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Definition: **Hindemith, Paul** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

German composer. Among his works are symphonies, concertos, ballets, chamber music and operas. In the 1930s, with Kurt Weill, he developed *Gebrauchsmusik* (Ger. utility music) written for amateur performance. Hindemith's best-known work is the symphony he derived from his opera *Mathis der Maler* (1934).

Summary Article: **Hindemith, Paul**
From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

German composer and teacher. His operas *Cardillac* (1926, revised 1952) and *Mathis der Maler/Mathis the Painter* (1933–35) are theatrically astute and politically aware; as a teacher in Berlin 1927–33 he encouraged the development of a functional modern repertoire ('Gebrauchsmusik'/'utility music') for home and school.

In 1939 he emigrated to the USA, where he taught at Yale University and was influential in promoting a measured neoclassical idiom of self-evident contrapuntal mastery but matter-of-fact tone, exemplified in *Ludus tonalis* for piano (1942) and the *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber* (1943). In later life he revised many of his earlier compositions to conform with a personal theory of tonality.

He was taught the violin as a child and entered the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, where he studied under Arnold Mendelssohn and Bernhard Sekles. Later he played in the Frankfurt Opera orchestra and was leader there 1915–23; in 1921 he founded a string quartet (the Amar-Hindemith quartet) with the Turkish violinist Licco Amar, in which he played viola. The quartet was disbanded in 1929, the year in which he premiered William Walton's viola concerto in London.

Works of his were heard at the Donaueschingen festival in 1921 and at the International Society for Contemporary Music festival at Salzburg, Austria, in 1922. His one-act operas of 1921–22 scandalized audiences and some musicians, and he had an early reputation as an iconoclast. His Kammermusik series, begun in 1922, sought to re-establish the musical values of the baroque concerto; *Cardillac* uses neoclassical forms, although its story of a goldsmith who murders his clients to regain his work recalls the savagery of Hindemith's early pieces for the stage.

From 1927 he taught composition at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, and his music was conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler and Otto Klemperer, but the Nazis proscribed his works as degenerate art. His opera *Mathis der Maler* was therefore produced in Zürich, Switzerland, in 1938; a three-movement symphony from the opera was premiered in Berlin in 1934 by Fürtwangler, prompting a temporary break with the Nazi authorities. For some years after 1933 he was in Ankara, Turkey, in an official capacity to reorganize Turkish music education. In 1939 he emigrated to the USA, where he taught at Yale University, but in 1946 he returned to Europe and was active for several years as a conductor.

In his late, largely orchestral works, Hindemith sought further to establish the values of tonality and classical restraint. The vision of the astronomer Johannes Kepler in his last opera, *Die Harmonie der Welt* (1957), suggests the composer himself striving to hear the sounds emitted by the planets as they circle the Sun, oblivious to the harsher musical realities around him.

WorksOpera_Cardillac_ (after E T A Hoffmann, 1926), _Mathis der Maler_ (1933–35), _Die Harmonie der Welt_ (1957).

Ballet_Nobilissima Visione_ (1938).

Orchestral_Kammermusik_ nos. 1–7 (1922–27; see separate entry), _Mathis der Maler_, symphony from the opera (1934), _Der Schwanendreher_, concerto after folk songs, for viola and small orchestra (1935), _Trauermusik_ for viola and strings (1936), _Nobilissima Visione_, suite from the ballet (1938), cello concerto (1940), Symphony in E♭ (1940), _Theme and Variations 'The Four Temperaments'_ for piano and strings (1940), _Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber_ (1943), _Symphonia Serena_ (1946), clarinet concerto (1947), horn concerto (1949).

Chamber and keyboard six string quartets (1918–45); 16 sonatas for various instruments, including four for solo viola; _Ludus tonalis_: 12 fugues with prelude and postlude, and other works for piano; three organ sonatas.

Choral and solo vocal_Das Marienleben_, 15 songs for soprano and piano (texts by Rilke, 1922–23); Requiem, after Walt Whitman's 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd' (1946).

quotations

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