HIN UND ZURÜCK BY PAUL HINDEMITH:
A PRODUCTION THESIS

by

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Hin und Zurück, a short, one-act opera written in 1927 by Paul Hindemith, was produced, designed, conducted and staged by Douglas V. Riley, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Music degree in the Department of Music of the University of British Columbia. This opera was produced on a budget of $232.07 and was performed by a student cast on November 29 and 30, 1974 in the Old Auditorium Theatre which seats approximately 550 people. The following is a detailed record of that production with the stage director's analysis and interpretation of the musical score.

This record is divided into seven chapters and a final section containing a bibliography and production appendices. The first chapter deals with the reasons for choosing the opera itself, taking into account the restrictions of an opera workshop: that is, a limited number of singers, young voices, inexperienced actors and the necessary simplicity of the design and production. This is followed by a short historical look at the composer and at the opera itself in Chapter Two. The third chapter contains specific notes on the different approaches to the conceptualization of the production and a discussion of the origin and basis of the final directorial concept. It also discusses intellectual and other analytic considerations dealing with dramaturgy and the projected production and directorial problems.
The fourth chapter covers the specific organization of the production and the detailed final realization of the staging. Cast selection and its related problems are then considered. This chapter also includes a scene-by-scene analysis which covers purpose, actions, musically-denoted actions, dominant emotions and the particular difficulties encountered therein. This chapter concludes with specific references to aspects of acting by young performers. Chapter Five deals with the conductor's personal preparation as a basis for co-ordinating the work both in rehearsal and during performances. The chapter then deals with all other musical considerations and their particular relations to both the performers and the audience of Hin und Zurück. The straightforward approach to the planning and construction of the scenery is discussed in Chapter Six which also describes the different methods of stage lighting. It concludes with an assessment of the final outcome.

Chapter Seven is a short appraisal of the entire production from different points of view, including a discussion of the opera as it relates to the director/producer. The final section consists of a bibliography and various appendices, from a scene breakdown to the photo-copied reproduction of the score.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I  Choosing the Work  1

II  A Brief History of the Composer and the Opera  6

III  Notes on the Production Concept  10

IV  Organization and Realization of the Project  21

V  Musical Preparation and Realization  41

VI  Planning and Construction of Scenery and Lighting  48

VII  Final Appraisal  54

Bibliography  57

Appendices:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Scene Breakdown  60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Rehearsal Schedule  62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Sketches of the Set  63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Coloured Photos of the Set  66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Properties List  68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Key to Staging Symbols  69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Instrument Schedule  70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>List of Expenses  72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Lighting Cue Sheet  73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Photo-copied Reproduction of the Score  74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>Blue-print of the Set Design (in pocket)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Blue-print of the Lighting Design (in pocket)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"A composer's horizon cannot be far-reaching enough: his desire to know, to comprehend, must incite, inspire, and drench every phase of his works."

Paul Hindemith
CHAPTER ONE

Choosing the Work

Paul Hindemith composed Hin und Zurück, or "There and Back", in 1927. This one-act opera is a comical melodrama which entertains in a half-serious, half-absurd way. It is based on an English revue sketch and the libretto was written by Marcellus Schiffer, a cabaret entrepreneur. While the musical language is distinctively Hindemithian, it is light-hearted and quick-moving, and lacks the pensive and often ponderous complexity of some of the composer's weightier compositions. But Hindemith did possess a wry sense of humour, which is revealed in much of the music of Hin und Zurück. This opera is a playful and diverting comedy, with something of an old-fashioned, music hall burlesque flavour. However, Hindemith's treatment of his subject has an added satirical element.

As well as its instant appeal, Hin und Zurück has distinct musical and dramatic structures and a practical small cast: soprano, two tenors, baritone, bass, speaker and mime, that is ideal for an opera workshop situation. Even though the staging can be complex and the pace can be often frantic, Hin und Zurück's length and form provide an excellent operatic vehicle as well as a realistic challenge for an opera workshop.
Hin und Zurück is an ideal way for an opera workshop to confront some of the problems and difficulties that opera workshops often present. Firstly, the singers involved are rarely professional in their level of training, and there is often a great disparity in training between cast members. Hin und Zurück has two major roles of equal complexity that are a challenge to undertake, as well as other roles of lesser difficulty. Secondly, this opera could be easily sectionalized to accommodate young performers with more concentrated staging and musical rehearsals, and also to allow co-ordination with and scheduling of the workshop's other operas and excerpts. A third advantage is the exclusion of an opera chorus and supernumeraries. Since most opera workshops do not have a trained opera chorus available, this often becomes a major consideration in the choice of an opera. Much valuable time is thus left for concentrated work with individual inexperienced singing actors.

Hin und Zurück presents few problems with stage management or technical staff. This aspect of choosing an opera is important and often overlooked because few workshops have a full-time back-stage staff; thus, frequently the singers are expected to assist with technical duties during actual performances. As well as performing and carrying out technical duties, the student cast may be expected to aid in set construction and painting of the scenery; all of which is time-consuming and often exhausting. The problem is compounded when these same singers have important roles in other operas and excerpts.
which may be considered of a higher priority.

The length, complexity and nature of the work were considered to determine its practicality for performance. *Hin und Zurück* is relatively short, with a running time from thirteen to fifteen minutes. Although the pace is sometimes frantic, exactness in movement, as well as vocal production, is imperative because the scenario requires the second half of the opera to run in reverse to the first half; that is, the plot and physical movement advance to a precise point where the singers are then required to turn the actions and the text backward and undo what they have done exactly in reverse. All of this is regulated by the exactness of the music, so that the staging of this abbreviated opera becomes a complicated one. However, accumulative concentrated effort and rehearsal produced a smooth running production from beginning to end and vice versa.

Opera workshops usually find themselves with a small operating budget which allows only for the simplest of set designs. This simplicity of design and construction methods and a minimum of building materials must yield a set that achieves the proper mood and atmosphere as well as provides an adequate realistic acting space for the performers. *Hin und Zurück*'s simple, modern design fulfilled these requirements of economy and, indeed, the quality and effectiveness of the production may have been enhanced by the sparse production budget.

Young singing actors often become over-excited and sometimes exhausted by the length of staging, musical, production and technical rehearsals. To alleviate some of these
problems, the opera was double-cast. This assisted the young performers to develop their vocal potential without over-extending it. Double-casting, however, increased the directorial and musical coaching duties.

Although the required orchestra is small: six wind instruments and four players at two pianos, it was decided to use a two-piano reduction of the musical score. Firstly, because the complexity, speed and difficulty of the orchestral parts, which were almost beyond a student attempt, require extra rehearsals. And, indeed, instrumental students involved in regular ensembles have little time available for extracurricular orchestral rehearsals. Secondly, the use of professional players and rental fees for the orchestral parts would have overwhelmed an already strained budget. This two-piano system was used for both rehearsals and performances, and provided not only the adequate and colourful accompaniment required, but also accommodated the additional rehearsals needed for staging with music. These extra rehearsals were essential because of the complex reverse staging.

The opera Hin und Zurück complemented the University of British Columbia's opera program. The program's format of combinations of opera excerpts and one-act operas provides not only a professional opera training ground, but also an opportunity for each individual in the workshop to prepare and perform several different styles of singing and acting. Hin und Zurück meets this format requirement and also the others out-
lined earlier. This work proved to be a distinct and unique challenge for a student director/producer and an ideal subject for a thesis production.
CHAPTER TWO

A Brief History of the Composer and the Opera

Paul Hindemith was born on November 16, 1895 in Hanau, near Frankfurt-am-Main in central Germany, where he lived until 1927. He studied at the Hoch Conservatory, Frankfurt, where he was known as an especially gifted student of string instruments and composition. At the age of twenty, he became concert-master of the Frankfurt Opera and was founder and violist of the Amar Quartet, a prominent European string quartet. He served a year in the German army in World War I.

In 1927, Hindemith was invited to become composition professor at the Hochschule für Musik (Berlin State Conservatory) and taught there until the rise of Hitler. Since the Nazi government forbade any performances of what was termed dissonant and degenerate modern music, he left Germany in 1938 and spent two years in Turkey.

From 1949 to 1953, Hindemith was professor of theory and composition at the School of Music at Yale University in the United States. In 1951, he accepted the position of professor of music at Zürich University in Switzerland while remaining on the staff at Yale, and for two academic years divided his time between the universities, eventually resigning from Yale in 1953. In that year, he settled in the village of Blonay, Switzerland, overlooking Lake Geneva. He gave up regu-
lar reaching in order to concentrate on composition and to fos-
ter his new-found enthusiasm for conducting. He died on Decem-
ber 28, 1963 in Frankfurt, where he began his career.

_Hin und Zurück_ was premiered at the Baden-Baden Festival
which superseded the Donaueschingen festival, on July 17, 1927.
This particular festival of new music featured three other one-
act operas; _Die Kleine Mahoganny_, a satirical skit by Kurt
Weill; _Die Prinzessin auf der Erbse_ by Ernst Toch, and the
world premiere of _L'Elevement d'Europe - 'opera minute'_ by
Darius Milhaud. Many of these operas, and especially _Hin und
Zurück_, were influenced by a small cultural movement in Ger-
many at that time called Zeitkunst or "art of the time". This
term was widely used in the later 1920's, and described popular
works that glorified certain contemporary subjects with well-
known themes and treated them in a contemporary and energetic
style. These operas combined popular musical idioms such as
music-hall, jazz, revue and cabaret tunes with texts on con-
temporary themes. _Hin und Zurück_ is also an example of the
miniature type of opera in vogue in the 1920's, which reacted
against the massive dimensions of the music dramas of Wagner
and Strauss. Hindemith's librettist, Marcellus Schiffer, was
a variety show producer and vaudeville writer "... and a lead-
ing figure of Berlin cabaret of the 1920's - a fact which will
explain the opera's subtitle of 'sketch'". ¹

¹ Ian Kemp, Hindemith, Oxford Studies of Composers (London:
Hin und Zurück is a sparkling, little spoof about a domestic murder. The lady of the house is confronted by her husband when he finds a note claimed to be from her milliner but in fact from her secret lover. After an exchange of verbal unpleasantries between the jealous husband and his spouse, he shoots her. In a fit of remorse, he bemoans the situation and leaps out of the window, presumably to his death. A doctor and his orderly enter, the Doctor pronounces his verdict and they take the dead wife out on the stretcher. This series of intensely over-dramatic scenes is interrupted by a benevolent "deus ex machina" who declares that something should be done. He points out that truth is opposed to man destroying himself over trifling human emotions. According to his logic, it makes no difference whether a man begins his life in the cradle and proceeds to his death or moves in the opposite direction. After considering this, he magically reverses the order of the preceding events. The librettist's reversal of this train of events involves inverting the order of sentences rather than of words so that the sentences retain linguistic sense. The husband jumps back in the window, the doctor and orderly back in carrying the dead wife, all the events reverse themselves, thus ending the opera as it began.

After mid-point, Hindemith's music "does not mirror the action to the extent of going into strict retrograde canon but reverses the order of its themes, movements and sections thus involving an operation which does require some delicate
This amusingly flippant matrimonial tragedy, representative of the satirical tendencies fashionable in Germany in the 1920's, was written by Hindemith at the overlapping stage of his Expressionistic and Neo-Classic periods. Like most of his music at this time, including the slightly later Neues vom Tage (1929), the music of Hin und Zurück is jazz-like and linear in texture, and is well-suited to its lively action.

Hindemith also composed for the cinema and orchestrated the music for the cartoon Felix the Cat at the Circus, which was shown in the section of the 1927 Baden-Baden Festival set aside for film music. It is possible that the idea for Hin und Zurück was suggested by contemporary film techniques. Considering this possibility, Morton Siegal, in the 1940 production at the Berkshire Music Centre, staged Hin und Zurück in the style of the early movie comedies. The set and properties were black and white, as were the complementing costumes and make-up. The addition of flickering strobe lights heightened the impression of a production of an early movie and helped to emphasize the reversed body movements.

Hin und Zurück proved to be a "tour de force" in Germany and around the world. The American premiere took place in Philadelphia in 1928, and it was subsequently performed at Tanglewood in 1940 and in London, England in 1958, as well as by countless university opera workshops and by professional opera companies since then.

CHAPTER THREE

Notes on the Production Concept

Opera brings groups of people together for different reasons; perhaps they wish to enjoy the aesthetic experience of an artistic performance or to understand and appreciate a specific composer's interpretation of a fragment of life. For opera students, however, opera provides the challenges of understanding the composer's mental processes, of creating original characterizations and of learning that most exacting type of self-imposed dramatic and musical discipline: the opera role.

For the singer and producer/director, the production of Hin und Zurück helps develop a critical, creative and original approach to every production problem. The approach to producing Hin und Zurück generally takes the following form: an intellectual analysis; analytic considerations based on the initial dramatic impressions upon reading of the musical score; dramaturgy and some production problems; and the myriad other considerations that the director must face prior to and during the realization of the project.

In the intellectual analysis, a few questions have to be answered satisfactorily. Why did Hindemith compose this opera? Some of his main reasons were based on his associations with the librettist, Marcellus Schiffer. When the work was to
be performed in a serious music festival, Hindemith and Schiff­
er had to turn what was really an English revue sketch into
an operatic form. The opera Hin und Zurück was primarily com­
posed then as consciously imaginative entertainment with a
peculiar insight into a family situation which was of a par­ticular competitive quality and proved to be a success at the
Baden-Baden Festival. The collaboration of Hindemith and Schiff­
er also proved to be a success in a subsequent opera, Neues
vom Tage, composed in 1929.

What are some of the opera's dramatic, theatrical and
musical values? The opera is presented in a mock-serious form,
where individual characterizations are almost as important as
the development and reversal of the plot itself. The music
moves quickly in a light-hearted manner which is in appropriate
contrast to the mock tragic theme. This musical contrast is
further reflected in the music-hall and burlesque themes, which
were reflected on the stage in our production.

The major and minor climaxes are of particular dramatic
value. There are a number of critical moments when the inter­
est climaxes in each scene. However, this director chose not
to emphasize specific climaxes and concentrated, instead, on
a steady building of dramatic intensity in which each scene is
dependent upon the two adjacent ones. One exception is the end
of the confrontation scene where there is a definite crisis;
namely, the husband shoots the wife, and its counterpart, which
might be called the ana-crisis, in the opera's second half.
Both crises were presented with the same intensity. The cli­
maxes in the confrontation scene were easily emphasized because the crises involved were so dramatically related to the music that the singers projected naturally the correct volume, intensity, movement and other necessary stage techniques.

The first impressions after initial musical readings and subsequent impressions both after extensive research and as the project progressed were quite different. The better parts of all three sets of impressions were utilized in the final realization of the project. The opera was seen by the director as definitely abstract with a carnival-like opening, and with jazz-cabaret themes highlighted in the music.

The director also used his preliminary dramatic impressions in a few individual scenes. For instance the propelling drama of the confrontation scene in Scene 4 (pp. 8-11) which gently subsides at the end into a more tranquil, flowing scene suggests a type of wildly animated storm. The scene with the doctor (Scene 5, pp. 12-13) has the heavy rhythmic accents of a death march which suggest wailing and despair. At the opera's mid-point, the harmonium accompaniment to the Sage's austere but comical appearance establishes a ghostly and somewhat spiritual effect. Many such scenes suggest that reality is being represented as totally absurd. The director sought to reflect many of these dramatic impressions on stage.

The set design was influenced by certain first impressions of geometric shapes with accents on Cubism and angles because the opera was composed during a time when these artistic influences were reflected more often in daily life. Paint-
ings and other forms of geometric art were being reluctantly accepted by the public at this time along with some examples of mildly dissonant music like Hin und Zurück. These abstract forms of artistic expression could be associated with the abstract absurdism of Hin und Zurück. As a result, the idea of angles and geometric shapes was incorporated into the set design.

The next step in the analysis was to isolate some of the chief acting problems in the opera. Because of the length of the opera, the character's identity was rapidly established by accenting particular mannerisms and distinctive movements that might be emphasized by the character's costume. Helene's fuzzy, pink house coat, frizzy blond wig and the exaggerated movements which these articles inspired helped to accent her effervescent nature. In some cases where distinct contrasts in mood were required throughout one scene, the character's facial expressions were considered as the most important factor not to the point of contorted over-acting but distinct enough to be quickly convincing to the audience. In-depth conferences about these characterizations were started with the actors at this point. They were then augmented by subsequent research into the time and period of the opera's debut as well as by considerations of the original setting and properties.

A few preliminary movement problems had to be considered, especially in relation to the reversed actions required in the opera. Each set of staged forward movements within the first half of the opera had to be strictly analyzed and precisely
rehearsed in order to facilitate the creation of the reverse movements needed in the opera's second half. Each scene was found to be short enough to accommodate these rehearsals and each set of forward and reverse movements was often rehearsed without music until fluidity of actions became second nature to the actors, who could then concentrate on more important matters.

The cast's movement within the stage setting naturally came during later rehearsals when the set was complete. Special attention was paid to the forward and backward entrances and exits through doorways and particularly to Robert's act of leaping out and in through the window. Working props posed few problems in handling and the only anticipated difficulty was the choreographic movement of the confrontation scene between Helene and Robert, which involved the letter and the pistol. The performer's breath control and the physical stamina necessary for the performances were considered at an early stage and the performers were asked to move about quite vigorously during the early musical rehearsals prior to first blocking. Other problems related to set and staging were dealt with during later rehearsals and will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Many considerations were involved in the dramaturgical view of Hin und Zurück. The compressed nature of the story means that there are no sub-plots co-existing with the main theme. Therefore, the main climax is the reversal of the plot itself and the peculiar effects that result. Although the
opera has apparent social and moral overtones which comment wryly on family life, infidelity and their ultimate unimportance in the moral hierarchy of human events, the simple comic elements were emphasized at all times in our production.

The directorial concept was primarily visual with a cinematic emphasis, that stressed the satirical and humorous elements of this particular family encounter. The distinct moods of the music helped to depict and emphasize the stage action. The opera has a definite musical form with some classical influences in the well-defined arias, duets and trios. This clarity of form helped the director's understanding of the opera and his formation of a simple and workable directorial concept. Boris Goldovsky states:

The staging of an operatic scene involves five steps: (a) The director familiarizes himself with the plot, the music, and the scenic setting of the entire opera. (b) He analyzes the scene in question and ties up whatever loose ends may have been left by the librettist. (c) He tries to penetrate the inner life of his characters and to read their minds, paying special attention to their thoughts, which take place during the orchestral introductions, interludes, and postludes. (d) He converts all their thoughts, whether spoken or silent, into action impulses. (e) He sees to it that the action he selects for his mis-en-scene matches as closely as possible the mood, energy, timing and form of the existing music.

It is the director's task to realize on-stage the full theatrical value of this "inner life of the characters" first created by the composer. The director must help the individual singing actor to determine what characterization is necessary

to exteriorize the character and to make it visible and comprehensible to the beholder. He must set up clear and workable reasons for the singing actor's motivations; whether they be intellectual reasons or emotional urges. While it is essential that the singers think and feel in character, under the director's guidance, their thoughts and emotions must be projected to the audience forcefully and clearly with meaningful actions and movement. At the same time, the director must devise a pattern of movement that satisfies his artistic feeling for unity, diversity and balance, just as the composer strives for a harmonious musical form.

A conscientious director should also consider whether or not his staging concepts coincide with those of the original creators and he should then direct his actors accordingly. Every attempt was made by this director to re-establish the point of view which created the original Hin und Zurück.

Other aspects of direction considered at this time were factors influencing the projection of the appearance and the behaviour of the performer: including posture, facial expression, gesture, placement within the scenic picture, and movement in relation to scenery, props, other characters and lighting. In theory, these elements may be subject to the stage directions given by the composers and the librettists, but in reality they differ from performance to performance, depending upon the scenic background and upon the imagination and talent of the stage director and the performers. Much of this information was given as character analysis in the early musical and
blocking stages of the production.

This information was imparted to the performer as a sequence: explaining what happens, or the particular actions and movement required for a scene; indicating when it happens, or at what point during the scene; questioning why it happens, or the motivation; and then help may be given, by illustration with how it happens. It often takes some time before an inexperienced singing actor can move and act independently on stage. He often cannot freely create without some assistance, so that the stage director must immediately help to free the singer from the basic concerns of what to think, where to go, when to react and at what speed to perform an action. The performer can assimilate these directives during the early rehearsals and is still free to build a believable, valid characterization. Just as the author and the composer free the singer from the necessity of inventing words and tunes, the director's information and basic directives encourage the performer to devote all of his energies to build a given characterization into a unique and meaningful role.

This concept of the director's role was sometimes found to be contradictory. Sometimes, while imparting this necessary information, he had to be an authoritarian figure while at other times he had to be a democratic group-leader eliciting ideas and building self-reliance. A director must know his cast well in order to adjust his methods accordingly to the person and the situation. Since he is in a position of power, he must learn to use that control for the good of the opera and
not for his own aggrandizement. As an artist-leader, the di-
rector has to plan the production in every detail so that he
has a solution for any problem that may arise. But as a group-
leader, he has to inspire others so that they grow as perfor-
mers and as people.

The following directorial notes helped in developing a
well-rounded and workable production concept:

(A) It was obvious although most of the opera's pacing
is determined by the tempo and intensity of the music, the
on-stage action can be retarded or accelerated as required within
the tempi of the musical framework. The director's contribu-
tion of his own ideas can thus be added to the original struc-
ture.

(B) The singing actors were encouraged to pantomine the
different scenes. This provided the singers with a good method
of learning and perfecting the specific stage techniques re-
quired in the opera without having to worry about vocal tech-
nique. The performer could then concentrate on musically mo-
tivated and correctly timed stage movements and actions.

(E) Especially to the novice singing actor, the director
could not insist enough on the importance of practising the
various vocal, musical and theatrical skills until they became
automatic.

(F) This director of Hin und Zurück tried to avoid the
role of either of the two extremes of stage director. The
first is the director who is not well prepared and who too
literally follows only those suggestions offered in the score.
He does not create or interpret the score in theatrical terms, and often merely acts as prompter and traffic cop. The other type is the director who is over-prepared; he knows the work so well, is in such a hurry, and is so fixed in his ideas that he acts out every role and insists that he be imitated absolutely. Although the latter approach was found to be necessary with some singers, the former method leads to a performance without spark or spontaneity, which may not allow the performer to achieve that confidence in his own creative ability which is especially valuable if the events on stage do not progress exactly as planned.

(E) Certain stage directions required the incorporation of specific symbols to indicate particular movement and physical attitude. A complete symbol list is contained in Appendix V.

(F) In addition to the score, a diary containing thoughts about light cues, sound effects, ideas on characterizations, motivation and stage "business", diagrams of movement and groupings, and definitions of words or phrases proved most helpful during the production as well as in the writing of this production thesis.

(G) The use of a television camera and a video-tape recorder in rehearsal enabled the cast to get an accurate, if painful, view of how they were projecting their characters. The use of these devices underscored what the director had been saying during rehearsals, but the learning came from a more persuasive source; the performer himself. In Hin und Zurück,
this device was especially helpful to the performer in mastering the required reverse movements.

The accumulation of the preceding directorial notes, concepts and analytic approaches over a lengthy period of time provided the director with the confidence to proceed with the project. With all these ideas clearly established, the detailed organization of the production and final realization of the staging could begin.
CHAPTER FOUR

Organization and Realization of the Project

An extensive analysis of the libretto and music was necessary before casting could take place. The English translation by Marion Farquhar proved to be adequate, and the actual words posed no problems although some vowels proved difficult on specific pitches for many of the young singers. As well as the over-all tessitura, the individual vocal lines were studied to evaluate difficulties relating to length of phrase, specific notes, intervals and vocal leaps. However, the proposed work is not overly difficult and most of the problems were overcome by the practice and persistence of the selected performers.

Other vocal and musical problems were then considered. Proficiency in musical timing and rhythm is required not only because much of the work involves constantly changing meters, but also because the emphasis in the work is on short staccato, colouratura-like phrases. (See example 1)

Because the performer was asked to coordinate specific staging and exact movement with specific musical values and timings, much initial consideration was given to appropriate casting. It was necessary also to anticipate the difficulty for the performer to move backward in accompaniment to the retrograde order of the music, so that he would appear as natural as in the
earlier forward movement. This was also related to the ability to memorize the music quickly and accurately and to remember the physical movements used in the staging. For example, the director saw the character of Helene as including vivacious, fluttery and energetic traits. The ability to project these characteristics and to move quickly both forward and backward as the music dictated was required, as well as many other vocal and musical demands.

After the many musical, vocal and dramatic aspects were fully considered, casting was begun. The University of British Columbia opera workshop programme provided enough talent for the project. It was found that double-casting of Helene’s part was possible, making the production of the work somewhat more involved and complicated, but providing the maximum learning and creative experience for both the performers and the producer/director. The double-casting of this part, however, produced a competitive spirit which had to be anticipated and developed into a constructive force. Since a tenor suitable for the role of Robert was not enrolled in the opera program,
considerable search was required, and the part was eventually filled by a robust, young singer with a more than adequate voice but with limited acting experience. The role of the Doctor is brief although important in establishing a strong, leading vocal line in the ensemble parts.

Since the music moves in a rather frenetic manner, the performers in the major roles were generally required to adapt quickly to the subtle variations demanded by each performance; for example, a piece of stage business was often created spontaneously during a performance. An adaptive performer was expected to perceive and utilize these subtle changes in a constructive manner.

The next step was the formal development of individual characterizations. It is the stage director's duty to have clear concepts of individual characters and also to allow his insight and knowledge of the work to guide the singing actors in the development of their roles. In the development of the characters, the director must stress that the first obligation of a conscientious singing actor is a careful analysis of the opera's text. The libretto contains valuable information about scenic description and stage direction. The performer must interpret this information and combine it with the director's contributions in order to create a character that is clear, precise, believable and well-projected to the audience. The singing actor must then allow himself to think the thoughts of the character. The libretto helps to provide those initial ideas upon which the character is required to comment. However,
there are also important thoughts and feelings, which are subsequently incorporated into the character, that are inspired by: research; the singer's natural day-to-day process of thinking; the singer's recollection of past experiences, feelings and other less clearly-defined images. All of these aspects should unite to create a deeper and more meaningful characterization.

In some cases the singing actor should be encouraged to write a complete biography of his character, including his past life and projecting all the events not shown on-stage or in the text. The director then helps him to create meaningful and characteristic movement and motivation so that the actor can convey clear attitudes and emotional states. A follow-up sketch can help this performer further enrich the characterization and convey subtly to the audience that the opera's character has an off-stage life which continues on from the one seen on stage. As well as these biographies and character studies from other plays and operas, the singing actor should be asked to study, and perhaps re-create individuals they have encountered who may give a further insight to the characterization.

The disparity of experience in the cast of Hin und Zurück created special problems in the planning of the action and movement on stage. There was limited rehearsal time that could be allotted for special sessions to raise the acting level of the less experienced to that of the more accomplished. Occasionally a few extra sessions were scheduled for the discussion of character development through clarifying kinds of
movement; in this case, the forward staging and its reverse; simple but distinctive expressive posture; mannerisms and clarity of vocal projection. Such extra sessions proved very helpful in the final analysis.

The primary approach was to develop an idea of each of the seven characters of the opera and then to adapt and broaden the existing skills of the participants in such a way as to best achieve these basic concepts. With the guidance of the director, the most important emphasis was on expanding the natural personality of the singing actor to form an individual, complete and effective characterization. The following is a thumbnail sketch of each of the characters in Hin und Zurück which serves only as a basis of the characterization.

- **Robert** - strong, persistent, doubting, agile, prone to the melodramatic, twenty-five years of age.
- **Helene** - vivacious, energetic, fluttery, agile, prone to exaggeration, effervescent, a bit flighty, twenty years of age.
- **Aunt Emma** - senile, deaf, eccentric, happy, seventy years of age.
- **Sage** - philosophic, wise, haunting, comical, calm, a bit monotonous in tone, ageless.
- **Doctor** - incompetent, slow, precise, sad, thirty years of age.
- **Orderly** - robot-like, eccentric, inept, unintelligent, thirty years of age.
- **Maid** - naive, bubbly, agile, eighteen years of age.

The characterization of the Maid is minimal, as her functional role consists only of delivering a note to Helene, and the musical score did not allow her more than a brief introduction.
The brevity of the score allowed only basic characterization, often only visual. In some cases, the characters were exaggerated like those in the "Commedia dell'arte". Hin und Zurück's dramatic plot combines a believable situation and a totally absurd one. The gestures were not quite "semaphoric" but the performers were directed "to think of magnification". These gestures remained clear and meaningful, and expressed each emotion distinctly enough to be remembered by the actor so that they could be also executed in reverse. Other views of characterization will be discussed later in the scene-by-scene analysis.

The opera was then broken down into workable scenes. Each scene was classified by the following criteria: a natural musical or dramatic break; the introduction or change of the leading characters; and one specific complex encounter of characters. Each distinct musical or dramatic scene was isolated when it was necessary to concentrate on movement, characterization or stage business. This scene breakdown is included in Appendix I. A deeper scene-by-scene analysis of the actual production is presented later in this chapter.

Once a logical series of scenes was decided upon, a rehearsal schedule was drawn up by considering the following questions: Is there enough time fairly allotted to those who are double-cast? Is the schedule flexible enough to handle the inevitable illness or absences of performers? Will it accommodate the scheduling of other operas and excerpts on the same program? Does it take into consideration the occa-
sional unavailability of those performers who are in these other works? Does it give the director enough time to rehearse the sequence of scenes in order to draw the full potential from the production and its members? Does the proposed schedule allow enough time for set and prop construction, lighting and technical rehearsals? When these questions were answered, the workable rehearsal schedule was drawn up. (See Appendix II)

Before creating the basic "blocking" or planning the acting areas, a set with a workable ground-plan was needed. Based on the production concepts of the director and the budgetary restrictions of the opera workshop, a set was conceived which also took into consideration the following: what the libretto and score required; the size of the auditorium; and the director's and performer's first musical and dramatic impressions of the opera.

The libretto required a living room, two entrances, a practical, breakable window, a table and chair, a rocking chair and a small end-table with a drawer where a gun is kept. The size of the auditorium suggested the set should be at least twenty feet high and twelve feet deep to both accommodate the performer's action and to be visually acceptable to the audience. The director's first impressions of the opera included: a circus-like atmosphere; some magical happenings; and absurd realism; all of which should combine with the music to contribute to the form of the set.

The initial sketch in Appendix III (p. 63) combines these ideas simply, with a main entrance for Helene upstage
centre, an interior entrance stage right and a window stage left. The walls and roof were to be made of small polyfoam balls on elastic strings and the strings were to be connected both to the roof and to the floor. For the first five minutes, the set was to be exaggerated like the plot, and stretched upwards and slightly to the sides out of proportion. In the second half of the opera, the set would settle back to its original shape.

After the director did considerable research into Hindemith's life, philosophy, ideas and other music, as well as into the times and artistic influences surrounding the first production of *Hin und Zurück*, he formed a new concept which utilized abstract Functionalism, geometric and particularly angular shapes, Cubism, Futurism and Expressionism, which was still an important influence. Early 20th-century design was based on functionalist design which "...often tried to prove that geometric shapes were functional, that is, comfortable, inexpensive and easy to maintain and fabricate." 4 This design movement included the separate movements of Futurism, Cubism and Constructivism. Although these movements had different leaders, they shared the same concept of abstract functional design with "... undecorated and geometric objects symbolizing the machine age ..." 5 and their art tended to be smooth-surfaced and made out of industrial materials such as steel, aluminum,


5 Ibid. p. 78
rubber and early forms of plastic.

Appendix III (pp. 63-64) traces the search for alternatives which combine the many design considerations. It shows the concept of angles as an integral design factor and the development of the ideas. The final design illustrated in the coloured photographs in Appendix IV (pp. 66-67) shows the final re-thinking of these set-concepts with the addition of a stylized house-top. As a result, the ground-plan on page 65 was developed and the initial blocking and staging began.
Scene-by-Scene Analysis

The director divided the opera into scene complexes (see Appendix I) for three reasons. Firstly, each brief scene represents a dramatic or musical entity starting with: an entrance of one or more characters; an aria, duet, or trio; or a complete change of dramatic mood. Such specific divisions helped both the singer and director alike to understand and analyze the dramatic requirements of the opera.

Secondly, these brief scenes assisted the singing actor and the director in the dramatic staging of the opera. Each scene required specific actions or a series of movements to be completed. However, as the second half of the opera is musically shorter than the first half, many of the required reverse movements needed to be executed a little more quickly. Dividing the opera into scenes meant that the performer had to complete his movement within a given scene despite the musical differences of the opera's two halves. The scenic divisions chosen by the director not only helped in his study and understanding of what movements were required but also helped to indicate when these movements should occur, taking into account any musical disparities. Thirdly, the system of short scenic divisions assisted in the creation of rehearsal schedules within the opera workshop programme.

After a lively introduction (pp. 3-4), the music introduces the first scene (pp. 4-6). The changing meter patterns
of the music and the emphasis on accents indicates extreme activity. As the curtain opens, Aunt Emma is found in the living room, rocking and knitting happily in her rocking chair by the window. At measure 62, she sneezes. Hindemith's music is indicative of the sneeze with a crescendoing tremelo (measures 57-61) which suggests the intake of air and the reiterated syllables "ah, ah, ah", the forte and mezzo-forte chords, and the diminishing staccato run (measures 62-64) suggesting the sneeze itself. The two syllables "Ah-Choo" as well as the appropriate actions should be clearly enunciated in order to facilitate the reversal of these actions and syllables in the second half of the opera. Since these are the first actions seen by the audience, they should be visually clear, large enough and distinctive enough to centre the audience's attention on the action so that it can comprehend immediately the events on stage.

Helene enters through the center doorway and places a rose in a vase already on the table. The music suggests her walk and her movements are quick and agile. She acknowledges Aunt Emma and bundles her up with a shawl. Helene's happy, carefree tone of voice corresponds to the flowing melody line, while the accented and staccato accompaniment is paralleled by Helene's characteristically exaggerated, dance-like walk and lively gestures.

Helene's aria in Scene Two (pp. 6-7) builds dynamically from a pianissimo to an eventual fortissimo. Her movements and vocal expression are initially refined and gradually intensify until her final G# at measure 109. During the beginning
measures (80-88), she crosses quickly over to the table, sits, casually pours her cup of tea and sings cheerfully about being awake and refreshed; "Now like new I wake ...". The music then slowly intensifies and at measure 92, the accompaniment alternates with Helene's melody line as she stands and toasts the morning. Both the melody and the accompaniment crescendo as Helene, with hands and napkin fluttering, moves enthusiastically around the table in an exaggerated series of dance-like steps.

Many of these steps are emphasized by strong forte chords and accents; for instance, the chords in measures 104-106 suggest a series of quick steps as Helene crosses downstage center for the aria's finale. Utilizing the music as a "staging" medium, the alternation of these quick steps with the accompaniment and her sudden pauses as she sings the staccato phrases provide a comic choreography.

Scene Three begins with Robert's entrance (p. 7 - measure 109) on two accented fortissimo chords. Helene is surprised to have her husband home from work so early and is visibly agitated. Robert's actions are swift and decisive as he presents Helene with a birthday gift and Aunt Emma with a parcel. Musically, this scene gradually slows down as Helene opens her package and is obviously disappointed by her gift (measure 121 - langsamer). During the following pause, the Maid enters with a note for "Madame". Helene and Robert look at each other apprehensively. The dissonance of this fermata (a B♭ against a B♮) supports this tension, which finally resolves with the
lively, propelling music of Scene Four.

It should be noted here that certain important aspects of the opera must be established in the first few scenes in order to set the mood and general tone of the opera. In the first three scenes of *Hin und Zurück*, the unpredictable and lively mood is supported by the dissonant and spirited music. Hindemith's highly rhythmic, accented and unpretentious score is full of musical contrasts which not only sustain the lively on-stage action but also contribute subtle allusions to a jazz-like style with his choice and use of orchestral instruments, most of which were included in a 1920's jazz band. Also, these opening scenes should provide information in a distinctive and memorable way about the dramatic questions: who, what, when, where and why.

"An expert actor is a person who is able to communicate a great variety of thoughts, moods and emotional states to his audience ... an expert opera singer is a person who, in addition to these skills, has a well-trained voice and a considerable knowledge of music." 6 A conscientious acting student also strives for these skills. It is essential for a performer to have a clear and vivid understanding of the motivation behind every action he creates. To be convincing, his actions must have personal motivation rather than be activities performed merely because they have been notated in the score or arranged by the stage director. One can invariably tell when a performer

6 Boris Goldovsky, *Bringing Opera to Life*, p. 17.
is executing a stage movement out of inner compulsion and sincere conviction, or when he is merely following directions and making a "move".

Important also to a student's performance is the quality of clarity, the ingredient that allows the happenings on-stage to not only be audible and visible, but when highlighted also allows the audience's attention to be concentrated on the characters and events that carry the main dramatic burden. The audience's attention must be primarily drawn to the leading action and only secondarily to the unobstrusive background actions. For instance, during her aria (pp. 6-7), Helene's dance-like steps downstage should never be overshadowed by Aunt Emma's simple gestures of knitting and rocking.

Scene Four (pp. 8-11) begins with the dramatic confrontation between jealous husband and guilty wife. Robert wishes to read the note and questions the identity of its author, who is Helene's lover. The propelling motion of the music is created by the many crescendo-diminuendo phrases and the continuous staccato and accented eighth notes in the accompaniment, with the quarter note at the metronomic reading of 186. At measure 160, the use of tremelo adds to the excitement of the on-stage action as the couple snatch the note back and forth in comic choreography while Robert presses the question of the authorship. At the height of this scene, the wife finally declares that the note is indeed from her lover. Robert then produces a pistol and shoots Helene who melodramatically falls, accompanied by a descending staccato line in the score (measures 200-203).
The tempo drastically changes at the start of Scene Five (p. 12, Terzett) with the downward glissando of the trombone suggesting the sighs and lamentation of Robert. The music becomes ponderous and march-like (number 17, langsam) as the Doctor and his Orderly enter unrequested with a stretcher. This scene portrays comic pathos as the Orderly takes a few bottles out of the Doctor's bag and identifies them in a robot-like way. The Doctor examines Helene and declares that "there's nothing I can do" as he places a lily in Helene's folded hands. The musical trio is completed when the remorseful Robert sings his repentance for his act of murder. While the musical lines of Robert and the Doctor double each other in octaves, the Orderly's musical line drones on throughout the trio like a pedal point. The meter sporadically alternates from 3/4 to 4/4 with each beat of the 4/4 measure accented. At measure 141, a few chromatic suspensions and harmonic changes help create a tension which resolves at the next 4/4 measure (144) as the two upper lines double again in octaves. The result is a peculiar type of remorseful chant which diminishes inconclusively at the end (measure 149).

Aunt Emma ignores the proceedings and continues to rock and knit. Helene's corpse is carried out and Robert declares that he no longer wishes to live. He tosses the gun out of the window and immediately leaps out through the window himself.

The action freezes at the beginning of Scene Six, page 14, as the lighting changes dramatically to shift the audience's focus of attention. High above the set, stage right,
a curtain is silently drawn revealing the deus ex machina, "the Sage" who is observing the now frozen proceedings with a telescope. To the accompaniment of the eerie sound of a harmonium he says to the audience that no one would think that a higher power might intervene over such a trivial human episode. He declares, in his monotonous voice, that something should be done and as it doesn't matter whether a man begins his life in the cradle and proceeds to death or vice versa, the Sage, in true ancient theatrical style, will reverse the logic and the action. His singing line is, for the most part, free and unrestrained by the harmonium accompaniment, thus symbolizing the independence of "higher powers".

From Scene Seven (p. 14) to the end of the opera, the action is a reversal of Scenes One to Five; that is, each dramatic and musical section is produced in reverse order with the actions, movements, and musical phrases also reversed.

As the stage lighting returns to normal, Robert leaps on-stage backwards through the window. He catches the pistol which is tossed through the window from off-stage left, and once again sings of his unwillingness to live, starting on the same A⁵ he ended with in scene five. The Doctor and Orderly back in with Helene's corpse and deposit her remains in the original position. The Orderly re-identifies his medicine bottles as the Doctor sequentially replaces the lily into his bag, reiterates the hopelessness of Helene's situation and re-examines her with his stethoscope. As this terzet ends on an accelerando, the medical team quickly backs out of the door
with the stretcher as Helene melodramically revives, springs up and advances toward Robert. Her husband re-shoots her, moves backward to the side-table and replaces the pistol in its drawer.

Scene Eight begins with the couple's lively duet. The music is as intense as in the first chase scene, as Helene again admits the note is from her lover, backs towards Robert, who re-reads the note, puts it back in the envelope and forces it into Helene's hands. In a comical and reversed cinematic fashion, the two people circle the table backwards, gesticulating wildly and thrusting the note repeatedly into each other's hands.

With the approach of Scene Nine, the music again gradually slows down as the on-stage action becomes static. During this pause (number 14), Scene Nine begins as the Maid backs in the door, curtseys, takes the note from Helene, says "a letter for Madame" once again, backs out of the door and knocks three times. Robert collects the parcel from Aunt Emma and the birthday gift from his wife. Helene's attitude and actions once again range from extreme agitation to surprise at her husband's early arrival. The short scene ends as Robert wishes her a "Happy Birthday" and rebounds backwards out of the door by which he entered to the accompaniment of the original fortissimo chords.

The final scene (scene 10, p. 21) repeats Helene's aria with each section sequentially reversed, while her actions and vocal expression diminish from intense elation to refined
cheerfulness. Helene dances backwards in a repeated pattern of quick steps, accompanied by the same musical phrases first heard in Scene Two. She pours the tea back in the tea-pot and then un bundles Aunt Emma. She retrieves the rose from the vase on the table and nimbly exits backwards through the center door-way. Aunt Emma finally realizes the reversed action, sneezes a "Choo-Ah" and frantically unravels her knitting as the curtain closes.

From the initial scene-by-scene analysis to the staging rehearsals and final realization of the production, fundamental acting techniques and skills were emphasized by the director, which helped the actors develop an awareness of themselves and their characters. To ensure the best performances the director and the individual singing actor were responsible for incorporating the following acting fundamentals into the rehearsals:

(A) The position of the head in relation to the shoulders and the rest of the body proved to be of the greatest dramatic significance. A few singers sang consistently into the stage floor or constantly off-stage into the wings. If the performer was instructed to sing with his head turned slightly down-stage, it was found that the performer could maintain both an indirect, but highly effective, rapport with a partner who was standing behind him and the flexibility to focus his voice toward the audience at all times.

(B) The ideas of "taking" and "giving" stage were encouraged. Whenever a performer was singing in direct rapport with his partners, he moved upstage to the right or left of
them, and those "giving" stage were required to "counter" down-stage accordingly.

(C) The simple rule of sight-lines was emphasized; that is, "one cannot be seen by the audience if one cannot see the audience".

(D) Using the face as a main expressive mechanism was stressed. The face reflects the mental states and makes them visible. For instance, in the scene where Robert takes the note from Helene, he expresses anticipation, anger and remorse within a very brief period of time. It is the face that most effectively communicates these emotions and, in fact, the performers were constantly encouraged to emphasize and exaggerate all facial expressions, feelings and movements. Even in the auditorium theatre used for the performances of Hin und Zurück, there was considerable distance between the audience and the stage. The performers were encouraged to produce facial expressions more pronounced and gestures larger than usual in order that they might be read by the audience.

(E) It was found that speaking the musical lines was as important as singing them. Performers were encouraged to exaggerate the words as well as to articulate the consonants and phonate the vowels clearly.

(F) Unnecessary physical movement was constantly checked and analyzed for dramatic meaning. During some rehearsals, it was found that some of the performers were not aware of involuntary movements of their arms, wrists and fingers. The ability to act and sing simultaneously without unconscious contor-
tions came reasonably quickly as the performer developed an awareness of such problems.

(G) Learning each other's musical lines as well as mastering one's own was found to be absolutely necessary. Certain unexpected mistakes could be quickly and inconspicuously corrected when all the singing actors were aware of the entire text and score.

(H) Constant thinking in character was stressed. A character's thoughts and feelings were to be as continuous as possible, and visible even when not audible. Greater dimensions were added to the character when a performer had a deep understanding and could express this understanding emotionally and physically to the audience. Also important were the actors' reactions to each other which resulted from reasoned motivations and not simply because from stage direction.

(I) Occasionally, "playing the prop" enhanced the individual characterization. Often a performer acquired strength by using a piece of set furniture properly or by using hand props to the greatest advantage. For instance, the peculiar manner in which Helene holds her tea-cup throughout part of the aria helps to delineate a facet of her character. The waving of her napkin through many of the quick steps of her aria helps to punctuate her movements.
CHAPTER FIVE

Musical Preparation and Realization

The first twelve measures of the prelude of *Hin und Zurück* have a meter change in almost every measure — 3/4, 3/8, 2/4, 3/4, 3/8, 2/4, 5/8, 3/8, 2/4, 2/4, 5/8 and 2/4 (see Appendix X; which is a copy of the musical score). With the quarter note at the metronomic indication of 116 ("sehr lebhaft"; very lively), the student conductor had a challenging task of merely keeping the beat pattern clear and distinct, let alone developing a singular or individual interpretation to this part of Hindemith's sketch. Fortunately, with the addition of the vocal lines, this erratic pattern subsides to some degree and reveals more easily anticipated patterns. This problem is compounded by the general nature of the "cues", which are necessary to help the singer effectively achieve the difficult musical entrances. Therefore, the conductor's personal preparation as well as the preparation of the singers with their interpretation of the music are two main factors in the musical realization of *Hin und Zurück*.

The principles of conducting as outlined in Max Rudolph's book *The Grammar of Conducting* and the *Handbook of Conducting* by Hermann Scherchen were the textual basis of the conductor's personal preparation. As well as giving special
assistance with problems of rhythm, meter and tempo changes, fermatas and the handling of accents and transitions, these texts helped the student conductor to develop the clear, precise and easy-to-read beat patterns essential in conducting the opera. In the course of rehearsals, the conductor achieved greater flexibility in the conducting technique. He also learned to make instantaneous decisions, to anticipate and avoid drastic mistakes and to generally carry out the tasks of the conductor in as calm, decisive and authoritative manner as possible.

Much of the musical preparation had to do with a particular relationship between tempo and energy. For instance, loud sounds may sometimes be interpreted as being more energetic than softer ones. Also, some dissonant harmonies and startling combinations of sound can create the illusion of an increase in energy values. These illusions can delude both the performer and the listener. They can affect the emotions and even the body. Great composers for centuries have used this energy device to create an emotional response in the audience.

What is generally referred to as "tempo" in much of the music of Hin und Zurück may be viewed also as a simple element of energy. The faster and louder the music, the more energetic it seems. When it becomes softer and slower, the energy seems to subside. Matching the rise and fall of these musical energies with stage activities is one of the fundamental rules of operatic theatre. With Hin und Zurück and its forward and
reversed action, this energy factor often became as important as the actual tempos themselves. It was not only important that the forward movements of the actors in the opera's first half match the reverse movements of the second half, but also that the energy of both halves should correspond.

During the early musical rehearsals, tempi were set and any inconsistencies were corrected. The singers and the accompaniment learned to respond to an anticipated tempo change with an appropriate change in the size of the conductor's beat for the first few bars. And for the student conductor, only diligent practice and day-to-day rehearsal experience can establish the correct tempo, complete freedom of the left hand for cueing and the development of constant eye contact with the singers, accompaniment and the musical score.

The eye contact between the on-stage performer and the conductor in the pit is extremely important. Because this visual link provides a specific cue for the start of a singer's musical line given just prior to the singer's breath in-take, the constant eye contact often anticipates and solves memory problems. With the established habit that the performer always sees the conductor, either directly or peripherally, the singer is constantly reassured that everything is proceeding in a secure and orderly fashion. This constant contact also allows the conductor to take visual cues from the performer when the stage action warrants it.

Even though a character's feelings can usually be communicated by the tone of his voice and by his actions, only a
few of his thoughts can be transmitted if his words are not completely intelligible. This is especially true in many twentieth-century operatic works. The clear enunciation of the sung text and the distinct intelligibility of these projected words were constantly emphasized to the young singers of *Hin und Zurück*. Special attention was devoted to the consonants of the text which must be clearly articulated without distortion, despite some antagonistic harmonic dissonances in the score. Emphasis was placed upon the vocal projection required for the production in the large performance space of the Old Auditorium. Constant attention to diction enabled the singers to fulfill the diction and projection obligations without placing undue strain on their voices.

The ensemble scenes were carefully studied to develop a workable and balanced blend of tone and volume. In rehearsal, each musical line was often spoken aloud and projected using the technique of classical spoken drama. This helped create not only expressive and well-controlled individual vocal lines but also a unified ensemble. A further consideration was one of vocal colouring because the human voice is capable of producing an almost endless variety of tonal shadings. This is often considered as important as the ability to handle the musical effects dramatically because the creation of special contrasting inflections and hues adds interest to the musical lines, and guards against any monotony from the repetitious phrases often heard in opera.

"When a gesture or stage movement must coincide exactly
with an accent or some other feature of the music, we speak of synchronization. The term contouring is for acting sequences that follow the outline of the music more loosely, without having obvious moments of exact coincidence."  

The exact pacing and spacing of dramatic action according to the music are of primary importance in *Hin und Zurück*. The conductor's aim was to perfect the timing between the action on stage and the music in the accompaniment. Very often this synchronization had a specific procedure; the action was instigated just before the accompanying music began in order to make it appear that the actor's movement brought forth the music as a result of that action. The orchestra does not merely accompany and support the characters on the stage; it also reflects their thoughts, feelings and actions. Consequently, the singer's actions must justify the music as if they themselves are causing the music to be. The accompaniment then seems to underline and intensify the actions of the performers.

The particular "contouring" involved in *Hin und Zurück* followed the specific outline of musical phrases. The movements and gestures of the performer were executed in such a manner that the ebb and flow of the stage actions corresponded to the various musical dynamic markings and the energy the music suggested. With this musical approach, the singing actors and the stage director could then acquire and incorporate the habit of thinking in terms of the phrases and combinations of

7 Boris Goldovsky, *Bringing Opera to Life*, p. 87.
phrases found in all musical forms and convert them into appropriate theatrical equivalents. In this production of Hin und Zurück, there was an advantage to combining the roles of conductor and stage director; any problems, either musical or dramatic, regarding timing were solved immediately.

A particular problem was encountered in the musical preparation of Hin und Zurück. Occasionally, finding the pitch of the initial note of a new phrase was a source of uncertainty and worry to the singer. This was often true when this pitch could not be found in or related to the accompaniment which is a situation common in twentieth-century works. To assist the singer a specially conceived melodic line was added that led from the last note of his preceding phrase to the note of a specific pitch that caused the difficulty. This melodic line was often hummed silently and was conceived in the form of a vocal exercise which the singer could easily understand and to which he could adapt. Any musical passage, vocal or instrumental, could serve as a point of departure for building a melodic bridge. Another solution was that the singers were encouraged to learn and sing each other's musical lines, especially those which preceded their own.

From the listener's point of view, singing functions on three separate levels; the words that are sung appeal to the intellect, the beauty of the vocal lines give a physical pleasure and the musical nuances of a well-executed performance satisfy the artistic sense. With the preceding aspects of
preparation and realization of the music as well as with those precepts cited in earlier chapters relating to dramaturgy and staging, this thesis production of Hin und Zurück attempted to satisfy the demands of the performers as well as the listeners.
CHAPTER SIX

Planning and Construction of Scenery and Lighting

The advantage of the set design chosen for this thesis production of Hin und Zurück is that it was easy to handle and quickly set up. Most of the scenery was painted factory-cotton cloth stretched over "flat" frames of 1" x 3" clear spruce boards. The doors, side flats, house-top and the window were created from the same materials. The abstract, angled design was inexpensive and simple to construct. Only parts of the set were three-dimensional and many of the household furnishings were painted on the walls. The actual set pieces were easy to manipulate as they were basically three flats lashed together and resting on metal glides. The weight of the set was relatively small and the house-top, a white painted triangle frame, was lowered from the fly-gallery (see Appendix XI - Set Design).

As a part of this contemporary design, the window and doors had to have the appearance of thickness. This was achieved by having 1" x 6" boards attached to the edges of the flat walls that were visible to the audience. This inexpensive method gave the necessary three-dimensional look without adding appreciably to the set's weight and bulk.

Special attention was given to painting the set in subtle pale colours to re-create the 1920's "pop-art" design.
After a white base coat, a light blue overcoat was applied with a later addition of darker blue stripes which gave the set a taller, busier appearance. Dark blue curtains over the window and center door-way gave emphasis and focus to these areas. Complementary furnishings were sketched on the walls along with special items such as a bird-cage and a clock.

The practical, breakable window was a wooden frame with thin pieces of "adding machine" tape - 2 inch wide white paper attached in the pattern of small squares (window panes). The whole frame could be removed from the window slot and another one could be quickly installed. As the character Robert leapt out and broke the tape in the window, an immediate lighting change, which helped mask the window from the audience, focussed attention on the Sage's appearance stage right. During this time, a new window frame which was hinged at the top was being installed. After Robert leapt back through the window, the new frame was immediately lowered as the lights returned to normal. With practice, this procedure proved effective, although the co-ordination was difficult to achieve with the available materials and man-power.

The appropriate 1920's household furnishings: table, table-cloth, chair, rocking chair and side-table, were fortunately easily obtained from the University of British Columbia's opera and theatre departments. There were a limited number of hand properties involved, all of which were either borrowed or from stock within the opera department.

The assistance of many of the singers as builders limited
the labour costs involved. Along with minimal expense for the required building materials, this assistance helped to keep the overall budget within reason for a small-scale university production. A list of materials and articles utilized and costs incurred is included in Appendix VIII. The list of properties used in the production is found in Appendix V.

The directorial conception created a simple, direct approach for the lighting which allowed for the proper illumination of the acting areas. To achieve this, instruments and lenses were chosen which not only assisted in the proper distribution of light to these areas but also added special qualities of illumination; for instance, a stepped Fresnel lens adds soft, diffused light and a curved ellipsoidal lens gives a more direct, intense illumination. Each instrument or combination of instruments was selected to give subtle qualities of illumination for different purposes: bright, even light for the main acting area; special subtle lighting used in the toning and blending of the setting and background areas; and special distribution which gave accent, motivation and special effects.

The combined roles of designer for both setting and lighting and of stage director proved to be a distinct advantage. The director required visibility for his performers with proper illumination for the acting areas at all times. The designer required the lighting to create mood and atmosphere in a particular composition for the whole setting. Certain compromises had to be made between the director's demands and
lighting needs as well as compromises with the set design itself.

After these decisions were made, the McCandless Method of Lighting was used, with some references to Richard Pilbrow's "key and fill" method. The ground-plan was divided into lighting areas approximately six feet in diameter which overlapped. Each area was illuminated with a "cool" and a "warm" light from diagonal lighting positions using the McCandless Method. In addition to these areas, there was a basic "wash" from the front lighting rail (PAR-border) and a few lighting instruments from the front-of-house (F.O.H.). Certain specific areas were illuminated with a strong light from one source at about a 45° angle and supplemented by one or more of lesser intensity from the other angles and positions of source using the key and fill method. This provided the necessary shaping of the articles and actors in these areas. In general, instruments with Fresnel lenses were used for general illumination, light filling and "washing" of the set areas, whereas ellipsoidal lenses were used for specific illumination of the primary acting areas.

The dramatic source of illumination came from the stage left window evenly covering the entire set because the time of day varied from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The basic wash used

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8 Stanley McCandless, A Syllabus of Stage Lighting (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, Stanley McCandless, 1958).

here consisted of light salmon pinks and light amber gel tones with a few additional blue gels. All gels used corresponded to the 1960 *Cinemoid* plastic colour chart which is based on a three-colour system. All individual instruments were of the *Strand* type. This washing of the set included the primary colours from the overhead borders to give the desired three-dimensional look. A slight halo effect often set the actors apart from the background. Although three back-lighting instruments of white light complemented this three-dimensional look, this effect was not specifically noticed by the audience. This white light was usually between 50% and 75% of full voltage which gave more warm tones of amber-yellow-orange rather than cool bluish ones, thus making gels unnecessary for these instruments.

Outside the windows and doors was special illumination originating from the "tormentor" lighting slots on-stage so that the actors would not appear out of the darkness as they entered. The other special light was a very intense white one required for the Sage as he appeared above the stage right flat because a heavenly, mystical, albeit comic, feeling was required. Back-lighting with direct and diagonal front-lighting helped to create this mirage. When these lights were employed, the action was frozen while the Sage made his decree. To enhance this atmosphere, this pure white light was contrasted and surrounded with specific bright red lights which were quite unrealistic in comparison to the rest of the lighting. This special lighting situation was used only for a short time, but
its contrast to the previous and subsequent sections proved to be very successful.

The downstage areas were lit from the front-of-house ceiling lighting positions from an approximately $45^\circ$ angle. Limited illumination from the pocket positions of the auditorium was employed primarily for the downstage areas as well as used diagonally for some upstage center areas. The front pin rail was used for both warm and cool lights and the second pin rail was primarily reserved for back-lighting. Appendix VII is an instrument schedule of particular lighting instruments utilized, with their respective gels, and Appendix IX is a cue sheet used in the production of *Hin und Zurück*.
Hin und Zurück was found to have an appropriate musical and dramatic structure and a practical small cast that proved an ideal choice for an opera workshop. This opera was easily divided into sections, allowing for concentrated musical and dramatic rehearsal. The required singing and acting were a considerable, but not overwhelming challenge and at all times the singing actor was encouraged to be consistent and convincing in the portrayal of his individual role. Those cast members who were dramatically, musically or vocally inexperienced were given extra help, encouragement and added opportunity for rehearsal.

The operation of the production itself required the simplest of modern technical facilities and only a few backstage staff members. The short one act format did not overburden the staff or the individuals who constructed and operated the set. The simple design was found to be inexpensive, but more than adequate in theatricality and attractiveness.

Within the University of British Columbia opera program, Hin und Zurück provided substantial opera training, not only for the singing actors involved, but also because it provided an opportunity and unique challenge for a director/pro-
ducer. Under the professional and experienced guidance of the opera program's supervisor, the student director/producer was given a multiplicity of duties which not only expanded his knowledge and experience but also allowed him to have individual control of all aspects of production. This helped to achieve greater unity in the work and helped him to carry out his personal concepts and ideas about the opera. This individual challenge involved many elements: from choosing the opera; to historical research and detailed musical analysis; to developing a total production concept for the stage which was not only theoretical but practical.

This production concept included: cast selection where great care was taken to protect the young vocal mechanisms; interpretation and realization of the text and music where extensive research and study of the musical score itself was supplemented by historical examination; set design where construction costs and the workability of realistic acting areas were as important as an acceptable appearance; set construction which gave the designer a good practical knowledge of the basics of carpentry, shop drawings, and of how the set functions; lighting design where complex lighting theories were examined, mixed and applied to solve the problem of how to illuminate acting areas while considering composition and mood; teaching of basic opera acting techniques and staging which encompassed not only physical movement but included an understanding of the subtle effects of facial expression; and conducting where the intricacies of the score were brought out and aurally realized in a
Such immersion in all aspects of opera production made possible a mature and realistic consideration of the demands, rewards and consequences of future employment in the opera field. This involvement in producing opera provided an opportunity to take the responsibility for organizing the entire project with a minimum of assistance and funds. The knowledge gained through this involvement will be invaluable in dealing with future projects.
Bibliography


APPENDIX I

Scene Breakdown (For Rehearsal Purposes)

Introduction pp. 3-4
Orchestral

Scene 1 pp. 4-6 Aunt Emma, Helene
   Aunt Emma curtain p. 4
   Helene enter p. 5

Scene 2 pp. 6-7 Aunt Emma, Helene
   Aunt Emma pp. 6-7
   Helene pp. 6-7

Scene 3 pp. 7-8 Aunt Emma, Helene, Robert, Maid
   Aunt Emma pp. 7-8
   Helene pp. 7-8
   Robert enter p. 7 (4:1)
   Maid enter & exit p. 8 (3:3-4)

Scene 4 pp. 8-11 Aunt Emma, Helene, Robert
   Aunt Emma pp. 8-11
   Helene pp. 8-11
   Robert pp. 8-11

Scene 5 pp. 12-13 Aunt Emma, Helene, Robert, Doctor, Orderly
   Aunt Emma pp. 12-13
   Helene exit p. 13 (2:1)
   Robert exit p. 13 (2:4)
   Doctor enter p. 12 - exit p. 13 (2:1)
   Orderly enter p. 12 - exit p. 13 (2:1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>pp.</th>
<th>Cast</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scene 6</td>
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<td>Aunt Emma, Sage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sage Appearance p. 14</td>
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<td>Scene 7</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>Aunt Emma, Sage, Robert, Doctor, Orderly, Helene</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sage pp. 16-17</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Robert enter p. 16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Doctor enter p. 16 (1:3)- exit p. 17 (1:3-6)</td>
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<td>Orderly enter p. 16 (1:3)- exit p. 17 (1:3-6)</td>
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<td>Helene enter p. 16 (1:3)</td>
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<td>17-19</td>
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<td>Helene pp. 19-21</td>
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<td>Aunt Emma pp. 21-23</td>
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<td>Sage pp. 21-23</td>
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<td>Helene pp. 21-23 - exit p. 23 (2:2-4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Curtain p. 23 (5:3-4)</td>
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## APPENDIX II

### Rehearsal Schedule

| Scene breakdown key: |  
|----------------------|---|
| 1 pp. 4-5          | AE,H |
| 2 pp. 6-7          | AE,H |
| 3 pp. 7-8          | AE,H,R,M |
| 4 pp. 8-11         | AE,H,R |
| 5 pp. 12-13        | AE,H,R,D,O |
| 6 pp. 14-15        | AE,S |
| 7 pp. 16-17        | AE,S,R,D,O,H |
| 8 pp. 17-19        | AE,S,R,H,M |
| 9 pp. 19-21        | AE,S,R,H |
| 10 pp. 21-23       | AE,S,H |

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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8:00-10:00 Stage 9,10</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7:00-8:30 Work 3-6</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8:30-10:30 Work 6-10</td>
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<td>7:00-8:30 Work 2-5</td>
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<td>2:00-5:00 Run-through</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>8:00 Performance Call 6:30</td>
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</table>
Plate I

Initial Sketch
APPENDIX III

Plate II

A - idea of angles

B

C

A Search for Alternatives
Ground-Plan

door

door

table

rocking chair

window

end-table
APPENDIX V

Properties List

I  Preset on Stage

Table (round) with chair
   I vase
   2 tea-cups & 2 saucers
   I tea-pot
   I napkin

Rocking chair
   I pair of knitting needles
   6 foot long piece of knitting
   I shawl (Aunt Emma)

Side-table
   I vase with flowers
   I wooden box
   I revolver (inside box)

II  Stage Right Properties Table

   2 wrapped boxes (presents - Robert)
   I envelope with note
   I stretcher c. 1927
   I doctor's bag (with small coloured medicine bottles and I lily)
   I stethoscope (Doctor)
   I telescope (Sage)

III  Stage Left Properties Table

   I rose (red)
APPENDIX VI:

Key To Symbols Used In Staging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AE Aunt Emma</td>
<td>CS Centerstage</td>
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<tr>
<td>H Helene</td>
<td>U Upstage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Robert</td>
<td>D Downstage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Maid</td>
<td>R Stage right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Doctor</td>
<td>L Stage left</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Orderly</td>
<td>X Make a cross at this time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Sage</td>
<td>&amp; And</td>
<td></td>
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Character's name, shoulder line and position of head and eyes.

- RSF - Right shoulder forward
- LSB - Left shoulder backing

A forward walk or cross

A backing movement

A movement on an exact measure
### APPENDIX VII

#### Lighting Instrument Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Use (area)</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Circuit</th>
<th>Dimmer</th>
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<td>G</td>
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<tr>
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<td>L. pock.</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>9</td>
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### APPENDIX VII

**Lighting Instrument Schedule (continued)**

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<th>Number</th>
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All lighting instruments - Strand type

All lighting gels - Cinemoid
APPENDIX VIII

List of Incurred Expenses

Articles:

Flats

160' - 1"x3" clear spruce @25¢ ft. $40.00

Door frame

13' - 1"x6" clear spruce @58¢ ft. 7.34

Door

28' - 1"x3" clear spruce @25¢ ft. 7.00
2 large hinges @ $2.70 5.40

Window

18' - 1"x6" clear spruce @58¢ ft. 10.44
1 sheet, 4'x8' mahogany 1/8" veneer 4.95
16 rolls, ticher tape @45¢ 5.80

House-top and small window

22' - 1"x3" clear spruce @25¢ 5.50
26' steel wire @5 ft. 1.30

Factory Cotton c.a. 33 yards @2.95 yd. 95.45

Paint:

Walls and Texturing

3 gals. white @$ 8.00 24.00
2 gals. blue @$12.00 24.00

Props:

1 ball of wool .89

Total $232.07
APPENDIX IX

Lighting Cue Sheet

Cue

1. Accompanist & conductor's lights on and preset (curtain warmers on).

2. House lights out.

3. P. 4, bar 26 - bring up preset (white radial to level 8) as curtain rises.

4. P. 8, bar 13 - bring up white radial to full by p. 13, bar 8.

5. P. 14, bar 1 - white radial down, red radial up to full (10).

6. P. 15, bar 14 - red radial down, white radial up to full (fast cross-fade).

7. P. 16, bar 1 - bring white radial down to 8 by p. 19, bar 22.

8. P. 23, last two measures - white radial down as curtain closes.

9. F.O.H. lights up for first curtain call (through the curtain on to apron).

10. F.O.H. down as performers exit apron.

11. Stage work lights on.

12. Repeat 9 and 10 as necessary.

13. House up to full.
APPENDIX X. Paul Hindemith, *Hin und zurück (There and Back)*
in accompanying envelope.
Curt Uhou5€ - top black carta, IN

KEY

6' Fresnel 123
900 watts

2' pipe electric

8' Pattern 264
1000 watts

8' Fresnel 223
1000 watts

6' x 6' Strip Light

CINEMOID GELS
STRAND INSTRUMENTS

HIN UND ZURÜCK: PAUL HINDEMITH

OPERA WORKSHOP
OLD AUDITORIUM
NOVEMBER 15, 16 1944

LIGHTING DESIGN: DOUGLAS V. RILEY

MASTERS PRODUCTION THESIS
MUSIC 544

SCALE: 1/4" - 1'

APPENDIX XII