

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Important as Composer, Theorist, and Music Educator

- **Earlier Musical Style:** music inspired by Brahms and Max Reger, especially in counterpoint. Early music sometimes described as **aggressively contrapuntal**; often quite **dissonant**; he used lots of **chromaticism**.
 - Example: *Kleine Kammermusik* (1922). Opening tune is volleyed among players, motives are manipulated, often by changing size of intervals within motive. Very contrapuntal texture
- **After 1927:** Hindemith joined faculty of Berlin Hochschule, and music became less aggressively contrapuntal and more simple and clear. His goal became to **educate the masses**. He wrote *Gebrauchsmusik*: functional music for amateur musicians to use at home and in schools.
 - many **solo sonatas**. Many, esp. after 1927, written as teaching pieces. Also, he loved to explore sonorities, wrote a sonata for almost every instrument he knew (some instruments no longer used today).
- **Hindemith the Music Educator:** wanted students to be versatile craftsmen as in 18th Century, rather than what he considered to be the overspecialized virtuosi of the 19th century. Encouraged students to learn to play lots of instruments, compose and perform each other's compositions.
- **Hindemith the Theorist:** had a theory about **hierarchy of notes** of the complete chromatic; employed the theory in his own music, giving it an identifiable, characteristic sound
 - He theorized an **innate hierarchical relationship** between the 12 chromatic notes, based on principles of acoustics. Each note has a relationship to tonal center that has a rank of importance: ranking is based on overtone series. Ranking reflects **relative tension of each pitch with central one**: e.g. pitch center and note a 5th away have closest relationship and therefore the least tension; pitches a min 2, major 7 or TT are least related and have most tension. Theory is explained in **Craft of Musical Composition** (1937).

- Theory deals with **intervallic** relationships, not issues of **order** (themes and motives). Not analogous to Tone Row because not a melody.
- An example of this theory at work: ***Mathis der Maler*** (Matthias the Painter): this is an opera (1934), but is better known in symphonic form, with music pulled from the opera. In this piece, hierarchy of pitch is audible even without score analysis
- Symphony is arranged in three movements corresponding to three panels of a triptych altar piece ([Isenheimer altar: Angel concert and birth Christi](#)) by Mathias Grunewald. Tonality of movements is interesting: first ends in G Major; the other two in C-sharp Major and D-flat Major, forming tritone with first movement, symbolizing resolution of ultimate conflict, Hindemith's interval of greatest tension
- Later in life, Hindemith revised a number of earlier works to conform with his theory, e.g. ***Das Marienleben*** (song cycle)