# Carl Orff's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

## An Interdisciplinary Study into a Musical Adaptation of Shakespeare in the Third Reich

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## Introduction

Shakespeare's plays have been interpreted in countless musical adaptations. There have been numerous songs, operas and incidental music written for them. One of Shakespeare's most musical plays is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Music has been composed for it by composers from all over Europe since the play's premiere. This BA thesis looks at one of those adaptations: Carl Orff's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He wrote six different versions, two of which were written during the Third Reich. The first time it was published, in 1939, aimed to replace Mendelssohn's popular music for the play.

Shakespeare has been integrated into German culture since the early Romantic period. Through Schlegel and Tieck's beloved translations, Shakespeare was accepted as part of contemporary German culture. "[W]hile other European continental cultures also adopted Shakespeare into their 'classic' cultural tradition, Germans 'naturalized' the Bard, firmly integrating him into their own culture" (Korte & Spittel 268). With Shakespeare being considered as German, German music was composed for the plays. In 1842, Mendelssohn composed incidental music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The play and Mendelssohn's music became inseparable on the German stage.

With the emergence of National Socialism, this popularity became problematic. Mendelssohn was the son of a Jewish banker and his music was therefore banned from being performed by Goebbels's Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. Shakespeare was, at the beginning of the Third Reich, also a subject of debate. "At one time or another, every officialdom, from local activists right up to the Minister for Propaganda were agonizing over it. In 1939 Hitler himself intervened" (Strobl 1). He deemed Shakespeare's plays acceptable. Thus, Shakespeare was a relatively safe subject, but due to the strict Nazi regulations, certain appropriations were illegal. It meant that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* needed to be interpreted in a new fashion because it could not use or reference Mendelssohn's

score. Still, the inseparability of Mendelssohn's score and the play made most new musical adaptions fail capture the public's approval. Orff accepted the offer to attempt to replace Mendelssohn's score. He was one of few composers who succeeded.

In 1937, after *Carmina Burana* became a success, Orff became an established composer in the Third Reich. Because of the success of *Carmina Burana*, he was asked by Lord Mayor Krebs of Frankfurt, a high-ranking Nazi, to write a new score to accompany Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* He had already started such a project before the Nazi regime, but he never finished it. He accepted this offer and his music premiered in Frankfurt in 1939.

The motivation for this BA Thesis is to see if through a new approach, namely combining the fields of Shakespeare studies and Musicological research, a new insight can be achieved in the debate concerning Orff's Nazi tendencies. It is an important discussion because Orff is still frequently condemned for being a Nazi, while it is unclear to what degree he believed in that ideology. It is undeniable that Orff was favored by the Nazi party and that they used his music for propaganda. Still, as Taruskin describes it, "[t]here is no inherent difference between music that accompanies leftist propaganda and music that accompanies rightist propaganda. But one may argue nevertheless that Orff's music is well – nay, obviously – suited to accompany propaganda" (164). He may not have aimed for propagandist music, but it helped establishing his name as an influential composer in the Third Reich. Orff's own explanation of his actions in the Third Reich is notoriously unreliable, because he changed his story a number of times, and refused to be interviewed after the war. According to Michael Kater, Orff lied in his memoirs to paint a more likable picture of himself during the Third Reich (142). A research into *A Midsummer Night's Dream* would therefore look at the Orff's Nazi tendencies, but through a new approach, not through the frequently examined *Carmina Burana*. With Orff's fluctuating circumstances in the Third Reich, his interpretation

of Shakespeare is an intriguing point of research. During political crises, Shakespeare adaptations often reveal political statements and ideologies. This thesis will examine if that is also the case in Orff's interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Therefore, the research question is: to what degree does Carl Orff's musical adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* written in the Third Reich reflect a Nazi interpretation of Shakespeare's play? To reach a detailed, descriptive answer in this research, the subordinate questions that will be answered are: What was the attitude towards Shakespeare, specifically to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in the Third Reich? How did Carl Orff's economic and social circumstances contribute to his *A Midsummer Night's Dream* adaptations? What are the attitudes towards Shakespeare's play in Orff's adaptations and how do they reflect on Mendelssohn's score to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?

The method of this research will predominantly be an extensive review of academic literature from the fields of Shakespeare studies and Musicology. Some sources are in German, in which case I translate them and insert the original text in a footnote. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Orff's 1939 and 1944 adaptations, and Mendelssohn's score for the play will be used as primary sources. They will be analyzed, compared and contrasted to see how Orff's music reflects on Shakespeare's text and on Mendelssohn's music.

The first chapter will answer the first sub-question which concerns the role of Shakespeare in the Third Reich, specifically looking at *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The role of Shakespeare in Nazi Germany should be established, in order to understand Orff's attitude towards the Bard in the Third Reich. Shakespeare was regarded as part of German heritage since the early Romantics. The fact that Shakespeare was still frequently performed in Third Reich shows how integrated he was in the German literary canon.

The second chapter will look at Orff's musical evolution with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Carl Orff wanted to write different music compared to what others had written before him. After he saw Richard Strauss' *Elektra* for the first time he wrote that nothing could ever exceed it. To create his own path in music, without copying somebody else, he stated that he had to "find a new ground, start anew"[1] (Rösch 13). Orff's approach to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1939 is therefore an intriguing point of research, because he consciously wrote in a similar style to composers of the nineteenth century. His need to write another version in 1944 is partly explained because of his opinion that he strayed from his path in 1939.

The final chapter compares and contrasts the 1939 and 1944 versions of Orff's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to each other as well as to Mendelssohn's score. Orff was openly critical of Mendelssohn's music. He stated his particular dislike of Mendelssohn's lack of dreamlike music (Orff "Sein Werk" 220). However, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was very popular in Germany because of Mendelssohn's music. In this chapter, Orff's attitude towards the play and towards Mendelssohn's music are studied, to see if Orff's political views are a part of his interpretation of Shakespeare's play.

[1] "Ich musste neuen Boden finden, neu beginnen" (own tr.).

## Chapter 1: Shakespeare in the Third Reich

In order to fully understand Carl Orff's motive for writing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I will present a closer look at what the general opinion was on the Bard in this chapter. Germany has had a long, and interesting history regarding Shakespeare. In the eighteenth century he became part of the German literary canon, and rather than being discarded for being English, he started to be regarded as German. This 'nostrification' of Shakespeare in German culture is fundamental to this research. Shakespeare's popularity in the Third Reich did not diminish because Germany's theatre culture was still encouraged by the Nazi regime. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of few Shakespeare plays of which the favored adaptation had to dramatically change; the Nazi regime forbade the performance of Mendelssohn's music for the play, which had negative consequences for the play's popularity.

The beginning of the 'nostrification' of Shakespeare started when Germany's own great authors became fascinated by Shakespeare, in particular with the translations by Schlegel and Tieck. Goethe and Schiller both idolized the Bard and made huge steps in integrating him into Germany's culture. "When Goethe and other German intellectuals … discovered 'their' Shakespeare in the mid-to-late eighteenth century, they found much to learn, and came to adore, imitate and even mythologize the Bard" (Korte & Spittel 267). The translations by Schlegel and Tieck also played a significant part in the 'nostrification' of Shakespeare. Together, they translated all of Shakespeare's plays in German. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was translated by Schlegel alone. Their translations of the plays were in contemporary German. This meant that Shakespeare was considered as a contemporary artist, rather than an important, historical figure.

Two important reasons that allowed for Shakespeare to become an inherent part of Germany's theatre scene are the repertory theatre tradition and the 'Bildung' ideology. Repertory theatre is according to the Oxford English Dictionary "the style of theatre

characterized by the performance of productions from a repertoire, and featuring a regular rotation of works performed" ("Repertory"). This was customary in German theatres and meant that certain plays were repeated regularly. Works by Shakespeare were often part of a theatre's repertoire, thus his plays were performed frequently across Germany. This is illustrated by the fact that, "between 1900 and 1914 an average of 24 plays was performed by some 200 companies in 1,100 to 1,600 performances each year. *Hamlet, Othello, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice* were constant favorites" (Hortmann 7). After the First World War, the emphasis in plays returned to the 'Bildung' ideology. Bildung had become part of the German culture in the eighteenth century, but was reaffirmed after the First World War. They needed a reeducation after the barbarism of war. Therefore, "turning theatres from business enterprises into cultural institutions was a generally approved effort. Germany ever lapsing into barbarism was unthinkable" (Hortmann 18).

The start of the Third Reich had consequences for Germany's theatre scene. At the beginning of the Third Reich, the "Gleichschaltung" was introduced for cultural institutions. It meant "the forcing into line" (Hortmann 112), including racial purification, of all cultural institutions. Mendelssohn's score for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was considered to be "traditionally married" (Habicht 29) to the play, was not allowed to be performed at all, because of Mendelssohn's Jewish heritage. Every theatrical performance had to be vetted by the 'Reichsdramaturg'. Still, theatre performances were difficult to control. "Critical plays were of course banned, as were plays by Jewish authors and music by Jewish composers. But the manner of performance was not so easy to control and left room for political innuendo and a modicum of independence" (Hortmann 114). The theatres ran into trouble with staffing, because they lost some employees during the racial purification. However, "Goebbels needed the theatres for cultural propaganda. Coercion, therefore, was only a last resort" (Hortmann

113). He initially tried to initiate Nazi theatre, but it turned out to be a flop. They created the Thingspiel, "open-medleys of Nazi 'agitprop', military tattoo, pagan oratorio and circus performance" (Strobl 2), but it did not catch on. In the end, Goebbels reinstated theatre experts to get people back into the theatres again. The fact that the new theatre directors did not join the party could be overlooked as long as they were not explicitly against them. Goebbels needed the theatres to be successful because "in a country where every provincial town takes pride in its state theatre the shrinking of the repertoire was a source of genuine embarrassment" (Strobl 2).

Shakespeare was not automatically accepted in the Third Reich, but the advantages of keeping him in the repertoire outweighed the disadvantages, so his plays continued to be performed frequently, with a severe censorship only being installed in 1941. "In 1933 there were as yet no restrictions on the performance of Shakespeare's plays" (Hortmann 121). There were arguments made to exclude his plays from the German theatre scene. The two main points were: firstly, he was English and therefore should not belong in the German canon. Secondly, his plays were interpretable in too many differing ways. "Several of the Bard's plays were distinctly awkward – open to all manner of political allusion and full of the most unwholesome sentiment. Theatrical routine could smooth this over, but inventive productions, or new translations, tended to throw Shakespeare's 'subversiveness' into unwelcome relief" (Strobl 2). The arguments against continueing performing Shakespeare were outweighed by the arguments for retaining him. These were, firstly, the Nazi obsession with high art and great men. "A party that claimed to restore the classics to their rightful place could ill afford to ban the greatest classic of them all" (Strobl 1). Secondly, as stated before, the Party had made the theatre into a weapon for their nation's education. "It would be the forum where the Volksgemeinschaft would become tangible" (Strobl 2). Thirdly, there was a lack of successful, contemporary artists and plays. Many artists emigrated or were outlawed.

When the Thingspiel failed, there was a necessity for successful theatre. They returned to Shakespeare because of his established popularity. Lastly, since this was before the war, the Nazi party still wished to accommodate the United Kingdom in their plans. The English were originally a Germanic people and thus belonged to the Aryan race. Hence, Shakespeare was proposed as a beneficial uniting factor between the Nazis and Brits (Strobl 1).

Even when Great Britain and all the allied forces declared war on the Third Reich, Shakespeare was kept on the German stage, albeit slightly more censored. In 1939, Hitler intervened on the Bard's behalf. In the past there had always been opponents against the 'nostrification' of Shakespeare, but he was always protected by someone higher up the chain of command. In this case, the Bard was protected by Hitler. Still, the theatre scene became consistently more controlled by Goebbels' Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. Since Goebbels still thought it important to use theatres, Shakespeare's plays remained on stage. However, "[f]rom 1941, Shakespeare productions required Goebbels' personal authorization" (Strobl 4). Unofficially this meant that certain plays were no longer performed. "The Histories, containing so many examples of despots destroyed would be forbidden" (Hortmann 121). The comedies and tragedies were still popular despite the censorship. Shakespeare remained, as long as it was not a challenging, modern interpretation, a safe choice for the theatres. Modern translations were frowned upon. Goebbels required to approve any new translation before it was performed. The Schlegel and Tieck translations were considered to surpass "the original in their poetic qualities and performativity" (Heinrich 231) and were therefore applauded by Goebbels. The reaffirmed adoration of Shakespeare and safety of choice in his plays secured many performances of Shakespeare's plays during the war.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* was one of Shakespeare's most popular plays in Germany. Important directors for this play in the Weimar Republic were Max Reinhardt and

Otto Falckenberg. "*A Midsummer Night's Dream* was Reinhardt's most popular as well as his favorite play … What attracted him to the text was not, as would be the case with directors of a later period, the possibility of a different personal interpretation or of revealing hidden subtexts. Reinhardt was a 'faithful' director who put his genius unreservedly at the service of the poet" (Hortmann 33). His *A Midsummer Night's Dream* remained romantically inspired, similar to the traditional adaptations of the nineteenth century, with huge tree trunks on stage and portraying a magic forest. He had already had significant successes in the United States, namely with his 1935 film adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* before he was forced to move there in 1938, due to his Jewishness. For this 1935 film adaptation, he asked Erich Korngold, another exiled German, Jewish artist, to adapt the Mendelssohn score for a movie audience. Mendelssohn's score was still clearly recognizable. With the traditional approach to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Reinhardt had enormous successes, the movie being the pinnacle of that success.

On the other side of the spectrum was Otto Falckenberg, who wanted to change the perspective on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a darker adaptation. He wanted to show its nightmarish aspects rather than the happy, joyous play that the audience had grown to love. The conflict between Theseus and Hyppolyta was not as amicable as it was portrayed in the earlier version. Falckenberg interpreted "I wooed thee with my sword, / And won thy love doing thee injuries;" (Shakespeare 1.1.16-17) as a reference to war. The play was not interpreted as the happy, fairytale-like play, but it was filled with conflict. He produced the play in 1920, 1925 and 1940 (Hortmann 105). Falckenberg stated after the first production that "[i]n retrospect he realized that the Mendelssohn music overpowered the poetry" (Hortmann 105). He sought to de-romanticize *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Thus, Falckenberg also changed the musical score, but instead of adapting Mendelssohn's music, he threw it out and ordered a new composition for the play. Also, he decided to use a newer

translation, because Schlegel's translation was too poetic and too Romantic. This avant-garde interpretation of the play was not received as well as his first, traditional interpretation of the play.

During the Nazi regime, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was still performed frequently, but there was a decline in popularity of the play. Theatre managements preferred performing safe plays, so the comedies were performed most often. "[T]he Comedies predominated to an unprecedented degree, *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, occupying first place for the first few years, closely followed by *Twelfth Night*, with previous favorites like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* noticeably less frequent" (Hortmann 122). An important reason for the decline in popularity was the banning of Mendelssohn's score. "The efforts of pure-blooded composers to provide alternative incidental music proved less attractive" (Habicht 29). Another reason for the diminishing popularity were the gloomy interpretations, such as Falckenberg's version. It was not the simple, fairytale-like comedy, with Mendelssohn's romantic interpretation, but different kinds of meaning were now attached to the play. The play without the Romantic music, was not as happy as it was considered before. This did not gain the appraisal of the general public though.

After the war, the theatres reopened quite quickly. "Directly after the war theatre companies emerged from everywhere. They aimed for conservative, not revolutionary theatre. They returned to Schiller's idea of "theatre as the nation's moral academy" (Hortmann 180). Seeing as Schiller was one of the people who started the 'nostrification' of Shakespeare in Germany, Shakespeare performances were included by the new theatre companies. With the emergence of new companies, new directors surfaced, who decided on a new direction for Shakespeare. One of them is Gustav Rudolf Sellner, an important director who refused to align himself with the conservative theatre. "Sellner insisted on theatre as being 'functional' in the sense of revealing essential truths" (Hortmann 181). He succeeded where Falckenberg

did not, namely in staging a dark yet successful interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* without the use of Mendelssohn's score. From 1950 onwards, interpretations of Shakespeare's plays changed, yet his plays never left the Eastern nor Western German theatre.

## Chapter 2: History of Carl Orff and his *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

In this chapter, I discuss the evolution of Carl Orff's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The circumstances that Orff was in when he wrote the six versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* varied greatly from each other. Orff's idea to write music for this play originated during the First World War, while the last version was published in 1963. This chapter looks at the historical and social background in which these versions of the work were written. It focuses predominantly on the period of the Third Reich. Carl Orff only became popular in 1938, after the success of *Carmina Burana*; he was thus not as ingratiated with the Nazis when they initially came to power. It took six years of hardship under the Nazi regime, before Orff accepted an offer of a high ranking Nazi official and composed on their behalf.

Carl Orff (1895 – 1982) grew up and started his career in Munich, the capital of Bavaria. He was mostly an autodidact, but he studied briefly at Bayerische Akademie der Tonkunst in 1912 with Hans Pfitzner and Hermann Zilcher. He dropped out because he found it too uninspiring. Similarly, he studied for a short time with Heinrich Kaminsky in 1921, but he quit for the same reason. The only thing Orff was grateful for in retrospect was that Kaminsky introduced him to the old masters, which inspired his lifelong fascination with Monteverdi and his contemporaries (Kater 115).

In terms of style Orff was greatly influenced by Stravinsky's music, which inspired him to emphasize rhythm over melody. However, Carl Orff always stayed within the range of tonal writing, while Stravinsky did not. As explained by Michael Kater,

> While consciously accepting as his model of modernity the music of Igor Stravinsky, whose percussive approaches he incorporated into his own creations after 1924, he would have no truck with other expressions of Weimar modernism, in particular atonality or anything remotely akin to the Second Viennese School, or the new jazz. He remained staunchly diatonic (116).

While Orff's primary focus was composition, music teaching filled up a significant part of his time. In 1924, Orff became a teacher at the Munich Günther-Schule; a school of music for young girls where they were "to be trained in the use of simple, sometimes exotic instruments (with great emphasis on percussion *and* melody), musical improvisation, rhythm, singing and dance" (Kater 115). His predilection for percussion, which resulted from Stravinsky's influence, surfaced in his music in this period for the first time. In all his work after 1924, percussion was an integral part of the music. He extended his musical pedagogy from everyday teaching to publishing his *Schulwerk* – a series of educational books and compositions created specifically for music education. The series included "written instructions on Orff's core ideas regarding rhythmic-melodic exercises, improvisation, and the use of a simple, even primitive orchestra, such as gongs, recorders, rattles, and metallophones, dictated by Orff's earlier interest in old and exotic musical instruments" (Kater 120). This work became particularly important after 1933.

Carl Orff's found his way to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when his teacher Hermann Zilcher wrote music for Otto Falckenberg's adaptation of *As You Like It* in 1916. Orff became Zilcher's replacement conductor. It was Falckenberg who introduced Orff to the idea that Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was not as reflective of Shakespeare's play as people were led to believe at the time. Through conversations with Falckenberg on the topic, Orff stated that "it quickly became clear to me, how unlike Shakespeare [this music] was in essence"[2] (Orff "Sein Werk" 219). He describes how Mendelssohn composed music for the magical forest, but he did not write dreamlike music. His composition is thematic and logical, while the music should be as illogical as dreams are (Orff "Sein Werk" 220).

In this period Orff was inspired to compose music for the play. He wrote his first version of theatre music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* but he quit the work in 1917

[2] "Es war mir bald klar, wie Shakespeare-fremd diese im Grunde waren" (own tr.).

because he was called up to fight in the First World War. It was therefore never performed nor published. It is unknown what type of interpretation this version had, and if it differed from the interpretation of 1925.

He picked up the work again around 1928, after he was greatly impressed by Falckenberg's adaptation of the play in 1925. Falckenberg used a different composer to write new music for the play. Orff was particularly impressed with Falckenberg because he conceived it "in the mental isolation of that time" (Hortmann 105). The uniqueness of Falckenberg's adaptation and the idea to return to Shakespeare's original intention was Orff's motivation to write music for the play. That is why he scored it very peculiarly with an unusual combination of instruments, namely with "harpsichord, viola d'amore, viola da gamba, lute, bass, piccolo, alto flute, and for the dance of the mechanicals a hurdy-gurdy"[3] (Orff "Sein Werk" 222) He also included a newly designed xylophone which functioned as the actor of the magic in the play. All the instruments, with the exception of the xylophone, were historically used in Renaissance music. In Shakespeare's time, the music consorts that accompanied the plays were similar to this ensemble. Orff had become well acquainted with Renaissance music through his fascination with Monteverdi's music. However, he also included a strong emphasis on rhythm through the percussion ensemble. Orff explained his intention regarding this version in "Musik zum Sommernachtstraum", published in 1963: it was the combination of a Renaissance ensemble with the modern percussion that led to a striking juxtaposition. The Renaissance ensemble would be visible on stage, while the percussion ensemble would be hidden behind the stage. The percussion would then accompany all the magic in the play, but would only be heard not seen. This contributed to a strong sense of illusion because the audience could see all the natural sounds being made by the Renaissance ensemble, while the sounds of magic appeared out of nowhere (from behind

[3] „Aus Cembalo, Viola d'amore, Viola da gamba, Laute, Bass, dazu eine kleine flöte un eine Altflöte, dür den Rüpeltanz eine Drehleier" (own tr.).

the stage). Orff's plan was that the play would be performed without decorations or intermission, and would only be supported by this musical ensemble. Sadly, he did not find support for this staging, nor for publishing his score. Therefore, despite Orff's efforts, this second version never saw the light of day either. (Orff "Sein Werk" 222)

Initially, the Nazi regime made it particularly difficult for Orff to work. Kater describes how it is "clear from all the evidence available that [Orff] thoroughly disliked most of the things that National Socialism and the Third Reich came to stand for … The crudities and banalities of the Nazis expressed, not least through their cultural ambitions, were anathema to Orff's arcane sense of aesthetics and his perception of an artist's role" (Kater 119). Orff believed that art should be autonomous, but writing apolitical art under the Nazi regime was considered impossible. The dislike was mutual. Orff was targeted by the Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur (KfdK) because of his songs with lyrics by the "Jewish poet Werfel as well as his collaboration with Marxist dramatist Bertolt Brecht" (Kater 118). Also, in 1933 Orff had been singled out as "a cultural bolshevist on account of the composer's extensive use of percussion instruments" (Levi 118). Another reason for the regime's dislike towards Orff was his modernist adaptation of Bach's *St. Luke Passion* for the Munich Bach Society, where he functioned as conductor and artistic director. Changing Bach's music was sacrilege according to the Nazi ideology. The Günther-Schule eventually adapted to the Nazi ideology which made Orff leave the school. Also, he was forced to resign his position at the Munich Bach Society which left him without a steady source of income. His main focus then transferred to his *Schulwerk.* "Orff turned increasingly to the *Schulwerk* both as a source of income and as a means to adapt to the new rulers … *Schulwerk* seemed salable because of the Nazi pedagogues' military-inspired emphasis on rhythm" (Kater 120). Despite his best efforts, Orff failed to secure a steady income through his *Schulwerk.*

The emergence of the Nazi party led to a shift in the musical scene in the Third Reich, which had significant consequences for Orff. Initially, Goebbels' Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda did not concentrate on music. Goebbels had chosen film and theatre to be the main media for propaganda. Still, he was involved in the control over music, namely through the Reichskulturkammer (RKK), which controlled the cultural field in the Third Reich. Goebbels was its president, but its active leader was Alfred Rosenberg. A subdivision of the RKK was the Reichsmusikkammer (RMK); this division oversaw musical activities. Peter Raabe, who became president of the RMK in 1935, described it as follows:

> The chamber has been formed in order to realize the possibility that the care of music is promoted. Because of this, the standing of the musician will be utilized to his advantage. The Reichsmusikkammer thus will be a type of agency through which his wishes can be directed towards official authority, which is in the position to alter and create things that have never before been possible (qtd. in Levi 28).

Naturally, the RMK was only supportive of musicians and composers who embraced the Nazi ideology. This led to a great number of Jewish or otherwise compromised artists to emigrate. Some artists were blacklisted and it became difficult for them to find work in a creative capacity. During the first few years of the Third Reich, this was the case for Carl Orff.

Orff's situation changed with the success of his *Carmina Burana*, which led to an offer for writing music on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. *Carmina Burana* was a success despite using texts in Latin, in Old-French, and only a little in High-German. It premiered in June 1937, in Frankfurt. "*Carmina Burana* for a time had difficulty being accepted at other German stages after its controversial Frankfurt premiere" (Kater 123). The piece was given condemning reviews by important Nazi agencies: one was written by Herbert Gerigk, Alfred Rosenberg's chief critic, and was published in the Nazi paper *Völkischer Beobachter*.

Gerigk's review endangered Orff's position and theatre managers waited to see what happened next to Orff, before staging it themselves. However, *Carmina Burana* had two factors working in its favor. First, the festival at which *Carmina Burana* premiered was championed by Peter Raabe (Kater 124). Raabe, who by then had become president of the RMK, exerted a strong influence on the acceptance of the piece. This meant that it was safe for other theatres to produce the piece. Second, Frankfurt Opera director Hans Meissner had the full backing of the culturally ambitious Lord Mayor Fritz Krebs of Frankfurt. Krebs, through Meissner, rewarded Orff for *Carmina Burana,* Krebs was a "high SS-officer, who had been a Hitler follower since 1922 and as such a virulent anti-Semite but now also a member of the presidial council of the RMK under Goebbels and Raabe, thus affording Orff double protection" (Kater 124). The approval of such a high-ranking SS official was politically "of enormous significance to the composer" (Kater 124). The political capital, with which Raabe and Krebs thus provided Orff, protected him from a condemnation by Nazi officials.

The success of *Carmina Burana* in Frankfurt led to Lord Mayor Krebs' to request Orff to write a score for *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* "replacing earlier compositions for Shakespeare's work" (Kater 125). The order was communicated to Orff through Hans Meissner. Meissner was popular for staging avant-garde productions. Before the Third Reich, Meissner had been a popular theatre director of contemporary art. He, after desperately trying to ingratiate himself with the regime, continued this under the Nazi regime with help of the Lord Mayor. This offer was significant enough to radically change Orff's circumstances. He accepted the offer of Krebs in the following letter:

> Honorable Councilor of State
>
> I received, with great pleasure, the order for music to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* through general Intendant Meissner, and I thank you

very much for the confidence in me once again. I am delighted to be able to hand over the handwritten score after its completion to the city of Frankfurt/Main, for I am indebted to the city and you, dear Lord Mayor, for a decisive artistic promotion and I am happy that another work of mine will be performed in your theatre.

Yours Sincerely,

Heil Hitler![4] (Prieberg 159)

Even though Krebs was a high-placed Nazi official, Orff could have refused the offer. He would not be the first composer to do so. Werner Egk, Gottfried Müller, Hans Pfitzner, Rudolf Wagner-Régeny and Julius Weismann were all requested in 1934 to write a new score for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Egk, Müller and Pfitzner refused the offer. After the war, Pfitzner said that "[T]hey came to me and they wanted me to compose a new *A Midsummer Night's Dream* because the Jewish Mendelssohn music was not allowed anymore. Wasn't that horrible!"[5] (qtd. in Prieberg 150). This shows that Orff could have taken Pfitzner's example and refused to take Krebs' order.

Still, the strong demand for a new score convinced most adapters to try to replace Mendelssohn's score. There were at least forty-four other attempts to do so (Prieberg 163). Not all of these attempts aimed to replace Mendelssohn with a new score. Several productions

[4] „Sehr Verehrter Herr Staatsrat!

Ich empfing heute mit grosser Freude die Auftragserteilung zu einer Musik zu Shakespeares Sommernachtstraum durch Herrn Generalintendanten Meissner, und ich danke Ihnen Ausserordentlich für das wiederum bewiesene Vertrauen. Ich freue mich sehr, die handschriftliche Partitur nach Fertigstellung der Arbeit der Stadt Frankfurt/Main übergeben zu können, denn ich verdanke der Stadt und damit Ihnen, sehr verehrter Herr Oberbürgermeister, eine entscheidende künstlerische Förderung und bin glücklich, dass ein weiteres Werk von mir in Ihrem Theater zur Aufführung kommen soll.

Mit ergebenen Grüssen

Heil Hitler!" (own tr.)

[5] „[M]an is an mich herangetreten und wollte dass ich den *Sommernachtstraum* neu komponieren solle, weil die jüdische Mendelssohn-musik nicht mehr tragbar sei. So etwas ist doch eine Gemeinheit!" (own tr.)

performed the play with arrangements of Carl Maria von Weber's *Oberon* or with music of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, both of which are based on an adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Still, there was much original music written for the play. Of the original scores, Wagner-Régeny's version initially became the most successful and it was performed all over the territories of the Third Reich. A popular score was thus proven to provide great opportunities were Orff to succeed in writing one.

During the Third Reich, Orff wrote two versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The first version was published and performed for the first time in Frankfurt in 1939. Even though it became a great success, Orff was displeased with the music, because of the compromises he had to make to please Meissner and the director Robert George. Therefore, he changed it quite radically for the next version, which was published in 1944. He changed it from a Romantic inspired, melodic score to music that was much more closely linked to the style of *Carmina Burana* and *Schulwerk.* It was scheduled to be performed in 1944 in Leipzig but was canceled due to the war's turmoil. (Kater 126)

With the successes of *Carmina Burana* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Orff's position was settled. He gained support from the highest ranks in the Nazi Regime. "RMK President Raabe decreed in February 1942 that Orff [was] not to be stripped of his telephone service because of his 'significance to the German music establishment'" (Kater 132). Even Goebbels became interested in Orff, stating that "Orff belonged among those few German composers 'whom the broadcast network cannot do without'" (Kater 132). In 1944, Orff's position was secured in the Third Reich because he was exempted from "war service requirements of any kind" (Kater 132). And even though his extensive use of percussion had led him to be targeted by the Nazi regime at the beginning of the Third Reich, it led to an eventual offer by "the minister [Goebbels] to Orff to compose special 'combat music' for his newsreel service" (Kater 132)

Orff became so popular in the Third Reich he could write an anti-authoritarian opera without being persecuted. During the war, Orff wrote an opera called *Die Kluge*. It was his second opera based on a Brothers' Grimm fairytale. What is notable about this opera is that it "contains a barely concealed attack against authoritarianism in the brutally satirical portrayal of the King" (Levi 190). This was risky, but he was never persecuted for it. The brothers Grimm were revered as part of German heritage and by then Orff apparently was too.

After the war, Orff retained his right to compose music, despite his prominence in the Nazi regime. He was not completely exonerated, but he fell into the "gray-acceptable" category, which allowed him to continue composing. He needed to prove he had been part of a resistance movement, so he claimed to have been part of the 'white rose' resistance movement in Munich. Although it was true that Carl Orff had frequently met with Kurt Huber, the actual leader of the movement who was persecuted and shot for it, Orff had never been a member of the movement. This was accepted as truth because Newell Jenkins, the American officer who was in charge of Carl Orff's case, had been a student of Orff's before the outbreak of the war.

In 1952, the fifth version of Carl Orff's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* premiered. In Rudolf Sellner, an upcoming director in that time, Orff found a like-minded director. He produced the play in the way Orff ideally wanted it set, namely with very little décor. Musicians were everywhere; in the pit, on the stage, around the stage. Sellner agreed with Orff that the play was not as lighthearted as it was performed usually. He portrayed the fairies as creatures "reminiscent of the by world of Hieronymus Bosch, which was shrouded by demonic humor"[6] (Orff "Sein Werk" 229). This was the best portrayal of Orff's vision of the play. The sixth and final version of the score is the same as the fifth version, except it replaces

[6] „Die von dämonischem Humor umwitterte Welt des Hieronymus Bosch" (own tr.).

some of the percussion instruments with pre-recorded sounds, to minimalize the costs of musicians.

To conclude, Orff was never a member of the Nazi party, nor was he personally supportive of their ideas. His popularity was not easily achieved. He was so desperate to succeed as a composer, that when the Nazi party provided him with the opportunities to rise to fame, he greedily accepted.

## Chapter 3: Analysis of Orff's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* versions from the Third Reich

The two versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that were written during the Third Reich were written with different approaches. In this chapter, I look at how the two versions compare and contrast to each other musically. Shakespeare's text is also studied to ensure that the interpretations are Orff's and not dictated in the play. The 1939 version was inspired by the customary interpretation of the play that originated in Romanticism. Orff used this approach because of his desire to become a successful composer. Due to his keen wish to succeed, he accepted to compromise his own style. However, he changed his adaptation of the play when he had fulfilled his wish and he had the opportunity to write an adaptation in his own style without losing face. I also look at how Orff's attitude towards Mendelssohn's score plays a part in his adaptation of the play.

In 1939, Orff published his music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the first time. He regretted this later. It was the third version he had written; the earlier versions were either unfinished or rejected. This third version became a success with both the critics and the public and it was eventually performed all over Nazi Germany. However, Orff changed it radically in later versions. In his explanation of the evolution of this piece, which he published in 1963, Orff describes how this third version "was nothing but a strong relapse. The general rejection of my earlier work, as well as certain demands of 'revered' directors, led me to make a compromising version, which regrettably was published"[7] (Orff, "Sein Werk" 223).

An important reason why Orff disliked this version was the removal from his personal style. Instead of using the style of *Carmina Burana,* which fitted with Orff's aesthetics as described in his *Schulwerk* series, Orff turned to Romanticism for this version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In a review of a performance of this version, Karl Holl describes

[7] „Nach diesem Fehlschlag unternahm ich 1938 einen dritten Versuch, der aber nichts anderes als einen starken Rückfall bedeutete. Die allgemeine Ablehnung meiner früheren Arbeit, dazu bestimmte Forderungen eines ‚gewiegten' Regisseurs, brachten mich dazu, eine kompromisshafte (leider gedruckte) Fassung herzustellen" (own tr.).

how "Orff stayed close to the poetry, by using the psychology and sensitivity of Romanticism, which is richer in melody and in color (through harmony and instrumentation)"[8] (Holl qtd. in Rösch 66). In the same review, Holl says, "nevertheless, this music is not imitated, but it is, as it were, filtered through a modern temperament which is, in relation to the Romantics, simpler, more concise and succinct"[9] (Rösch 66). However, it remains undeniable that the music is audibly Romantic. This style was so far removed from his personal taste Orff later felt the need to rewrite the music.

The orchestration is one feature that shows that this version was inspired by traditional, early Romantic orchestral music. The orchestra consists of three flutes (also playing piccolo), two oboes (also playing oboe d'amore), one clarinet (playing on b-flat, A and E-flat clarinet), two bassoons (also playing contrabassoons), three French horns, two trumpets, one trombone, timpani and percussion (bass and small drum, concert toms, tambourine, Triangle, cymbals, tam-tam, xylophone and glockenspiel), harmonium, celesta, piano, harp and strings. This is comparable to an early opera orchestra, which commonly held strings, double woodwinds and a small brass and percussion section. Orff expanded this Romantic formula with some modern instruments, specifically the xylophone, celesta, harmonium, and piano. The songs are sung by a female choir.

The Romantic adaptation of the play is shown in Orff's music in his interpretation of the fairies. Example 1 shows how Orff wrote peaceful music to describe the fairies entities. It is used as the "song and dance", which Titania introduces by saying "Hand in hand with fairy grace / Will we sing and bless this place" (Shakespeare 5.1.389-390). It is a soft, sweet melody used as a lullaby sung by a female choir. The harmonies are completely consonant.

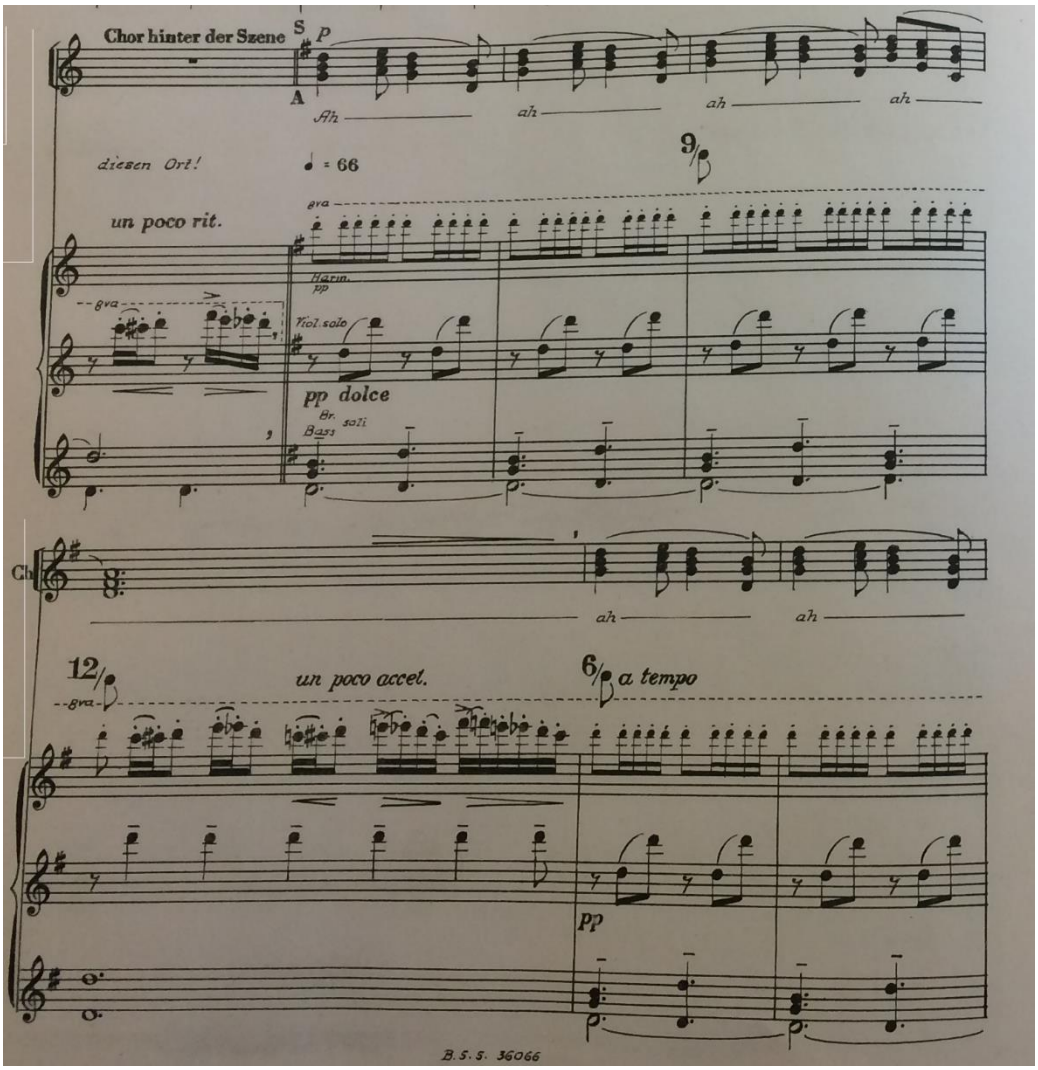
[8] „Näherte sich aber, im Kontakt mit der Dichtung, zwangsläufig der seelisch und sinnlich differenzierten Haltung der Romantik, die sich reicherer melodischer und klangfarbiger Mittel (Harmonik und Instrumentation) bedient" (own tr.).

[9] „Dennoch wirken diese Tonsätze nich nachgeahmt, sondern sozusagen filtriert durch ein im Verhältnis zu den Romantikern einfacheres, auf knappe und gesammelte Formulierung bedachtes, in dieser Hinsicht modernes Temperament" (own tr.).

This sweet melody for the fairies reveals the Romantic interpretation of the fairy world. The fairies were, especially in the nineteenth century, commonly interpreted as peaceful, tiny creatures. Shakespeare's play is open for this interpretation, for he writes how a fairy "must go seek some dewdrops here, / And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear" (Shakespeare 2.1.14-15). Also, Shakespeare writes that they are small enough to "creep into acorn cups" (Shakespeare 2.1.31). It became tradition on the German stage to interpret the play in this fashion. The translation by Schlegel, which Orff uses for his adaptation of the play, arguably encourages this interpretation even more than Shakespeare's text. Schlegel described in 1809 the fairy world as follows:

> [It] resembles those elegant pieces of arabesque, where little genii with butterfly wings rise, half embodied, above the flower-cups. Twilight, moonshine, dew, and spring perfumes, are the element of these tender spirits; they assist nature in embroidering her carpet with green leaves, many-colored flowers, and glittering insects; in the human world they do but make sport childishly and waywardly with their beneficent or noxious influences. Their most violent rage dissolves in good-natured raillery; their passions, stripped of all earthly matter, are merely an ideal dream. (qtd. in Bloom 64)

Orff followed this interpretation of the play in this version. The childlike qualities of the fairies are achieved in the music by casting them as women, whose high-pitched voices are closer to that of children. Caring, kindness and light-heartedness are often associated with femininity which is another reason why Orff wrote the fairies' choir as female. Orff also describes them as innocent beings through the completely consonant, peaceful music to describe their actions when they dance through the palace.




Example 1: Consonant, soft music in Orff's 1939 version. Scene 5.1.390 (Orff "1939" 38)

An important reason why Orff wrote this version in the traditional German interpretation was because his artistic freedom was limited by the commission he was given. When Orff finished the score and sent it to Lord Mayor Krebs, he writes "I hope that I succeeded in writing the music that you imagined"[10] (Rösch 63). Even though Orff was consulted in the choice of director, the production hired Robert George, without Orff's consent. Orff states that "[George's] views were not in any way harmoneous with my ideas"[11] (Rösch 52). It appears George would not agree to Orff's modernist views. Therefore, Orff had to write music for the play in a style different from his own.

[10] „Ich hoffe, dass es mir geglückts ist, mit der Musik das zu schaffen, was Sie sich vorgestellt haben" (own tr.).
[11] „Das dessen Auffassungen keineswegs mit seinen Vorstellungen harmonierten" (own tr.).

Another reason for writing Romantic music rather than modernist theatre music was Orff's intention to also publish the music as an instrumental suite. It was fairly common for theatre music to be transcribed into a suite which meant that it could be played in concerts rather only as music supporting performances of the play. Movements from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* had been part of the concert repertoire as well as of the theatre repertoire. A year before the opening night of Orff's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Orff wrote to his publisher that "the music will be unusual, and can easily be transcribed for concerts as well"[12] (qtd. in Rösch 54). Publishing a suite as well as the theatre music could have meant extra income. However, Orff never saw this idea through.

In the following years, partly due to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s success, Orff rose to fame in the Third Reich. However, despite the success with critics and the public, Orff wanted to rewrite the adaptation. He published this renewed version in 1944. There were plans to perform it in Leipzig that year but it was canceled due to the war (Orff, *Sein Werk* 226). Orff describes how "this time the music was often only suggestive, with accents functioning as Shakespeare's initials. It is Shakespeare's work but colored in"[13] (Orff, *Sein Werk* 225). This newer version exhibited Orff's interpretation of the play in his personal style. The focus was much more on rhythm and harmony than on melody.

Orff wanted to give the music a more important role in the play in the 1944 version. He achieved this through attaching the dark interpretation to the music instead of to the text. Falckenberg's adaptation of the play in 1940 used a new translation by Alexander Schröder. This version lent itself much better to the nightmarish interpretation of the play than the Schlegel's translation. Orff shared Falckenberg's view that the Schlegel's translation encouraged a Romantic interpretation of the play, but Orff disagreed that this text could only

[12] „Eine absonderliche Musik, aber jedenfalls auch für Konzert gut verwendbar" (own tr.).
[13] „Diesmal aber durchzog eine oft nur andeutende Musik, wobei Akzente gleich Initialen gesetzt wurden, das ganze Werk – Shakespeare handkoloriert" (own tr.).

be interpreted in this way. In Shakespeare's text nightmare interpretations are equally as possible as light-hearted interpretations. Puck describes the fairies as they are about to roam through Theseus' palace when all the married couples have just gone to bed:

| | |
|---|---|
| Now it is the time of night | Jetzo gähnt Gewölb und Grab, |
| That the graves, all gaping wide, | Und, entschlüpft den kalten Mauern, |
| Every one lets forth his sprite | Sieht man Geister auf und ab, |
| In the churchway paths to glide. | Sieht am Kirchhofszaun sie lauern. |
| And we fairies, that do run | Und wir Elfen, die mit Tanz |
| By the triple Hecate's team, | Hekates Gespann umhüpfen |
| From the presence of the sun | Und, gescheucht vom Sonnenglanz, |
| Following darkness like a dream, | Träumen gleich ins Dunkel schlüpfen, |
| Now are frolic. (Shakespeare 5.1.369-377) | Schwärmen jetzo; (trans. Schlegel and Tieck Kapitel 10) |

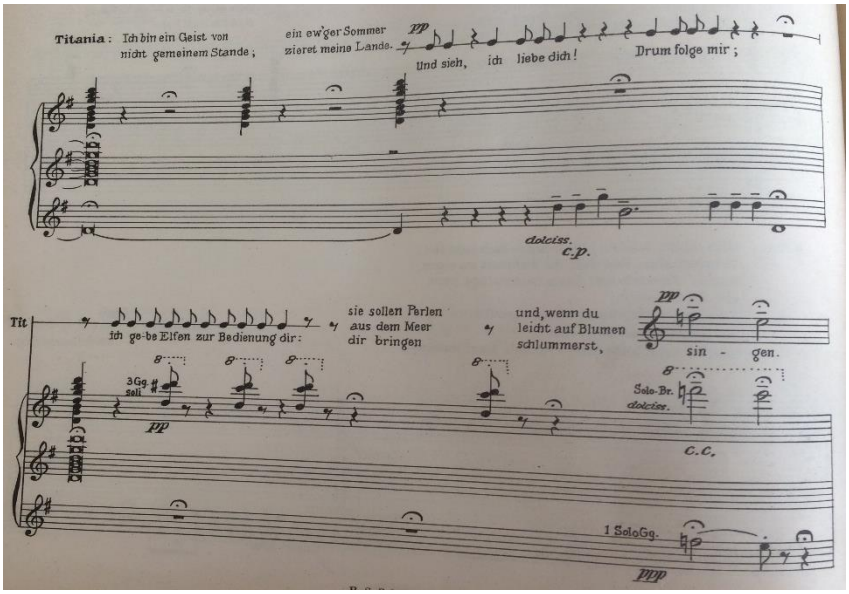
Orff evaluated the text, both Shakespeare's text and Schlegel and Tieck's translation, to be dark enough to interpret the play as such without needing to change the text. He used Schlegel's version because it a more poetical translation than Schröder's version. Still, he wanted to "transfer the demonic, foreign, possessed, elements" so he did so "completely through his music, which for that reason gained weight in the play"[14] (Rösch 83). The importance of the music to the play was therefore changed in comparison with the 1939 version.

To enhance the importance of the music even more, Orff sought to immerse the music in the play. Therefore he changed the orchestration. He created three different ensembles in various places in the theatre. The first ensemble was in the orchestra pit and hand not changed

[14] „übertrug aber dafür die Dämonie, das Unheimliche, das Besessene, das Spiel des Eros und des Pan vollständig in seine Musik, die allein dadurch schon ein eigens zusätzliches Gewicht erhielt" (own tr.).

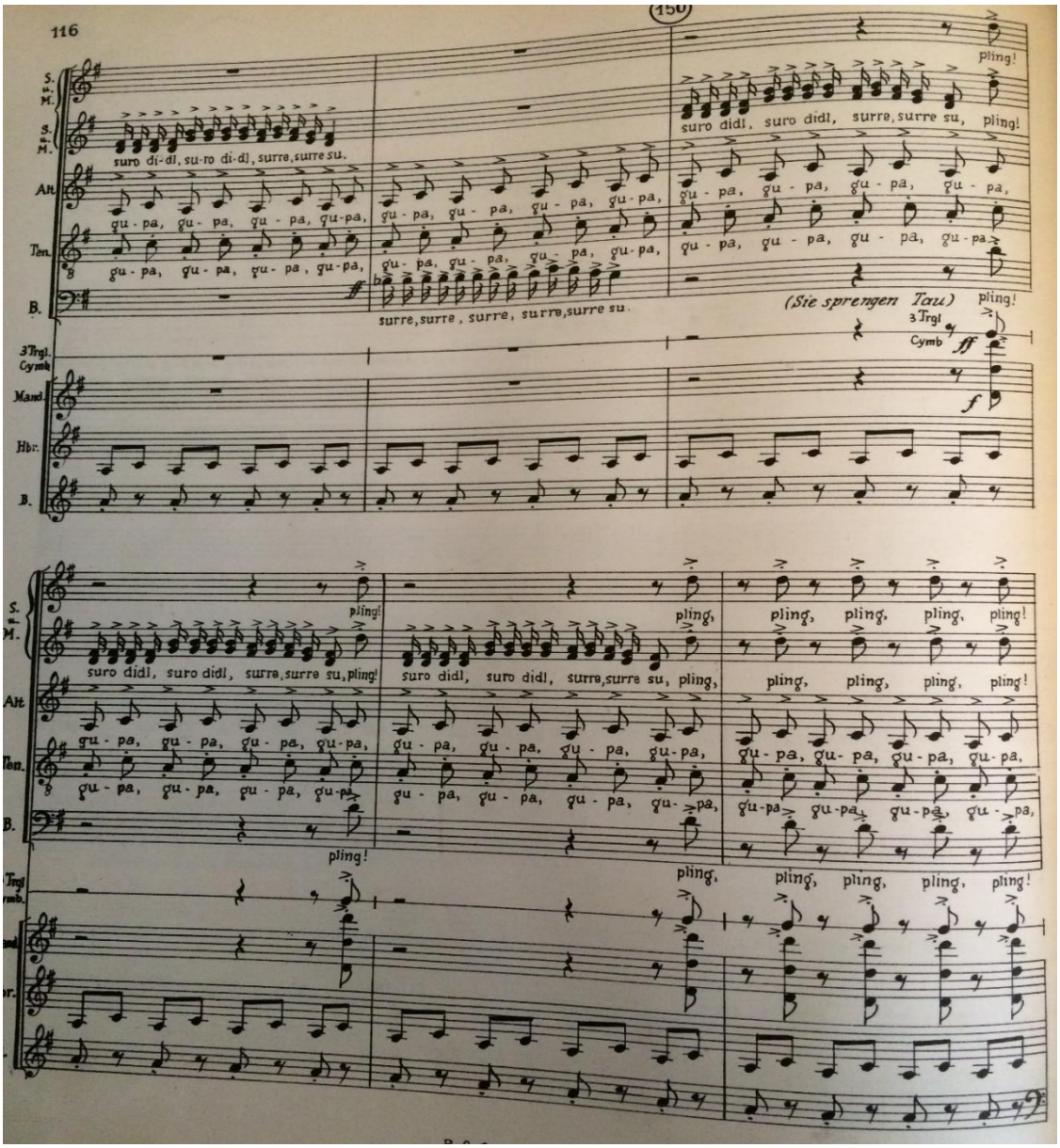
much from the 1939 version. Only, the harmonium had been replaced by two mandolins and the percussion section was expanded. To immerse the music with the play more, Orff wanted musicians playing a part in it so he placed the second ensemble on the stage. There were trumpets, clarinet, cornet, trombone, hammer dulcimer, two violins, double bass, little drum and a Schellenbass playing in view of the audience. Behind the stage was a mixed choir, making the fairies' song performed by a mixed choir rather than a female choir. Also, a percussion ensemble was added behind the stage including a thunder and wind machine. The different placements of the orchestra show how the music was as much part of the play as it was supporting it.

Another way of integrating the music and the play was by introducing rhythmic speech. Entire passages of the play were set to rhythm, accompanied by harmonies from the orchestra, to integrate the play even further with the music. Orff did not indicate pitch or melody, he only dictated the rhythm of the dialogue. In example 2 the different forms in which Orff notated these passages are shown. The only words he wants to be sung are "to sing".




Example 2: Notated, rhythmic speech. (Orff, "1944" 56)

The different interpretation of the fairies in the play is clear in the rewritten final song of the fairies. The Act 5 “song and dance” from example 1 is radically different in the 1944 version. Instead of the peaceful melodic lullaby he wrote in 1939, the music became a quick, staccato choral work, as shown in example 3. It is driven by rhythm rather than melody. It is a series of repetitive motifs in the different voices. It exhibits how Orff wanted to change the attitude towards the fairies. The fairies are now performed by a mixed choir. Thus the fairies are not only performed by women anymore, but there are masculine fairies as well. The magnitude of a full mixed choir also instigates a threatening interpretation of the fairies. This song shows Orff’s withdrawal from the interpretation of fairies as childlike, innocent creatures. Their unrecognizable words still leave a sense of mystery around them. They remain mystical beings, but this time they are threatening rather than kind.




Example 3: Song and dance, scene 5.1.390 (Orff "1944" 117)

To remove any remaining doubt that this version was written in his personal style, rather than compromised by other influences, Orff cites a piece from *Carmina Burana* in the 1944 version. A citation of it emphasizes that this version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is written by Orff in his own style. He replaced the male choir from *Carmina Burana* by three trumpets on the stage in the play. The words of that the choir sang in *Carmina Burana* are important. It celebrates the joyful coming together of the happy couples (Orff "Sein Werk"

226). Orff thought that this message suited *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well as *Carmina Burana.*

After comparing the two versions to each other, it is clear that Orff remained true to his personal aesthetic in the later version, but had to compromise in the 1939 version. The 1939 version is far removed from his personal style. His dislike for it is probably best proved by the fact that he rewrote it in a very different fashion. The different approaches to Shakespeare's play are diametrically opposed to each other. The Romantic approach to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was still the interpretation that held the public's favor. Orff wrote the piece in a style that fit within this widely held perception, so he composed for light-hearted fairies, which were performed by a traditional orchestra. In a period in which Orff was desperate to succeed as a composer, the 1939 version shows that Orff was keenly aware of the public's wishes and that he was willing to compromise his own style for their approval. When he started rewriting his score for the 1944 version, Orff's name had become firmly established which allowed him to go against the taste of the people.

It is important when studying Orff's score, to compare it to Mendelssohn's music for the play. The ban on Mendelssohn's music was the reason why Orff was commissioned in the first place. However, Mendelssohn's popularity led other composers to fail in their attempt to replace him. Mendelssohn's aesthetics were not the reason for the ban of his music. The Nazi aesthetic is clear in the Nazi reverence of late Romantic style, the ultimate composer of which was Richard Wagner (Levi 87). However, the earlier, great German composers also remained popular. Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert were still performed frequently. Mendelssohn's aesthetics were quite similar from Schubert's, so it cannot have been Mendelssohn's style that Nazis objected to. The ban on his music was purely derived from his Jewish heritage. Edmund Nick, the first composer who tried to replace Mendelssohn's score for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Third Reich, was criticized because "Mendelssohn's music belongs with *A*

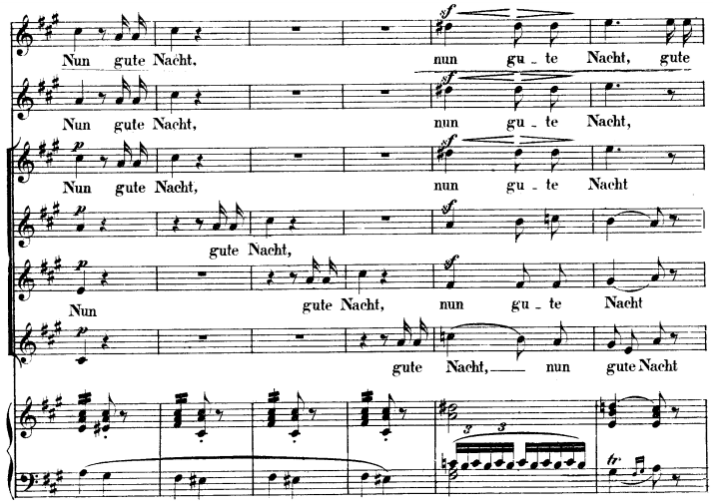
*Midsummer Night's Dream*. No honorable arranger should touch this artistic masterpiece"[15] (Prieberg 149) Orff knew the risk he was taking by writing music for this particular play. In the correspondence with his publisher, Orff was warned. "With the music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* you find yourself, I'm afraid, in a hornets' nest. Will you be able to make people forget about Mendelssohn?"[16] (Rösch 49)

A striking similarity between Mendelssohn and Orff's 1939 version is the light-hearted overture that opens the piece; Orff moved away from this similarity in his 1944 version. The similarity in the overture shows how Orff wanted the audience to know from the first moment that he remained true to Mendelssohn's interpretation. In Mendelssohn's opening movement, fairy music is featured, in which the strings play a quick but soft staccato melody (Mendelssohn 1). The 1939 version also opens with the orchestra playing a 'leggiero' melody, also with quick staccato sequences (Orff, "1939" 1). The 1944 overture is not light at all. Instead, it features the horns and percussion playing a motif of six repetitive notes fortissimo all of which are accentuated, alternated by a repeating motif of three accentuated notes in the woodwinds who play forte leading to fortissimo (Orff, "1944" 1). The similarity between the 1939 version and Mendelssohn's music shows that they have a similar interpretation of Shakespeare's fairies. Both share the light-hearted, naughty interpretation of the play. Orff was aware of Mendelssohn's part in the 'nostrification' of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in German culture (Orff "Sein Werk" 220). He approached this fact by not opposing Mendelssohn's interpretation in 1939, even though he disagreed with the interpretation personally.

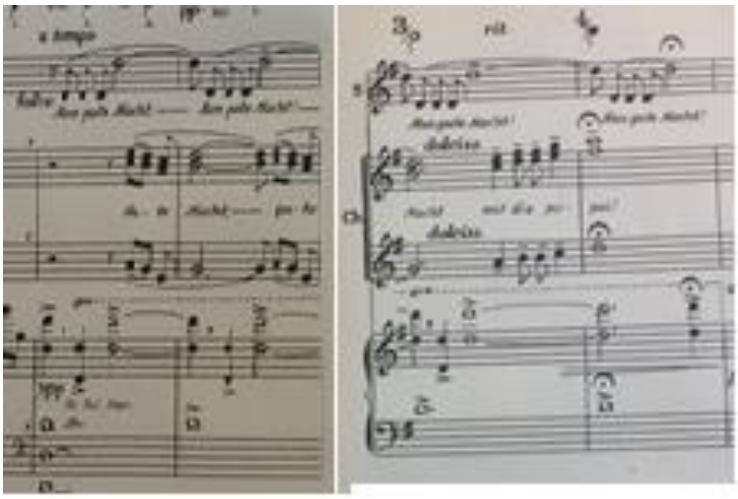
An interesting passage that shows that even the 1944 version is not completely removed from Mendelssohn's interpretation is the lullaby for Titania in Act 2. Orff set it to

[15] „Zum Sommernachtstraum gehört nun einmal Mendelssohns Musik. Es gereicht keinem Bearbeiter zur Ehre, dieses künstlerische Meisterwerk anzutasten" (own tr.).
[16] „Mit der *Sommernachtstraum*-Musik haben Sie sich, fürchte ich, in ein böses Wespennest gesetzt. Ob es Ihnen gelingen wird, Mendelssohn aus dem Felde zu schlagen?" (own tr.)

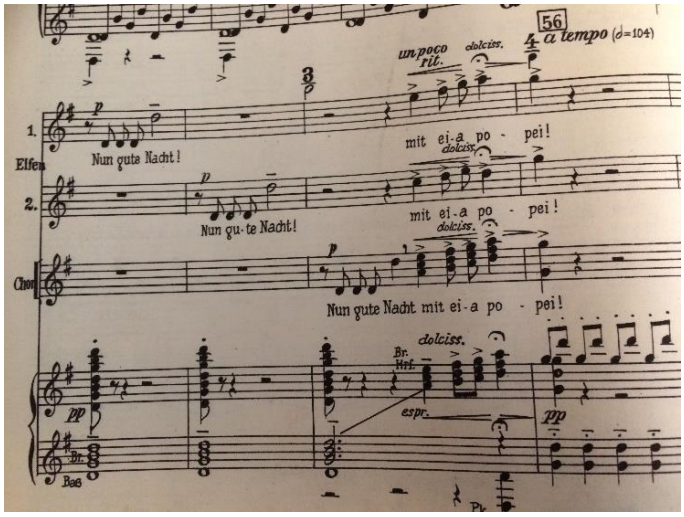
music and interestingly it is quite similar to Mendelssohn's lullaby. This song is different in the two versions, but they are still rather similar to each other and to Mendelssohn's version. In examples 4, 5 and 6, the same phrase is put to music. All the examples show the rhythm of "Gute Nacht" as short-short-long, both emphasizing "Nacht" by going up an interval. However, where Mendelssohn only goes up a third, Orff goes up an octave. Another similarity is the passing of "Gute Nacht" through the choir, because it features in both Mendelssohn's and in Orff's 1944 score. The first fairy introduces the "Gute Nacht" and it is answered in the other voices. In the 1939 version, the "Gute Nacht" is passed on in the choir in some form, but it is not as similar to Mendelssohn's version as Orff's 1944 version. The rhythm of "Gute Nacht" or the passing of it through the choir is not prescribed in Shakespeare's play. It is fitting that it is this section in particular that Orff composed similarly to Mendelssohn, because he admired Mendelssohn's musical form of the magical forest, he just did not believe Mendelssohn captured the dream-state properly (Orff, "Sein Werk" 220). This shows how Orff intended to build on the established interpretation.




Example 4: Lullaby in Mendelssohn (Mendelssohn 30)



Example 5: Lullaby in Orff's 1939 version (Orff, "1939" 10-11)




Example 6: Lullaby in Orff (Orff, "1944" 40)

The most important difference between Mendelssohn's and Orff's music were the occurrences of music in the play. Mendelssohn's music was predominantly entr'acte music, used between scenes to change the sets. There are only fragments of the score that are integrated into the scenes. The reason for this is evident; in Mendelssohn's time the decors were often elaborate and it took a long time change from one set to another. Orff's music, even the 1939 version albeit to a lesser extent, used music in the scenes, not just in between it. Shakespeare's text asks for music in various places, and while Orff composed for all those instances Mendelssohn did not. For example, Orff wrote a complete song for Bottom's song in Act 3.1, and Mendelssohn did not. Orff was not hindered by the obligation to write

entr'acte music. In fact he wanted as little set decoration as possible. In 1939 the director overruled that idea, but in the 1944 version he wanted to eradicate the need for different sets by creating two connected but separate stages. (Orff "1944" iii)

The magic in the play signifies another difference between Orff's and Mendelssohn's scores. When Oberon sprays Titania with the magical flower and Puck sprays the lovers, the moment is accompanied by strange instruments. In the 1939 version he accompanies the magic with the harmonium (Orff "1939" 11). In the 1944 version he accompanies it with the Celesta and Glockenspiel (Orff "1944" 42). In both scores the moment is preceded by an upwards arpeggio, announcing the magical moment. Mendelssohn did not write music for the magic at all. The emphasis in Mendelssohn's score was on the reverence of Nature of the play, while Orff wanted to emphasize the magic, of the play.

It was Orff's mission to create something to replace Mendelssohn's music and he was quite successful. In both the 1939 and the 1944 version, there are only very few commonalities with Mendelssohn's music. But the fact that he did not dismiss Mendelssohn's music entirely might have worked in Orff's favor in the reception of the play. Prieberg describes how there were at least forty-four attempts at replacing Mendelssohn's music (Prieberg 18). However, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed noticeably less frequently on the German stage (Hortmann 122). Orff was one of the few composers to have success with an adaptation of this play, despite its diminishing popularity. Prieberg also describes how Orff was the only exception to the vanishing of these forty-four alternatives at the end of the war. Orff's music was the only *A Midsummer Night's Dream* score from the Third Reich to last in post-war Germany (Prieberg 162).

To conclude, Orff was commissioned to write music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to replace Mendelssohn's admired music for the play. The 1939 version reveals that Orff needed to stay close to Mendelssohn's style to fulfill the order for Mayor Krebs and please the

audience. His wish to write another version reveals Orff's personal distaste for the 1939 version. He thought that Shakespeare's description of the magical, dreamlike world of fairies was not represented accurately in the customary, Romantic adaptation of the play. Therefore, he moved away from Mendelssohn's version and from the Romantic interpretation. In 1944, his established fame enabled him to write in his own style rather than in Mendelssohn's. his recognition enabled him to write purely in his own style, and although he respected previous composers, he wanted to share his personal style through his interpretation of the play.

## Conclusion

The previous chapters have answered the subordinate questions of the research question as formulated in the introduction. Together they aimed to eventually answer the question; to what degree do Carl Orff's musical adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* written in the Third Reich reflect a Nazi appropriation of Shakespeare's play? After all the research, I did not find any political views inserted in the adaptations of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Orff's history shows that his success is indebted to Nazi officials, so he never refused their help. In my opinion, that does not condemn Orff as a supporter of the Nazi ideology. What is evident is that Orff gladly compromised his style to ingratiate himself with the public.

The first chapter showed that Shakespeare was revered in Germany, even in the Third Reich, despite his Englishness. Theatre was an important factor in the Nazi plan for the reeducation of the public. Goebbels' Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda invested much time and money in creating a popular Nazi theatre. The 'Reichsdramaturg' controlled all performances, but Shakespeare had become such an integral part of the German literary canon that performances remained encouraged repertoire. As long as they did not display anti-Nazi sentiments, theatres were still free to interpret Shakespeare in their own fashion.

However, the popularity of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suffered from the Nazis because Mendelssohn's score, which had become an inherent part of the play in Germany, was forbidden. Otto Falckenberg, who had become famous for his interpretations of Shakespeare, including for his *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* adapted the play more nightmarish than it was done before. He stopped using Mendelssohn's score and used a new translation. The audience did not respond well to these changes and it resulted in a diminished popularity of his adaptation. The audiences in the Third Reich were not ready to relinquish their Romantic perception of the play. Performances with Mendelssohn's score were illegal,

but performances without it were unpopular. The demand for a new, popular score was therefore very strong.

In the second chapter, I showed that despite Orff's initial struggles with the Nazi regime, his rise to fame is due to opportunities provided by Nazi officials. At the beginning of the Third Reich Orff was struggling financially, thus when he was asked to write music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Meissner he was happy to oblige. Orff had to make many stylistic compromises in the version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he wrote for this commission. It resulted in a score that he was unhappy with. He had initially been inspired to write music for the play because of the adaptations of Falckenberg. Orff wished to follow in Falckenberg's footsteps and move away from the Romantic adaptation of the play to a more modern, nightmarish interpretation. In 1944, Orff changed and published a new score that aimed to incorporate these modernist ideas.

Orff's acceptance of the commission for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* shows a willingness to adapt to the Nazi regime. Other composers had refused the commission to write music for the play, because it would be unjust towards Mendelssohn, whose incidental music the Nazis wanted to replace. Orff refused to accommodate the Nazi ideology in the first years of the Third Reich, but when the commission was offered in 1939 Orff succumbed to it.

Comparing and contrasting the 1939 and the 1944 versions of Orff's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* shows that the 1939 version is very different from Orff's personal style, while the 1944 version conforms more to Orff's aesthetics. The 1939 version is filled with traditional, nineteenth-century influences, using Romantic influences to score the magical forest. The 1944 version, underscored most dialogue, including some scenes with the lovers, which was intended to integrate music in the play, so the music was not used as simple background or entr'acte music. The interpretation of the fairies is also an important difference. In the 1939 version, the fairies' songs are sung by a female choir, keeping them

light-hearted and kind. This interpretation was the norm on the German stage ever since the translation by Schlegel in the early Romantic period. In the 1944 version, the fairies sing a strange, buzzing song while they are roaming through Theseus' palace. The innocence of the fairies, which was emphasized in the Romantic interpretation, is removed. Instead, the fairies were interpreted as demonic spirits.

In comparing the two versions with Mendelssohn's music for the play, it becomes evident that Orff did not remove himself completely from Mendelssohn's interpretation. Mendelssohn also only wrote music for the scenes in the woods and the magical moments. Orff continued this interpretation in the 1939 version, but extended it in the 1944 version. The interpretation of the fairies is similar to Mendelssohn's version in the 1939 version, but Orff changed his interpretation in the later versions. The 1944 version contains fewer similarities with Mendelssohn's score but they are not removed altogether. In 1963, he recognizes the importance of Mendelssohn's score to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s popularity in Germany. Referencing Mendelssohn's score might have helped the popularity of the piece in Nazi Germany. Mendelssohn's music was illegal in Nazi Germany because of his Jewishness, not because of his music. The diminishing popularity of the play starting when Mendelssohn was made illegal indicates that. By sticking with Mendelssohn's interpretation, Orff helped popularize his score.

The 1939 version proves that although he was not a member of the party, he accepted their support and through that accepted their views willingly. The 1939 version was written, performed and published for a Nazi commission. Orff needed to please Nazi officials in the 1939 version, so he kept their ideals in his mind when writing it. He played it safe in this first version, so he stuck with traditional sounds and orchestration in the early version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Falckenberg's nightmarish adaptation of 1940 proved that a darker, nightmarish interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was possible during the

Third Reich. Still, Orff shied away from this interpretation, despite its matching his personal views.

In the 1944 version Orff showed his true colors. He reveals his personal style much more than in the 1939 version. By 1944, Orff's popularity was secure, and with his success came a degree of freedom. He had become an important composer in the Third Reich, getting attention from Raabe and Goebbels. The fact that Goebbels thought Orff's music suitable as battle music, does not prove that Orff intended it as such.

Orff was not a member of the Nazi party. He was, however, desperate to succeed as a composer. The evolution of his *A Midsummer Night's Dream* reveals that he compromised his views willingly in exchange for success. However, in neither version is there a specific allusion to a political view, not in favor of Nazism nor against it. Aesthetically they vary greatly from each other. The 1939 version conforms to the Nazi aesthetics of that time, but those aesthetics are similar to Germany's aesthetic of the nineteenth century, so it does not necessarily prove Orff's conformity to the Nazi ideal. The removal from that aesthetic in 1944 does not exonerate him either, because he did not cut ties with the Romantic interpretation entirely. I have found no proof of Orff's political beliefs in the music. That might very well be one of the reasons that Orff succeeded in staging it again after the collapse of the Third Reich.

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