

foregoing) dramatic form, which as a result are given other identifiers under the larger music theatre umbrella.

This can be seen in the organization of the second biennale in 1990: while the first biennale's productions seemed to have been made to be in *Wozzeck*'s image, the second biennale appears to have adopted a broader understanding of music theatre. Its program was divided into four categories of productions, the operas proper with their pride of place, the *Figurentheater*, concerts by the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra and the Musica Viva concert series, and last, in the ignobly-named "Miscellaneous" category, further music theatre productions that did not fit the criteria for being called "opera." This included a jazz-based production from England (*The Wizard of Jazz*, 1990), a "school opera" performed in part by school children (*Abscences*, 1990), a ballet on Marienplatz together with IRCAM (*Träume vom Fliegen*, 1990), and a likely more performative piece on the oppression of women (*Miriam*, 1990), among others.

Despite this seeming diversity of approaches, the staple of the biennale remained the main section of commissions in the tradition of the literary opera—a genre to which also the majority of Henze's own operas could be attributed. Though to an extent the wider umbrella of music theatre productions was present in his biennales, particularly towards the mid-1990s, literary opera was nevertheless still the dominant genre. Henze's emphasis on a plurality of approaches, as well as on the exposure to new music theatre and operatic productions would still however set the tone for the festival's future editions.

A year before the fifth biennale in 1996, Henze asked his colleague Peter Ruzicka if he would like to take over the festival, citing his pending retirement (Ruzicka 2014, 8). Though officially run by Ruzicka, the fifth biennale was a collaboration between the former and current directors, representing a gradual transition from one to another, an approach which was also felt in the style of the productions themselves. While Ruzicka's leadership would change the biennale's aesthetic program in important ways, much of Henze's original impulse would continue to determine the biennale and its form over the course of its existence. The most significant shift with Ruzicka would be in the style of music theatre production that the biennale focused on.

### 4.3 Music Theatre?

In order to understand this stylistic shift that occurred between the tenures of Henze and Ruzicka, and as well in order to establish a framework for understanding these two approaches in relation to that of DOMTS, a closer look must be taken at various possible definitions of the "music theatre" in the festival's name. Taking

a longer view of the genre of music theatre, Matthias Rebstock understands it as an umbrella term for

all forms of theatre for which music plays [a] constitutive role. Those genres which fall under this term include opera, operetta and the musical, in addition to a spectrum of diverse genres like new music theatre, experimental music theatre, instrumental theatre, staged concerts, concert installations, musical performance and so forth. (Rebstock 2017, 527)

Though in the first two biennale editions, opera is prioritized over what are labelled “miscellaneous” forms of music theatre in the program, these proportions would come to shift and change over time, while still remaining under the umbrella of Rebstock’s broad definition of the practice. It is significant that, despite Henze’s clear prioritization of opera over other forms of music theatre, the festival has kept until now the more general term *music theatre* in its name and not called itself e.g. “Biennale for New Opera.”

Musicologist Christian Utz proposes a rough system of three categories of music theatre production in the Germanic context that can help bring an additional level of detail to some of the practices listed by Rebstock as existing under this rubric. They are

1. Classical libretto opera, the operatic repertoire in major opera houses, and contemporary approaches that model themselves on the same.
2. Music theatre that explicitly rejected the operatic style and institutions in favour of smaller performative works, influenced by performance art
3. “Alternative models” which attempt to create a synthesis between the first two categories, and which are often similar to post-dramatic theatre (Utz 2016, 408–409).

While hardly encompassing all forms of relationship between music and theatre, Utz’ framework can be useful when taken within the more limited and specific context of German-speaking music theatre practices in the New Music and classical traditions. These three broad categories in turn correspond to and can help shed light on, the various approaches to the biennale of Henze, DOMTS, and Ruzicka, respectively.

To the first category belong those practices that either restage or model themselves on the operatic tradition and operational requirements of the *Literaturoper* (literary opera) of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These works are most often found in large opera houses specially equipped for their production, and works follow a linear, text-driven narrative. While the majority of these works are re-stagings and re-interpretations of the standard repertoire, to this category can also be ascribed those works that are modeled after the same set of exigencies as the traditional

opera (Utz 2016, 408). It was this partly this prevalence of older repertoire in large opera houses that Henze sought to change with the initiation of the biennale.

The works commissioned by Henze during the biennale years 1988 to 1994 can largely be counted among these type of works. Works took place with conventional staging, using dramatic logic, and a clear division of tasks between the librettist and the composer. When Henze spoke of re-invigoration, and intended to motivate more young composers who had moved away from composing for the theatre, it was to this line of tradition *within* the context of opera to which he was referring. The works of the Second Viennese School that influenced him so greatly were examples of how a dodecaphonic language could be reconciled with the style of Late Romanticism without resorting to what he saw as the dour serialism of the (rest) of the Darmstadt school.

More evidence of this can be found by examining Henze's own characterization of himself above as a composer who views *Wozzeck* as the thematic and musical ideal on which to model commissions for his biennales, seeks to counter the alienation of the public by the modernist avant-garde, and views many possibilities still left in "the path from Wagner to Schoenberg," all of which are attempts to preserve the music theatre lineage of literary opera.

Returning to Utz' categorization of three general groups of music theatrical production, he explains that by the 1980s, there had emerged a generation of composers who rejected this operatic approach, and whose compositions were influenced by the tradition of happenings, Fluxus, and performance art, which also became highly influential in the wider arts world around the 1960s. Characteristic of these works was their focus on intermediality; both sound and visual elements were seen as responsible for creating compositional meaning, as well as their emphasis on performativity, and the uniqueness of the fleeting moment of the event itself. Important representatives of this approach included Mauricio Kagel and Dieter Schnebel, as well as John Cage.

The compositional practices that emerged out of this kind of music theatre production often understood themselves in opposition and rejection to the traditional operatic regime, starting around the 1950s. Whereas opera focused on representation and narrative action, performative practices emphasized the performing bodies themselves and their bodily co-presence with the audience in the room. They no longer sought to communicate a narrative, preferring instead to act-with the literal, non-representative spaces in which they performed.

Manos Tsangaris, one of the biennale's two co-directors, studied with Kagel in Cologne, and had a music theatre practice that clearly emphasizes a similar performative approach to the "instrumental theatre" practiced by his teacher. The other, Daniel Ott, has a compositional practice also bears similarities to this category of music theatre composition, in that works are site-specific, and developed in collaboration with the individual musicians who will be performing it. As the current

directors are the focus of this investigation, their approach to the festival will be thoroughly analyzed in section 4.5.

Where the productions programmed by second Munich Biennale director Peter Ruzicka largely fit into this picture is in the *third* category that Utz draws, namely so-called “alternative models,” which are those approaches that merge and blend the operatic and performative approaches together. They integrate the criticisms of traditional narrative opera, but still make use of its apparatus rather than seeking out their own venues, as is often the case with performances of the second category. This aspect of a critical re-reading, a continuation-and-change to tradition will be shown in the next section to resemble the artistic/compositional project of Peter Ruzicka.

These alternative approaches to opera resemble what Hans-Thies Lehmann calls *post-dramatic* theatre, or performative works where a textual *logos* no longer drives the performance, replaced by an emphasis on the sharing of a common experience and creation of affect in the space itself (Lehmann 2006, 14). This does not mean that there can be no text at all, but rather that it is not the central driver of the work, becoming only one element among many others.

## 4.4 Peter Ruzicka

### 4.4.1 Ruzicka's Career

Peter Ruzicka was born in Düsseldorf in 1948, and has worked as composer, arts administrator, and conductor for a host of prominent cultural institutions in German-speaking Europe. His first major appointment was as director of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra between 1979–1987, followed by the artistic directorship of the Hamburg State Opera and State Philharmonic orchestra between 1988–1997. In 1996, he began his tenure as director of the Munich Biennale for New Music Theater. His first edition in 1996 was a collaboration with his friend and colleague Henze, ensuring a smooth transition from his friend and colleague. After ending his tenure in Hamburg, Ruzicka would focus on the Biennale until 2014. During that time, he also worked as director of the Salzburger Festspiele between 2001–2006. Serving only one 5-year term in Salzburg, Ruzicka's departure was mostly due to the behind the scenes political imbroglio, but significantly can also be read in part as his insistence on his continued staying-on at the biennale (Kriechbaumer 2013, 38).

Compositionally, during the late 1960s Ruzicka was strongly influenced by Henze, even working e.g. in the summer of 1969 with the older composer (Sommer 2001, 1). Despite their later divergent creative trajectories, they would remain close, as is evident in the transition year of the biennale in 1996. His post-modernist approach to composition shows strong ties to pre-avant-garde repertoire,