber orchestra. Commissioned by the London Sinfonietta, Suntory Hall in Tokyo and Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne. *In memoriam Michael Vyner*.

This is not a religious work (just as the *Requiem*s by Brahms and Ligeti are not, and even less so those by Eisler and Britten) but rather a meditation on death itself. Henze's score bears no relation to the liturgy and, exceptionally (unlike Brahms, Ligeti, Eisler and Britten), makes no use of any text.

The nine purely instrumental *spiritual concertos* are arranged according to the expressive needs of the composition and not according to the sequence of the *Requiem*, of which it nevertheless retains the traditional titles, except for the *Ave Verum Corpus*.

Henze explains: "The nine music pieces speak of the fears and needs of people in our time, of illness and death, of love and loneliness, but above all of the extraordinarily vibrant and passionate man that was **Michael Vyner** [1943–1989, Musical Director of the London Sinfonietta from 1972 until his death from *AIDS*], of his life and death, and of my grief at his loss, which is identified with the loss of so many others who have also tragically and painfully passed away. The mood of the music must be traced back to this reality, to our present and seems strongly influenced by it, with its horrors and passions, its beauty and its dynamism."

TWO CONCERTOS

In the 1960s, Hans Magnus Enzensberger introduced Henze to **Gastón Salvatore**, a Chilean poet and playwright living in exile in Germany and the nephew of Salvador Allende, who later decided – like Henze – to settle in Italy, spending the last part of his life in Venice. In Berlin, Henze and Salvatore developed a close friendship, sharing a strong commitment to the radical left and the student protest movement.

Henze collaborated with Salvatore on several occasions, setting the Chilean writer's anti-bourgeois and protest-poems to music, including ***Versuch über Schweine*** (Essay on Pigs, 1968), ***Der langwierige Weg in die Wohnung der Natascha Ungeheuer*** (The Tedious Way to the Place

Lacrimosa

Hans Werner Henze
(1992)

4/4 Adagio (♩ = 69) 3/4 6/4 4/4

Flute 1

Alto Flute (2)

Oboe

Cor anglais

Clarinet

Bass Clarinet

Alto Saxophone

Double Bassoon

Horn 1 2

Trumpet 1 2

Tenor Trombone

Double Bass Trombone

Timpani

Percussion

Harp

Celesta

Piano

Trumpet concertante

Violin 1 2-4

Viola 1-3

Violoncello 1-3

Double Bass

© 1992 B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz

Hans Werner Henze – VIII *Lacrimosa* (1992), for solo trumpet and large chamber orchestra, from *Requiem* (1990–92), Nine Sacred Concertos for solo piano, solo trumpet and large chamber orchestra – page 301 of the score.
© 1992 B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz.
Courtesy of SCHOTT MUSIC, Mainz.

of Natascha Ungeheuer, 1971) and, most notably:

- **Compases para preguntas ensimismadas** (Musical measures for questions absorbed in self-contemplation, 1970) for solo viola, strings, wind sextet and percussion [[10 august*](#)]

The title is taken from a verse in Spanish by Salvatore. Henze, highly impressed by his writings, wished to compose this Concerto as a purely musical commentary – without text – on his poetry. It is a deeply reflective work, composed during a period when the composer had turned towards the political left, exploring his role as an artist in a society characterised by social injustices.

- **Tristan. Preludes for piano, tape and orchestra** (1973) [[14 july*](#)].

It is a critical reworking of the myth of Tristan and the themes of love and death, in which Henze also utilises pre-existing musical material, often in the form of collage or distorted quotation, with a particular focus on the musical legacy of **Richard Wagner** (employing the famous chord from *Tristan* and its extreme chromaticism).

Although critical of the nationalist ideology associated with Wagner, Henze was deeply drawn to the expressive power of his music. He therefore uses his *Tristan* to navigate between attraction and repulsion towards German Romanticism, even combining dodecaphony with Wagner's rich chromaticism.

Composed of six Movements ("Preludes"), the work alternates between solo piano passages and orchestral outbursts. One of the central Movements, *Tristan-Wahnsinn* (Tristan's Madness), explores the character's frenzied despair.

In the Movement *Praeludien und Variationen*, Henze inserts direct quotations from the opening of the First Symphony of **Johannes Brahms** (known for his opposition to Wagnerian aesthetics).

Henze also uses the music of **Frédéric Chopin** (the Funeral March from the Second Sonata in B-flat minor) as a reference to 19th century Romanticism, instrumental virtuosity and death.

Henze also uses a magnetic tape containing various electronically distorted sounds: fragments of the Prelude to Act III of *Tristan und Isolde*; recordings of a heartbeat; the Florentine manuscript *Lamento di Tristano*; the voice of a child reciting a text from Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*.

But these are never mere quotations, rather a genuine political and personal reinterpretation of the grand theme. Written during a period of personal and political crisis (General Pinochet's coup d'état in Chile had taken place that year), the work transforms Wagner's desire for death into a contemporary lament, as well as a quest for "transfiguration" through music.

Perc. I (7)

Arpa

Clavic.

Cel.

Viola

Perc. I

Perc. II (7)

Arpa

Clavic.

Cel.

Viola

30

Viola

più e più rallentando

Hans Werner Henze – *Music for Viola and 22 Players (Musik für Viola und 22 Spieler)* (1969–70), “Compasos para preguntas ensimismadas” (“Measures for Introspective Questions”) – page 51 of the score.

© 1971 B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz.

Courtesy of SCHOTT MUSIC, Mainz.

THE 10 SYMPHONIES

Henze composed two *Symphonic Poems* - in a single movement - for large orchestra:

- **Heliogabalus Imperator.** *Allegory for Music* (1971; premiered in 1972 by Sir Georg Solti with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra).

The score is inspired by *Heliogabal ou l'anarchiste couronnée* by **Antonin Artaud**, as well as by a series of paintings on fascism that **Renzo Vespi gnani** produced during those years. Central to the work is the historical figure of the Roman emperor Heliogabalus, known for his extravagant, scandalous and brief reign.

- **Barcarolle.** *In memoriam Paul Dessau* (1979).

In its devastating severity, charged with evocative and dramatic sounds, the piece depicts the journey of Charon, the ferryman of the dead, across the infernal river Styx towards the world of eternal torment. The piece finishes in a ghostly suspension, as if to suggest that life and death are part of a single intertwined and endless cycle.

Henze's extensive orchestral output centres however on his **10 Symphonies**, composed in the period 1948-2002. He was – alongside Dmitri Shostakovich – the most prolific and significant symphonic composer of his time. He began to devote himself to the symphonic genre in the mid-20th century, at a time when most composers of his generation were primarily engaged in experiments with twelve-tone music. Others however – as is indeed the case with Henze – chose to approach serialism with an unorthodox attitude, thereby achieving a greater freedom. With his 10 Symphonies Henze certainly demonstrates his faith in the classical tradition, whilst maintaining a personal expression clearly removed from that “reactionary aesthetic” of which he has often been unjustly accused. Henze found in the classical symphonic genre a model not to be discarded but to be made his own, always guided by an interest in the expressive and communicative possibilities of music.

In the first 5 Symphonies (all of modest length, lasting around 20 minutes and all in three Movements – except the *Fourth*, which is in a single one) a first stylistic period of his symphonic output has been identified, anti-Romantic though open to refined lyrical or descriptive passages.

(In 1964, Henze himself conducted and recorded *live* his first 5 Symphonies with the Berlin Philharmonic).

This aesthetic perspective underwent a radical transformation following Henze's stay in Cuba in the late 1960s. The *Sixth* (1969), written for two chamber orchestras, depicts sonic conflicts and, at times, an attempt at reconciliation between different musical languages (classical

and popular; complex and accessible). It employs solo instruments from Cuban folklore, creating a wealth of almost exotic imagery and quoting Mikis Theodorakis's hymn to freedom. With this work, Henze's symphonic output intensifies his need for an interlocutor, for an audience as a necessary point of reference. A fervent civic enthusiasm bursts forth, an impulse for personal, often passionate, engagement with human affairs, with the struggles against injustice and collective unhappiness. His music is imbued with ethical responsibility and drama, without sacrificing irony, humour and grace.

The *Seventh* (1984) once again demonstrates the composer's great interest in **Friedrich Hölderlin**. (Cf. his earlier *Kammermusik* 1958 for tenor, guitar and eight solo instruments, based on the great German poet's hymn *In lieblicher Bläue* – In lovely blue, 1808). Indeed, the third Movement of the Symphony, the Scherzo *Unablässig in Bewegung* (In constant motion), is intended as a broad meditation on the terrible medical tortures suffered by the writer at Dr. Autenriedth's neurological clinic in Tübingen. Meanwhile, the Finale *Ruhig, verhalten* (Calm, Restrained), of profound lyricism, is inspired by one of Hölderlin's final texts, *Hälfte des Lebens* (Midlife, 1804), imbued with "that final apocalyptic vision of a world devoid of humanity, cold and rendered mute".

The *Eighth* (1992), though without any text, has specific literary references, having emerged from a reflection on Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

But Henze's most important symphony is undoubtedly the *Ninth* (1997). It is an extremely modern score in which, through the orchestra and the ever-present choir (without soloists), he expresses a cry of horror against Nazi barbarism. Directly based on the novel *The Seventh Cross* (1942) by **Anna Seghers**, the score (set to a text written specifically for the work by the poet **Hans-Ulrich Treichel**) is dedicated "to the heroes and martyrs of German anti-fascism": an intensely gripping lament for the killing of seven opponents of Nazism, presented in turn across the seven Movements of the score.

Several of these *10 Symphonies* had their world premieres conducted by distinguished musicians, such as the *Fourth* (by Henze himself in 1963, with the Berliner Philharmoniker); the *Fifth* (by Leonard Bernstein in 1963, with the New York Philharmonic, commissioned for the opening of the Lincoln Center); the *Sixth* (by Henze himself in 1969, with the Orchestra Sinfonica Nacional de La Habana, Cuba); the *Seventh* (by Gianluigi Gelmetti in 1984, commissioned by the Berliner Philharmoniker for the Centenary of its foundation); the *Eighth* (by Seiji Ozawa in 1993, commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra); the *Ninth* (by Ingo Metzmacher in 1997, with the Berliner Philharmoniker);

and the *Tenth* (by Sir Simon Rattle in 2002, with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at the Lucerne Festival; commissioned by Paul Sacher, as if to dispel the old superstition that composers, having written a *Ninth Symphony*, would die without being able to complete another).

In 2003, the Paris *Festival Présences* programmed a performance of all of Henze's *Ten Symphonies*.

FILM MUSIC

Henze was also a prolific composer of soundtracks, collaborating with important film directors of his time.

For **Volker Schlöndorff** he wrote *Der junge Törless* (The Young Törless, 1966, based on the novel of the same name by Musil), *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* (The Case of Katharina Blum, 1975, based on the novel of the same name by Heinrich Böll) and *Un Amour de Swann* (Swann's Way, 1984, based on the novel of the same name by Marcel Proust). He composed the soundtrack for **José Montes-Baquer's** film *Concierto barroco (Montezuma)*, (1980, based on the novel of the same name by Alejo Carpentier).

Finally, Henze composed the soundtracks for two films by **Alain Resnais**: *Muriel, ou le temps d'un retour* (Muriel, or the Time of a Return, 1963) and *L'Amour à mort* (1984).

CANTIERE INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE DI MONTEPULCIANO

Henze's long-standing commitment to teaching was evident on an international scale:

1962–1967: he was in charge of the Composition Masterclasses at the **Mozarteum in Salzburg**.

1972–1996: he held the International Chair for Composition at the **Royal Academy of Music** in **London**.

1980–1991: he led the Composition Class at the **Staatliche Hochschule für Musik** in **Cologne**.

1982: he taught composition at the **Accademia Chigiana** in **Siena**.

1983–1988: he taught composition at **Tanglewood**, Massachusetts, at the **Summer Academy** of the Berkshire Music Centre (founded in 1940 by Serge Koussevitzky and where Leonard Bernstein and Seiji Ozawa taught conducting).

1976–1980 and 1989–1992: he founded and directed the **Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte** in **Montepulciano** (Tuscany).

1988–1994: he founded and directed the **Münchener Biennale – Internationales Festival für neues Musiktheater** (Munich Biennale

– International Festival for New Music Theatre). Focused on world premieres, it was conceived by Henze as a springboard for young composers interested in the new and the unexpected, thereby stimulating cultural debate on major humanitarian and political issues. (In 1996, Peter Ruzicka succeeded him as director).

Today, amidst the rampant individualism that shapes the values of civil society – where the state appears to be gradually withdrawing from cultural investment, with an unstoppable decline in music education – it is truly difficult to fully appreciate the significance of the work Henze carried out at the **Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte in Montepulciano** in the late 1970s. It is almost incomprehensible how a composer of such international renown could have committed himself, gratis and unreservedly, to transforming the culture of a small remote village in the heart of Tuscany through a project of the socialization of music.

When Henze began realising his Utopia in 1976, Montepulciano was a culturally dormant village. But it was precisely such artistic underdevelopment and the critical lack of adequate financial resources that convinced him to embark on his endeavour to try to rouse the *Poliziani* (those born in Montepulciano) from their slumber through the dissemination of music; out of their cultural provincialism via a comprehensive campaign of the promotion of the arts.

As Henze recalled: “It seemed to me that a regular, high-quality music festival might be a little too expensive and would fail to meet the cultural needs of the local population”. Eventually, a project emerged: not the usual *festival* for the uninitiated consumers of the cultural industry, but rather a *Cantiere*, “meaning a workshop where young artists could invent and experiment with new forms of communication” and through which it would be possible to transform the local population into critical appreciators of the artistic heritage and, in the long term, into active producers of their own, renewed art.

During his years as Artistic Director of the *Cantiere* (1976–1980 and 1989–1992) Henze presented works from the classical and contemporary repertoire aimed at a wide-ranging audience, often featuring great performers who always contributed their services gratis, receiving only the reimbursement of their travel, board and lodging.

- **Pollicino** (1980), A musical fairy tale based on stories by Collodi, the Brothers Grimm and Perrault. Libretto by Giuseppe Di Leva. *For the children of Montepulciano*.

Created with the specific educational aim of introducing youngsters to art music, both as listeners and as performers, it is now one of the most frequently performed works of musical theatre of its kind in the



Hans Werner Henze with a group of young participants at the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte in Montepulciano

world.

Henze described his challenging score as a true “intensive music course” designed to introduce youngsters to the diversity of styles and languages coexisting in our time. Indeed, he employs various techniques of contemporary music, whilst never losing sight of the style of the great classics who are fundamental to the musical development and growth of young listeners and performers.

The libretto incorporates Freudian themes and tells a story of initiation, from the harshest reality of a deceived and betrayed childhood to the luminous finale: now far removed from the cruel world of adults, Pollicino, his brothers and even the Ogre's young daughters – just as the protagonists of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* do – will pass their “water trial” by crossing the raging river and will be able to face life, free, independent and perhaps even falling in love.

The composition and performance of this opera was probably the high point of Henze's work in Montepulciano. Composed for young local instrumentalists and singers, it was the first opera ever written by a major composer for young Italian performers. *Pollicino* had its world premiere on 2 August 1980 at the Teatro Poliziano, during the 5th Cantiere, performed by some sixty youngsters, mostly from Montepulciano, together with a string ensemble of students from the ‘Cherubini’ Conservatory in Florence, as well as one professional violinist and one professional pianist. In 1995, to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the premiere, the Cantiere presented a new production of *Pollicino*; this time, however, using exclusively local talent: the students and teachers of the Music Institute of Montepulciano (now renamed the *Hans Werner Henze* Music Institute). An institution which, in the meantime, has grown to include around 40 teachers and over 1,000 students across the region (considering the main school in Montepulciano and the connected branches in the Siena Province, in the towns of Cetona and Sarteano).

Perhaps what Henze wrote in 1980 at the time of the world premiere of *Pollicino* today rings truer than ever: “Here there is no longer any fear of music, or mistrust of the arts. Something has begun to exist within our walls, something that can no longer be erased, that can no longer fall into oblivion”.

L'INTERVISTA. Il compositore Hans Werner Henze compie 70 anni. E ce li racconta

Visconti e Rudi il rosso, memorie da rivoluzionario

E dalle DG i compact della Henze collection

In occasione dei settant'anni di Hans Werner Henze, la Deutsche Grammophon ha realizzato una iniziativa straordinaria e unica nel contesto della musica contemporanea, pubblicando la Henze Collection. In un solo cofanetto di 14 Cd, disponibili anche separatamente, sono raccolte alcune tra le più importanti opere e composizioni di Henze, registrate dalla casa discografica nel corso degli anni, a partire dal 1947. Treidici, ma in altre case, le prime sei sinfonie dirette dallo stesso autore con Herbert von Karajan e la London Symphony Orchestra, la «Fantasia per archi» diretta da Paul Sacher, le opere impegnate pubblicamente come «Cimabue» e «Matilde Inglese», con le personaggi di Susan Sontag, V. «Verso il mare Schumann», l'«Oratorio volgare e satirico» dedicato a Che Guevara «La zattera della Padovana», con le voci di Edda Moser e Dietrich Fischer-Aschke. E ancora l'«Aria per soli cantati» «Hosidatino», in tre atti di Aulisio da Esopo, la «Canta della falba estrema», su testi di Elio Sestini, il «Giovane Lord», su testi della Buchman, l'«In Concerto per Violino e Orchestra», l'«In Concerto per pianoforte e Orchestra», 2. e altre composizioni ispirate da grandi scrittori e dalle più importanti invenzioni teatrali e cinematografiche. Una iniziativa molto significativa nel panorama discografico, sempre poco generoso nei confronti, ad esempio, di compositori d'orchestra, ad un certo punto scritte grazie al nome di qualcuno e che ora, Ma ce li racconta, come no, eccolo? Te lo presento.

Hans Werner Henze compie 70 anni. E l'Italia, la patria che lui scelse al posto della Germania, lo festeggia con la cittadinanza onoraria di Montepulciano, città dove lui stesso fondò il celebre Cantiere d'Arte. Musicista colto, aperto a tutte le nuove culture, politicamente impegnato, vivace e curioso, Hans Werner Henze racconta in questa intervista il suo rapporto con l'Italia, la musica, la contestazione politica e la sua Germania ora riunificata.

NICOLA SANI
 «... è così il successo, ed è cominciata la nostra amicizia. Lui mi ha pregato di scrivere la musica per un balletto, che aveva ideato per Jose Ballea. Avevo una chiave accademica, una grande eleganza nel trattare la gente. Volendo, posso essere anche molto violento, aggressivo, per esemplarità laterale».

Ma c'erano anche altri importanti amici.
 «Il pittore Pietra Vespignani, con cui ho lavorato assieme a Vienna, e poi c'era la Ida. Era il mio grande punto di riferimento. Purtroppo abbiamo litigato ad un certo punto e lei era molto radicata in questi «demoni». Ho mancato una sua poesia, che si chiama «Mito». Era una lunga poesia d'amore, molto bella. Non la ricorderò dell'indirizzo della persona in questione e c'è qualche bella frase da lei sulla falba estrema. La sua cartolina si chiama «Canta della falba estrema».

Lei si sentiva anche molto vicino alle «Stronchi» di quegli anni.
 «Molto, sempre, e primo ricordo di Stronchi è senza di lui. È la prima occasione del mio balletto «Chigera», in forma di concerto. Il ricordo più divertente è legato all'arrivo dello scacchista di «Bavardieri» Soltanovic, nel '54, al Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. La gente dibatteva lo spettacolo, si lamentavano. Lui saltò alla prima e non aveva tempo di uno slogan, perché piazzava i danzatori. Le macchine non lo toccano. Era Ludovico il mazzaiò gli onni una

lettera di essere un grande fausto di voti. Fu Stronchi a farlo alla seconda, questa volta in streaming, ed era il unico veduto in streaming. Ci erano in centro qualche giorno prima. Aveva voluto come in un passato tutto il ricicciamento all'Accademia Antoniana. Lui voleva sapere come la pensava sul serbatoio perché lui era molto preoccupato, a causa della tendenza internazionale lanciata da alcuni: serbatoio dodecaedrico o ottagonale.

Quelli musicali italiani l'hanno ben rammentato?
 «Comincio da Pavarotti, del quale ho eseguito due architetture: Zvezdochka e di Francesco De Vito. Per me ha avuto un enorme influenza. Il Verdi opera, del quale dell'energia, della forza che sta nei suoi anni, dell'intimidazione del suo discorso».

E i tedeschi?
 «S. Inchi, molto, specialmente da Stronchi, che sono ancora oggi meraviglioso. Da allora mi colpiva l'energia, si diceva una lingua eleganza, non opulenta, si chiama, insomma».

Siamo parlando soltanto del mondo italiano e volevo proseguire su quello liberato verso il mondo tedesco?
 «Ho sempre avuto delle grandissime difficoltà con Wagner. Mi dispiace la sua ideologia, che si esprime anche nella musica. È terribilmente antica, irraggiungibile, eterogenea. E che grandi eroi della mia cultura in gioventù erano Bach e Mozart e lo sono ancora. Con Bach mi sento quasi locustario. Incontrai mentalmente il padre. E poi Mozart, che è una grandissima esperienza di tonalità».

Nel suo percorso di compositore e di intellettuale, il rapporto con la politica ha un ruolo importante.
 «L'idea di interessarmi a più del campo della politica è venuta qui, a Roma. Quando sono arrivato a Roma non prima anno Sessanta i segni della



Hans Werner Henze

Definirei senza partito. A una sua la connessione era una volta tedesca che venne qui a curare le loro paragoni nel dibattito dell'alternativa socialista e altri.

La Cuba che lei ha preso concetto della necessità di quell'evento concreto nell'organizzazione culturale, che l'ha portata nel '76 a controllare l'esperienza del Cantier Internazionale d'Arte di Montepulciano, tuttora molto attiva?

«Sì, ma io ho anche visto che questo lavoro è possibile. Per esempio, a Cuba c'era un compositore che si chiama Juan Bravo, che era invece un'esplicita parte dei grandi successi italiani. In occasione dell'emigrazione di una donna mia figlia, indugiavo nella Santa Marta, sono là con i tanti giovani e ho difficoltà una musica elettronica. E la musica è molto tradizionale, ancora la loro via».

Quest'anno lei ha ricapitolato la carriera di Montepulciano. Quali idee ha condiviso nell'occasione?

«Quella di non fare «do-do» festival ad esempio, ma qualcosa di diverso che riguarda la popolazione e la possibilità di possedere i mezzi di espressione che altrimenti non avrebbero mai in questi luoghi. Questa idea era logica anche di più, quella dell'«artwork» ma era stata, a cui ho avuto l'onore di essere iscritto dal '77, di diventare qualcosa».

Le impressioni ha della Germania di oggi, dopo la caduta del muro di Berlino e la legge della Ddr? Ho fatto varie volte in città della Germania democratica, a pagamento. Ho visto l'argomentazione con cui gli occidentali trattano i loro massi congegnati, l'attacco perfino, «ancora una, perché è evidente».

In Germania, però, si sono molte iniziative che la riguardano. Si sta accendendo anche sui partiti?

«A Berlino, in settembre, sono diventato il primo presidente onorario di più. Tutto è come che sto ancora, in questo momento, lo si sta vedendo per quella Berlino che per me una volta era un po' come quella di adesso, quando ho visto una manifestazione normale che ha due parti, anche le quattro parti, che sono quelle che hanno sempre in mente. Però mi non accetto che tutto quello che c'è stato di finora non è più. Né le persone che insistono».

Foto: M. Della Porta - ECA - T. P.

Reproduced here is the article featuring Nicola Sani's interview with Hans Werner Henze, conducted at the Maestro's home in Marino, Villa La Leprara, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, and published in L'Unità on 27 June 1996.

MAJOR AWARDS AND HONOURS

1953

RAI Prize (Grand Prix Italia) for *Ein Landarzt*, a radio-play based on Kafka.

1957

Großer Kunstpreis in North Rhine-Westphalia.

1959

Großer Kunstpreis in Berlin.

1971

Honorary Doctorate in Music, University of Edinburgh.

1990

Ernst von Siemens Music Prize.

1991

- BBC *Henze-Festival* at the London Barbican Centre.
- Henze conducts the Berlin Philharmonic for the last time. The orchestra appoints him its *Composer in Residence*.
- *International Theatre Institute (ITI) Prize*.
- *Grand Cross of Merit* of the Federal Republic of Germany.

1996

S. Fischer in Frankfurt publishes Henze's autobiography *Reiselieder mit böhmischen Quinten. Autobiographische Mitteilungen*. It is subsequently published in English (Faber & Faber, London, 1998), in Spanish (Antonio Machado Ediciones, Madrid, 2004) and in Italian (ilSaggiatore, Milan, 2005 and 2016, in a revised and greatly expanded edition).

1997

The Berlin Philharmonic *Hans von Bülow Medal*.

1998

- *Bavarian Maximilian Order for Arts and Sciences*.
- *Abbiati Prize* from the Italian National Association of Music Critics for his opera *Venus und Adonis* at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa.

2000

Imperial Prize in Tokyo.

2001

Cannes Classical Award as *Best Living Composer*.

2002

Laurence Olivier Award 2000 (in the category *Best New Opera Production*) for *Boulevard Solitude* at the Royal Opera House in London.

2003

- The Paris *Festival Présences* programmes all his *Ten Symphonies*.
- Awarded the title of *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* in Paris.
- *Neues Hören* (New Listening) Prize from the Internationale Sommerakademie Mozarteum in Salzburg (promoted and funded by the Cologne Fondation *Neue Musik*

im Dialog) for his significant contribution to New Music.

2004

Laurea honoris causa from the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich.

2006

- *Abbiati Prize* from the Italian National Association of Music Critics for the production of *Elegia per giovani amanti* at the Teatro delle Muse in Ancona (conducted by Lothar Koenigs, directed and staged by Pierluigi Pizzi).

- *Henze Festival* in Salzburg, Stockholm, Munich, Dortmund and Bünde (near Bielefeld) to mark his 80th birthday.

2007

Grand Cross of Merit with medal from the Federal Republic of Germany.

2009

Abbiati Prize from the Italian National Association of Music Critics for the Italian premiere of *Phaedra* at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino 2008 (conducted by Roberto Abbado, directed by Michael Kerstan, staged by Nanà Cecchi).

2010

- Sir Antonio Pappano conducts the world premiere of *Opfergang* (Sacrifice, based on Franz Werfel's surrealist poem *Das Opfer*), the result of the only commission Henze ever received in Italy (from the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rome).

- *Laurea honoris causa* from the Royal College of Music in London.

- *Culture Prize* from KulturForum Europa.

- *Das Henze-Projekt* in Essen (2010 European Capital of Culture) in the Ruhr region, featuring over 250 performances of his works, including 10 musical theatre pieces: the largest event ever dedicated to a living composer.

2012

- Appointed *Capell-Compositeur* of the Sächsische Staatskapelle in Dresden.

- Dies in Dresden on 27 October. Buried at Marino Cemetery in the Castelli Romani region.

2015

Abbiati Prize from the Italian National Association of Music Critics for *The Bassarids*, which opened the 2015–2016 Season at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma (conducted by Stefan Soltesz, directed by Mario Martone).

2025

Abbiati Prize from the Italian National Association of Music Critics for the new production of *Der junge Lord* (The Young Lord) at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (conducted by Marcus Stenz, directed by Daniel Menghini).

2026

Focus Hans Werner Henze 100 at the Chigiana International Festival to mark the Centenary of the composer's birth, featuring performances of 41 of his scores: the largest Italian festival ever devoted to his works.

BIBLIOGRAFIA SCELTA SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Norbert Abels – Elisabeth Schmierer (Curatori),
Hans Werner Henze und seine Zeit (Ruhr.2010 – Kulturhauptstadt Europas)
Laaber Verlag, Regensburg, 2013.

Ingeborg Bachmann – Hans Werner Henze,
Lettere da un'amicizia
A cura di Hans Höller, EDT, Torino, 2008.

Jérémie Bigorie,
Hans Werner Henze
bleu nuit éditeur (horizons), Paris, 2026.

Jens Brockmeier,
Es dauert nicht lange. Über Sprache, Zeit und die Musik von Hans Werner Henze
Hollitzer Verlag, Vienna, 2026.

Gastón Fournier-Facio (Curatore),
Realizzare l'Utopia: Henze a Montepulciano
Edizioni Tratti d'Autore, Montepulciano, 2013.

Anton Giulio Onofri (Fotografie) / Gastón Fournier-Facio (Curatore)
A casa di Hans. Villa La Leprara di Hans Werner Henze nei Castelli Romani
Timia edizioni, Roma, 2022.

Anton Giulio Onofri (Fotografie) / Gastón Fournier-Facio (Herausgeber) /
Julia Elisabeth Hartmann (Deutsche Version)
Zu Besuch bei Hans Werner Henze. Die Villa La Leprara in den Castelli Romani
Timia edizioni, Roma, 2025.

Klaus Geitel,
Hans Werner Henze
Rembrandt Verlag, Berlin, 1968.

Hans Werner Henze,
Music and Politics. Collected Writings 1953-81
faber and faber, London, 1982

Hans Werner Henze,
Musik und Politik. Schriften und Gespräche 1955-1984
Mit einem Vorwort herausgegeben von Jens Brockmeier
dtv, München, 1984.

Hans Werner Henze,
Ein Werkverzeichnis / A Catalogue of Works / Un catalogo delle opere (1946-1996)
Schott, Mainz, 1996.

Hans Werner Henze,
Canti di viaggio. Una vita
Nuova edizione italiana a cura di Gaston Fournier-Facio, Michael Kerstan, Elena Minetti,
(Include: Cronologia della vita e delle opere / *Catalogo ragionato delle principali composizioni*) - ilSaggiatore, Milano, 2016.

Hans Werner Henze,
In nessun tempo. Diari, saggi e interviste
A cura di Riccardo Panfili e Clemens Wolken. Libreria Musicale Italiana, Lucca, 2019.

Michael Kerstan – Clemens Wolken (Curatori),
Hans Werner Henze. Komponist der Gegenwart
Henschel, Berlin, 2006.

Peter Petersen,
Hans Werner Henze. Ein Handbuch
et+k / edition text + krit, München, 2022.

Enzo Restagno (Curatore),
Henze
EDT/Musica, Torino, 1986.

Dieter Rexroth (Curatore),
Der Komponist Hans Werner Henze.
Ein Buch der Alten Oper Frankfurt. Frankfurt Feste '86. Schott, Mainz, 1986.

Guy Richards,
Hindemith, Hartmann and Henze
Phaidon, London, 1995.

Franco Serpa
Prefazione. I giorni e le opere.
In: Henze, *In nessun tempo. Diari, saggi e interviste*
A cura di Riccardo Panfili e Clemens Wolken. Libreria Musicale Italiana, Lucca, 2019.

Ulrich Tadday (Herausgegeben von)
Hans Werner Henze. Musik und Sprache
Musik-Konzepte 132. Neue Folge. Edition text+kritik, München, IV/2006

Antje Tumat, Elena Minetti, Dennis Ried, Irmilind Capelle (Curatori)
Musik, Netzwerke, Selbstzeugnisse. Aktuelle Forschung zu Hans Werner Henze
musiconn.publish, Dresden, 2025 *Edizione digitale*