

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,

in particular Mahler, a result of his concept of “second modernity” that will be discussed later. His compositional production declined significantly as of around 2000 as his administrative and conducting obligations, not least at the biennale, continued to grow, and increasingly kept him from composition.

Ruzicka's citations of historical works, and interest also in the non-musical factor of works, point to a compositional language with similar considerations as his work as arts administrator and conductor. This means a sensibility for historical context, for the effect on and communicability of works on the audience, and for the “material” existence of the works themselves, in the widest sense ranging even to issues of copyright.

The latter can be seen in activities not normally associated with compositional activity as such, like his time as member of the supervisory board of GEMA 1989–93, or his 1976 dissertation entitled *The Problematic of an “Eternal Moral Right” for Authors: with specific consideration for the protection of musical works* (Die Problematik eines “ewigen Urheberpersönlichkeitsrechts”: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Schutzes musikalischer Werke), which can be seen to combine knowledge from his studies in law and composition. Seemingly banal, these details show the importance Ruzicka places on supporting his artistic goals also through keen and efficacious administrative competence over the course of his career.

This chapter will outline the most important stages in Ruzicka's creative development, in order to understand better the second director of the Biennale, and in turn also his approach to running the festival.

4.4.2 Two Fragments

In the foreword to *In processo di tempo. Materialien* (1971) for 26 instruments and cello, Ruzicka writes that the forward march of New Music has come to a standstill (Sommer 2001, 6). In order to keep the revolutionary character of New Music, the persistent material innovation of the avant-garde would no longer be enough, he argued. What would be needed instead was a reflection on the current historical situation, in order to create once again a “critical music” (Schäfer 1998b, 6). The work itself he refers to as a “negative cello concerto,” whereby the soloist, who is normally supported and indulged by the supporting orchestra, is blocked by them at every turn (Sommer 2001, 6). In place of a cadenza, there is a minute of silence. The work is not just a portrayal of negativity or empty space, it is a form of negation taking distance from the materials themselves.

This approach filled with negation and blockage is a mirror for the wider compositional situation around 1970. If the avant-garde project of material innovation had indeed come to a standstill, as many around Ruzicka had also felt, how can one continue to compose music? A total stoppage of compositional work was for him not out of the question, and seemed to be an appropriate way to deal with

this breakdown in the historical telos and directionality (Schäfer 1998b, 6). This *musica negativa* rejected the Hegelian concept of the complete and finished artwork, supplanting it with fragmentation and montage in order to de/compose it and understand its inner workings, attempting to find a new way forward.

By the mid-1990s, Ruzicka had come to the idea to write an evening-length music theatre work, a genre that had now long been at the centre of his administrative activities, e.g. at the Hamburg State Opera and the Munich Biennale, but not yet of his compositional work. This interest would lead to the composition of the music theatre work *CELAN* (2001), with a libretto by Peter Mussbach based on the life and work of poet Paul Celan. The libretto does not use any original texts by the poet, nor is it to be understood as a musical telling of the biography of the composer.

Rather, the work is made up of seven “attempts” (*Entwürfe*) at illuminating Celan’s life and the trauma he experienced fleeing persecution as a Jewish person during WWII. Each attempt is an experiment in accessing the poet’s inner states and perception. Situations from Celan’s life are mixed with present-day events, creating situations that “spirals” around that core truth the composer wishes to communicate, but not name directly (Sommer 2001, 15; Albrecht 2001, 4). Material is presented and manipulated, illuminating it from a variety of perspectives, again creating a coherent but disorienting whole.

Ruzicka’s formal approach to *CELAN*, characterized formally by the use of a modified developing variation proceeding from recognizable musical “islands” connected to each other, and textually by the use of fragments of narrative connected to but not stemming from Paul Celan himself, both point to a shift in how Ruzicka understands opera in comparison to his predecessor at the biennale. For Henze, literary opera and a coherent narrative drives the drama, and underlies the form of his own productions, as well as those at the biennale. Ruzicka’s approach on the other hand renounces its claim to consistency in favour of fragmentation, as is evidenced in *CELAN* (Sommer 2001, 13–14).

Whereas with Henze, the model of *dramatic* opera is dominant, Ruzicka’s music theatre work, starting with *CELAN*, is clearly *post-dramatic* in the sense of Hans-Thies Lehmann, in that it is fragmentary (musical islands), associative (connected to but not stemming from Celan), and non-narrative (focusing on traumata rather than biography) (Lehmann 2006).

Musically, they also represent two very different approaches. Henze’s musical style, though sharing with his successor Ruzicka’s rejection of the serialist music-historical narrative, was nevertheless still strongly informed by a modernist grand narrative of progress. This was in his case the ultimate synthesis of popular (traditionalist) and new (serialist) styles using his brand of dodecaphonic technique. Ruzicka, a generation later, rejected this grand narrative of ultimate synthesis through a post-modernist “editing” of works of the past, updating them for present-day audiences, and searching in them for a new way forward (Hiekel 2016, 521).

Around the time of *CELAN*, it becomes clear that Ruzicka's conducting, directing, and administrative responsibilities were leaving less and less time for compositional work. Though Ruzicka's music theatre productions continue with *Hölderin* (2008), another music theatre work addressing a poet, which could be analyzed here, a more interesting direction to continue studying Ruzicka's practice is to look at it from a different angle, namely the way in which his careers as composer, conductor, and director were related by a common direction.

As obvious as it may sound that these different tasks should be related, being as they are united in one person, surveying the literature on Ruzicka, it is clear that it falls into remarkably separate categories. The first are composer biographies of Ruzicka like those put together by musicologists Uwe Sommer or Thomas Schäfer. These deal with his compositional works, and examine that output exclusively. Otherwise, they are texts that talk about his role as artistic director of major festivals, or about issues of cultural management.³ What is remarkable is that apart from mentioning that there *could* exist a connection (see Schäfer 1998b, 4), there is a lack of scholarship on the interrelationship of these aspects; while it is suggested (and doubtless the case) that his compositional and administrative functions informed each other, these are conceived of as separate worlds that can only "influence" each other, but surely never merge (as will be the case in understanding Ott and Tsangaridis' approach to biennale administration, for instance).

Only recently has scholarship on Ruzicka has begun, likely due to a shift in scholarly norms towards interdisciplinarity, to grasp his work as a whole: In a commemorative publication from 2018 on Ruzicka, musicologist Jörn-Peter Hiekel calls Ruzicka a bridge-builder, someone who worked across these respective different fields of activity to support a variety of musical practices that were often, at least rhetorically, at odds with each other (2018a, 158). He argues that his most important bridge consisted of one spanning the gap between pre- and post-war musical avant-garde, termed by Ruzicka "second modernity" (157). Ruzicka's understanding of this term was as a critical re-reading (but a re-reading nonetheless) of the modernist project, akin to the Lyotardian understanding of post-modernism. This more questioning, relativizing approach to the post-war musical avant-garde would help soften embattled ideological positions within New Music (embodied in Darmstadt school dogmatism) in favour of a less linear understanding of music history that would carry with it a pronounced—again, post-modernist—relativism.

Ruzicka's "second modernity" can be seen as manifested in his fragmentary aesthetic and his "music about music" explored above. It should also be understood as

³ See Kriechbaumer 2013 for a discussion of Ruzicka's leadership of the Salzburger Festspiele. For insight into how Ruzicka sees his own approach to cultural management, see also Ruzicka 1993. Remarkable about both of these texts is their only passive acknowledgement of Ruzicka's compositional work.

a broader aesthetic program, one that would influence his programming decisions at the various organizations that he would lead during his career, such as the New Music concert series “Passagen” [Passages] at the Salzburger Festspiele in 2005.⁴ “Second modernity” has also been a driving force in Ruzicka’s insistence, even at large, conservative, and cumbersome institutions like the Hamburg State Opera and the Salzburger Festspiele, on the programming of new work (Hiekel 2018b, 155).

Ruzicka’s talent is how he applies this approach to programming, while also balancing it with efficacious leadership strategies. An example of how he integrates aesthetic approach and administrative strategy can be seen in his text *Administrative Probleme des Musiktheaterbetriebes* [*Administrative Problems in the Music Theatre Business*]. In a section on the challenges posed by the design of yearly opera programs, he attempts to articulate the balance that must be achieved between fulfilling the immediate desires of the audience and creating a musical offering that challenges them:

A yearly opera program that is too close to what the public wants creates problems for later administrators interested in programming more contemporary opera. Rather than requiring a fixed amount of income that should be made by the theatre, the director of the theatre should leave space for a balanced program. This would mean a program that also aspires to something, and that demands “aesthetic curiosity.” ... The engagement for New Music, for until now undiscovered works from the opera repertoire, and for innovative stagings of the familiar opera repertoire should not be made impossible by barriers put in place because of the requirement for high levels of profitability. (Ruzicka 1993, 266; translation added)⁵

This quote shows the extent to which Ruzicka is dedicated to the support of new operatic works, while also highlighting the extent to which he also values *how* exactly to achieve this goal. It shows the way in which he takes a position to realize his aesthetic values *through* the use of his administrative competencies. Here it involves a discussion of the financial targets that should be set by opera houses in order to remain viable, which takes place in the text within a larger discussion

4 See section “Salzburger Passagen” at <https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/en/archive/j/2005> for the series’ complete program. Accessed 05 December, 2018.

5 “Ein ausgesprochen publikumsnaher Opernspielplan setzt Richtwerte, die für eine der zeitgenössischen Opernproduktion aufgeschlossene spätere Theaterleitung zum Problem werden können. Die Festschreibung eines Einnahmesolls hat dem Theaterleiter Spielraum zu lassen für einen ausbalancierten Spielplan, der auch Ansprüche stellt und »ästhetische Neugier« voraussetzt ... Der Einsatz für zeitgenössische Musik, für bislang unentdeckte Werke des Opernrepertoires und für innovative Regieansätze bei den Werken des vertrauter Opernrepertoires darf nicht durch die Barriere zu hoch angesetzter Einnahmeverpflichtungen des Theaters unmöglich gemacht werden.”

of his view of the ideal operational parameters and business model to ensure an opera house's long-term financial stability—importantly *in the name* of offering this important service to society at large.

Significant too is the style of argumentation in dialectics, with Ruzicka pitting popular appeal and financial success of old and established repertoire against the less financially-successful New Music, which must be supported in the spirit of subsidizing the avant-garde that society will someday understand for its genius. He then creates synthesis through arguing for the “balance” between the two, one that achieves a harmony between the two differing positions.

This mixing of administrative competence and aesthetic direction for the field of music is an interesting notion that Ruzicka raises, and one that shows many of the same symptoms of a curatorial approach that have been explored in the previous two chapters. Earlier in the same article, he more explicitly states his view on the direction that music institutional leadership should take, writing:

Theatre operations are navigable when management challenges itself with solving the many administrative challenges that may arise, rather than implementing these as effective barriers to achieving the institution's artistic goals as effectively as possible. This kind of management style most constantly orients itself towards the artistic direction of the house, and do its best to realize them ... Without a doubt, the theatre also needs a competent artistic direction ... It appears today to be the ambition of the theatre to have theatre directors who *unify these two competencies in one* (Ruzicka 1993, 257; emphasis and translation added)⁶

Encapsulating the split between artistic and administrative duties, Ruzicka emphasizes that the theatre must have a director that is capable of understanding both the theatre's administrative needs, as well as its artistic goals, which should stand at its centre. The theatre director must use modern management methods in order to achieve their artistic goals. Note again the dialectical mode of argumentation employed by Ruzicka, with their synthesis in the institutional administrator. This position fits with first-hand accounts of him being a very effective manager able to focus attention on productions instead of internal strife in the organizations in which he works, and able to mediate between administrative and artistic considerations (Kriechbaumer 2013, 35; Koch 2014, 32; Czernowin 2014, 39).

6 “Theaterbetriebe sind führbar, wenn sich Theaterleitungen den vielfältigen administrativen Aufgaben stellen und diese nicht grundsätzlich als Barrieren künstlerischer Zielsetzung so effektiv wie möglich einzusetzen. Ein solches Management muss sich daher stets an der künstlerischen Zielsetzung des Hauses orientieren, diese zu ermöglichen versuchen. ... Das Theater benötigt ohne Frage eine kompetente künstlerische Führung ... Das Theater braucht aber genauso eine organisatorisch-administrative Steuerung, und es erscheint heute als ein Desiderat, dass der Theaterleiter beide Fähigkeiten in sich vereinigt.”

It also shows symptoms of a curatorial approach to running cultural institutions. As has been argued in the previous two chapters, the mediation of cultural practices must occur with both a knowledge of the specific practices being mediated and their histories, while also intervening in/with the material in the name of a specific ethos. The ethos of a second modernism of Ruzicka does not quite align with the understanding of curating put forward in Chapter 1 though: They diverge in that Ruzicka continues to make quite clear separations between his leadership and compositional approaches, whereas curatorial thinking sees them as distinct areas each with their own challenges, but inseparably entangled. This is also surely symptomatic of the differing aesthetic conceptions of the two practices. Ruzicka's dialectical understanding of arts practice and administrative practice is underwritten by a more modernist philosophical approach than curating's more contemporary, network-based understanding of the same.

4.4.3 Ruzicka's Biennales

Henze asked Ruzicka to take over the music theatre biennale as of the 1996/7 edition, which resulted in both composers working together on developing the program, which was divided into three separate production periods (i.e. a stagione system) as a cost-saving measure. The following section provides a contour of Ruzicka's editions of the Munich biennale, looking at how administrative strategies and individual festival themes intersect with the works that were programmed. Examining these examples, the approaches to composition and music theatre that Ruzicka developed in his own composition will be brought into relation with his programming choices for the biennale.

1996/7 and 1998/9

Though Henze and Ruzicka represent at their core two quite different understandings of opera, during the shared festival in 1996/7 and subsequent 1998/99 edition, a slow and gradual transition, rather than a radical change from, the older composer's focus on serialism and literature opera can be seen.

Works during the first festival together in 1996/7, such as Egger's *Helle Nächte* (1997), still bore a strong influence of Henze's modernist, dramatic opera style. This can still be seen here in Egger's persistence in composing serially, though with his own modifications (Koch 2014, 34). The 1998/99 edition, under the title "Dialog der Kulturen," remained largely in this same traditional mode as well, despite being the first conceived entirely by Ruzicka. Toshio Hosokawa's *Vision of Lear* was a cooperation with Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki, integrating also elements of Nô and Japanese instruments, but nevertheless still adheres to the structure of Shakespeare's original play. Sandeep Bhagwati's opera on the Indian mathemati-

cian Srinivasa Ramanujan (*Ramanujan*, 1998) also followed this similar characteristic shape of the literary opera (Koch 2014, 34–35).

2000

The 2000 edition of the biennale carried the title “... über die Grenzen,” and claimed to focus on exploring the limits of music theatre and its capacity to affect the audience (Munich Biennale 2013a). The biennale only produced three productions in this year, commissioning however two significant works, Mahnkopf’s *Angelus Novus* (2000), and Czernowin’s *Pnima...ins Innere* (2000). Only as of the 2000 edition of the biennale did the style of the productions begin to bear a clear resemblance to Ruzicka’s aesthetic viewpoint that we have seen expressed in his compositions.

Angelus Novus is based on the short text by Benjamin about the angel of history, but the opera itself does not quote it, and does not contain text at all. Music, not narrative, is at the centre of the performance, a core characteristic of the post-dramatic style that would define Ruzicka’s aesthetic approach going forwards. Similarly, Czernowin’s *Pnima...ins Innere* (2000) renounces text and plot in favour of freely associative content. The work was inspired by David Grossman’s book *Stichwort: Liebe*, and addresses society’s grappling with the holocaust, connecting as well to Czernowin’s own history as a Jewish-Israeli composer (Czernowin 2014, 39). Without text, it does this using other stage components, with music as the driving force behind them. On a different level, the work was for Czernowin an important breakthrough in her career, playing a major role in helping her establish herself as composer. She relates her appreciation for how Ruzicka was willing to take a chance in giving her a commission, a move that affirms again the importance he places on also supporting new talent in the field (the results of which speak here for themselves).⁷

In the context of post-dramatic theatre, Hans-Thies Lehmann outlines the concept of *dream images* that fits to both these examples. As in a dream, the works of Mahnkopf and Czernowin retreat from synthesis and a definite thesis, forming instead in the audience a heterogeneous community of interpreters of the collage of images and sounds (Lehmann 2006, 142–143).

2002

The 2002 edition explored the implications of new media such as live electronics, projectors, and the internet on music theatre. Manfried Stahnke’s *Orpheus Kristall* (2002) carries the subtitle “Opera in two medias,” and is a good illustration of what this exploration looked like. The work is a reimaging of the classic Orpheus story

7 Czernowin relates this in the text she wrote commemorating the end of Ruzicka’s tenure at the biennale in 2014. This view was also confirmed by the composer in a personal conversation with the author in Darmstadt in April, 2017.

for the internet age; the traditional split between our world and the underworld is reimagined as that between the real and the virtual. Orpheus must rescue his beloved Eurydice by braving the virtual world (rather than the underworld), turning her into a real experience. The work is also internet-connected: musicians in other parts of the world were connected to the performance in Munich, and were able to intervene in the actions taking place on-stage in the hall via a dedicated website—addressing the instant interconnectedness made possible by the internet (Munich Biennale 2013b).

The Orpheus story is significant because of its important place as the first genuine and surviving opera by Peri, and due to this, the myth's constant re-visitation by operatic composers, in particular reformers. Composing an Orpheus opera for “two medias,” and adapting it to the internet is an act of attempting to marry tradition with new media. It is an alternative model for the opera, working within its confines but suggesting a new way forward, a second modernism where operatic composition can once again become relevant.

Returning to Ruzicka's concept of a second modernity defined as a post-modernism that continues the modernist project, but with a critical perspective, and practicing a Lyotardian process of “editing,” strong parallels can be drawn here. *Orpheus Kristall*'s claim to be an “opera in two medias” is a way of both connecting to operatic history, while also updating it to this important new media that is in the course of transforming society. It is a continuation of the tradition, while updating and revisiting it as well, in fitting with Ruzicka's aesthetic point of view.

Andre Werner's *Marlowe: Der Jude von Malta* (2002) similarly employs large amounts of projection and live-electronics as part of its staging. The inclusion of Marlowe's name before his play is a core part of the concept; it is the play itself, and not just its content, that is the focus of Werner's work. It focuses on the affects elicited by the work, as well as on the development of its characters (Munich Biennale 2013c). As with Ruzicka's concept of “music about music,” which led him to write works that broke down into fragments and re-assemble older works by Mahler, Haydn, or Schumann, shedding a new light on their inherent formal qualities, Werner's post-modern approach to *Der Jude von Malta* similarly strives to re-imagine an older work in order to produce a new perspective on it (ibid.). He revisits the play, and creates a new work out of it that is the result of a careful analysis of its formal features, being then both new as well as having a strong relationship to the historic play.

2004

The 2004 festival saw Ruzicka's productions tend increasingly in the direction of non-narrativity. For instance, Brian Ferneyhough's *Shadowtime* (2004) takes Walter Benjamin's suicide in Port Bou in 1940 as its point of inspiration. He uses it to

create a “thinking opera” whose textual element is comprised of a so-called “poetic-philosophical collage,” presenting it over the course of seven episodic scenes (Utz 2016, 415). *Cantio* (2004) by composer Vykintas Baltakas moves further away from the sense-giving component of language, employing it only for its structural characteristics rather than its content (Munich Biennale 2013d).

2006

The 2006 biennale represented a decade of Ruzicka’s leadership of the biennale. Structurally significant in this year as well was that its total of 8 main productions was the same number as took place during the first biennale in 1988, making it one of the largest editions of the festival (Brandenburg 2014, 154–157).⁸ The biennale took place under the title “Labyrinth | Resistance | Us” (*Labyrinth | Widerstand | Wir*). The title comes from an observation by Jacques Attali, who Ruzicka says claims that the labyrinth is a necessary concept to understand the modern world, referring to the double role that its complexity, analogous perhaps to modern information technology, offers as both protection and prison (Munich Biennale 2013e).

Ruzicka in his 2006 editorial makes the first explicit mention of the biennale as a laboratory, connecting this with the concept of the labyrinth. The 2006 productions for their part show the beginnings of an increased amount of experimentation with the stage situation and the contextualization of the works. They however arguably still remain within the post-dramatic paradigm, in that they do not break with the theatrical setting as such. *GRAMMA* (2006) by José M. Sánchez-Verdú represents an example of this experimentation, in that it addresses the conventional stage situation by having listeners stand at lecterns with scores underneath a raised orchestra. Instead of a conventional “watching” situation, the audience is brought into a “reading” situation, encouraged to wander through the texts as if in a garden (Munich Biennale 2013f). Similarly, *WIR* (2006) recreates utopic visions of society sold to consumers by high-tech industries. The work is conceived as an evolving installation rather than having a development in a specific direction, an approach that challenges the traditional music theatre understanding of a temporal progression of a work (Munich Biennale 2013g).

2008

The 2008 biennale marked the 20-year anniversary of the festival in Munich. Looking at Ruzicka’s editorial, it emphasizes the careers it has helped establish, as well

⁸ As of 2018, the largest festival was the 1992 edition by number of productions, with 10 main productions and 6 puppet theatre productions. The 2018 biennale comes in second and was arguable as large if not larger, with 14 commissioned productions. The 2006 edition had 8 main productions, 4 secondary productions, and did not have any puppet theatre productions.

as the international character of the Biennale over that time (which will be discussed in depth later) (Munich Biennale 2013h). Carrying the title “Foreign Proximity” (*Fremde Nähe*), it again contends to address the relationship between the digital/real divide, as well as the reality of living in times of rapid globalization. Robinson Crusoe is for instance portrayed by Erno Poppe in his opera as a modern man ripped from the civilization he knows, then growing accustomed to his new home; an analogy for globalization’s processes of mass migration.

Carola Bauckholt produced her opera *Hellhörig* (2008) for this Biennale. The work does not use any words or libretto, and takes place entirely in music. Sitting in a circle with their backs to the audience, the performers create an abstract play of noises, in an attempt at re-contextualizing them and manipulating the audiences’ perception (Munich Biennale 2013i). For Bauckholt, rather than tones serving to convey the drama, they take on traits and personalities themselves. She is a student of Mauricio Kagel, whose concept of *instrumental theatre* is important for understanding Bauckholt’s approach to the work.

The core conceit of instrumental theatre is the acknowledgement that there is no difference between the performativity of the actors onstage and the musicians that are hidden or in the pit of a given work. Instruments therefore should be brought onstage and treated in the same way as actors. This insight led, according to scholar Marianne Kesting, to two broad tendencies, visible also in Bauckholt’s *Hellhörig*: the first is the “theatricalization of music,” when the inherent performativity of musical instruments is emphasized by the composer. This is what is seen when the musicians onstage create a “theatre of noise” using their instruments as well as everyday objects in the work. The second is the “musicalization of theatre,” where musical performance is created inside of a fictionalized scene consisting here of the light and video projections onstage, which flow into and become an integral part of the musical experience. (Kesting quoted in Heile 2016, 289)

Bauckholt is an interesting inclusion in the festival. Along with Dieter Schnebel and his work *Utopien* in 2014, it demonstrates an anomaly in the festival’s programming during the aughts. Whereas with few exceptions, works for the biennale until Bauckholt had still been within the tradition of new opera and post-dramatic theatre, her work—along with that of Schnebel six years later—is situated within a distinctly different line of historical development of music theatre. Bauckholt’s compositional practice is more situated within the genre of Kagel’s instrumental theatre, which itself is part of a tradition of independent music theatre that has existed outside of traditional opera institutions since around 1960, finding its place more in the context of New Music, and heavily influenced by John Cage’s work, as well as happenings, Fluxus, and DADA. Though sharing aspects of post-dramatic theatre with other productions at the biennale, many of the underlying aesthetic premises of Bauckholt’s work pre-empt the changes in artistic direction that will take place under the next directors, Tsangaris/Ott, the former of whom was also a

student of Kagel's. The programming choice is an example of Ruzicka's programmatic openness to new kinds of music theatre practice, and itself shows the beginning of a trend in music theatre practice away from the more opera-like alternative models programmed by Ruzicka towards more performative approaches (see section 4.3).

2010

The 2010 biennale was given the subtitle *Der Blick der Anderen* ("The gaze of the other"). Citing its mandate to be an "international" festival for music theatre, the biennale wanted to address the rapid processes of economic and cultural globalization that had occurred during the biennale's lifetime. In his editorial, Ruzicka takes a cultural-essentialist, or "container-based" view towards the cultures of the world, saying that cultural exchange cannot happen as rapidly as economic exchange, and that we must see the world from the perspective of the cultural other in order for integration and understanding to occur (Munich Biennale 2013j). In thematizing the relationship to different cultures, Ruzicka further reifies notions of self and other, and his adherence to a still-modernist mode of thinking becomes more apparent.

The theme was addressed by the large co-production with the Zentrum für Kunst und Medien Karlsruhe (ZKM) entitled *Amazonas* (2010). The work consisted of 3 50-minute parts, the first being a music theatre work addressing the European colonist's perspective on the Amazon using text excerpts from discoverers' journals. The second part showed the perspective of the native Yanomami people, one of the largest tribes of the Amazon. This section tells the creation myth of the Yanomami through music that also integrates their traditions by the Brazilian composer Tato Taborda. The third section was a conference/performance organized by the ZKM and Peter Weibel, which featured a conversation between an economist, a scientist, a politician, and a shaman, who discussed together the future of the Amazon (Weibel 2016, 279–280).

Weibel's writings on the *Amazonas* project frame it as a continuation of the development of the operatic format. He argues that since Monteverdi's *Orfeo* the opera has itself been an inherently "multimedia" genre, combining music, movement, story, and visuals together into a coherent whole. *Amazonas* used many of the latest multimedial developments available in order to present its message in a way suited to the 21st century public. The work did not have any musicians, being composed solely for computers that controlled sound, light, and picture (280). This media-art music theatre project sees itself as a continuation of the operatic tradition, while attempting to update the format with new technological advancements suited to the present day. Weibel's formal, structural conception of music theatre as seen here is thus comparable in approach once again to Ruzicka's sec-

ond modernity, whose goal is the updating and “editing” of older formats to suit current audiences.

Another important work during the 2010 biennale was *Die Quelle* (2010), with music by Lin Wang and a text adapted from secluded Chinese poet Can Xue. The program notes explain that Wang’s musical style rejected the polystylistic trend in post-modernism, preferring to refer back to modernism (this post-modernist skepticism is however a trademark of more tradition-oriented post-modernist composers). Her integration of Chinese traditional instruments into the music are also characteristic of musical post-modernism, in that they are understood as an innovation in material. (Munich Biennale 2013k)

Both these works show an engagement and interest in topics and musical genres outside of the limited sphere of New Music, fitting with the topic of “the gaze of the other.” What remains an issue is the lack of reflection on the constitution of one’s “own” gaze, and the fundamental belief in European art music as a universal and superior aesthetic category instead of only one musical culture among many.

2012

2012’s festival bore the subtitle *Der Ferne Klang* (“the distant sound”) in reference to Schrecker’s opera of the same name that premiered in Frankfurt exactly 100 years prior. In his editorial, Ruzicka makes a link between Schrecker’s historical opera and the productions for the biennale, arguing that that year’s composers focused on generating music out of the content, rather than allowing it to be determined by any exterior system (Munich Biennale 2013l).

The 2012 edition is perhaps most notable for the series *Nuclei*, which featured a series of 8 mini operas that each attempted to ask the question as to what the core or nucleus of opera is. The format, contrary to DOMTS strategy as of the 2016 biennale, was not to only invite young people, though structurally it pre-empts their platform system. Where it differs is first in its focus on individual, older composers rather than groups of practitioners, but second importantly also in how it is framed. Ruzicka’s description emphasizes once again very typically post-modernist values, in searching for a “quintessence” of opera, but without having a clear idea of the exact way forward, and therefore setting up this kind of “experimental” approach, seemingly producing a great deal of operas in the hopes that one will be the “seed” for a new beginning (Munich Biennale 2013l).

2014

The 2014 festival would be Ruzicka’s last; Tsangaris/Ott had already been nominated to take over the festival leadership in October 2012. Perhaps echoing the administrative changes on the horizon, this final edition carries the title *Außer Kontrolle* (“Out of control”). Having now taken a quick look at every biennale under Ruzicka’s

direction, this final snapshot of his programming choices can be contrasted with his first festivals, and compare what aspects changed and what stayed the same over the course of his 18 years of leadership.

Sammy Moussa's *Vastation* (2014) takes place in the final stages of a political campaign for president of a fictional country, where the incumbent president must stage a crisis in order to portray themselves as the country's saviour and ensure their re-election. It is active in taking a position towards political topics, but does not go over the edge of art and become a kind of activism: the country remains fictional, the president is not an obvious foil for any real figure (Munich Biennale 2013m).

With perhaps the exception of the engaged *Amazonas* project, there is a clear tendency of biennale works to address and somehow be relevant to actual societal debates of the day, but while still retaining a relatively high level of distance, and not venturing too clearly into overly activist practices. Contrasting this with initiatives such as by Florian Malzacher with *Truth is Concrete* from two years earlier highlight the stark contrasts in style and aesthetic outlook that still remain between the disciplines (see section 3.4.2). It also highlights the different understanding of both the work and this biennale's relationships to their publics to biennales happening in the visual arts and in theatre/performance/dance. While *Vastation* and the Munich Biennale until this point seem to only strive for a representation, a mimesis, of current events, in many other related fields more direct involvement can clearly be seen.

Utopien (2014) by Dieter Schnebel for the Neuen Vocalsolisten Stuttgart was another of the five premieres of the festival. This work significant in the same way to Bauckholt's piece from 2008, in that it shows the gradual acknowledgement by the director of an approach to music theatre that historically has been antithetical to the operatic genre. The inclusion of this work in the final biennale can be taken as evidence of the extent to which performative approaches to music theatre had already begun to rise more in prominence in the New Music field more generally.

In *Die Befristeten* by Detlev Glanert (2014), contrasts emerge with the biennale's earlier editions. Glanert was commissioned to create a work for the very first Henze biennial in 1988. This means that his first commission came when he was 28, the second when he was 54. The biennale was originally intended as a laboratory for young composers to create their first experiments in music theatre, but by the end of Ruzicka's tenure it had clearly developed into a space for more highly professionalized productions by older and experienced composers (see also section 4.8.1). Ruzicka's emphasis on brokering efficacious co-productions with opera houses has been given as one reason for this gradual drift upwards in average age and career status.

Examining the descriptions of Glanert's opera also shows that working methods had also changed significantly. They explain that Glanert brought only one

minute of composed music for each of the work's 21 scenes. This material was then developed in collaboration with the performers into what would become the final work to be performed. This is a working method significantly removed from those that would typically be found in productions for the opera house, and point to the biennale's gradual embrace of, and participation in, the field of what music theatre scholar Matthias Rebstock calls "independent music theatre," in that it focuses on a production process that is not found in opera houses, and which uses a "lighter, more flexible apparatus" in order to realize the performance (2017, 533).⁹

Ruzicka's tenure at the Munich Biennale has revealed the importance that he places on music theatre productions searching for alternatives to the operatic form, but still take place within the established theatre setting. His fragmentary approach deconstructs and weakens narrative continuity; It creates montages, as discussed with *CELAN* (2001), that address the audience in a post-dramatic way. The biennales that he led can thus themselves be understood as montages of approaches. They did not prescribe a way forward, but rather put out a great deal of plausible answers in the hope of finding a solution. Contrary to what will be argued with DOMTS later, this still importantly means that theoretically a solution *does exist*.

More fundamentally, his approach does not give up its core belief in the opera as a place where future music theatre works can be created; it is an attempt to remain within the context of the institution of opera, but innovating, adapting it to suit the needs and expectations of a contemporary public. Ruzicka sought to present audiences with productions that address current issues and technological possibilities, but still keep the link with a modern tradition of opera-making. The director's concept of second modernity means remaining faithful to the spirit, not the letter, of the aesthetic lineage that still exists in the opera repertoire, and ultimately also in its building and infrastructure itself, which in its design contains certain assumptions about the orchestra, the audience, and the stagecraft that are available to be used to make new works.

4.5 Daniel Ott and Manos Tsangaris (DOMTS)

Rather than an approach based on or reacting to the traditional operatic genre, whose influence on the biennale has been shown under the tenure of both Henze and Ruzicka to still be significant, Daniel Ott and Manos Tsangaris (together

9 Rebstock defines independent music theatre as "all forms of music theatre on a professional level that are not produced in publicly [sic] funded houses and that do not pursue purely commercial interests" (533). Glarnert's work was produced for the Residenztheater in Munich for the city-sponsored festival, and thus does not fit this narrow definition. However, this situation does point to a gradual shift in publicly-funded festivals to similar ways of working, one that is very apparent in the case of DOMTS' approach to the biennale.