

**THE PIANO WORKS OF
ADOLF BUSCH**

Aspects of Style and Pianism

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Abstract

Adolf Busch (1891–1952) is primarily remembered as one of the greatest German violinists of the twentieth century. He is also noted for his moral integrity and his clear and uncompromising stance against the rise of the Nazis, but the fact that he was also a prolific composer is less known. Influenced by Brahms, Busoni and most of all Max Reger, Busch developed his own uniquely complex and distinctly individual musical language. Existing writing on Busch consists of a major biography, the cataloguing of his compositions, and research into his songs, as well as a range of short essays in journals and festschrifts. References to modernism in Busch's compositions are apparent in past scholarship, but overall, a broad consensus has been established that his style is tonally and structurally largely traditional. Focusing on the stylistic context of Busch's piano works, my research mainly confirms this view but further specifies subtle shifts in his musical language, highlighting signs of idiomatic innovation and tonal experimentation, particularly in his middle period.

This thesis is the first study of Busch's piano works. It combines practice research through performance with musicological research and editing of primary sources such as manuscripts held in the Busch Archive. Drawing together research on Busch, musical analysis and the findings of performance practice, I investigate the piano works in the context of twentieth-century music in general and Busch's oeuvre in particular, specifically with a particular focus on his most substantial contribution to solo piano repertoire, the *Sonata* Op. 25. Furthermore, I explore the extent to which editorial and wider research impacts upon my pianistic interpretation. The submission consists of: i) a written thesis examining the issues outlined above; ii) a recording of Busch's entire piano works; iii) a later recording of the *Sonata* Op. 25, using iv) my new edition of this work, prepared from the two available sources: the autograph manuscript of 1922 and the first edition of 1925. Busch's piano pieces provide an invaluable testimony to the conflict between tradition and innovation in the early twentieth century. I hope that this research will contribute to their rediscovery.

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List of Accompanying Material

Busch, Adolf. *Complete Works for Solo Piano*, performed by Jakob Fichert. London: Toccata Classics, 2017. CD. — Recording dates: July 22 and 23, 2015 and January 21, 2016.

Busch, Adolf. *Sonata for Piano Op. 25*, performed by Jakob Fichert, engineered, produced and edited by Jez Wells, unpublished recording. York: January 19, 2020. CD.

Busch, Adolf. *Sonata for piano Op. 25*, edited by Jakob Fichert. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2019.

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The process of researching the piano music of Adolf Busch has enriched my professional life and my view on music in an invaluable way.

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Two of the three items of accompanying material have been published: the recording of the complete piano works of Adolf Busch (Busch, Adolf. *Complete Works for Solo Piano*, performed by Jakob Fichert. London: Toccata Classics, 2017. CD), and my edition of his *Sonata* (Busch, Adolf. *Sonata* for piano Op. 25. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2019). Both were developed as part of the PhD research.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Adolf Busch (1891–1952) is primarily remembered as one of the greatest German violinists of the twentieth century. He is also noted for his moral integrity and his clear and uncompromising stance against the rise of the Nazis. However, the fact that he was also a prolific composer is less known. Influenced by Brahms, Busoni and most of all Max Reger, Busch developed his own uniquely complex and distinctly individual musical language.

The body of scholarship on Busch is thus far limited to only a few books, articles and dissertations, and much of his music is yet to be explored in any depth by researchers. This doctoral project is the first study of Busch's piano works. It combines practice research through performance with musicological research and editing of primary sources, including original documents held in the BrüderBuschArchiv in Karlsruhe and score manuscripts in the Paul Sacher Stiftung (with digital copies of scores in the BrüderBuschArchiv). The piano works are investigated in the context of twentieth-century music in general and Busch's oeuvre in particular, drawing together research into Busch's compositional development, knowledge acquired through performance practice, and analytical study. The thesis examines the extent to which — and how — Busch's writing for the piano changed over the years, both stylistically and instrumentally. These issues are closely related to three contextual considerations: the impact upon Busch of key influential figures, compositional sources of inspiration and his relationship with modernist musical thought. Finally, the study explores the correlation between theoretical aspects of the research and insights gained through performance of his music, especially in relation to the *Sonata* for piano, Op. 25.

1.1 Starting Points: A Personal Note

I first came into contact with the music of Adolf Busch in 2010 at the launch of Tully Potter's two-volume biography, *Adolf Busch — The Life of an Honest Musician*. I was presented with a signed copy of this beautiful new publication as a thank-you gift for my performance of Busch's *Andante Espressivo*¹ at the event. Little did I know that this

¹ Adolf Busch, *Andante Espressivo* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1952).

would be the starting point of a long journey which has led to numerous other performances, and subsequently to recordings and related research.

Prior to the book launch, Adolf Busch was known to me primarily as the first violinist of the famous Busch Quartet. I had never heard of him as a composer but studying *Andante Espressivo* for the event made me curious. Given my previous occupation with the piano music and chamber music of Max Reger, a composer highly influential for Busch, I now felt keen to explore Busch's other piano pieces. With the help of Martin Anderson, executive producer of Toccata Classics and Toccata Press, and Dr. Jürgen Schaarwächter, researcher at the Max-Reger-Institut in Karlsruhe, which houses the BrüderBuschArchiv, I obtained copies of the manuscripts of Busch's smaller piano works and the first edition of his *Sonata* Op. 25. Perusing this highly original and intrinsically beautiful music filled me with excitement at the idea that I could be the pianist who would 'rediscover' these works and make them available to a wider audience. I started to learn this repertoire, culminating in a CD of Busch's complete piano works issued in 2017 on Toccata Classics.²

Preparing Busch's solo piano music for performances and the recording sparked in me a wider interest in the background of these pieces. Some initial research resulted in a lecture recital on Busch's piano writing, presented at the London Piano Symposium in early 2015, after which I was encouraged by many to make this the topic of a PhD. The interweaving of my professional practice and research has since continued, one enriching the other, including through the production of editions: In 2017 I was given the opportunity to produce a new edition of Busch's *Sonata* Op. 25 for Breitkopf & Härtel, with a follow up commission to edit his *Flute Quintet* Op. 68. My research also led to inspirational meetings and interviews with the composer's descendants and his wider family, including most notably Peter Serkin, sadly now deceased, who late in his life became a champion of his grandfather's chamber works with piano.³

The number of Busch's piano works are limited, but naturally they cannot be discussed in isolation. However musically interesting these pieces are in themselves, it is primarily the stylistic, historical and biographical context, along with related issues of performance, which makes them particularly worthy of in-depth research: these

² I discovered the existence of his *Sonata* fragment (presumably 1909) and *Five Variations on an Original Theme* (1920) only in 2021; therefore, these works are not included in the CD.

³ See, for example Adolf Busch, "K. Petiskova & P. Serkin: A. Busch Clarinet Sonata in A, Op. 54 (score-video)," YouTube video, 28:47, posted by "L.S. Archive," October 6, 2019, accessed October 21, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK9xqA0hwDI&t=1s>.

perspectives provide insights into Busch's musical development and thus open up wider questions of musical style and historical situation.

1.2 Research Field: Primary and Secondary Sources

The primary focus of the research for this project is archive materials and published letters: the details of this are set out below. Secondary sources have of course played an important role, too, but extant writing on Busch is somewhat limited, consisting of a substantial biography, the cataloguing of his compositions, some significant research into the composer's time in Switzerland, and a doctoral thesis on his songs, plus a range of brief, overview or celebratory essays in journals and festschrifts. Furthermore, a number of historical and more recent audio recordings of his music are in existence and have been helpful tools for my work. A brief overview of the principal sources is given in the following.

1.2.1 *Archive Materials and Published Letters*

Primary sources such as manuscripts and letters have been at the heart of my research. Material from the BrüderBuschArchiv, which is part of the Max-Reger-Institut in Karlsruhe, has proven particularly valuable. Relevant resources were either sent to me as digital copies or perused on site during visits to Karlsruhe in 2016 and 2022. Amongst these documents are the autographs and out-of-print first editions of Busch's compositions – none of the piano works were in print at the time of my research, and the *Sonata Op. 25* is the only piano work ever published. In addition to all of Busch's piano pieces I had archival access to all other unpublished and out-of-print works discussed in this thesis, such as the *Symphony Op. 39* and the *Ten Songs on Negro Spirituals Op. 58c*.⁴ (Details of published and unpublished scores can be found in the bibliography; unpublished manuscripts are also referenced with footnotes).

Unpublished archival material also includes the manuscripts and typescripts of Otto Grüters, Busch's brother-in-law. These have been important sources for my research:

⁴ Adolf Busch, *Ten Songs on Negro Spirituals Op. 58c* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1943).

Grüters' detailed timeline of Busch's life,⁵ for instance, and his speech on the occasion of the composer's seventy-fifth birthday,⁶ are especially insightful.

The extensive collection of selected letters compiled by Busch's daughter, Irene Serkin-Busch, has proved invaluable. In addition to over 500 pages of correspondence, presented in chronological order, this publication also contains a timeline of Adolf Busch's life,⁷ genealogical trees of Busch's close and more extended families,⁸ and includes a preface by the eminent art historian Ernst Gombrich (a close friend of Busch from his time in Vienna).⁹ There is relatively little mention of Busch's piano works in this volume, but the letters provide numerous insights into Busch's practice as a composer.

1.2.2 Additional Secondary Sources: Biographies, Essays, Work Catalogues and Theses

Naturally, existing literature on Busch has been essential to this research. As noted above, the scope of Busch scholarship to date is limited, with only a few studies dedicated to his work. An overview of the most significant sources of secondary literature is therefore provided below.

An essential source for Busch research is the biography by Tully Potter. This substantial publication provides a comprehensive chronological account of Busch's life and includes one chapter devoted to Busch as a composer and a comprehensive list of his works.¹⁰ There are also two supplementary discs, 'Busch the Performer' and 'Busch the Composer', attached to this biography. The piano pieces are mentioned only in connection with Rudolf Serkin and Donald Francis Tovey: the latter's short analysis of the *Sonata Op. 25* is cited.¹¹ That Busch was a composer is acknowledged throughout the book, but life events and the development of his career as a performer are the main focus. The level of detail and thorough investigation, however, makes this publication the most significant contribution to research on Busch to date.

⁵ Otto Grüters, undated, *Adolf Busch's Lebenslauf* [personal data sheet of Adolf Busch's life], BrüderBuschArchiv M 40, Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, Karlsruhe.

⁶ Otto Grüters, June 5, 1966, *Ansprache am 5. 6. 1966 in Dahlbruch* [speech held on June 5 1966], BrüderBuschArchiv V 2542, Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, Karlsruhe.

⁷ Irene Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen* (Walpole, New Hampshire: Arts and Letters Press, 1991), 563-565.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 567-570.

⁹ *Ibid.*, VII-XII.

¹⁰ Tully Potter, *Adolf Busch, The Life of an Honest Musician* (London: Toccata Press, 2010), 1213-1280.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1219-1220.

André Tubeuf's book, *Le premier des justes*, also provides a holistic view of Busch's life and work. The author cites Potter's biography as the only source for his research,¹² and therefore does not contribute anything novel beyond this. However, by virtue of being the only book on Busch in French to date, it has contributed to general public awareness of Busch's music.

The writings of Dominik Sackmann, perhaps the most prolific Busch scholar, constitute the most significant and substantial research on Busch's compositions. Sackmann has published a number of essays on Busch's compositions, either in more general terms¹³ or focussing on specific works.¹⁴ In his 2018 book, *Einswerden von Schaffen und Nachschaffen (Oneness of Creation and Recreation)*, Sackmann writes about Busch's years in Switzerland (1927-1939), dedicating a chapter specifically to the compositions of that period.¹⁵ Whilst not directly relevant to the piano works — Busch did not write for solo piano between 1922 and 1941 — Sackmann here provides invaluable insights into Busch's compositional style. Other contributions by Sackmann include a 1994 *catalogue raisonné* of Busch's compositions and an essay on Busch and the clarinet.

Jens Röth's doctoral thesis on Busch's lieder constitutes the only other substantial research into Busch's compositions. The author examines stylistic features, specifically analysing the influence of Reger and Brahms on Busch's songs,¹⁶ as well as discussing the composer's relationship to modernism.¹⁷ With its more purely musical focus on Busch's compositions, this contribution forms an indispensable basis for research on the style and characteristics of the piano pieces. The only other academic thesis on Busch to date is Fabian Zerhau's Masters dissertation on Reger's influence on the composer.¹⁸ Inevitably, this is less detailed than Röth's doctoral research. Nonetheless, this unpublished dissertation represents an important reference point for research on Busch's main stylistic influences.

¹² André Tubeuf, *Le premier des justes* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2015), 171.

¹³ Dominik Sackmann, "Adolf Busch der Komponist - eine Annäherung", in Wolfgang Burbach (ed.), *Veranstaltungen zum Gedenken an Adolf Busch aus Anlaß seines 100. Geburtstages* (Hilchenbach: Brüder-Busch-Gesellschaft, 1991), 43-54.

¹⁴ Dominik Sackmann, "Dreimal ins Exil getrieben — Adolf Busch," in *Entre Denges et Denezey...* *Dokumente zur Schweizer Musikgeschichte*, ed. Ulrich Mosch and Matthias Kassel (Mainz: Schott, 2000), 383-390.

¹⁵ Dominik Sackmann, *Einswerden von Schaffen und Nachschaffen, Adolf Busch in Zürich* (Basel, Frankfurt am Main: LIBRUM Publishers & Editors LLC, 2018), 120-158.

¹⁶ Jens Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe — Einblicke in das Liedschaffen Adolf Buschs," (PhD thesis, Universität Siegen, 2017. Löhnberg: Günter W. Röth Buch- und Musikverlag, 2017), 261-277.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 329-344.

¹⁸ Fabian Zerhau, *Aspekte der Reger Rezeption bei Adolf Busch* (Masters dissertation, Universität Hamburg, 2018).

Three published catalogues itemise Busch's compositions: Sackmann's and Potter's,¹⁹ both noted above, plus the *catalogue raisonnée* from the Paul Sacher Foundation.²⁰ Potter's list is perhaps the most informative: in addition to listing the dates of composition, he includes the dedicatees, the dates of first performances (wherever applicable), plus the number of bars and movement titles of each piece. However, it is not correct in all aspects. For example, the outdated BoO numbers ('Busch ohne Opuszahl', 'Busch without Opus'), initially introduced by Sackmann²¹ but are now deemed outdated, are still used. Furthermore, non-verifiable titles are occasionally attributed to some works, such as *Suite* for his collection of piano pieces Op. 60b.²² The listing in the Paul Sacher Foundation catalogue is largely complete but provides less detail than Potter. Sackmann's catalogue lists all pieces with opus numbers but only a selection of Busch's other works. Despite their undoubted value, no single one of these catalogues is both comprehensive and fully accurate. Two unpublished and undated catalogues compiled by Otto Grüters²³ provide some detailed information not available in the other lists: for example, information from this source feeds the discussion of Busch's *Intermezzo* in A minor and the *Agitato* in Appendix III. Finally, a number of encyclopedia entries include lists of Busch's compositions,²⁴ plus an additional catalogue was published together with a festschrift in 1966,²⁵ but none of these offers anything of further significance for researching Busch's piano works.

Beyond the small number of substantial items detailed above, other literature on Busch mainly consists of contributions to festschriften for his seventy-fifth and one hundredth birthdays, articles in musical journals and periodicals, entries in encyclopedias, liner notes for recordings, and the catalogue of an exhibition on Busch's, Serkin's and Reger's association with the town of Riehen, Switzerland. Amongst these, the contributions of three authors are notable in the current context. Hans Ehinger's short articles from 1955

¹⁹ Potter, *Adolf Busch, 1242-1280*.

²⁰ The Paul Sacher Foundation is in possession of most of Busch's original autographs. The BrüderBuschArchiv holds digital copies.

²¹ Dominik Sackmann, *Werkverzeichnis Adolf Busch* (Zürich: Schweizerisches Musikarchiv, 1994), 12.

²² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1261.

²³ Otto Grüters: *Verzeichnis der Kompositionen Adolf Buschs*, undated, BrüderBuschArchiv V 2662, Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, Karlsruhe; Otto Grüters: untitled list of compositions of Adolf Busch, BrüderBuschArchiv V 2663, Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, Karlsruhe.

²⁴ Alfred Einstein, ed., *Hugo Riemann's Musiklexikon* (Berlin: Max Hesses Verlag, 1929), s.v. "Busch, Adolf Georg Wilhelm"; Henry Cope Colles, ed., *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1927), s.v. "Busch, Adolf Georg Wilhelm"; Erich H. Müller, ed., *Deutsches Musiker-Lexikon* (Dresden: Wilhelm Limpert Verlag, 1929), s.v. "Busch, Adolf".

²⁵ Wolfgang Burbach (ed.), *Adolf Busch, Verzeichnis der Kompositionen* (Hilchenbach: Brüder-Busch-Gesellschaft, 1966).

and 1966,²⁶ provide important information about the composer's time in Switzerland. Jürgen Schaarwächter's essay on Busch's place between tradition and modernism offers valuable starting points for consideration of Busch's style.²⁷ Equally significant is Susanne Popp's contribution: in her 1993 article on "elective affinities" between Busch and Reger, she writes about the latter's impact on the former and more generally about similarities and differences between these oeuvres.²⁸

Publications by and about Busch's close family members are also of significance. The autobiography of Busch's brother, Fritz, *Aus dem Leben eines Musikers* [From a Musician's Life], is a highly insightful account of the siblings' musical upbringing and their later careers. Fritz's wife, Grete Busch, wrote a biography of her husband's life, *Fritz Busch, Dirigent* [*Fritz Busch, Conductor*], which supplements the autobiography. However, apart from anecdotal comments on the instrumentation of Adolf Busch's *Three Etudes for Orchestra* Op. 55,²⁹ there is very little about his music here. This biography, by virtue of feeding into the broad picture of the Busch family, though, is a valuable piece of supporting literature. Another highly informative item is Stephen Lehmann's and Marion Faber's biography of Busch's son in law and longstanding duo partner, Rudolf Serkin, which lists all of the pianist's published and unpublished recordings³⁰ as well as details of his Carnegie Hall recital programmes:³¹ the artistic collaboration of Busch and Serkin makes these listings especially relevant.

1.2.3 Audio Recordings

Recordings of Busch's music provide a useful backdrop to this research. Potter lists over 150 recordings of Busch's compositions,³² but the majority of these are not available commercially or online: copies of some are held at the BrüderBuschArchiv or the Library of Congress.³³ Notably, prior to my own 2016 CD, the only known recording of any of

²⁶ Hans Ehinger, "Adolf Busch in Basel", in *Baseler Jahrbuch* (Basel: Christoph Merian Stiftung, 1955), 64-82; Hans Ehinger, "Adolf Busch in Basel", in *In memoriam Adolf Busch*, ed. Wolfgang Burbach (Hillenbrach: Brüder- Busch-Gesellschaft, 1966), 53-54.

²⁷ Jürgen Schaarwächter, "Zwischen Tradition und Moderne — Der Komponist Adolf Busch", in *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung, Preußischer Kulturbesitz* (Mainz: Schott, 2013), 339-370.

²⁸ Susanne Popp, "Max Reger und Adolf Busch: Eine musikalische Wahlverwandtschaft" in *Beiträge zur Regerforschung*. Series: Reger-Studien, No. 5, ed. Susanne Shigihara (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1993) 85-103.

²⁹ Grete Busch, *Fritz Busch, Dirigent* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985; Frankfurt a.M.: S.Fischer Verlag, 1970), 206. Citations refer to the Fischer Taschenbuch edition.

³⁰ Stephen Lehmann and Marion Faber, *Rudolf Serkin, A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 273-310.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 267-272.

³² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1203-1212.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1203.

Busch's solo piano music was an undated, privately recorded performance of the *Andante Espressivo* played by Peter Serkin (son of Rudolf), made available on one of the CDs that accompany Potter's biography.³⁴ However, Rudolf Serkin recorded a number of Busch's chamber works with piano, sometimes together with the composer on violin: the *Sonata* for violin and piano Op. 56, for instance.³⁵ Particularly relevant in the context of piano music is the 1980 recording of *Theme and Variations* for piano duet Op. 63, performed by Rudolf and Peter Serkin.³⁶ Recordings from the Marlboro Music Festival (formerly Marlboro School of Music) are also of significance: Busch and (Rudolf) Serkin helped to found this festival in 1951,³⁷ and it has subsequently been the only context in which Adolf Busch's works have been regularly performed, thus developing a performance tradition of his oeuvre.³⁸ The 1965 Marlboro recording of his *Flute Quintet* Op. 68,³⁹ for instance, is particularly insightful, informing the research for my edition of this work. Naturally, these historic recordings are of special interest to me, since they involve performers close to Busch and his collaborators. However, other, more recent recordings have also been used to accompany my research. Most of these recordings — Georg Fritzsche's renditions of some of Busch's orchestral pieces, for example⁴⁰ — also provide an important backdrop to Busch research.

1.2.4 *The Wider Context of Busch's Piano Music*

Beyond the research sources directly related to Busch and his music, additional resources support the investigation of his main musical influences and the wider contextualisation of his piano music. The methodology for the performance element of this research and the work on the *Sonata* edition draw on additional research materials. Details of all sources can be found in the bibliography, but a brief overview of the most essential is given below.

Much of my research on Busch's three primary compositional influences — Brahms, Reger and Busoni — is based on the examination of scores and my experience of

³⁴ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 'Disc 2: Busch the Composer', CD.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ "History", *Marlboro Music*, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://www.marlbormusic.org/about/history/>.

³⁸ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1213.

³⁹ Adolf Busch, "Adolf Busch: Quintet for Flute and Strings," YouTube video, 34:36, posted by "Jk Stevenson," July 23, 2015, accessed October 29, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTux0UzuWIM>.

⁴⁰ Adolf Busch, "Adolf Busch — Symphony in E minor (1927,)" YouTube video, 38:58, posted by "KuhlauDilfeng," March 29, 2013, accessed June 3, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kk7AZymdyU&t=399s>; Adolf Busch, "Adolf Busch: Mozart Variations for Orchestra," YouTube video, 21:33, posted by "Jk Stevenson," April 5, 2014, accessed June 3, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzd5DFkR2EY>.

performing the works discussed. The literature on the above-mentioned composers is vast and selecting relevant writing to support my research has been challenging. I found those studies focused on stylistic features and their comparison most relevant in the context of my work. For instance, Detlef Kraus' and John Rink's insightful writings on Brahms as a composer for piano examine the stylistic and instrumental features of his music, especially applicable to my examination of Busch's *intermezzi*. In the case of Reger, the literature includes studies of his work produced during the composer's lifetime or shortly after his death: this was the period in which Busch was most influenced by Reger and thus particularly significant in this discussion. Eugen Segnitz' 1922 book on Reger, for example, includes a chapter on the Reger School and the stylistic features perceived as typically Regerian at the time:⁴¹ this informs the discussion of Busch's music in section 4.3. Also significant is Max Hehemann's work on Reger, first published in 1911, only two years after Busch had met Reger for the first time.⁴² With respect to Busoni, aside from this composer's own writings, such as his *Sketch on a new Esthetic [sic.] of Music*, Antony Beaumont's extensive study, *Busoni the Composer* (1985) provides in-depth stylistic research; this underpins my own investigation of Busoni's influence on Busch.

Examining the wider context of the period and musical landscape of Busch's piano works, especially the *Sonata* Op. 25, requires a focus on Weimar Germany and the musical scene of 1920s Berlin. There is a vast array of research on this topic, but two publications are of particular relevance, here: Eric D. Weitz's *Weimar Germany, Promise and Tragedy* provides an overview study of the period, and the volume *Musikkultur in der Weimarer Republik (Musical Culture in the Weimar Republic)*, edited by Wolfgang Rathert and Gisela Schubert, provides specific insights into the musical and cultural background against which Busch wrote his *Sonata*. Electronic archives of musical journals of the time, especially of the German periodical *Die Musik*, provide a clear picture of the reception of Busch's music. In order to identify Busch's position within the context of musical modernism writings by composers of the time, Schönberg and Busoni in particular, have been consulted alongside more recent secondary literature on the topic (all sources are listed in the bibliography).

Research into and through process of critical editing and performance is wide and diverse; the field of performance studies, including research through performance, has

⁴¹ Eugen Segnitz, *Max Reger* (Leipzig: Historia Verlag Paul Schraepler, 1922; Bremen: dearbooks, 1913), 116-119. Citations refer to the dearbooks edition.

⁴² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 91-92.

grown particularly fast in recent years. In the context of my work, two specific subfields are most pertinent, though: approaches to critical editorial practice — including reconsiderations of the status of the musical text — and performance research that makes specific use of recorded material. The former is exemplified by James Grier’s and Stanley Boorman’s contributions: Boorman’s thoughts on authenticity and the correlation between autograph and first edition,⁴³ and Grier’s elaboration on presenting a critical edition⁴⁴ are particularly noteworthy in the context of my research. The work of Anna Scott is especially notable for the latter. However, whilst Scott uses historical recordings to stimulate her interpretation, I compare two of my own recordings of the same piece — these were produced almost five years apart — to investigate in what way and to what extent editorial and broader research has impacted my interpretation.

1.3 Content and Structure

The three components of this submission — two recordings, an edition and the thesis — reflect the blended approach to performance, editorial and musicological research. The recordings of Busch’s entire piano oeuvre, completed at the start of my PhD in 2015 and 2016, as well as the second recording of the *Sonata* Op. 25 of 2020, produced much later in the project, evidence the importance of performance in my work on Busch. My new edition of the *Sonata* Op. 25 exemplifies my involvement with first-hand sources and shows my approach to producing a critical urtext edition, fit for practical use.⁴⁵ Finally, at the heart of the submission is the thesis, which primarily considers the stylistic context of Busch’s piano works, but also issues of interpretation and performance.

The thesis begins with a general contextualisation of Busch within the musical landscape of his time with particular focus on his time in Vienna and Berlin. This is followed by two chapters examining Busch’s main stylistic influences, considering the composers most important in his search for an individual aesthetic framework and musical language. Chapter 5 focuses more specifically on Busch’s music, examining his smaller piano pieces and their contextualisation within his oeuvre, especially in juxtaposition with his lieder. Chapter 6 is then dedicated to the context of the *Sonata* Op. 25, Busch’s most

⁴³ Stanley Boorman, “The Musical Text”, in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 417-420.

⁴⁴ James Grier, *The Critical Editing of Music. History, Method, and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 155-158.

⁴⁵ See also my edition of Busch’s *Flute Quintet*. Adolf Busch, *Quintet* for flute, violin, 2 violas and cello Op. 68 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, to be released in 2023). Close examination of score manuscripts and other primary sources was necessary for the production of both editions.

significant solo piano piece. This examination is embedded in a discussion of the composer's experimentation with modernist features, which formed part of his overarching search for his musical style. Chapter 7 shifts this discussion of the *Sonata* into the important area of performance, considering interpretative decision-making and the shifts in my approach to performing Busch's *Sonata* over the period of doctoral research; this is documented by the two recordings of this piece. The appendix contains extensive supporting material, including scores, an overview of Busch's piano works and a brief biographical contextualisation of each piece, interview transcripts, an overview of Busch's life in table form and an extended bibliography.

It is recommended that the reader should listen to my earlier recording of Busch's complete piano works and familiarise themselves with my edition of the *Sonata*, prior to reading the thesis. The 2020 recording of the *Sonata* can be listened to at a later stage as it is relevant mainly to Chapter 7.

Chapter 2: Busch in the Context of Stylistic Diversity

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to sketch an overview of the diverse musico-stylistic landscape of the early twentieth century and to locate Busch's place within this context. Musical developments in the Austro-German world, mainly in Vienna and Berlin, two cities where Busch spent some of his most formative years,⁴⁶ are the main focus here. It is not the purpose to discuss Busch's primary influences and sources of inspiration here (these are investigated in Chapters 3 and 4) but rather to describe how he navigated his way as a composer against the backdrop of multi-faceted aesthetic developments of a time that saw traditionalist as well as modernist tendencies.⁴⁷

Shifts in aesthetic conception associated with modernism are often seen in the wider context of societal and scientific developments. This has been acknowledged as early as 1925: Arthur Salmon, in his paper titled 'Conservatism and Modernism in Music', argued that recent aesthetic innovations are a direct result of the awareness that there is "far vaster complication in life"⁴⁸ than previously acknowledged — a development owed to "scientific advance".⁴⁹ In a further attempt to explain recent cultural shifts, Salmon considered that "our natures may not be becoming actually more complex, but it seems certain that our consciousness is doing so."⁵⁰ This description of the roots of cultural changes at a time when early twentieth-century modernism was less determinable than it is today, is particularly revealing as, unlike most writings on the subject, it is not conceived with the benefit of hindsight.

Defining 'modernism' more specifically comes with some challenges as different and sometimes contradictory schools of thought claim to be its representative. There were, on the one hand, the serialist composers Schönberg, Berg and Webern, who, according to American musicologist and Schönberg-scholar Joseph Auner, saw themselves as

⁴⁶ Busch was appointed leader of the Konzertvereinorchester in Vienna in 1912 and later moved to Berlin, where he became professor for violin in 1918. He stayed in the German capital until 1922 but remained connected to its scene much beyond that.

⁴⁷ For Busch's place in this stylistically diverse environment see also Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 334.

⁴⁸ Arthur L. Salmon, "Conservatism and Modernism in Music", *The Musical Times* 66, no. 983 (1925), 21.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

following “the one true path”.⁵¹ This can be evidenced, for instance, by the fact that Schönberg explicitly rejected other compositional approaches in his writings.⁵² On the other hand, multiple forms of classicism represented by Busoni, Stravinsky, Hindemith and others, are often retrospectively viewed as the progressive answer to out-dated romantic and expressionist aesthetics — perhaps a reaction spurred by the “catastrophe of the First World War”⁵³ — and thus constituting a progressive, modernist movement.⁵⁴ Furthermore, spearheaded by Kurt Weill and Hans Eisler, there were the political modernists, often associated with the artists from the *Novembergruppe*⁵⁵ and following a path inspired by revolutionary social reform.⁵⁶ These were in stark contrast to the Schönberg circle with its “idealist-isolationist”⁵⁷ attitude, an approach that can well be criticised as elitist. Counter to all this, there were also tendencies which were expressly anti-modernist: Hans Pfitzner is seen as the most prominent advocate of this movement.⁵⁸

The question arises: where did Busch stand in this complex and multi-layered stylistic environment. There is little evidence that he engaged in intellectual discourses on aesthetic ideas of the time or that he read important contributions to philosophy of art and music theory such as Pfitzner’s anti-modernist *New Aesthetic of Musical Impotence* or Busoni’s visionary *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*. Philipp Naegele, a violist and musicologist who was student of Adolf Busch in the early 1950s, communicates his impression that Busch was perhaps not overly interested in studying compositional and musicological treatises, describing him as an academically “totally self-educated”⁵⁹ artist with a mainly “practical, hands-on, craftsmanlike attitude”⁶⁰ and little willingness to get involved in musical scholarship. Naegele, however, qualifies this by pointing out Busch’s high regard for Donald Francis Tovey, whom he describes as a “scholar-musician”.⁶¹ This

⁵¹ Joseph Auner, “Proclaiming the mainstream: Schönberg, Berg and Webern”, in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 228.

⁵² Arnold Schönberg, “New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea”, in *Style and Idea*, trans. Dika Newlin, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 48n, 52.

⁵³ Herrmann Danuser, “Rewriting the past: classicisms of the inter-war period”, in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 264.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ For more information about the *Novembergruppe* see “Novembergruppe”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 3, 2008, accessed October 31, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Novembergruppe>.

⁵⁶ Peter Franklin: “Between the wars: traditions and modernisms, and the ‘little people from the suburbs’”, in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 189.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 187.

⁵⁹ Lehmann and Faber, *Rudolf Serkin*, 251.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

perhaps demonstrates that it is too simplistic to portray Busch's approach to musicology as indifferent. It is therefore maybe more apt to describe his attitude towards musical scholarship as selective rather than dismissive.

Perhaps, rather than searching for any clear philosophical or aesthetic standpoint held by the composer, we can find the key to Busch's position in this diverse stylistic environment of the time by looking at his choice of repertoire as a performer. As Franklin points out, "performers were (and are) more closely constrained by the tastes and enthusiasms of their time" than composers,⁶² and Busch was no exception. However, given that the repertoires in major post-war European concert series remained largely the same as before the war,⁶³ by virtue of championing music by Reger, Busoni, Tovey, Kahn and others⁶⁴ Busch made some bold programming choices. Busch took some pride in playing music of his time: he responded as early as 1913 to an unknown critic who reprimanded him for not including enough contemporary music in his repertoire, stating that he is "not as hostile to it [contemporary music] as you think".⁶⁵ However, it was only certain contemporary music that Busch accepted. He was highly selective, stylistically, in both directions: whilst being highly sceptical towards certain modernist traits such as atonality and serialism, Busch also detested Pfitzner's ultra-conservative style.⁶⁶

Busch's music is perhaps best described as being somewhere between traditionalism and modernism⁶⁷ and somewhat outside the above mentioned main stylistic discourses. The composer Hans Gal confirmed in his 1979 interview with Tully Potter that Busch wasn't fully in the 'camp' of the traditionalists: "at the time [referring to Vienna in the 1910s], one wouldn't have called Busch's manner conservative. He was very much absorbed in composing, and his style was more or less shaped by that time."⁶⁸ Gal also claimed that Busch was "already perfectly formed as a musician"⁶⁹ once he had moved to Vienna, implying that he was quasi-immune to external influences. As a consequence most modernist aesthetic ideas had only little effect on the development of Busch's musical language. This can be endorsed by the comparison of works from the Viennese years with compositions written before and after: these juxtapositions only reveal subtle stylistic shifts.

⁶² Franklin, "Between the wars", 198.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁶⁴ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 932.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Busch's low opinion of Pfitzner and Richard Strauss is eloquently documented by Thomas Mann in 1933. See Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 548 and 932.

⁶⁷ See also Schaarwächter, "Zwischen Tradition und Moderne", 339-370.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

In the following I map out the main features of cultural and musical life in Vienna of the 1910s and post-war Berlin and describe Busch's position in these contexts.

2.2 Busch and Modernists in Vienna

Two years before World War I, in 1912, Busch was appointed Leader of the Vienna Konzertverein-Orchestra. By virtue of moving to the Austrian capital, after completing his studies in Cologne and embarking on a career as an international soloist, Busch entered a unique and fascinating world: the artistically vibrant Vienna of the early twentieth century, a city full of cultural and political divisions. Busch spent six of his most formative years in Vienna: the imperial capital remained the main residence of the Busches until Busch's appointment as violin professor in Berlin in 1918. From 1916, though, a Sanatorium in Arosa, Switzerland, led by Dr Wolfgang Römisch and frequented by many illustrious names in art and society, became their second home — Busch's ongoing lung condition made these visits necessary. Back in Vienna, the schedule of the orchestra still left him enough time to continue furthering his career as an international soloist and, most importantly, to cofound the Konzertverein Quartet, later to become the famous Busch Quartet, together with Fritz Rothschild, Karl Doktor and Paul Grümmer.⁷⁰ Furthermore, he composed some of his most substantial works in those years — some compositions were conceived in Vienna, others in Arosa — for example his *Radetzky March Variations for large Orchestra* Op. 9⁷¹ and his *Symphony* Op. 10.⁷²

Coming from the culturally relatively homogeneous Cologne, and, by 1912 already having started a flourishing career as a soloist, the question arises of how Busch fitted into this new world. Generally, whilst appreciating the cultural richness of the city to some extent, Busch only felt partially at home in this extremely diverse landscape.⁷³ This is discussed below in greater detail. In order to locate Busch's position within that environment, it is apt to illuminate some of its main features first.

An adequate description of Busch's Vienna calls for a look beyond the world of music and art and needs to consider developments in politics and social life as well as in

⁷⁰ Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Blider, Erinnerungen*, 566.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1243.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1244.

⁷³ Busch once referred to the city's musical scene as "completely off the mark", see Letter to Otto Grütters, dated February 28, 1917, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Blider, Erinnerungen*, 182-183.

science. The early twentieth century was a time of political and social turmoil in Vienna,⁷⁴ and society was deeply divided.⁷⁵ Mass unemployment of the working classes coexisted with the entrepreneurial spirit of a rising middle class and the old aristocracy.⁷⁶ The Habsburg monarchy was still in place, but its end was near, and change was in the air.⁷⁷ Opposing political forces were battling against each other. Two figures are particularly important in this respect: Karl Lueger,⁷⁸ founder of the conservative, often antisemitic Christian Socialists and mayor of the Austrian capital from 1897-1910, and Victor Adler,⁷⁹ founder of the reform-oriented Social Democrats, a party on the opposite end of the political spectrum.

An important cultural trait of fin-de-siècle Vienna was its vast ethnic diversity. The city had become a melting pot of a multitude of nationalities drawn from the Habsburg empire.⁸⁰ Effie Papanikolaou, specialist in early twentieth-century Vienna, claims that, drawing from this diversity of nations, “the Viennese did not essentially create a new culture but rather” accumulated “many different types of political and artistic ideals from other cultures.”⁸¹ This created a fertile ground for differing approaches to all aspects of society and culture.

Social and political movements coexisted alongside revolutionary progressions in science and culture. The doctor and psychologist, Sigmund Freud, often regarded as the ‘father of psychoanalysis’ due to his ground-breaking discoveries about the human subconscious, was certainly one of Vienna’s most notable figures of the time. His impact is accepted to be universal and highly significant well beyond the city, and ways in which

⁷⁴ For a more detailed overview of social and cultural life in Vienna around 1900 see Allan Janik, “Wiens Kultur und Gesellschaft um 1900 — eine schematische Übersicht”, in *Wien 1900, Aufbruch in die Moderne*, ed. Hans-Peter Wipplinger, (Vienna: Leopold Museum-Privatstiftung, 2019), 34-45.

⁷⁵ See also Peter Franklin, “Gustav Mahler”, *Groves Music Online*, September 16, 2010, accessed October 13, 2022,

<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040696>.

⁷⁶ Janik, “Wiens Kultur und Gesellschaft”, 34-45.

⁷⁷ For another description of the coexistence of various political models see also Hans-Peter Wipplinger, “Vorwort”, in *Wien 1900, Aufbruch in die Moderne*, ed. Hans-Peter Wipplinger, (Vienna: Leopold Museum-Privatstiftung, 2019), 4.

⁷⁸ “Karl Lueger”, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, March 6, 2022, accessed October 14, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Karl-Lueger>.

⁷⁹ “Victor Adler”, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, June 20, 2022, accessed October 14, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Victor-Adler>.

⁸⁰ Janik, “Wiens Kultur und Gesellschaft”, 42.

⁸¹ Effie Papanikolaou, “Aestheticism and the City: Gustav Mahler and Musical Politics in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna”, *Journal of Political & Military Sociology* 30, no. 2 (2002): 242.

his pioneering research influenced art⁸² and music⁸³ has been extensively discussed in literature. However, Freud's was only one of many important cultural stimuli that originated in Vienna of that time.

Mitchell G. Ash elaborates on some of these other impulses in his chapter on the 'multiple modernisms' of early twentieth-century Vienna, in which he points out the strong parallels between scientific discoveries and shifts in aesthetic conceptions of music.⁸⁴ Here, the approaches of two prominent Viennese scientists are examined: Ernst Mach's anti-metaphysical attitude,⁸⁵ which resulted in the questioning of the ego as an unalterable entity,⁸⁶ and Ludwig Boltzmann's new approach to physics, prioritising theoretical research over methodologies based on measurable observations.⁸⁷ Ash suggested that these developments in science can be linked, philosophically and aesthetically, to Arnold Schönberg's systematised, 'quasi-technological' compositional technique of serialism,⁸⁸ which is based on the "emancipation of the dissonance".⁸⁹ He illustrates this with a juxtaposition of Mach's diagram 'Pure and Tempered Tuning,' with two of Schönberg's diagrams; he notes the similarity in appearance, suggesting they both "exemplify syntheses of formalist and technological modernity".⁹⁰ More generally, Ash contextualises the rise of modernism in music and parallel scientific developments — a connection also pointed out in the above mentioned remarks by Arthur Salmon⁹¹ — by highlighting the "technological transformation of the lived world" at the time as one of their main drivers.⁹²

Spearheading the movement for aesthetic renewal and innovation in the fine arts, the *Vienna Secession*, a group known for its stylistic plurality reaching from post-impressionist to symbolist tendencies⁹³ and founded in 1897 by prominent painters, most

⁸² See, for example, Burghardt Schmidt, "Wissenschaftlich-philosophische Umbrüche und deren Einflüsse auf die Künste", in *Wien 1900, Aufbruch in die Moderne*, ed. Hans-Peter Wipplinger, (Vienna: Leopold Museum-Privatstiftung, 2019), 32.

⁸³ See, for example, Christopher Butler, "Innovation and the avant-garde, 1900-20" in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 80.

⁸⁴ Mitchell G. Ash, "Multiple modernisms in concert: the sciences, technology and culture in Vienna around 1900", in *Being Modern, The cultural Impact of Science in the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. Robert Bud et al., (London: UCL Press, 2018), 23.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 32.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁹¹ Salmon, "Conservatism and Modernism in Music", 21.

⁹² Ash, "Multiple modernisms in concert", 36.

⁹³ Wipplinger, "Vorwort", 5.

famously Gustav Klimt, is particularly noteworthy here.⁹⁴ However, the *Hagenbund*, another such association, in a recent exhibition referred to as Vienna's "alternative modernism",⁹⁵ also significantly contributed to Vienna's cultural life of the time and beyond, representing an even more diverse spectrum of new styles. A more detailed discussion of interdisciplinary modernist developments in Vienna of the early 1900s would, of course, go beyond the scope of this thesis. However, generally and in summary, it can be said that culture and society were undergoing radical changes on all levels, changes that contributed to the atmosphere of the city that Busch encountered in 1912.

A picture of the cultural life of Busch's Vienna would not be complete without mentioning the famous coffee-houses — an essential institution with a unique atmosphere. These were places where much of the city's cultural elite would meet to either discuss current affairs or as a means "to evade reality" and find a "harbour for the weary of the world" whilst regarding themselves "apostles of modernity".⁹⁶ Prominent figures in literature such as Stefan Zweig, Arthur Schnitzler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal were regular guests alongside influential personalities of all walks of life.⁹⁷ The old, culturally traditionalist world also had a strong presence in Vienna at the time, often demonstrating a zeitgeist of 'joie de vivre' and political indifference, perhaps best exemplified by the Strauss family.⁹⁸ Busch, according to the available sources, was not part of any particular group of artists or intellectuals. He had a tendency to side with the traditionalists⁹⁹ — the choice of Strauss' *Radetzky March*, for his above-mentioned set of variations, can perhaps be read as an endorsement of that tendency.

One name is essential for understanding the Viennese music scene, an environment Busch entered in the early 1910s: Gustav Mahler, sometimes referred to as a 'musical Secessionist',¹⁰⁰ a term originally forged by Eduard Hanslick in relation to Mahler, Strauss and Wolf.¹⁰¹ Mahler entered the scene as the newly appointed director of the Hofoper (Opera of the Court) in 1897, the same year the *Vienna Secession* was founded, and

⁹⁴ For more detailed information about Vienna Secession see Roberto Rosenman, "The Vienna Secession: A History", *Vienna Secession*, 2017, accessed October 10, 2022, <https://www.theviennasecession.com/vienna-secession/>.

⁹⁵ Stefan Üner, "Der Hagenbund. Die alternative Moderne", in *Hagenbund, von der gemäßigten zur radikalen Moderne*, ed. Hans-Peter Wipplinger, (Vienna: Leopold Museum-Privatstiftung, 2022), 10-35.

⁹⁶ Papanikolaou, "Aestheticism and the City", 244.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 243.

⁹⁹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 174.

¹⁰⁰ Theresa Muxeneder, "Endliche Romantik und Emanzipation der Dissonanz. Neue Töne in Wien um 1900", in *Wien 1900, Aufbruch in die Moderne*, ed. Hans-Peter Wipplinger, (Vienna: Leopold Museum-Privatstiftung, 2019), 92.

¹⁰¹ Papanikolaou, "Aestheticism and the City", 254.

stayed in that position until 1907 — later he took on a contract with the Metropolitan Opera in New York.¹⁰² His welcome in Vienna was by no means unequivocally positive: controversial as a conductor and composer, Mahler faced a world which was welcoming and hostile at the same time.¹⁰³ His diverse choice of repertoire which included the classical mainstream plus works of Pfitzner, Strauss and, of course, himself,¹⁰⁴ and his highly individual conducting and rehearsing style¹⁰⁵ might have contributed to scepticism towards Mahler.

Where there were hostilities, these were often exacerbated by antisemitic prejudice against his Jewish background.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, and despite all the controversies, the impact of Mahler's presence in Vienna was significant, and many of its future musical figureheads started as ardent followers and sometimes proteges of Mahler; Schönberg and Zemlinsky are examples.¹⁰⁷ Being in-between the romantic tradition and the early-twentieth century styles, Mahler is often referred to as a “mediator between the Austro-German tradition and the early twentieth-century modernists”.¹⁰⁸

In 1904, after having become a household name in Vienna, Mahler was elected honorary president of the newly founded *Vereinigung Schaffender Tonkünstler*, an association promoting new music. This strengthening his links with the city's modernist musical elite,¹⁰⁹ which consisted mostly of representatives of the ‘Jung-Wiener Tonkunst’ [Musical Art of New-Vienna], a term that was first forged in the late 1890s but prevailed throughout the pre-war years, encompassing composers such as Zemlinsky and Schönberg as well as the latter's students Berg, Webern, Egon Wellesz and others.¹¹⁰ As mentioned above, all these composers were linked together by a shared admiration for Mahler. Schönberg — associated with the abandonment of traditional harmony and the emancipation of the dissonance,¹¹¹ and described by his contemporary, the music journalist Richard Specht, as the “most compelling, most problematic and most unsettling”¹¹² composer amongst the Viennese modernists — was particularly vocal in taking sides with Mahler, defending

¹⁰² Franklin, “Gustav Mahler”.

¹⁰³ Muxeneder, “Endliche Romantik”, 93.

¹⁰⁴ Franklin, “Gustav Mahler”.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Muxeneder, “Endliche Romantik”, 94.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Franklin, “Gustav Mahler”.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Muxeneder, “Endliche Romantik”, 94.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹¹² Richard Specht, “Die Jungwiener Tondichter“, in *Die Musik. Sonderheft Wien* 9, no. 8 (1910): 80-85, quoted in Muxeneder, “Endliche Romantik”, 94.

him in an essay written in 1912 against the prevailing prejudice of superficiality¹¹³ and describing him a genius and artistic role model.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, Schönberg emphasises the importance of expression in Mahler's music, noting that this expressive qualities, rather than the musical material or scope or length of his works, makes his music stand out.¹¹⁵

It is against this backdrop that Busch came to Vienna in 1912, one year after Mahler's death and five years after he had left his position as director of the Hofoper. However, although Mahler was not personally present anymore, his impact affected the musical life of the Austrian capital much beyond his tenure at the Hofoper and, indeed, his life. Given his strong links with the Viennese modernist composers who somewhat dominated the musical discourse of the early 1910s, it was to some extent still 'Mahler's Vienna' that Busch encountered when he took up his new role in the Konzertverein-Orchestra. It is therefore apt to shed some light on Busch's attitude towards Mahler before discussing the former's relationship with the next generation of Viennese composers.

Whilst Busch did not relate much to the Viennese modernists mentioned above, he did not dislike the music of their hero, Gustav Mahler. As Potter states "Busch was not an out-and-out admirer of Mahler"¹¹⁶ but he appreciated his music enough to voluntarily take part in the Mahler-Feest in Amsterdam in 1920.¹¹⁷ Busch's first encounter with Mahler took place when Busch was a student in Cologne, where he participated in two performances conducted by the director of the Hofoper.¹¹⁸ Many of Busch's teachers and role-models championed Mahler's music; examples include his teacher in composition and music theory, later to become father-in-law, Hugo Grütters,¹¹⁹ his composition teacher at the Conservatory, Fritz Steinbach,¹²⁰ the conductor Bruno Walter¹²¹ and Busch's own brother Fritz.¹²² Other close friends and colleagues such as Natalie Bauer-Lechner, a violinist high in Busch's esteem, and Leonie Gombrich, a pianist and student of Theodore Leschitzky, had strong associations with Mahler as well.¹²³ The fact that Mahler never abandoned traditional harmony, whilst certainly pushing its boundaries, as

¹¹³ Arnold Schönberg, "Gustav Mahler", in *Style and Idea*, trans. Dika Newlin, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 20.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹⁶ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 75.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 73-75.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1098.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1119.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 1122.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 1077.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 153-155.

well as his unequivocal association with the Austro-German tradition,¹²⁴ might have made it easier for Busch to appreciate Mahler's style. However, it was perhaps also the many personal connections mentioned above that played a role in Busch's much more positive attitude towards Mahler than Mahler's followers.

Notably, in contrast to Busch's tentatively sympathetic approach to Mahler, his opinion of the Schönbergian circle of composers was rather dismissive. This overall rejection went as far as disrupting a performance of Alban Berg's *Altenberg Lieder* Op. 4 conducted by Schönberg on March 31, 1913: according to a footnote in the selection of published letters, Busch, when attending this legendary concert, started a rather vocal protest against the music joined by other audience members.¹²⁵ As Potter puts it, Busch's time in Vienna coincided with "the height of the split between the traditionalists and the second Viennese School"¹²⁶ and Busch "opted for tradition".¹²⁷ A more granular examination, however, reveals cracks in this simplistic binary narrative. This is, for example, manifested in the above-mentioned claim by Hans Gal that Busch's writing wasn't seen as conservative at the time,¹²⁸ and by the fact that Busch shared his admiration for Brahms, Reger and, to some extent, Mahler with Schönberg and his followers.¹²⁹

Generally, it is conspicuous that, whilst outwardly strongly opposing the more radical ideas of Schönberg and his followers, Busch shared some of their ideals and compositional role-models. Schönberg's admiration for Bach — Schönberg claimed that Bach could be seen as "the first 12-tone-composer"¹³⁰ — and the former's reverence for the classical tradition¹³¹ is something that Busch would have endorsed. However, while for Schönberg the development of serialism from the emancipation of the dissonance was the most coherent way to continue with tradition,¹³² Busch saw this as a path leading nowhere.¹³³

¹²⁴ Franklin, "Gustav Mahler".

¹²⁵ Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 59.

¹²⁶ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 174.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹³⁰ Schönberg, "New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea", 42.

¹³¹ Muxeneder, "Endliche Romantik", 96.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ See quote by Philip Naegele in Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 863.

2.3 Busch's Stylistic Encounters in Berlin

Busch's time in Berlin was relatively short: he lived in the German capital for merely just under five years, 1918-1923. The reason for the relocation from Vienna was his appointment as violin professor at the Preußische Akademie der Künste, a position he officially held until his resignation over Franz Schreker's appointment as Director of that institution in 1920.¹³⁴ However, Busch stayed on until 1923, the year the Busches moved to Darmstadt.¹³⁵

By relocating to Berlin right after World War I, Busch entered a "metropolis" with a "sizzling, lively, excessive and extravagant scene"¹³⁶ which was seen internationally as particularly attractive for artists.¹³⁷ Like the rest of Europe, Berlin was "like a battlefield" in 1918,¹³⁸ but there was also a spirit of hope and renewal, out of which culture could rise again like "phoenix from the ashes".¹³⁹ Post-war Berlin, like the young Weimar Republic in its entirety, can perhaps best be defined by the vast array of conflicting political attitudes and movements. On the left, the radical socialists and communists, mainly represented by the KPD (Communist Party of Germany), the USPD (Independent Social Democrats) and the Spartakusbund, all inspired and encouraged by the Russian Revolution that toppled the Tsar in 1917, were aiming to establish a soviet-style workers' republic.¹⁴⁰ The mainly antidemocratic monarchists, loyalists to the former German emperor and mainly represented by the DNVP (German National People's Party), were undermining the young democracy from the other end of the political spectrum.¹⁴¹ The MSPD (Majority Social Democrats), the Catholic Zentrumspartei (Centre Party) and the liberal DDP (German Democratic Party), as the main representatives of the more moderate forces, shared the middle ground and were the only main parties unequivocally in favour of democracy.¹⁴²

¹³⁴ Sackmann, "Adolf Busch, der Komponist," 45.

¹³⁵ Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Blider, Erinnerungen*, 564.

¹³⁶ Habakuk Traber, "Der Elan einer Epoche: Berlin zwischen den Kriegen", *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 160, no. 6 (1999), 39.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Franklin, "Between the wars", 189.

¹³⁹ Traber, "Der Elan einer Epoche", 39.

¹⁴⁰ Kolja Bartsch and Wilhelm Weege, "Vor neunzig Jahren: die Novemberrevolution von 1918", *Deutscher Bundestag, Wissenschaftliche Dienste*, November 11, 2008, accessed October 26, 2022, <https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/503676/62c5996ef2cf277419f0e0c4ebd05bbe/Novemberrevolution-data.pdf>.

¹⁴¹ "Weimarer Republik (1918-1933)", *Deutscher Bundestag*, accessed October 26, 2022, <https://www.bundestag.de/parlament/geschichte/parlamentarismus/weimar>.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

Busch encountered this diversity of the political spectrum which was clearly mirrored by the plurality of different approaches in art and music. Adolf Weissmann, a music critic from the more liberal wing of society,¹⁴³ described the musical landscape as “chaos”,¹⁴⁴ by which he meant the “colourful plurality” of “individual forms of expression”.¹⁴⁵ This ‘chaos’ has its roots in a mix of styles ranging from anti-modernist composers such as Pfitzner to representatives of various differing modernisms such as Schönberg, Schreker, Busoni, Hindemith, Krenek and Weill. Different sets of aesthetic and social values were in existence and passionately fought for, be those Kurt Weill’s social-satirical approach¹⁴⁶ or Schönberg’s plea for ‘l’art pour l’art’¹⁴⁷ — Schönberg deemed the idea of “art for everyone” vulgar.¹⁴⁸ The rising influence of jazz is another important characteristic of the music of 1920s Berlin: this was seen by many as a threat to “traditional high culture”.¹⁴⁹ The fact that there was no agreed stylistically uniform ideal¹⁵⁰ (even less so than before the war), can also be read as an attempt to liberate art and culture from the “uniformity of war”.¹⁵¹

A glance at the mix of music journalism in Weimar Germany further clarifies the political and cultural divisions of the time. The *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* [General Music Journal] mainly disseminated anti-democratic and antimodernist views,¹⁵² whilst *Rote Fahne* [Red Flag] stood for a left-wing, more progressive approach.¹⁵³ *Die Musik* took a neutral, more balanced stance,¹⁵⁴ and *Melos*, a musical journal launched in 1920 by the conductor and composer Hermann Scherchen,¹⁵⁵ was specifically dedicated to contemporary music.¹⁵⁶ The “coexistence of competing world-views”¹⁵⁷ and aesthetic approaches was also

¹⁴³ Andreas Eichhorn, “Republikanische Musikkritik”, in *Musikkultur in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Wolfgang Rathert and Giselher Schubert, (Mainz: Schott, 2001), 199.

¹⁴⁴ Adolf Weissmann, “Moderne Musik”, *Die Neue Rundschau* 33, Vol. 1 (1922): 305, quoted in Martin Thrun, “Krieg und Revolution. Über die Erschütterungen von Kunst und Kultur nach 1910”, in *Musikkultur in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Wolfgang Rathert and Giselher Schubert, (Mainz: Schott, 2001), 39.

¹⁴⁵ Martin Thrun, “Krieg und Revolution. Über die Erschütterungen von Kunst und Kultur nach 1910”, in *Musikkultur in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Wolfgang Rathert and Giselher Schubert, (Mainz: Schott, 2001), 39.

¹⁴⁶ “Kurt Weill”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 11, 2022, accessed October 31, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Kurt-Weill>.

¹⁴⁷ Schönberg, “New Music, Outmoded Music, Style and Idea”, 51.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Franklin, “Between the wars”, 192.

¹⁵⁰ Eichhorn, “Republikanische Musikkritik”, 206.

¹⁵¹ Thrun, “Krieg und Revolution”, 39.

¹⁵² Eichhorn, “Republikanische Musikkritik”, 199.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁵⁵ Marion Brück, “Scherchen, Hermann Carl Julius”, *Deutsche Biographie*, 2005, accessed October 27, 2022, https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz111696.html#ndbcontent_leben.

¹⁵⁶ Eichhorn, “Republikanische Musikkritik”, 200.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 199.

reflected in the daily press, which, despite representing a wide range of views, was generally more open towards new music.¹⁵⁸

The post-war period was a time when the centre of cultural modernism in the Austro-German world gravitated towards Berlin — ‘cultural modernism’ had previously been somewhat monopolised by Vienna.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, when Busch relocated to the German capital in 1918, he was part of a general trend. One figure who played a critical role in persuading leading personalities of the musical world to move to Berlin, and thus opening the city to musical modernism,¹⁶⁰ was the pianist turned social-democratic politician and chief music advisor at the Prussian Ministry of Science, Art and Public Education, Leo Kestenbergr.¹⁶¹ Kestenbergr was responsible for Busoni, Schreker, Schönberg and Hindemith being appointed professors at the Preußische Akademie. Schönberg only came to Berlin in 1926,¹⁶² but he was already a familiar face in the city after his two tenures at the Sternsche Konservatorium (1901-1902 and 1911-1915).¹⁶³ Likewise, Hindemith forged links with the city long before his appointment in 1927. Important figures who shaped the musical scene in the early 1920s included Busoni, Schreker and Krenek.

As shown in Chapter 4, Busoni was the only one of Kestenbergr’s appointees whom Busch respected as a composer. Busch’s opposition to Hindemith’s style of ‘Neue Sachlichkeit’ and Schönberg’s atonality remained unwavering,¹⁶⁴ and any attempts (for instance by his brother or son-in-law), to persuade him otherwise remained unsuccessful.¹⁶⁵ Franz Schreker faced the fiercest rejection from Busch, though: his dislike for Schreker, whom he apparently regarded as an inferior composer,¹⁶⁶ was so strong that he resigned from his post at the Akademie once Schreker was appointed Director, see above. Since there is no more granular information as to why exactly Busch disregarded Schreker’s music so passionately, we can only speculate that the latter’s tendency to abolish “formal conventionality”¹⁶⁷ and his new approach to timbral

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ For a more detailed account on the shift from Vienna to Berlin see Susanne Rode-Breyman, “‘Alte’ und ‘Neue’ Musikmetropolen. Wien und Berlin vor und nach 1918“, in *Musikkultur in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Wolfgang Rathert and Giselher Schubert, (Mainz: Schott, 2001), 42-53.

¹⁶⁰ Thrun, “Krieg und Revolution”, 52.

¹⁶¹ For more information on Leo Kestenbergr see “Life and Work”, *Internationale Leo Kestenbergr Gesellschaft*, accessed October 27, 2022, <https://www.leo-kestenbergr.com/home-english/leo-kestenbergr/life-and-work/>.

¹⁶² Eberhard Freitag, *Arnold Schönberg*, (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1973), 161-162.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ See also the Fax from Philip Naegele to Tully Potter in Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 863.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 932.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 269.

¹⁶⁷ Muxeneder, “Endliche Romantik”, 97.

experimentation,¹⁶⁸ went counter to the former's philosophical and aesthetic ideals. Many of Schreker's students followed their teacher to Berlin: Krenek and Haba, for instance.¹⁶⁹ It is doubtful if Haba's work on microtonality¹⁷⁰ would have attracted Busch's approval despite the fact he followed the call for alternative tonal divisions made by Busoni,¹⁷¹ a composer for whom Busch had the highest regards.

Busch, by virtue of teaching at the Akademie, was part of the Berlin music scene in the years after the war but is not particularly associated with any group of composers or artists. A fervent supporter of Busoni's music in general, Busch was not part of his inner circle.¹⁷² Busoni preferred to surround himself with like-minded composers and students,¹⁷³ and whilst he admired Busch as a performer,¹⁷⁴ he perhaps did not recognise him enough as an equal when it came to composing. There is no evidence even that Busoni was familiar at all with Busch's compositions.

In these Berlin years, Busch clearly continued to compose somewhat outside the main aesthetic discourses. He took sides unequivocally and passionately, as demonstrated through his strong reaction to Schreker's appointment, but his own work was only subtly impacted by either modernist or anti-modernist schools of thought. Politically, Busch seems to have been relatively uninvolved, generally, at this time — very much in contrast to his earlier enthusiasm for the German alliance with the Austro-Hungarian side in World War I¹⁷⁵ and his later vocal opposition to the rise of the Nazis in the 1930s.¹⁷⁶ He remained friends with Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, previously chancellor of imperial Germany,¹⁷⁷ but this did not result in any public political positioning. In summary, whilst Busch was no doubt aware of recent developments in the arts and politics, his life and compositional work seem to have been curiously unaffected by these.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Rode-Breyman, "'Alte' und 'Neue' Musikmetropolen", 44.

¹⁷⁰ Traber, "Berlin zwischen den Kriegen", 40.

¹⁷¹ Ferruccio Busoni: *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*, trans. Th. Baker (New York: Schirmer, 1911), 30-33.

¹⁷² For more information about Busoni's circle see Tamara Levitz, "Ferruccio Busoni and his European Circle in Berlin in the early Weimar Republic", *Revista de Musicologia* 16 no. 6 (1993): 3705-3721.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 3708.

¹⁷⁴ Letter from Ferruccio Busoni, dated March 15, 1923, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 238-239.

¹⁷⁵ See also Letter to Fritz Grüters, dated October 29, 1914, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 111.

¹⁷⁶ Busch's unequivocal stance against the rise of the Nazis is, for instance shown in a correspondence to a German concert agency in which he cancelled all further performances in Germany because of the political situation. Letter to an unnamed German Concert Agency, dated April 4, 1933, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 286-287.

¹⁷⁷ See, for example, Letter from Feix Bethmann-Hollweg, the former chancellor's son, to Busch, dated November 12, 1919, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 214-215.

2.3 Conclusion

Examining the available sources, though few in number, it is apparent that Busch's stylistic judgments were led by genuine conviction rather than opportunism. Potter notes that Busch "was never one for sitting on the fence",¹⁷⁸ implying that he placed himself on the traditionalist side of the diverse stylistic spectrum,¹⁷⁹ but nor did he take the side of the anti-modernists, such as Pfitzner. Rather, he was highly selective as to which composers, modernist or traditionalist, he respected. Busch clearly came across as highly opinionated about anything musical. Hedwig Busch-Vischer, his second wife, used the German word "schwernehmend" [perhaps best translated with "taking it heavily"]¹⁸⁰ to describe his serious and sometimes stubborn approach to music and life in general. The fact that esteemed colleagues, close friends and family members sometimes thought differently about new music could not persuade him to openly explore new territories and potentially change his mind.¹⁸¹

Anecdotal evidence shows that Busch could get involved in heated debates about the 'correct' way to compose, as Hermann Scherchen's testimony of a conversation with Busch demonstrates:¹⁸² here, Scherchen expresses his frustration about the fact that such "discussion just amounted to a self-defence of Busch as a composer".¹⁸³ Outwardly, Busch's attitude was often somewhat dogmatic — certainly more so than his brother Fritz's who later championed Hindemith¹⁸⁴ and even conducted the music of Schreker.¹⁸⁵ However, looking at Busch's compositional choices and writing styles more closely reveals that the composer's rejection of certain modernist composers was perhaps not quite so unequivocal. Potter, for instance, speculates that Busch's writing of a *Concerto for Orchestra*, his Op. 43, in 1929,¹⁸⁶ was at least in parts inspired by Hindemith, who pioneered in that genre four years earlier.¹⁸⁷

The aforementioned claim by Hans Gal that Busch was already formed as a musician and composer when coming to Vienna in 1912,¹⁸⁸ thus making him relatively unreceptive to

¹⁷⁸ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 174.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 587.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 932.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 604.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 360.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1078.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1254.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 360.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

new influences, can be applied to his later years as well, at least to some extent. His deep adherence to certain aesthetic ideals, mostly based on his reverence for Brahms and Reger (see Chapters 3 and 4), made it difficult for him to break away from this familiar world and explore a different, more modernist musical language. It is only in brief moments that we can glimpse stylistic curiosity and experimentation. These are the places where Busch, without openly admitting it, perhaps questioned his self-inflicted rigid set of aesthetic values. Whilst not fully signing up to the main features usually associated with early twentieth-century modernism — emancipation of the dissonance, the liberation from thematicism, innovation in melody and harmony, experimentation with instrumental techniques and orchestral instrumentation as well as pushing the boundaries of genre and structure¹⁸⁹ — he tentatively introduced them in some of his works.¹⁹⁰ For a more in-depth of this see Chapters 5 and 6.

The following two chapters, Chapters 3 and 4, address the crucial overarching research question of the main influences upon and sources of inspiration for Busch's piano music, whilst further elaborating on the closely-linked, complex question of how we might understand Busch's music in the context of twentieth-century music. As noted previously, Brahms, Busoni and Reger were the composers most influential on Busch; therefore, I dedicate Chapter 3 to the impact of Brahms, a figure often seen as a bridge between tradition and modernism,¹⁹¹ and Chapter 4 to the influence of Busoni and Reger, both contemporaries of Busch.

¹⁸⁹ Muxeneder, "Endliche Romantik", 97.

¹⁹⁰ For Busch's selectiveness regarding modernist features see also Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 336.

¹⁹¹ Muxeneder, "Endliche Romantik", 93.

Chapter 3: The Influence of Brahms on Busch: Craft as an Affirmation of Tradition

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses Brahms' role in shaping Busch's musical language — both as a reference to past tradition as well as a gateway to modernism. Jens Röth points out that Busch believed in what can best be described as “eternal values in music.”¹⁹²

Compositional craftsmanship, demonstrated in particular by skilful voice leading and the comprehensive understanding of harmony, was for him the primary criterion of quality rather than idiomatic innovation.¹⁹³ Busch was not a reactionary, and did not oppose the stylistic evolution of music, but he showed no interest in breaking with tradition for the sake of it. Consequently, Busch turned to the canonised composers of the past as role models for his own writing, and regularly referred to artists such as Bach, Mozart and Brahms as his 'teachers'.¹⁹⁴ Otto Grüters, Busch's brother-in-law, evidences this approach anecdotally: in a speech given in 1966 to commemorate Adolf Busch's 75th birthday, Grüters reported that, after a performance of Mozart by Rudolf Serkin, the composer said: “This is the music I want to write”.¹⁹⁵ Another episode highlights Busch's high regard for craftsmanship: he responded to favourable comments on his *Handel Variations* Op. 52 simply by saying that the music is good “because of the correct voice leading.”¹⁹⁶

Given Busch's high regard for compositional craftsmanship born out of past traditions, it is no surprise that he turned to Brahms as one of his role models: Brahms himself judged music of his contemporaries against exemplary works from the canon, viewing these as quasi timeless benchmarks. Alexander Zemlinsky, for instance, remembers Brahms referring to one of Mozart's string quintets as an example of “unsurpassed structure-building”¹⁹⁷ when commenting on and criticising the younger colleague's early string

¹⁹² Röth, “Der Komponist als Philologe,” 77.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Grüters, *Ansprache am 5. 6. 1966 in Dahlbruch*, 15.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 7, see also Röth, “Der Komponist als Philologe,” 76.

¹⁹⁷ Alexander Zemlinsky, “Brahms und die neuere Generation“, *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 4, nos. 5-6 (1922), 69-70, in *Über Brahms, von Musikern, Dichtern und Liebhabern*, ed. Renate Hofmann and Kurt Hofmann (Stuttgart: Reclam jun., 1997), 201.

quintet.¹⁹⁸ Later Zemlinsky reports that Brahms saw himself in line with tradition by saying that “this is the way it’s done — from Bach to myself.”¹⁹⁹ Another reason for Busch’s receptiveness towards Brahms can be found in the former’s musical education. Busch’s affinity with Brahms developed in his student years at the Conservatoire in Cologne, where he was taught in the tradition of Brahms: Fritz Steinbach, Busch’s first composition teacher, was a student of Vincenz Lachner and Gustav Nottebohm, both friends of Brahms,²⁰⁰ and Busch’s violin teacher, Bram Eldering, also had strong links with Brahms, having studied with Joseph Joachim and being personally acquainted with Brahms.²⁰¹ Overall, it can be said that Busch was educated in the spirit of the perceived lineage Bach-Beethoven-Brahms:²⁰² both teachers were very much in the Brahms ‘camp’ in the Brahms-Wagner dispute, a division shaping much musical discussion in the late nineteenth century.²⁰³

Busch’s affection for Brahms also needs to be seen in the light of a general adoration of the music of Brahms amongst early twentieth-century composers, which can be found across the apparent divide between conservatism and the modernist avant-garde. Each composer’s stylistic background and aesthetic ideals, however, determined which aspects of Brahms’ music was in the centre of their interest: Brahms’ impact on Busch, for instance, is apparent primarily in relation to matters of musical architecture and harmonic language; this contrasts with Schönberg, who was most interested in aspects of Brahmsian motivic development and its possibilities for serialist and dodecaphonic techniques. Schönberg expands on these aspects in his essay ‘Brahms the Progressive’, in which he meticulously analyses motivic correlations in Brahms’ *Fourth Symphony* Op. 98, his *String Quartet* Op. 51 no. 2 and the third of the *Vier Ernste Gesänge* Op. 121.²⁰⁴ Perhaps, then, Brahms’ influence on Busch can be seen as both an affirmation of tradition and a bridge to modernism, since strong links with the Brahmsian idiom are characteristic of seemingly opposing stylistic tendencies of the time: this is explored below.

The fact that Brahms plays a major role amongst the multitude of stylistic influences on Adolf Busch has been acknowledged in all critical literature on Busch, but the most substantial and detailed discussion of this matter has been conducted by Jens Røth: in

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 65-66.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 68-69.

²⁰² Popp, “Max Reger und Adolf Busch”, 85-86.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Schönberg, “Brahms the Progressive”, 62, 87-89, 90-93.

his thesis on Busch's lieder he meticulously compares traits of Busch's songs with those of Reger and Brahms,²⁰⁵ writing, in summary, "the idealistic neo-Kantian orientation on timeless values and the appreciation of a tradition of craftsmanship in art links Busch with Johannes Brahms".²⁰⁶ Other scholars have also written about Brahms' impact on Busch, but mostly in a more general way. Potter, for instance, describes Busch's style "in horse-racing parlance as 'by Reger out of Brahms'",²⁰⁷ whilst Dominik Sackmann outlines a lineage reaching from Bach to Busch with Brahms and Reger in the middle.²⁰⁸

Brahms' impact on Busch's writing was referenced on a few occasions by Busch himself; in a letter to Fritz Steinbach, for instance, Brahms is mentioned as a major factor in Busch's decision to write songs for voice, viola and piano.²⁰⁹ Busch clearly references Brahms' *Zwei Gesänge* (two songs) Op. 91, and uses this combination of instruments in his *Drei Lieder* Op. 3a and *Zwei Lieder* Op. 23b.²¹⁰ Traces of Brahms's influence can be found throughout Busch's oeuvre, and his piano works are no exception. To explore this more fully, I first discuss the composers' broad approach to writing for the piano and highlight similarities in approach and genre. I then examine each of Busch's four *intermezzi*, comparing them to aspects of those of Brahms, highlighting common traits as well as areas in which Busch took a different path.

3.2 Busch's Piano Music in the Light of the Brahms Tradition

3.2.1 *Busch and Brahms: Common Factors in their Approach to Piano Composition*

Taking a bird's-eye view of each composer's oeuvre, it is noticeable that both Busch and Brahms took significant breaks from writing for solo piano in the middle of their lives: in Brahms' case there was a gap of eleven years between the solo version of his *Waltzes* Op. 39 (1867) and the *Piano Pieces* Op. 76 (1878), and it took Busch nineteen years to resume composing for solo piano after he had completed the *Sonata* op. 25 (1922)²¹¹. It is also striking that both artists exclusively composed short character pieces when

²⁰⁵ Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe," 261-277.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁰⁷ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1214.

²⁰⁸ Sackmann, *Einswerden von Schaffen und Nachschaffen*, 124.

²⁰⁹ Letter to Fritz Steinbach, dated August 4, 1910 in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 28-29, see also Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe," 79.

²¹⁰ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1244-1245.

²¹¹ *Allegro Bizarro* and 'Scherzo', the second movement of his *Suite* op. 60b, were written in 1941. See Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch*, 21; 25.

writing for the piano later in life. Broadly, Brahms' choice of genre for his solo piano music divides clearly into three stages. Denis Matthews describes this as Brahms' "definite plurality",²¹² pointing out the "architectural", "contrapuntal" and "lyrical"²¹³ phases of the piano writing: the first represented by the early sonatas, the second by sets of variations and the last by the later piano pieces.²¹⁴ Busch also composed in a variety of piano genres, but with less diversity of form than Brahms: most of Busch's piano works are single movement character pieces. The only significant exception is the *Sonata* Op. 25, written in the early part of his middle period and constituting his only large-scale piano work. The early *Fantasy* of 1908 is also written in sonata form but consists of one movement only. John Rink contrasts Brahms's plurality of genre with his overall stylistic unity, endorsing Matthews' view that, despite gradual refinements in approach, the composer's musical language remained the same.²¹⁵ Similarly to Brahms, Busch's stylistic changes are subtle. Whilst still searching for his own musical language and showing some openness to idiomatic and tonal innovation in the earlier works, his later piano pieces seem generally more settled and less experimental. However, Busch never abandoned the parameters of traditional harmony and counterpoint, and any changes in approach do not amount to significant stylistic alterations.

The fact that neither composer attributed metronome markings to their piano pieces is another conspicuous parallel.²¹⁶ Brahms allegedly did not approve of the metronome: legend has it that he responded to questions relating to numerical tempo markings with the comment, "Do you really believe that I am such a fool to play my pieces always in the same manner?"²¹⁷ Busch is not known to have made an equally strong statement. However, by not indicating metronome markings, he likewise delegates greater interpretative responsibilities to the performer, and thus follows in Brahms' footsteps rather than emulating the approach of some modernist composers who used metronome marks extensively, amongst those Max Reger, who otherwise had a profound impact on Busch (see section 4.4). Both artists share the tendency to avoid extreme tempos: *presto* and *adagio* are rarely used, and moderating descriptors such as *ma non troppo* and *un poco* are often added to *allegro* or *vivace* markings. The pianist and Brahms scholar Detlef Kraus speculates that it was Brahms' intent to prioritise intensity over virtuosity by

²¹² Denis Matthews, *Brahms Piano Music*, (London: BBC Publications, 1978), 5.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ John Rink, "Opposition and integration in the piano music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 79.

²¹⁶ Brahms' second *Piano Concerto* op. 83 is the exception here.

²¹⁷ Detlef Kraus, *Johannes Brahms als Klavierkomponist*, (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1989), 111.

keeping away from extreme speeds.²¹⁸ The same can be said of Busch: the only piece marked *presto* (and even here it is the weaker *quasi presto*) is his late 'Scherzo' Op. 60b no. 2, and *adagio* is never applied to a movement or piece as its main heading (the third variation of the second movement of the *Sonata* Op. 25 is titled *adagio*, and *quasi adagio* appears at the end of the first movement, though). Busch showed a general proclivity for *andante* headings, which underlines the tendency towards moderation in tempo.²¹⁹

Baroque music was a common point of reference for Busch and Brahms. This was not uncommon at the time and stems from a general longing for expressing the past in the Romantic period;²²⁰ Mendelssohn's Bach revival or baroque adaptations by Gounod are exemplary here.²²¹ Both Busch and Brahms wrote historicised piano pieces — examples include Brahms' two *Sarabands* and Busch's *Three Pieces in Old Style* — but in Busch's oeuvre as a whole many more references to baroque style can be found. Some works are directly linked to the music of the baroque era, such as his *Fantasy on the recitative 'Mein Gott, warum hast Du mich verlassen?'* from the *St Matthew Passion* and the *Chorale 'Aus tiefster Not schrei ich zu Dir'* by J.S. Bach, for organ Op. 19a²²² or his *Handel Variations* for chamber orchestra with piano op. 52.²²³ Similarly, Brahms wrote his own set of *Handel Variations* Op. 24, which is followed by a fugue, and he transcribed Bach's *Chaconne* from the second *Violin Partita* for left-hand piano. Busch often used baroque titles, such as *Prelude and Passacaglia* for two violins and piano Op. 4,²²⁴ *Passacaglia and Fugue* for organ Op. 27²²⁵ and *Five Preludes and Fugues* for string quartet Op. 36.²²⁶ His numerous suites for solo instruments and small ensembles and the inclusion of a fugue in most of his sets of variations are additional indicators of his affinity with eighteenth-century music. Brahms chose baroque titles less frequently than Busch: only his lesser-known works for organ include choral preludes, preludes and fugues. Busch's strong affinity to baroque tradition is also a shared trait with Busoni and Reger (see Chapter 4).

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 115.

²¹⁹ *Fantasy* (1908) first section, *Andante sostenuto*; *Klavierstück* (1916), *Andante*; *Two Canons and a little Fugue* (1916) no. 1, *Andante*; *Three Pieces in old Style* (1917) no. 2, *Andante*; *Sonata* op. 25 (1922) 2nd movement, *Andante con variazioni*; *Suite* op. 60b (1941) no. 1, *Andante un poco Agitato*; *Andante affettuoso* (1945); *Andante espressivo* (1951).

²²⁰ See, for instance Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (London: faber & faber, 1971, 1997), 515, Citations refer to 1997 edition.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1247.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 1257.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1242.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1250.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1252.

It is also worth noting that both composers used the piano in chamber music throughout their compositional lives and wrote concertos for piano and orchestra — Brahms wrote seventeen and Busch 13 chamber works for piano with strings or/and wind instruments, ranging from duos to quintets; whilst Brahms composed two piano concertos, Busch wrote only one (see Section 6.4). A closer investigation of the similarities and differences in their ensemble writing is, however, beyond the scope of this discussion.

Busch's tendency to regard the piano as a substitute for other instruments, or a group of instruments, discussed in chapters 5 and 6, follows Brahms' often symphonic piano writing — indeed, Robert Schumann described Brahms' *piano sonatas* as “veiled *symphonies*”.²²⁷ Rink specifies that Schumann's comment points to “the variegated timbral palette, dense textures and instrumental characterisations”²²⁸ of the music, but also to the “essentially non-pianistic nature of the piano style”.²²⁹ Such descriptors can equally be applied to many of Busch's piano works. There are, however, genres in which both composers took a different approach to piano writing. An orchestral piano style was, for instance, rarely applied in Brahms' *intermezzi*;²³⁰ instead, he usually reverted to a more vocal, texturally less dense, idiom here. Similarly, virtuoso piano writing, found in much of Brahms' piano music, primarily in his sonatas, variations and rhapsodies, is a seldom occurrence in his *intermezzi*.

Of the genres Busch chose for his solo piano works, the *intermezzo* is that most associated with Brahms. It is therefore particularly apt to examine ‘Brahmsian’ characteristics of Busch's four *intermezzi*: aspects of this are discussed below, with respect to each piece. The scores of each *intermezzo* can be found in Appendix I. The original manuscripts are in the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, with digital copies being held at the Max Reger Institut/Elsa Reger Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv in Karlsruhe.

A variety of characters and approaches is apparent within the same genre: Brahms' eighteen *Intermezzi* are diverse, ranging from the serene and humorous Op. 119 no. 3 to the deep melancholy of Op. 117 no. 2, and from the melodic complexity of Op. 76 no. 6 to the relative simplicity of Op. 117 no. 1. The question then arises as to whether it is possible to define archetypical characteristics of a Brahmsian *intermezzo* with which the Busch pieces can be compared.

²²⁷ Robert Schumann, “Neue Bahnen”, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 39 no. 18, (28 October 1853): 185.

²²⁸ Rink, “Opposition and integration”, 81.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ The orchestral style of parts of *intermezzi* Op. 118 nos. 4 and 6 are the exception to this general observation.

Kraus identifies four attributes as inherent to Brahms' *intermezzi*: clarity of structure, a generally vocal outlook, depth of expression and relatively low-level technical challenges.²³¹ Whilst these descriptors are certainly helpful, they are also rather general and sometimes difficult to evidence objectively. Structure is perhaps easier to discuss than issues of expressivity, and even technical difficulty is to an extent a matter subjective to each pianist. To some degree, examining score markings and textural choices can help to illuminate Busch's approach to expression and vocality, aiding a discussion of his proximity to the Brahmsian model. Expressive depth is particularly difficult to pinpoint as it is often implicit rather than clearly defined by markings. It therefore is essential to look at specific examples to identify similarities and differences between the two composers. Overall, the following discussion of the *intermezzi* shows that Brahms had a close and immediate impact on Busch. It also demonstrates that Busch was not imitating the Brahmsian idiom but further developing and integrating it into his own unique musical language.

3.2.2 Brahmsian Traits in Busch's *Intermezzo in B flat major (1909)*

In terms of Kraus' key characteristics of Brahms' *intermezzi*, regarding structure, vocality, expressivity and instrumental challenge, Busch's first *Intermezzo* in B flat major is very close to this prototype. Firstly, the music is clearly structured: the piece is written in ternary form, consisting of three well-defined main sections.²³² Secondly, the vocal character is prevalent throughout, though manifested in different ways: the outer sections are written in a chorale-like style, and the middle section consists of polyphonically interwoven cantabile lines in conflicting duplets and triplets, dominated by an upper singing line. Thirdly, the chosen markings point towards a high degree of expressiveness: Busch uses 'espressivo' five times in an otherwise sparsely-marked score. Density of texture (for example in bars 19 and 20) and the frequent use of chromaticism (for example in bars 37 and 38) also contribute to the intensity and expressiveness. Lastly, comparing the B flat major *Intermezzo* with Busch's other piano music — for instance the *Sonata op. 25*, or pieces such as the two *Allegros* written in the early 1940s — it is apparent that the technical demands for the performer are significantly less, here.

Examining these issues more specifically, it is clear that the choral nature of Busch's writing in this piece is reminiscent of similar techniques in Brahms' piano music. This can

²³¹ Kraus, *Johannes Brahms als Klavierkomponist*, 41.

²³² Bars 1-12, 13-33 and 34-46.

be seen by comparing the opening bars of Busch's *Intermezzo* (see figure 1) with some passages from Brahms' *intermezzi* such as the beginning of Op. 116 no. 6 (see figure 2²³³) or bars 57-64 of Op. 118 no. 2 (figure 3²³⁴).

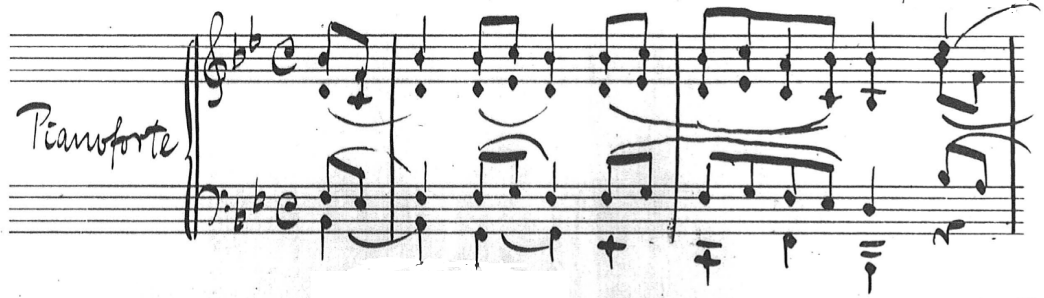


Figure 1: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in B flat major, bars 1-2

Figure 2: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 116 no. 6, bars 1-5

Figure 3: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 118 no. 2, bars 57-62

²³³ Johannes Brahms, *Phantasien* Op. 116 (Leipzig: Peters, 1910).

²³⁴ Johannes Brahms, *Klavierstücke* Op. 118 (Leipzig: Peters, 1910).

Like Brahms, in this *Intermezzo* Busch often takes a polyphonic approach to cantabile lines; this is the case, for example, in the passage beginning in bar 7 (see figure 4), which we might compare to bars 22-38 of Brahms' *Intermezzo* 117 no. 2 (see figure 5²³⁵) or the whole of *Intermezzo* op. 119 no. 1.



Figure 4: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in B flat major, bars 7-8

Figure 5: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 117 no. 2, bars 23-27

It is also striking that Busch often chooses expressive terms similar to favourites of Brahms; in particular 'poco agitato' which Busch uses in bar 13, is often regarded as one of Brahms' trademarks,²³⁶ but also the frequent use of the term 'espressivo' (bars 7, 14, 20, 21 and 26), while of course not specific to Brahms, is common in his piano music. Taking all the above into account, it seems clear that the *Intermezzo* in B flat major is primarily conceived under the influence of the Brahmsian idiom. That is not to say that other sources of inspiration are insignificant. However, of all Busch's influences, Brahms clearly has most distinctive presence in this piece.

²³⁵ Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzi* Op. 117 (Leipzig: Peters, 1910).

²³⁶ Kraus, *Johannes Brahms*, 112.

3.2.3 *Beyond the Brahmsian ideal: Klavierstück (Intermezzo)²³⁷ in A minor (1916)*

The aesthetic concept of Busch's *Klavierstück* is somewhat different to that of the B flat major *Intermezzo*: whilst Brahms' influence remains prevalent in terms of structure and expressivity, when it comes to vocality and pianistic demand Busch veers away from the Brahmsian model. Therefore, Busch develops the Brahmsian idiom further by keeping some of its traits whilst introducing new stylistic elements at the same time.

Aspects of the *Klavierstück* which seem to correspond to the Brahmsian ideal are easy to define. The distinct ternary form renders the *Klavierstück* architecturally unambiguous,²³⁸ providing the structural clarity characteristic of a Brahms *intermezzo*.²³⁹ Busch uses *espressivo* markings extensively and attributes *agitato* to bars 11 and 62 and *molto tranquillo* to bar 74: similar to the *Intermezzo* in B flat major, this is close to the Brahmsian prototype in terms of expressivity. However, a vocal approach to piano writing — one of the traits of a Brahms *intermezzo* identified by Kraus — is only partially apparent here; the largely chordal piano writing of the *Klavierstück*, covering the full range of the instrument, especially in some passages of the outer sections, can best be described as broadly symphonic, resulting in higher technical demands than those of Busch's other *intermezzi*. The combination of orchestral writing and a pianistically more demanding score is indicative of Busch moving away, somewhat, from the ideal of a Brahmsian *intermezzo* described above. The *Six Intermezzi* Op. 45 by Max Reger, which are pianistically more challenging than those of Brahms, might have served as a source of inspiration, instead.

Beyond this clear deviation from the approach to piano writing of Brahms' *intermezzi* lie further, more subtle differences: the *Klavierstück* displays certain features similar to those typically found in the Brahmsian model but realised somewhat differently. For instance, quaver or semiquaver lines, constituting an undercurrent to the main melodic narrative, can be found recurrently in the piano writing of Busch and Brahms. In Brahms' *intermezzi*, these lines tend to consist of uniform patterns and primarily support the underlying chord progressions, accompanying the melody:²⁴⁰ this is apparent, for example, in bars 21-37 of the *Intermezzo* Op. 117 no. 1 (see figure 6) or bars 36-71 of the

²³⁷ The title *Intermezzo* was added later on. See section 2.8.

²³⁸ Bars 1-23, 24-55 and 56-77.

²³⁹ Kraus, *Johannes Brahms*, 41.

²⁴⁰ An exception to this tendency is perhaps *Intermezzo* Op. 118 no. 6: here, the running demisemiquavers have a greater degree of independence, especially in bars 23-24.

Intermezzo Op. 119 no. 2 (see figure 7²⁴¹). In the middle section of the *Klavierstück*, however, the semiquaver line is more independent, sometimes hinting at chords other than those of the underlying harmonic progression, often seeming to take on the character of countermelody rather than accompaniment, and thus achieving a greater layer of density (see figure 8).

The image shows a musical score for Johannes Brahms' *Intermezzo* Op. 117 no. 1, bars 21-24. The score is in G major, 3/4 time, and marked "Più Adagio." The upper staff features a melodic line with a slur over the first four bars and a fermata over the fifth bar. The lower staff features a semiquaver accompaniment with a "rit." marking under each bar. The dynamic marking "pp sempre, ma molto espressivo" is placed between the staves.

Figure 6: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op 117 no. 1, bars 21-24

²⁴¹ Johannes Brahms, *Klavierstücke* Op. 119 (Leipzig: Peters, 1910).

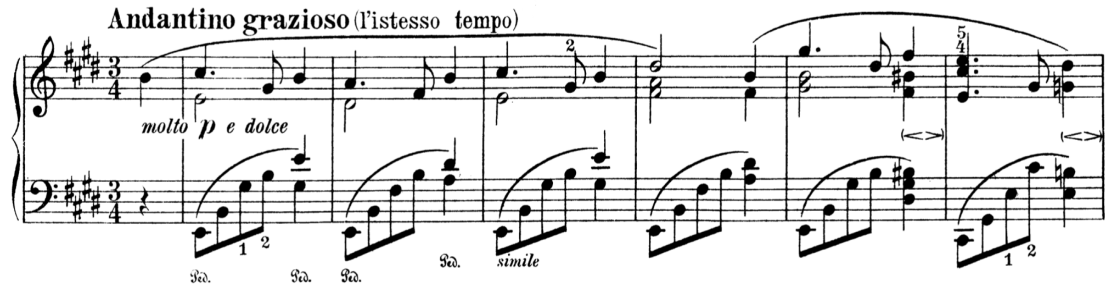


Figure 7: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 119 no. 2, bars 36-41



Figure 8: Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück*, bars 24-27

In ending the otherwise rather tumultuous *Klavierstück* slowly and quietly Busch falls in line with the spirit of most *intermezzi* by Brahms: this can be evidenced by comparing the end of the *Klavierstück* (see figure 9) with, for instance, the final bars of Brahms' Ops. 116 no. 5 (see figure 10), 118 no. 4 and 119 no. 2. In the final sections of these *intermezzi*, however, the previously somewhat agitated music merely slows down in pace and energy without any significant thematic developments. In contrast, Busch's *Klavierstück* finishes with a new section, spanning over five bars, in which the musical material is significantly further developed. Arguably, something similar to this is apparent in the more substantial codettas of Brahms' *Intermezzi* Op. 76 no. 3 and Op. 116 no. 6. However, the textural and harmonic language is less complex here than at the end of the work by Busch.²⁴² These juxtapositions exemplify that, whilst adapting much of the Brahmsian idiom, Busch advanced Brahms' style further into the twentieth century.

²⁴² This comparison is perhaps slightly problematic anyway as the pieces differ significantly in character: both *intermezzi* are calmer and less dramatic than the *Klavierstück*.



Figure 9: Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück*, bars 73-79



Figure 10: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 116 no. 5, bars 35-39

3.2.4 *New Paths*: *Intermezzo in C sharp minor* (1917)

Busch's *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor is structurally more ambiguous than those described above, and thus, if we follow Kraus' criteria, further away from the Brahmsian idiom. However, these criteria, whilst being useful points of orientation, are perhaps too simplistic in this context and a more granular investigation is needed here. Examining Brahms' *intermezzi* it becomes apparent that a more veiled structure is not entirely unusual, albeit not very common. One of the more structurally enigmatic of Brahms' *intermezzi*, his Op. 116 no. 4, can in some ways be seen as an architectural model for Busch's *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor. Both works are built around a loose ternary form

and consist of an extended 'A' section (bars 1-34 of the Busch, and bars 1-36 of the Brahms), followed by a short 'B' section (bars 35-48 of the Busch, and bars 37-49 of the Brahms) and concluded by a third 'C' section, in which the materials from 'A' and 'B' are merged (bars 48-69 of the Busch, and bars 50-71 of the Brahms). The two *intermezzi* are also similar in that the boundaries between the sections are not always clear cut. The beginnings of the final sections, for instance, might equally be located a few bars later: bar 57 of the Busch and bar 53 of the Brahms — both are marked by a significant key change.

Despite this, the similarities between the two pieces do not reach beyond these aspects of structure: significant differences can be found in terms of character and musical language. If we examine Busch's C sharp minor *Intermezzo* in terms of expressivity, a connection to Brahms' depth of expression, claimed by Kraus, is certainly in evidence. At times, however, Busch seems to elevate Brahmsian expression to an almost expressionistic level — similar to the observations made in relation to the *Klavierstück*, this is another indication that Busch uses the Brahmsian idiom as a vehicle to explore and introduce features of twentieth-century music. This is best illustrated by the use of wide and dissonant melodic intervals, especially the frequent use of tritones and sevenths (for instance in bars 20-35: see figure 11). The incorporation of melodic sevenths is not foreign to Brahms — the *Intermezzo* Op. 76 no. 6 is exemplary in this respect (see figure 12²⁴³). However, the preceding tritone and the rapidly changing harmonies in the excerpt from the Busch *Intermezzo* suggest a different, more expressive, perhaps even more modernist, musical language.

²⁴³ Johannes Brahms, *Klavierstücke* Op. 76 (Leipzig: Peters, 1910).

Figure 11: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor, bars 23-32

Andante con moto.
Sanft bewegt.

Figure 12: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 76 no. 6, bars 1-4

In terms of piano writing, there is little in Busch's writing to help one argue for either a particular closeness or a strong contrast to the Brahmsian idiom. Overall, Busch's *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor contains vocal and symphonic elements, and unlike some of his other piano pieces, the partly challenging piano writing is instrumentally more idiomatic than many of his other works (see discussion in Chapter 4).

There are no direct motivic references to the music of Brahms in this *Intermezzo*, but one might wonder whether Brahms' *Intermezzo* Op. 117 no. 3, his only *intermezzo* in C sharp

minor — the same key as Busch's *intermezzo* — served as a source of inspiration. For instance, the octaves in bars 18 and 19 of the piece by Busch convey a character somewhat reminiscent of the unison octaves of Brahms' Op. 117 no. 3, described by Kraus as "the sound of bare octaves void of colour" (see figures 13 and 14).²⁴⁴ By moving the octave melodies in a more agitated and extrovert manner later in the piece, Busch moves well beyond the hollow and eerie nature of the octaves in the Brahms *Intermezzo*. Therefore, the reference, if intended, is primarily textural and relates only peripherally to mood and character. In summary, Brahms' influence is prevalent on many levels throughout the *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor, but the uniqueness of Busch's style and musical language is also evident.

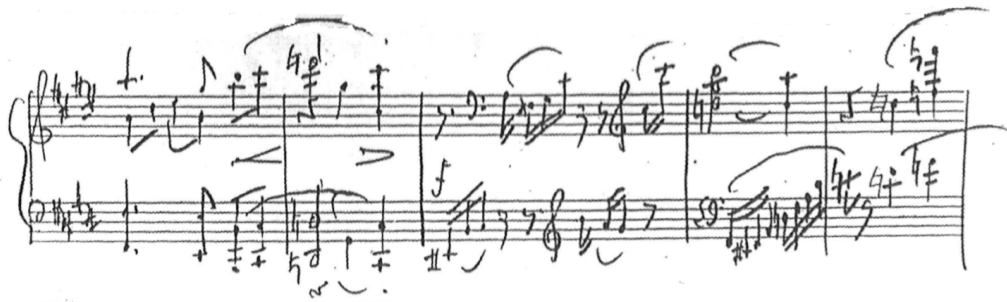


Figure 13: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor, bars 18-22

Andante con moto.

molto p e sotto voce sempre

senza Ped.

Figure 14: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 117 no. 3, bars 1-5

3.2.5 *The Maverick*: Intermezzo in A minor (undated, presumably 1909)

Busch's *Intermezzo* in A minor appears last in this discussion because the date of composition cannot be verified beyond doubt. However, as noted in Appendix III, it is likely that it was written before the *Klavierstück* and the *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor.

²⁴⁴ Kraus, *Johannes Brahms*, 45.

This piece stands out amongst the *intermezzi* in terms of its treatment of harmony, hence my characterisation of it as ‘the maverick’. Unlike Busch’s other *intermezzi*, tonality remains ambiguous until the end: the tonic key of A minor only appears in the final bar of the piece. This quasi absence of a tonic key demonstrates Busch’s willingness to experiment with tonality. He does establish some fleeting points of tonal arrival, such as with the use of C major at the beginning of the *tranquillo* section in bar 10 (see figure 15), and A flat major in the equivalent passage in bar 35.



Figure 15: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in A minor, bars 9-14

However, these moments of tonal centrality do not last for long or point towards the tonic key. The tonic key of A major does make a brief appearance in bar 15 and 16 (see figure 16), but even this does not establish a clear tonal centre.



Figure 16: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in A minor, bars 15-16

The question arises whether this form of tonal elusiveness is also characteristic of Brahms’ *intermezzi*. Brahms was certainly not averse to such ambiguity, and in some *intermezzi* tonal centrality is established only late in the piece: good examples are Op. 76 no. 4 and the aforementioned Op. 116 no. 4. In Op. 76 no. 4, also referred to by Edward

T. Cone to illustrate Brahms' approach to tonal centricity,²⁴⁵ whilst the tonic chord of B flat major does not appear until bar 45, the dominant seventh at the start clearly indicates the harmonic telos (see figure 17).

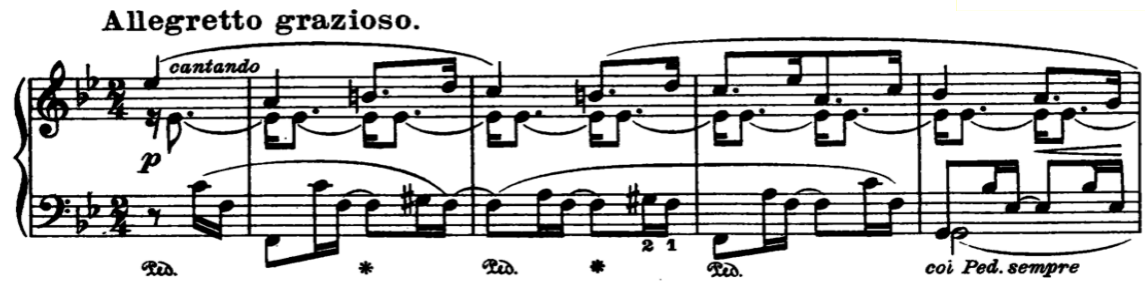


Figure 17: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 76 no. 4, bars 1-4

In Op. 116 no. 4, the tonic chord appears at the beginning of the work, on the upbeat to bar 1, but immediately afterwards, on the downbeat of the first bar, this chord is transformed into C sharp minor, leaving the listener somewhat in suspense as to the tonic key (see figure 18), which is established beyond doubt only at the end of the piece. Unlike in the Busch *Intermezzo* in A minor, these two *intermezzi* by Brahms imply the tonic key from the outset — either by the introduction of the dominant seventh or by a fleeting appearance of the tonic chord. Therefore, it can be said that Busch adapts aspects of Brahmsian ambiguity but exceeds these in his *Intermezzo* in A minor.



Figure 18: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 116 no. 4, bars 1-4

Notably, there is one *intermezzo* in which Brahms takes harmonic uncertainty further than in the two discussed above, and this — Op. 118 no. 1 — is in A minor, the same key as this harmonically ambiguous *intermezzo* by Busch. Edward T. Cone points out Brahms' exceptional tonal language in this piece,²⁴⁶ comparing the harmonic journey with a detective story in which the case is only solved at the very end.²⁴⁷ Cone writes about the

²⁴⁵ Edward T. Cone, "Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story — or a Brahms Intermezzo", *The Georgia Review*, Volume 31 No 3 (1977): 269.

²⁴⁶ Cone, "Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story", 566-567.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 569.

striking fact that there are “three ‘suspects’, C, A and F”²⁴⁸ that all have the potential to become the tonal centre. It is, indeed, only in bar 30 of this forty-one-bar piece, that A minor is somewhat established as the tonic key, showing clear similarities with the A minor *Intermezzo* by Busch. Brahms is not quite as radical as Busch, though: there are glimpses of A minor already in bar 2 of Brahms’ Op. 118 no. 1 and the tonal centre is briefly implied by the dominant seventh in bar 11.

The two *intermezzi* display similarities in terms of character, also: both begin somewhat impulsively and move from this highly energetic start to a tranquil ending. Examining Busch’s piece against the criteria set by Detlef Kraus, there are some correspondences and some deviations. Structurally, the *Intermezzo* is clearly defined: the piece can best be divided into four sections (A: 1-9; B: 10-25; C: 26-34; B1 plus small codetta: 35-47). The piano writing of the *Intermezzo* can be described as vocal in certain respects – especially the chorale-like sections B and B1. Often coinciding with such vocality, Busch’s broadly polyphonic approach, especially in section A, might be inspired by Brahms – Brahms’ *Intermezzo* Op. 117 no. 2 is a good example (for the opening bars of this piece see figure 19). The dense and almost impulsive expressivity in parts of the Busch *Intermezzo* is less similar to Brahms’ writing in this genre, though, and points to a tentative stylistic shift towards modernism and early expressionism.



Figure 19: Johannes Brahms, *Intermezzo* Op. 117 no. 2, bars 1-3

The mere fact that Busch chose the key of A minor for his tonally most experimental *intermezzo*, a key in which Brahms also was at his most daring, is notable; it is perhaps in itself a reference to Brahms. At the same time, in this piece Busch moves away from the earlier defined prototype of a Brahms *intermezzo* in many respects. We might therefore consider that this piece constitutes a young composer’s strong and confident statement of individuality.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

3.3 Conclusion

The above demonstrates that the piano works of Brahms had a significant impact on Busch's writing for the instrument. In the light of the fact that Brahms highlighted the importance of compositional craftsmanship and viewed works from the canonical repertoire as significant 'timeless' benchmarks against which any music can be judged — ideals both composers shared — his influence on Busch can be seen as an affirmation of tradition. However, by virtue of being a shared role-model for modernist and traditionalist composers alike, Brahms also acted as a gateway to stylistic innovation for Busch. Furthermore, Busch's tendency to partially adapt the Brahmsian idiom in his *intermezzi* whilst transforming its musical language into a style more akin to twentieth-century music, further exemplifies that Brahms was not only a reference point to the past but also a catalyst for a tentatively more modernist future.

Chapter 4: The influence of Busoni and Reger: Compositional Craft in the Context of Modernism

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the impact of Busoni and Reger on Busch's piano writing. As discussed in Chapter 2, Busch was highly selective as to which contemporary composer he would approve of in the light of the highly diverse landscape of modernist styles. Amongst all composers of the early twentieth century it is particularly Reger and Busoni that attracted Busch's interest. That is not to say that he did not appreciate and perform music of other contemporaries, Hermann Suter and Volkmar Andreae are particularly noteworthy here.²⁴⁹ However, of all modernist influences on Busch, those of Busoni and Reger were the strongest.

Ferruccio Busoni's influence on Busch is difficult to pinpoint because of the former's stylistic diversity which ranges from the radically modernist to the traditional: in his *Sketch of a New Aesthetic in Music* of 1907, for instance, Busoni formulated a vision that includes microtonality and electronic music,²⁵⁰ but later in life he developed a proclivity for a more historicist and classicist approach.²⁵¹ It is therefore my intent to discuss how the various facets of Busoni's music — from the Neoclassical to the experimental — were influential upon Busch, who met Busoni several times and performed his works on numerous occasions.²⁵² Busoni's high regard for Busch as a performer is documented,²⁵³ but there is no evidence of his familiarity with Busch's compositions.

Of all artists, Max Reger was perhaps the composer who had the most obvious influence on Busch. The latter's regard for Reger as, in his view, the most significant contemporary composer,²⁵⁴ superficially points towards some form of conservatism: Reger is often seen as a traditionalist.²⁵⁵ Whilst this is true in the sense that Reger never abandoned tonality and stayed somewhat faithful to traditional form and structure, it is worth noting that he

²⁴⁹ Sackmann, *Einswerden von Schaffen und Nachschaffen*, 68-69, 115.

²⁵⁰ Ferruccio Busoni: *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*, trans. Th. Baker (New York: Schirmer, 1911), 30-33.

²⁵¹ Albrecht Riethmüller, "Ferruccio Busoni" in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Personenteil, Vol. 3*, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2005), 1398-1399.

²⁵² Potter, Adolf Busch, 992-993.

²⁵³ Letter from Ferruccio Busoni, dated March 15, 1923, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 238-239.

²⁵⁴ Grüters, *Ansprache*, 15.

²⁵⁵ Susanne Popp, "Max Reger" in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Personenteil, Vol. 13*, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2005), 1427.

was held in high esteem by Arnold Schönberg,²⁵⁶ who identified Reger as one of “the greatest musicians” of the time.²⁵⁷ In fact, Reger was the composer most frequently performed at Schönberg’s Society for Private Musical Performances, with some concerts dedicated entirely to his music.²⁵⁸ It was also Schönberg with whom Busch was in contact in planning his revision of Reger’s Violin Concerto in 1938.²⁵⁹ While somewhat surprising in certain respects, Schönberg’s appreciation for Reger is perhaps an indication that the frontiers of the apparent divide between tonality and atonality, modernism and tradition are not as clear-cut as sometimes implied. Just as aspects of Reger’s music were of interest to Schönberg and others, assuming Busch’s reverence for tradition, conventional skills and canonical composers to be retrogressive does not do justice to the contextual complexity of the situation.

This is supported by the fact that Busch’s music often indicates that he was not immune to the stylistic innovations of his time and that his outward rejection of the musical avant-garde was less absolute than an initial impression might suggest. Therefore, a rather more nuanced view is needed to approach the question of his place in the twentieth century. The need for a more granular examination of Busch’s attitude towards modernism is supported, for example, by the late Peter Serkin: he stated in my interview with him that Busch “was never a Schönbergian, but he had much interest [in him]” (see Appendix III for full transcript).

The modernist characteristics of Busch’s music are subtle,²⁶⁰ though, and he never followed the rules of serialism or any other new system in the manner of composers such as Messiaen or Hindemith. Nor did Busch ever completely abandon traditional tonality. However, he tentatively integrated elements of polytonality and bitonality, a fact that has been widely acknowledged in the critical literature.²⁶¹ His incorporation of moments of dissolving tonality, where harmonies momentarily abandon conventions and tonal centrality is obscured, is often somewhat similar to the Second Viennese School’s early approach to free atonality. Looking at Busch’s oeuvre as a whole, the late 1910s and early 1920s were the years in which he was most susceptible to stylistic and tonal experimentation. His *Sonata* for piano Op. 25, written in 1922, falls into this period and,

²⁵⁶ Letter from Schönberg to A. von Zemlinsky, dated October 26, 1922, *Arnold Schönberg Center*, accessed February 27, 2021, http://archive.schoenberg.at/letters/search_show_letter.php?ID_Number=744.

²⁵⁷ Arnold Schönberg, “Brahms the Progressive” in *Style and Idea*, trans. Dika Newlin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 53.

²⁵⁸ Jonas Pfohl, “Arnold Schönberg, Max Reger und der Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen”, *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, Vol. 67, Iss. 6 (2012): 70.

²⁵⁹ Popp, “Max Reger und Adolf Busch,” 101-102.

²⁶⁰ See also Röth, “Der Komponist als Philologe”, 343.

²⁶¹ See, for example, Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1216.

within the context of his music for solo piano, is the most significant testimony to his opening up to modernity. Highlighting the cultural background against which this *Sonata* was conceived, as well as considering Busch's own artistic circumstances, helps us to understand and explain these idiomatic subtleties. Section 4.2 consists of a discussion of Busoni's influence on Busch; this is followed by an examination of Reger's impact on Busch's compositional style in section 4.3.

4.2 The Influence of Busoni on the Piano Music of Adolf Busch

When Busch relocated to Berlin in 1918, where he had been appointed professor of violin, succeeding renowned teachers such as Joseph Joachim and Karl Klingler, he was confronted with the prevalent spirit of renewal. After the horrors of World War I, society was seeking more radical political and cultural paths.²⁶² Busch's relocation happened just two years after the death of his mentor, Max Reger, in 1916, which marked the end of an era for Busch as a composer: this event, discussed below in greater depth, can be seen as a turning point which perhaps prompted him to seek new ways to develop his musical language. One artist who became influential to him during this formative period was Ferruccio Busoni: a notable presence in Berlin as one of its musical figureheads.

The aesthetic influence of Busoni on Busch is less traceable and more subtle than the impact of Brahms or Reger, and any possible connections need to be examined in the light of Busoni's aforementioned idiomatic diversity, resulting from multiple changes in his compositional style.²⁶³ A brief overview of the main phases of Busoni's writing provides further clarity. Brahms and Verdi were major sources of inspiration for his earlier works,²⁶⁴ and as a result his music from before the turn of the century can still be classified as late Romantic: for instance, his *Violin Concerto* Op. 35a and *Second Violin Sonata* Op. 36a were conceived in that period, and Busch performed both pieces on numerous occasions.²⁶⁵ In the early years of the twentieth century, Busoni revealed a more radical and revolutionary side, which manifests in his visionary essay *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*. His compositions of that time, such as his cycles of piano pieces, *Seven Elegies* and *An die Jugend*, are testimony to his newfound openness to tonal experimentation. In the early 1910s, Busoni, like Alexander Scriabin, developed a

²⁶² For a detailed description of 'modern' Berlin in the 1920s, see Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, 41-79.

²⁶³ For further discussion of the diversity of Busoni's compositional style, see Beaumont, *Busoni the Composer*.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁶⁵ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 992-993.

proclivity for the mystical and occult: this is clearly displayed in his *Second Sonatina* for piano and the *Nocturne Symphonique*. A fundamental shift towards Neoclassicism is displayed in works written after 1915 — Busoni himself used the term “Junge Klassizität” (“Young Classicality”).²⁶⁶ Pieces such as *Arlecchino* and the third and fourth *sonatina* exemplify such tendencies in this period. In his most significant work, the opera, *Doctor Faust*, written towards the end of his life, Busoni uses a variety of stylistic elements, including material conceived as early as 1892.²⁶⁷ As such, he created an art work which can be seen as an idiomatic synthesis of his oeuvre.²⁶⁸ It is worth noting that the music of J. S. Bach was a source of inspiration and point of reference throughout the different stages of Busoni’s writing;²⁶⁹ manifestly so in works such as his famous transcription of Bach’s *Chaconne* (1892), the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* (1910) and *Sonatina no. 5* (1918).²⁷⁰

In the light of this diversity in Busoni’s output, it is vital to identify which stylistic phases of Busoni’s music might form the basis of the discussion of his impact on Busch. Whilst Donald Francis Tovey mentions Busoni’s influence on Busch in general terms without further elaboration,²⁷¹ Tully Potter identifies Busch’s *Divertimento for 13 Instruments Op. 30* as the work most influenced by Busoni.²⁷² He comments no further — there is no identification of specific, common musical features — but Busch’s *Divertimento* is somewhat Classical in style, and as such we might understand Potter to be implicitly linking Busch to Busoni’s neoclassical period. Possible correlations between the music of Adolf Busch and other, specifically non-neoclassical, aspects of Busoni’s work have not yet been written about. Such an examination is not the primary purpose of this thesis, but a brief discussion of the wider relationships helps with the understanding and contextualising of Busch’s piano music.

4.2.1 *Busch and Busoni: Specific Stylistic and Pianistic Parallels*

It would be far-fetched to postulate that Busch adopted particular compositional techniques from Busoni or quoted his music in any obvious way. However, certain

²⁶⁶ *Von der Einheit der Musik, Verstreute Aufzeichnungen* (Berlin: Max Hesse Verlag, 1922), 275-280.

²⁶⁷ Beaumont, *Busoni the composer*, 314.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 354.

²⁶⁹ Riethmüller, “Ferruccio Busoni”, 1394.

²⁷⁰ Beaumont, *Busoni the Composer*, 269-273.

²⁷¹ Donald Francis Tovey, *A note on the Music of Adolf Busch* (unpublished notes for a private concert held by the Busch Trio in Glasgow in December 1934, Edinburgh: Tovey Archives) quoted in Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 601.

²⁷² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 246.

similarities in harmony, contrapuntal style and pianism are worth considering. Busoni's tendency to use prolonged pedal points underneath harmonically ambiguous and sometimes polytonal chord progressions is mirrored in some parts of Busch's compositions. This can be demonstrated by comparing the end of the first movement of his *Sonata Op. 25* (see figure 20²⁷³) with bars 19-38 of Busoni's *Elegy No. 3* 'Meine Seele bangt und hofft zu Dir' (see figure 21²⁷⁴). The use of pedal points is not in itself indicative of Busoni's influence, but its frequency, in combination with harmonic complexity, points towards an analogous approach.

Figure 20: Adolf Busch, *Sonata Op. 25*, bars 203-211

Figure 21: Ferruccio Busoni, *Elegy no. 3*, bars 17-25

The juxtaposition of the third movement of Busch's *Piano Sonata* with sections of Busoni's *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* reveals further parallels, this time in context of polyphony. Comparing, for instance, the fugal subject of the *Sonata* with the main theme of 'Fuga III' in Busoni's *Fantasia*, reveals some resemblance, at least in spirit: both include references to the BACH-motive and end on a trill (see figures 22 and 23²⁷⁵). Furthermore, the reappearance of the main theme of the opening section of the *Fantasia*,

²⁷³ Adolf Busch, *Sonata Op. 25* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2019). With kind permission from the publisher.

²⁷⁴ Ferruccio Busoni, *Elegies* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1908-1909).

²⁷⁵ Ferruccio Busoni, *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1983)

titled 'Preludio Corale', in 'Fuga II' shares common traits with the end of the Busch *Sonata*, where the chorale-like theme of the second movement comes back as a 'cantus firmus'. Like 'Fuga I' in the *Fantasia*, the fugue in Busch's *Sonata* is preceded by a short introduction directly connecting to the exposition of the first subject, which from the outset is complemented by counterpoint of descending crotchets. It is not possible to determine whether Busch willfully referenced Busoni here or not. In any case, there is a likeness in spirit and attitude.



Figure 22: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, third movement, bars 39-42



Figure 23: Ferruccio Busoni, *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*, bars 387-391

Turning to Busch's instrumental writing style, several passages of the *Sonata* Op. 25 resemble the pianism displayed in some of Busoni's writing. This can be evidenced by comparing the first variation of the second movement of Busch's *Sonata* with passages from Busoni's *Sonatina* no. 6, popularly known as *Carmen Fantasy*, for instance bars 205-207: the melodic line is led through interrupted demisemiquaver two-note chords in the right hand in both excerpts (see figure 24²⁷⁶). Here, too, any such examples might be deliberate references to Busoni, but might equally have been written in the wider scheme of idiomatic experimentation.

²⁷⁶ Ferruccio Busoni, *Sonatina* no. 6 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1920).

Busch

L'istesso tempo

una corda

Busoni

Figure 24: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, second movement, bars 17-18 (above); Ferruccio Busoni, *Sonatina* no. 6, bars 205-207 (below)

4.2.2 Busoni's Broader Impact on Busch

Whatever his motive and intention, it is evident that Busch's tentative stylistic shift towards modernism coincides with his rising interest in Busoni, who was in many ways a true radical but never broke with tradition in the manner of Schönberg. Whilst postulating that tonality should be completely freed from historic conventions, Busoni did not reject tonality per se and expressly included major and minor in the multitude of possible tonalities.²⁷⁷ In other words, his aim was not to abolish but to extend tonality.²⁷⁸ He also retained a link to the canonised composers throughout his oeuvre — that to J. S. Bach is mentioned above. This reverential acknowledgment of tradition might have made Busch, himself a traditionalist at heart, more receptive to Busoni and his modernist tendencies than to other composers of his time. In this respect, Busoni's music was at least in some way a gateway to modernism for Busch, who, despite his general scepticism towards the

²⁷⁷ Busoni, *Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music*, 25-30.

²⁷⁸ See also Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 331, 337.

avant-garde, tentatively adapted some of its features (as is discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6).

Overall, it was probably Busoni's significance within and contribution to the radical spirit of the time which impacted on Adolf Busch more than any specific compositional technique or aesthetic idea. As a result, identifying shared modernist traits is probably of greater value than searching Busch's music for specific links to or quotations from Busoni. Glimpses of modernism and a good example of dissolving tonality somewhat akin to Busoni's experimental period can, for instance, be found in the development of the first movement of the *Sonata* Op. 25, where, in bar 85 an E flat major chord in its first inversion rapidly transitions into a hybrid chord that combines diminished and augmented elements (in bar 87: see figure 25). The following bars consist only of loosely connected dominant chords: the lack of coherence of harmonic functionality or tonal centrality here is another indicator that Busch moved towards a freer form of tonality. The harmonisation of the ascending melody in bars 205-6 in the *Sonata's* second movement is another example of Busch's somewhat restrained flirtation with modernism. As in the previous excerpt, Busch here displays a non-functional understanding of tonality, this time represented by the chordal succession from a hybrid G minor/diminished chord, through B major, G minor, and E minor, to C major: whilst the bass-line movement of descending thirds (d, b, g, e) provides some logic to the voice leading, overall the harmony does not correspond to conventional functionality (see figure 26).

Figure 25: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, first movement, bars 85-88

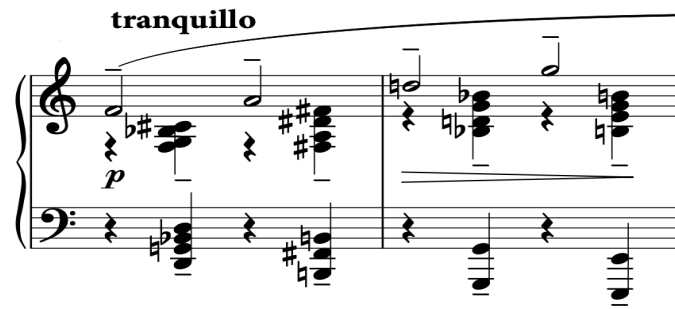


Figure 26: Adolf Busch, *Sonata Op. 25*, second movement, bars 205-206

In merging performer and composer identities, Busch matched Busoni's ideal of "Unity in Music"²⁷⁹ as expressed in his letter to Paul Bekker.²⁸⁰ Likewise, Busch might well have related his own position to that of Busoni, himself a performer-composer, rather than to artists who were solely composers. Despite the many similarities, however, there are several significant differences between the two artists, not least in their attitudes towards interpretation and authenticity. Their approaches to performing J.S. Bach, for instance, were at least partially contrasting. In search of authenticity, Busch departed from the romanticised nineteenth-century style of Bach performance. This is documented in many recordings: in addition to his numerous accounts of Bach's solo works, his legendary recordings of the *Six Brandenburg Concertos* with the Chamber Players, an orchestra formed of his students and friends, are testimony to his attitude to interpreting Bach.²⁸¹ Potter summarises Busch's tendency to avoid excessive emotion in his playing, drawing on accounts from the musicologist, Frederick Dorian, the politician and music enthusiast, Conte di San Martino and the violinist, Isaac Stern, amongst others,²⁸² and this is also mirrored in Busch's general approach to composition

Busoni, likewise, outwardly opposed over-expressiveness and sentimentality in the interpretation of Bach's works.²⁸³ However, contrary to the expressed intention, his Bach editions and transcriptions follow in the footpath of the romantic tradition best represented by Liszt.²⁸⁴ Busoni justified the introduction of complex, late romantic piano textures into Bach's counterpoint by claiming that only through 'modernising' Bach, the

²⁷⁹ Sackmann, "Adolf Busch, der Komponist", 44.

²⁸⁰ Busoni, *Von der Einheit in der Musik*, 277.

²⁸¹ Johann Sebastian Bach, *Brandenburg Concertos 1-6, Orchestral Suites 1-4*, performed by Busch Chamber Players, 1935-36. (London: EMI Records, 2008), CD.

²⁸² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 949-951.

²⁸³ Grigory Kogan, *Busoni as Pianist*, trans. Svetlana Belsky (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2010), 90-91.

²⁸⁴ Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age, Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 214-218.

‘true intention’ of the composer can be brought across.²⁸⁵ Busch’s record as a performer demonstrates that he did not see the need for such ‘modernisation’. However, despite their differing approaches to Bach interpretation, it can be speculated that the pianistic suggestions in Busoni’s Bach-editions might have fed into Busch’s approach to counterpoint lines in the left hand (see sections 3.2.3 and discussion in Chapter 5).

Busch viewed expressionist aesthetic as over-expressive and subjective, instead striving for objectivity in music:²⁸⁶ in this respect Busch’s position followed Busoni’s, as is apparent in his above-mentioned letter to Paul Bekker.²⁸⁷ However, the fact that Busoni’s music went through a number of stylistically contrasting phases adds complexity to the question of quite what Busoni’s aesthetic ideal was. In particular, there is a tangible dichotomy between the pieces linked to his notion of “Young Classicality” and his more experimental works. Something similar can be detected in the contrast between the broadly conservative but occasionally experimental characteristics of Busch’s oeuvre, but the shifts are far less clear-cut or extensive: despite his mainly traditional approach, he adopted elements of the modernist style he sometimes fought against. This cannot solely be attributed to Busoni, but his influence was most likely a significant factor in the widening of Busch’s harmonic palette and exploration of tonal boundaries.

4.3 Reger’s Influence on Busch’s Piano Music

The composer who most influenced Adolf Busch was Max Reger; perhaps inevitably, then, this artistic relationship has been the subject of some discussion. Most writings on this topic consist of shorter essays in journals or festschriften — Fabian Zerhau’s Masters dissertation, dedicated solely to Reger’s influence on Busch, is an exception.²⁸⁸ However, Busch’s works for solo piano have never yet been the focus of such research: it is therefore my intention to demonstrate how these fit into the broader picture, pointing out similarities and differences to Reger’s compositional approach.

Busch was introduced to Reger’s music at the young age of 14, when he was a student at the Cologne Conservatoire, studying with Fritz Steinbach and Bram Eldering, both friends of Reger and strong supporters of his work.²⁸⁹ In 1905, Adolf and his brother Fritz

²⁸⁵ Johann Sebastian Bach, *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, ed. Ferruccio Busoni, Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1894.

²⁸⁶ Röth, *Der Komponist als Philologe*, 340-341.

²⁸⁷ Busoni, *Von der Einheit in der Musik*, 278.

²⁸⁸ Fabian Zerhau, “Aspekte der Reger Rezeption”.

²⁸⁹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 78.

Busch attended a performance of Reger's *Sinfonietta* Op. 90 and were enthused by its musical language — according to Fritz, the two brothers studied the piece “day and night”.²⁹⁰ This first encounter marked the beginning of a life-long dedication to Reger, who became a composer role model to Adolf Busch, and it is no exaggeration to claim that of all composers Reger had the strongest and most immediate impact on Busch. Dominik Sackmann even states that the question of Reger's influence must always be at the centre of any examination of Busch's compositions.²⁹¹

It was four years after Busch's first encounter with Reger's music that the artists first got to know each other; a friendship sparked by Reger's admiration for the violin playing of the then adolescent Adolf, who was eighteen years his junior. They first met in 1909, when Busch played Reger's *Violin Concerto* Op. 101 to the composer.²⁹² The performance of the very young artist made a lasting impression on Reger, who famously wrote to his wife in a frequently-quoted postcard: "This morning a 16 year old rascal played my violin concerto to me, from memory and perfectly beautiful in tone, technique etc".²⁹³ Subsequently, Busch became one of the strongest advocates of Reger's *Violin Concerto*, performing it twenty-three times after Reger's death and later, in 1938, rearranging its orchestration.²⁹⁴

Busch also performed Reger's works for solo violin and chamber music many times throughout his life, on some occasions together with the composer.²⁹⁵ Reger dedicated his *Prelude and Fugue* for solo violin Op. 117 no. 6 to Busch in 1912,²⁹⁶ and in May 1916 announced plans for an *Andante and Rondo Capriccioso* Op. 147 for violin and orchestra, to be written for Busch.²⁹⁷ This plan never came to fruition because of Reger's death ten days after the announcement. Adolf Busch was devastated by the loss of his friend and mentor. One of the many testimonies of his grief is a letter to his brother-in-law, Fritz Grüters, in which Busch expressed his sadness that this composer's life had tragically ended at the height of his creative powers.²⁹⁸ In the same letter, Busch deeply regrets that he will not be able to continue learning from Reger, and here he describes

²⁹⁰ Fritz Busch, *Aus dem Leben eines Musikers*, 60.

²⁹¹ Dominik Sackmann, "Adolf Busch, der Komponist", 43.

²⁹² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 91-92.

²⁹³ Postcard from Max Reger to his wife, dated January 26, 1909, in Serkin-Busch ed., *Adolf Busch, Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 9.

²⁹⁴ Zerhau, "Aspekte der Reger Rezeption", 74.

²⁹⁵ Popp, "Max Reger und Adolf Busch", 89-90.

²⁹⁶ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 110.

²⁹⁷ Postcard from Max Reger, dated May 1, 1916, in Serkin-Busch ed., *Adolf Busch, Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 153.

²⁹⁸ Letter to Fritz Grüters, dated September 3, 1916, in Serkin-Busch ed., *Adolf Busch, Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 174.

himself as one of Reger's pupils,²⁹⁹ although this was never formalised. After Reger's death, Busch and his brother Fritz involved themselves in the newly-founded Reger Society, helping to organise festivals dedicated to the composer.³⁰⁰

4.3.1 *Reger and Busch: Shared Traits and Significant Differences*

In her essay, 'Max Reger and Adolf Busch—Musical Elective Affinity', the Reger scholar Susanne Popp describes the strong personal and artistic bond between the two composers.³⁰¹ She identifies a common artistic ethos based on solid knowledge of the past and craftsmanship.³⁰² Popp also claims that in life Reger and Busch shared the characteristics of integrity and honesty,³⁰³ though she does not further specify; in my view, this assessment could be accounted for by Reger's generally uncompromising artistic stand— for instance, when he left his teaching position at the Akademie Der Tonkunst in Munich, in 1906, because of conflicting views with the largely conservative faculty³⁰⁴— and Busch's open and unequivocal³⁰⁵ opposition to the rise of the Nazis.

Considering the entire bodies of works by Reger and Busch, it becomes apparent that there are striking similarities in their choices of genre, a fact already widely commented on. Dominik Sackmann has undertaken the most detailed comparison, juxtaposing the composers' works in table form, categorised by genre.³⁰⁶ Schaarwächter and Popp also point out the many parallels in the chosen genres of these artists.³⁰⁷ The most obvious commonalities are the use of historicised musical forms, such as the prelude, passacaglia and fugue,³⁰⁸ as well as a proclivity for large-scale sets of variations, mostly followed by a fugue. Reger composed eight and Busch fifteen such sets, in orchestral, chamber music or solo piano settings; this is presented in a diagram and discussed in detail in Fabian Zerhau's dissertation.³⁰⁹ Other noteworthy mutualities include the existence of one violin and one piano concerto in each composer's oeuvre, as well as similar combinations of instruments in chamber music.³¹⁰

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Popp, 'Max Reger und Adolf Busch', 96-98.

³⁰¹ Ibid. 94-96.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ "Kurzbiografie", *Max Reger*, Max Reger Institut, accessed Februar 16, 2021, <https://www.max-reger-institut.de/de/max-reger/kurzbiografie>.

³⁰⁵ Much has been written about Adolf Busch's opposition to the Nazis, but particularly useful is Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 17-18.

³⁰⁶ Sackmann, "Adolf Busch, der Komponist", 52-53.

³⁰⁷ Schaarwächter, "Zwischen Tradition und Moderne", 345. and Popp, "Max Reger und Adolf Busch", 96.

³⁰⁸ Popp, "Max Reger und Adolf Busch", 96.

³⁰⁹ Zerhau, "Aspekte der Reger Rezeption", 85-87.

³¹⁰ Popp, "Max Reger und Adolf Busch", 96.

There are, however, also noticeable differences between Busch and Reger with regard to compositional genre, as noted by Sackmann.³¹¹ The most significant distinction is that Reger composed no full-scale symphonies, whereas Busch composed three: Ops. 10, 39 and 51.³¹² This is not to say that Reger was any less prolific as a symphonic composer. Justifiably, the *Sinfonietta* Op. 90 is often referred to as his hidden symphony.³¹³ Furthermore, he composed numerous groundbreaking orchestral works; amongst these are his two sets of variations on themes of Hiller and Mozart Op. 100 and 132 respectively, and *Four Tone Poems after Arnold Boecklin*, Op. 128. In contrast, Adolf Busch did not write a symphonic poem, unless we count a very early attempt: in 1904, at the age of thirteen, with the help of his brother, Fritz, he sketched a tone poem, *Max und Moritz*, modelled on Richard Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel*.³¹⁴

4.3.2 References to Reger in Busch's Music

Busch's numerous direct compositional references to Reger reinforce the impression of a significant and immediate impact. This can be evidenced, for example, in the two composers' works setting the same texts. At times, it almost seems that Busch continues where Reger has left off. Most noticeably, this is the case in Busch's last major work, *Psalm 6* Op. 70 for choir, orchestra and organ.³¹⁵ Reger previously used this Bible passage in four of his works: the *Choral-Fantasy* Op. 40 no. 2, *Choral-Prelude* Op. 67 no. 37 for organ, the *Motet* Op. 110 no. 2 and a choral work from his selection *Der evangelische Kirchenchor* WoO V/17.³¹⁶ Reger's general propensity for religious topics, highlighted by his biographer Eugen Segnitz as early as 1922,³¹⁷ is often emulated by Busch, whose settings of the *Lord's Prayer* Op. 44 are exemplary here.³¹⁸ The fact that Reger's unaccompanied choral work *Vater Unser* WoO VI/22 and the *Choral Prelude* for organ Op. 67 no. 41 are also based on the same text also underlines his strong impact on Busch.

Busch's oeuvre is full of links to Reger and it would reach beyond the scope of this dissertation to elaborate on this in great detail. However, a consideration of Reger's

³¹¹ Sackmann, "Adolf Busch, der Komponist", 46-47.

³¹² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1244, 1253, 1256.

³¹³ Hehemann, *Max Reger*, 77-78.

³¹⁴ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 74.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1264.

³¹⁶ Schaarwächter, "Zwischen Tradition und Moderne", 345-346.

³¹⁷ Eugen Segnitz, *Max Reger* (Leipzig: Historia Verlag Paul Schraepfer, 1922), 17-18.

³¹⁸ There are three versions of this work: one is a cappella, one for choir, orchestra and organ and another one for choir and piano.

Violin Concerto Op. 101 is important, as this work exemplifies the strong bond between the two artists as no other. It also highlights Busch's dual identity as violinist and composer: as noted above, Busch was not only one of the most prolific performers of the work, but also created his own version of it in 1938,³¹⁹ rearranging its orchestration to address some weaknesses in terms of length and textural transparency. Reger himself had conceded these deficiencies:³²⁰ his doubts led him to ask Busch not to play the *Concerto* in a concert in Munich in 1914.³²¹

Despite all this, Busch viewed the work as a masterpiece worthy of being included in the canon of mainstream violin concertos.³²² The problems with scoring seemed to him minor in nature, and he concluded that adjustments could be made that would not affect the overall spirit and intention of the piece.³²³ Busch claimed that these alterations could actually bring out its otherwise hidden, core qualities.³²⁴ Fabian Zerhau investigates in greater detail the method and style of Busch's re-orchestration,³²⁵ pointing out that Busch achieves greater clarity by omitting contrary motion lines and homogenising the timbre, for example by reducing the opening phrase to woodwind instruments only.³²⁶ Busch was not the only one to deem the *Concerto* worthy of wider recognition and, as mentioned earlier, it was no less a figure than Arnold Schönberg who encouraged Busch to create a new version.³²⁷ Schönberg had already commissioned a chamber music version of the *Concerto* in the early 1920s,³²⁸ and hoped that through revision the work would gain popularity.³²⁹ Zerhau hypothesises that the simplifications of the Busch arrangement differed significantly from Schönberg's idea of a new version,³³⁰ but this cannot be verified. However, in whatever light the Busch version is judged, the mere fact that he rearranged the *Concerto* is further evidence of his strong and life-long dedication to Reger's music.

³¹⁹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 678-680.

³²⁰ Letter from Max Reger, dated May 2nd 1914, in Serkin-Busch ed., *Adolf Busch, Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 94.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² Letter to the editor Walter Hinrichson, dated August 4th 1938, in Serkin-Busch ed., *Adolf Busch, Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 379-380.

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ Zerhau, "Aspekte der Reger Rezeption", 81-84.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ Popp, "Max Reger und Adolf Busch", 101-102.

³²⁸ Letter Schönberg's to C.F. Peters Verlag, dated September 24, 1920, *Arnold Schönberg Center*, accessed February March 3, 2021, http://archive.schoenberg.at/letters/search_show_letter.php?ID_Number=7755.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ Zerhau, "Aspekte der Reger Rezeption", 79.

4.3.3 Busch: A 'Pupil' of Reger?

Eugen Segnitz's research on composers of the 'Reger School' is useful in the process of identifying Regerian features in Busch's music. His chapter "Reger succession" is focused on Joseph Haas, Roderich von Mojsisovics and Hugo Daffner — all actual students of Reger.³³¹ As noted above, in spirit Busch saw himself as a 'pupil' of Reger, although this was never formally the case.³³² We cannot even verify whether Reger had any knowledge of or interest in the compositions of his younger colleague. Tully Potter claims that Reger perused some of Busch's early compositions,³³³ but this is merely an assumption of likelihood rather than evidenced by letters or interviews. Segnitz does not mention Adolf Busch, but the descriptors he attributes to the 'Reger School' can also be applied as criteria to define Reger's influence on Busch's writing. In particular, Segnitz highlights: the emphasis on old and partly forgotten musical forms; sudden changes in — often overloaded — musical texture; colourful tonality; an abundance of accidentals; and a certain Reger-like appearance of musical notation³³⁴ (which he does not specify, but he is most likely referring to textural density of the kind illustrated in the musical example in figure 28³³⁵).

In spite of these shared traits, there are significant differences in Reger's and Busch's compositional approaches. In more recent scholarship, Dominik Sackmann endorses Segnitz's claim that Reger had a tendency to overburden the musical texture.³³⁶ Comparing the *Choral Preludes* for organ by Busch and Reger, Sackmann concludes that Busch's pursuit of clarity and transparency is somewhat in contrast to Reger's approach.³³⁷ Busch's re-orchestration of Reger's *Violin Concerto* further evidences this difference. Zerhau's comparison of the symphonic variations of the two composers reaches similar conclusions.³³⁸ The same tendency is also mirrored in expressive markings and chordal progressions (as demonstrated below, in section 4.3.5): where Reger aims for density and complexity, Busch seeks to thin out the musical score for the benefit of greater clarity and accessibility.

³³¹ Segnitz, *Max Reger*, 116-119.

³³² Letter dated September 3, 1916 in Serkin-Busch ed., *Adolf Busch, Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 174.

³³³ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 92.

³³⁴ Segnitz, *Max Reger*, 116-119.

³³⁵ Max Reger, *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Bach* (Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1904).

³³⁶ Sackmann, "Adolf Busch, der Komponist", 45-46.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ Zerhau, "Aspekte der Reger Rezeption", 84-89.

As early as 1911, Max Hehemann observed that Reger's music places new and modernist content into traditional forms,³³⁹ and this is echoed more recently by Susanne Popp, who argues that Reger deconstructs traditional musical forms from within and treats all musical parameters equally.³⁴⁰ Such comments seem to position Reger as highly radical, pointing as far as the total serialism of the late twentieth century, rather in the same way as a lineage can be construed from Brahms to Schönberg. As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, Schönberg's development of serialist tone rows was imbued with Brahms' motivic concepts. Elevating parameters such as dynamics and tempo to the same level of importance as pitch would pave the way for post-Schönbergian serialist techniques later developed by composers such as Messiaen and Boulez. Most importantly for the current context, Reger's tendency to value different musical parameters equally is not evident in Busch's music to the same extent: significant differences in approach can be evidenced, as shown below.

Hehemann describes the tonal language of Reger as highly visionary, especially in its fast-changing functional reinterpretation of chords.³⁴¹ This is endorsed in Reger's own writing about composition: for instance, in 'Modulation', a supplement to his *Theory of Modulation*, containing 100 model modulations, he meticulously defines each chord and its changes in functionality. Relating the harmonic language of Reger to that of Busch, Jürgen Schaarwächter acknowledges the kinship, but claims that by opening music to polytonality and tonal ambiguity, Busch's treatment of tonality — here described as "sweeping harmony" — is more at home in the twentieth century than Reger's.³⁴² I would agree that there are, indeed, passages in Busch's writing that are tonally experimental. However, most of the time Busch's tonality is less complex and dense than Reger's: this is illustrated by a comparative analysis later in this chapter.

As discussed above, Busch did not view adapting aspects of another composer's style as a negative or retrogressive trait, and therefore openly referenced the music of composers such as Bach, Mozart, Brahms and Reger in his works.³⁴³ From this perspective, it can be said that Busch's embracing of tradition in itself follows Reger, who himself based his music on past traditions whilst developing his own individual style.³⁴⁴ As Popp says, it was not Reger's purpose to reinstate the past by referring to old

³³⁹ Hehemann, *Max Reger*, 4-5.

³⁴⁰ Popp, "Max Reger und Adolf Busch", 86; 103.

³⁴¹ Hehemann, *Max Reger*, 14-15.

³⁴² Schaarwächter, "Zwischen Tradition und Moderne", 346-347.

³⁴³ Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 77.

³⁴⁴ Popp, "Max Reger", 1425.

styles, but to use tradition for the benefit of the future.³⁴⁵ This description also matches Busch's compositional ethos.

4.3.4 *Writing for the Piano: Busch and Reger*

Focussing on the piano works of both composers, at first sight it is evident that the forms and titles of Busch's and Reger's pieces differ, but a more in-depth examination reveals significant parallels. In the context of the entire oeuvres of each composer, it is noticeable that writing for piano was somewhat peripheral for both. However, Reger's compositions for piano are substantially more multitudinous than Busch's: Reger attributed opus numbers to more than twenty pieces, whilst Busch only considered two of his piano works worthy of inclusion in his official oeuvre: *Sonata* Op. 25 and *Suite* Op. 60b.³⁴⁶

The majority of piano works by Reger and Busch consists of miniature pieces. There is very little overlap in the choice of titles except when it comes to the use of *intermezzo*: Reger wrote 6 *Intermezzi* Op. 45 and Busch four single *intermezzi* without opus number. Although most other titles differ, a more in-depth examination reveals that some works were clearly written in the same spirit. For instance, Busch's *Two Canons and a Little Fugue*, written in 1916, are, in their educational intent, somewhat reminiscent of the 10 *Vortragsstücke* Op. 44 by Reger: both pieces were composed for pedagogical purposes. Another example is Busch's 'Scherzo', the middle movement of the *Suite* Op. 60b; albeit not identical in title, it has a kinship in character and style with Reger's *Humoresques* Op. 20.

In contrast to Busch, Reger never wrote a fully-fledged piano sonata — his four *Sonatinas* Op. 89 do not match the scope and dimension of either the Busch *Sonata* or his own duo sonatas. However, despite often being regarded as a master of the miniature when it comes to piano writing,³⁴⁷ he composed two large-scale works: *Variations on a Theme of Bach* Op. 81 and *Variations on a Theme of Telemann* Op. 134. Both sets of variations are followed by a fugue. This is somewhat paralleled by the second and third movements of Busch's only larger piano work, the *Sonata* Op. 25: these movements also consist of a set of variations and a subsequent fugue.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch — Musikmanuskripte*, 14, 21.

³⁴⁷ Segnitz, *Max Reger*, 37.

4.3.5 Two Variations with a Strong Resemblance

Beyond these relationships of form, Busch's *Sonata* includes numerous references to Reger's piano variations, either as direct quotation or more allusive echoes. A full exploration of links to Reger in Busch's piano works is beyond the scope of this study. However, having defined the relevant idiomatic features of Reger's music, below I identify these connections in a comparative analysis of one variation from Reger's *Variations on a Theme of Bach* Op. 81 and Busch's *Sonata* Op. 25, demonstrating the extent of the influence. I chose the ninth of Reger's *Variations* and third variation of the second movement of the Busch *Sonata* due to their strong resemblances in texture, harmony and character, but also their subtle differences. The full score of the variation from Reger's Op. 81 can be found in Appendix II. The variation from the Busch *Sonata* can be viewed in my edition, which is part of this submission.

As shown in figures 27 and 28, in the beginning of each of these variations the melody is complemented by pulsating chordal groups of three semiquavers. There are some subtle differences here, too: whilst Reger uses anticipatory melodic grace notes, in Busch's *Sonata* the demisemiquavers with the same function are tied into each subsequent beat. Another small disparity can be found in the bass notes, which are played with the semiquaver chords in the Reger *Variations* but only move in dotted quavers in the *Sonata* movement. However, these minor differences do not affect the general textural outline in any significant way: the overall similarity is apparent.

49 *Adagio*
espr.
pp

poco marc.

A F# B G# C# A F# A D E

Figure 27: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, second movement, bars 48-50 with simplified harmonisation (ignoring inversion or passing notes)

Grave e sempre molto espressivo (♩ = 68-72) (*tempo rubato*)
sempre ben marcato, ma dolce la melodia

sempre assai delicato e molto espressivo *molto* *pp*

pp *molto* *quasi f* *poco stringendo*

F# B E C# F# A B G# D# B# C# F# B E F# G A G

C A F# B F# B

Figure 28: Max Reger, *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Bach* Op. 81, bars 145-147 with simplified harmonisation

As mentioned above, Eugen Segnitz refers to a style of notation specific to Reger and his pupils,³⁴⁸ and a general likeness in the appearance of the musical notation of these two pieces is notably apparent when the two variations are juxtaposed. The notation of certain specific musical parameters reveals discrepancies in approach, however, and also a difference in compositional prioritisation: Reger uses significantly more expressive markings and tempo specifications than Busch. Examining each variation, it is apparent that Reger includes twelve tempo specifications plus metronome marks, fifty-nine dynamic markings and nine expressive descriptors, whilst Busch only specifies two tempo changes, sixteen dynamic instructions and two expressive descriptors. Additionally, the Reger variation has a longer and more descriptive title than Busch's equivalent: Reger's reads 'Grave e sempre molto espressivo', and he adds 'tempo rubato' plus a metronome mark, whereas Busch merely writes 'Adagio'. This is one example of a more general tendency across the oeuvres of the two composers: Susanne Popp's observation that Reger treats all musical parameters in an equally detailed way³⁴⁹ does not apply to Busch. As a performer of the two works, I find that both variations, which are alike in speed and character, require a similar attention to the textural density, balance, expressiveness and idiomatic flexibility in tempo. However, Reger's score demonstrates a meticulous micromanagement of performance, whilst Busch leaves the expressive details open to the judgement of the pianist.

Both composers use a musical language characterised by harmonic anticipations, functional ambiguity and fast-moving changes in harmony. However, whilst Busch's use

³⁴⁸ Eugen Segnitz, *Max Reger*, 116.

³⁴⁹ Popp, "Max Reger und Adolf Busch", 103.

of tonality is relatively transparent and often guided by melodic factors, Reger creates a denser harmonic structure, driven primarily by functionality. This can be seen in a detailed analysis of the first phrase of each variation, summarised diagrammatically in figure 29.

Reger

$f\#$ b $c\#$ $d\#$ $c\#$ b a b
 $F\#$ B E $C\#$ $F\#$ A B $G\#$ $D\#$ $B\#$ $C\#$ $F\#$ B E $F\#$ G A G

e $d\#$ $f\#$
 C A $F\#$ B $F\#$ B

Busch

$g\#$ a $c\#$ d $d\#$ e
 E A $F\#$ B $G\#$ $C\#$

A $F\#$ A d E c a
 X X X X

Figure 29: Max Reger, *Bach Variations* Op. 81, bars 146-147; Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25., movement 2, bars 48-50. The simplified description of the chords is reiterated here. 'X' signifies reinterpretation of tonal functionality; lower case letters indicate the melody.

In the chosen passage from the Busch *Sonata*, the tonic key of A minor is clearly established at the start, followed by a distinctly definable chord progression constituting a sequencing modulation. In contrast, the harmonies are generally more veiled in the Reger extract and therefore open to several potentially contradictory interpretations. For example, the chords on semiquaver 6 of bar 146 and semiquaver 2 of bar 147 can be read as either minor seventh chords or major chords with an added sixth (also known as *sixt ajout *). The former would point to a weakened dominant functionality, the latter to a subdominant tonality.

All nuanced ambiguities aside, it is noticeable that in the Busch excerpt the tonal progression corresponds to the melodic line in a more direct way than in the Reger example. Figures 27, 28 and 29 illuminate this: the root note of each harmony constitutes a second voice to the melody in Busch's writing, whilst Reger's tonal language is dominated by rapid re-interpretation of functional harmony. The strong link between melody and harmony is more generally characteristic of Busch's music, as has been pointed out by Dominik Sackmann.³⁵⁰ For this reason, reducing the interpretation of harmony to functionality is only partially meaningful here. In contrast, the correlation of melody and harmony is less strong in the Reger excerpt and functionality takes a more prominent role.

Overall, this above juxtaposition exemplifies relevant features of the tonal languages of the two composers, and the findings are endorsed by similar observations in the literature on Busch. Jens R th, for instance, describes Busch's treatment of harmony as colourful, intricate and certainly influenced by Reger, yet less dense and complex.³⁵¹ Despite Busch's harmonic language being generally more transparent than Reger's, there are, nevertheless, particular passages in his music that display strikingly modernistic tendencies, as discussed above with respect to the influence of Busoni.³⁵² However, these glimpses of modernism remain the exception in Busch's writing.

Ultimately, a comparative investigation of the works for solo piano by Busch and Reger endorses the close artistic relationship of the two composers and confirms Reger's significant and far-reaching stylistic impact on Busch. This is amplified by the broader observations on their compositional oeuvres, since solo piano pieces constitute only a

³⁵⁰ Dominik Sackmann, *Einswerden von Schaffen und Nachschaffen*, 140.

³⁵¹ Jens R th, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 274.

³⁵² As there is no simple equation between harmonic complexity and modernism, Schaarw chter's claim that Busch's tonality is more rooted in the twentieth century than Reger's does not necessarily contradict the observation that Busch's harmonic language is generally less dense than Reger's. See Schaarw chter, "Zwischen Tradition und Moderne!", 346-347.

fraction of their outputs. Comparing the piano writing of Busch and Reger reveals the deep artistic affinity between the composers, but it is perhaps in pieces such as the aforementioned *Psalm 6* or his rearrangement of Reger's *Violin Concerto* that this symbiosis is most firmly established. Despite thinking of himself as a 'pupil' of Reger,³⁵³ Busch did not simply emulate his style, but rather embraced his approach in order to create a new and unique musical language. The depth of Busch's artistic and personal adoration of Reger is expressed in the many letters he wrote in the aftermath of Reger's death. One of them reads: "I really could not fathom, and I was like in despair, that such a human is simply not here anymore. Very few people are aware of the extent of the loss; I believe that even his followers don't know how great he really was."³⁵⁴

³⁵³ Letter to Fritz Grütters, dated September 3, 1916, in Serkin-Busch ed., *Adolf Busch, Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 174.

³⁵⁴ Letter to Paul Hellmann (a friend and textile manufacturer), dated June 9, 1916, in Serkin-Busch ed., *Adolf Busch, Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 161.

Chapter 5: The Smaller Piano Works of Busch's Early and Late Periods

5.1 Introduction

As outlined in the overview of Busch's piano works given in Appendix III, Busch's oeuvre for solo piano divides naturally into those works written before 1922 and those after 1941: it took him nearly twenty years to write for solo piano again after completing his *Sonata* Op. 25 in 1922. The first piece after this long break was the quirky *Allegro Bizarro*, dedicated to Rudolf Serkin. This chapter identifies the characteristics of Busch's first and second phases of piano writing, henceforth referred to as his early and late periods.

Naturally, Busch's works for solo piano were written alongside pieces of different genres, and therefore overarching stylistic tendencies in his body of works need to be considered in this discussion. At the same time, examining the entirety of the composer's oeuvre is, of course, beyond the scope of this thesis. However, investigating features of Busch's piano works can be an entry point to a better understanding of his aesthetic struggles and stylistic trends more generally. Particularly useful for highlighting overarching characteristics is a comparative examination of Busch's songs, discussing style and approach to the instrument in both genres: the lieder therefore provide the main focus of the contextualisation of the piano pieces.

Numerous parallels can be drawn between Busch's piano pieces and songs with piano, making a juxtaposition of the two genres particularly apt. The relatively short duration of most of his piano pieces, alongside their stylistic closeness to the Romantic character-piece, strongly corresponds to the characteristics of his lieder. The simple fact that the piano is used in both sets of works adds to the commonality of piano pieces and songs, and allows for a more in-depth discussion of the evolution of Busch's instrumental writing style for the piano. Furthermore, the above-mentioned chronological division of the body of his piano works is somewhat matched in the song output: the majority of his lieder were created before 1921, the year he completed his *Five Songs* Op. 12, and subsequently his interest in the genre seems to have resurged around 1938, after which he wrote settings of texts by Nietzsche, Hesse, Rilke and others.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ Unlike his piano solo writing, Busch never fully abandoned composing lieder and wrote at least four songs in the period between 1921 and 1938: *O wär ich ein See* and *Durch die Sonne Strahl* (both 1925), *Geistliches Wiegenlied* (1927) and *Die Hirten auf dem Felde* (1932).

There are further links between the two genres. The question of cyclicity is, for instance, relevant to both sets of compositions but similarly complex in each. Jens Röth discusses this topic at great length in relation to Busch's lieder.³⁵⁶ He concludes that only Busch's *Three Songs* for voice, viola and piano Op. 3a qualify as a cycle; all his other groups of lieder were collected together retrospectively, mostly for the purpose of publication.³⁵⁷ This can also be said of Op. 60b, a compilation of three piano pieces ('Song without Words', 'Scherzo' and 'Albumblatt') and Busch's only other piano solo work with opus number other than the *Sonata* Op. 25. As discussed in Appendix III, this collection of pieces is named *Drei Klavierstücke (Three Piano Pieces)* in the catalogues of the Paul Sacher Stiftung³⁵⁸ and Dominik Sackmann.³⁵⁹ In Potter's *catalogue raisonnée* it is entitled *Suite*,³⁶⁰ which attributes a cyclical quality to the opus; this cannot be verified by the autograph or any other available source, though. Unlike some of his song collections, Busch's Op. 60b has never been published and was evidently not conceptualised as a unit. Other, more homogenous, groups of piano pieces could easily be formed from Busch's works without opus number, and considering his practice of retrospectively assembling several items under one opus number, it is not too remote a speculation that the composer might have subsumed his four *intermezzi*, two *Allegros* or two *Andantes* in a similar way, if any of these were in consideration for performance or publication. As noted in Appendix III, there are two unambiguously cyclical piano works in existence: *Three Little Pieces in the Old Style* (1917) and *Two Canons and a Little Fugue* (1916). Both were written for private purposes and never considered for publication, and they consequently bear only limited significance within Busch's body of piano works as a whole. As with the songs, cyclical conceptualisation was therefore very much the exception in Busch's corpus of piano writing: most pieces were conceived as single items.

Having established key parallels between Busch's compositions across the two genres, the following discussion is focused on two research questions. Firstly, is there a tangible stylistic development evident across Busch's piano works, and can this be drawn out by reference to parallel stylistic trends in the songs? Secondly, how does Busch's instrumental writing for the piano develop, and is his approach here similar to that in the piano parts of his songs?

³⁵⁶ Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 81-260.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 261.

³⁵⁸ Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch, Musikmanuskripte*, 21.

³⁵⁹ Sackmann, *Werkverzeichnis*, 33.

³⁶⁰ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1261.

5.2 Busch's Early Piano Compositions

5.2.1 Stylistic Features of the Early Piano Works

Before any possible stylistic shifts in Busch's early piano compositions can be defined, it is necessary to identify idiomatic characteristics. This is a somewhat challenging task: although there are some recurring features, the early piano works do not constitute a homogeneous group. The very early *Fantasy* (1908) and *Agitato* (1909), as well as the fragment of a sonata (presumably 1909), written under the spell of Busch's first encounter with Reger's music,³⁶¹ can be seen as belonging together, stylistically. His four *intermezzi*, written between 1909-1917, form another loose group, in which he explores a more Brahmsian idiom, as discussed in Chapter 3. Busch also wrote two historicised works for piano: *Three Pieces in Old Style* (1917) and *Two Canons and a Little Fugue* (1916). Here, he uses a more classicist musical language. His set of *Five Variations on an Original Theme* (1920) and the *Sonata* Op. 25 (1922) also fall into his early period; a more in-depth examination of the *Sonata* is undertaken in the next chapter, and it therefore features only peripherally here.

In addition to the stylistic diversity, in the early piano pieces Busch's approach to tonality is also somewhat heterogeneous. "Harmonic elusiveness", a description Jens Röth uses for the harmonically ambiguous language of Busch's songs,³⁶² coexists alongside relative tonal simplicity. Generally, the harmonic complexities of pieces such as the *Fantasy* and *Agitato* are in stark contrast to the approach in the smaller, historicised pieces, where tonality is less ambiguous. More specifically, this is demonstrated by juxtaposing the *intermezzi* in B flat major (1909) and A minor (undated): whilst the tonal centre is firmly established at the beginning of the former, the tonic key is only reached in the last bar of the latter (see discussion in section 3.2.5).

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁶² Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 117.

Harmonic elusiveness often manifests itself through ambiguity of the tonal centre. Notably, three of Busch's earlier piano works only establish the tonic key some way into the piece. The introductory section of the *Fantasy* in C major is a perfect example of the journey from the tonally uncertain and at times unsettled to the first tonic arrival point at the beginning of the main section in bar 12. Despite a few hidden appearances in the introduction (in bars 1 and 5), C major cannot confidently be identified as the tonal centre here. For a brief moment, D major seems to become the tonic key in the second half of bar 3; the subsequent chord progression immediately exposes this as an illusion, though. Later, in bar 8, the music reaches out to the faraway key of F sharp major, achieving an atmosphere of a dream-like trance — a characterisation supported by the slower tempo, marked *quasi adagio*. Then, at the end of the section, greater tonal clarity is reached (for an annotated version of the introduction of the *Fantasy* see figure 30).

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Adolf Busch's *Fantasy*, bars 1-11. The score is annotated with color-coded boxes: yellow for C major, red for D major, and blue for F sharp major. The tempo is marked 'Andante sostenuto' and 'quasi Adagio'. The score includes dynamic markings like 'sf', 'dim', 'molto dim', 'p', 'pp', 'poco a poco stringendo', and 'triumf'. The key signature changes from C major to D major and then to F sharp major.

Figure 30: Adolf Busch, *Fantasy*, bars 1-11.
 Colour scheme: C major (yellow), D major (red), F sharp major (blue)

Similar observations can be made of the opening section of *Agitato* also in C major. Here, the music rapidly alternates between different possible tonal centres: first D minor in bar 1, then A minor in bar 2, followed by F sharp minor in bar 4. Only after returning to D minor in bar 5 does the tonal centre become gradually clearer, firmly arrived at in bar 11 (for an annotated version of the opening of *Agitato* see figure 31). Likewise, in the A minor *Intermezzo* the listener is kept in suspense, and here Busch is at his most radical: whilst the tonal centre is clearly defined after the introductions of the *Fantasy* and *Agitato*, in the A minor *Intermezzo* this point is reached only at the very end (as discussed in section 3.2.5).

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Adolf Busch's piece 'Agitato', covering bars 1 through 13. The score is written on four systems of staves. The first system is marked 'Pianoforte' and 'Agitato'. The second system has a blue box under the first few bars, a red box under the next few, and a pink box under the following few. The third system continues with various dynamic markings. The fourth system is marked 'Moderato' and has a yellow box under the first few bars. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p', 'cresc.', 'poco tenuto & dim.', 'p molto espressivo', 'poco f', and 'dim'.

Figure 31: Adolf Busch, *Agitato*, bars 1-13.

Colour scheme: C major (yellow), D minor (red), A minor (pink), F sharp minor (blue)

This suspenseful struggle for tonal centricity is apparent not only in the early piano works but also elsewhere in Busch's oeuvre, including in his eighteen songs of the early

period.³⁶³ A good example is ‘Bitter Weh der Schmerzen, die ich Arme trage’ Op. 23b no. 1, for voice, viola and piano (written in 1917 and revised in 1931): whereas the tonic key of G minor is implicit in the viola part from the outset, it is only towards the end, in bar 37, that the tonal centre is clearly established by introducing a cadence leading to the final chord in bar 41 (for the opening and final bars of ‘Bitter Weh der Schmerzen, die ich Arme trage’ see figures 32 and 33). Of his other earlier songs, ‘Aus den Himmelsaugen droben’ Op. 3a no. 3 for voice, viola and piano (written in 1915),³⁶⁴ ‘Der Einsame’ 11a no. 2 for voice and piano (written in 1910 and revised in 1917) and *Das Leben draußen ist verrauschet* (written in 1910)³⁶⁵ are also relevant in this context. However, the search for tonal centrality is limited to a few introductory bars here — two bars in Op. 3a no. 3, five bars in Op. 11a no. 2 and three bars in *Das Leben draußen ist verrauschet*. As a result, the degree of tonal suspense is considerably less than in Op. 23b no. 1 and the aforementioned piano pieces.

Figure 32: Adolf Busch, ‘Bitter Weh der Schmerzen, die ich Arme trage’ Op. 23b no. 1 for voice, viola and piano, bars 1-4

³⁶³ Details are only included for the unpublished items. Adolf Busch, *Three Songs* Op. 3a for voice, viola and piano, written in 1915; Adolf Busch, *Nacht* Op. 3b for voice, cello and piano, written in 1915; Adolf Busch, *Der Blick* Op. 3c for voice, violin and piano, written in 1915; Adolf Busch, *Four Songs* Op. 11a for voice and piano, written in 1917; Adolf Busch, *Das Leben draußen ist verrauschet* for voice and piano (part of manuscripts version of Op. 11a, Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1917); Adolf Busch, *Five Songs* for voice and piano Op. 12, written in 1921; Adolf Busch, *Verfall* Op. 18b for voice and piano (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1918); Adolf Busch, *Two Songs* Op. 23b for voice, viola and piano (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1917).

³⁶⁴ Röth interprets the third chord in bar one of ‘Aus den Himmelsaugen droben’ as an early tonic arrival point. Given the context, the first inversion of the submediant is perhaps more likely here. See Röth, “Der Komponist als Philologe”, 125.

³⁶⁵ *Das Leben draußen ist verrauschet* was originally part of Op. 11a, but was taken out for the print version. See Adolf Busch, *Five Songs* for voice and piano Op. 11a (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1917).



Figure 33: Adolf Busch, 'Bitter Weh der Schmerzen, die ich Arme trage' Op. 23b no. 1 for voice, viola and piano, bars 37-42

Keeping the listener in doubt as to the tonic key is only one aspect of tonal ambiguity. Röth's phrase "harmonic elusiveness" is coined with specific reference to 'Wonne Der Wehmuth', Op. 3a no.2.³⁶⁶ Here, the tonic key of C sharp minor is established from the start, but the music rapidly moves to the Neapolitan key of D major in bar 2, before modulating to the tonic major key in bar 5 (for an annotated version of the opening bars of *Wonne Der Wehmuth* see figure 34³⁶⁷).³⁶⁸ Equivalently, in the piano pieces stable tonality often remains elusive once tonal centrality is established. At the beginning of the main section of the *Fantasy*, for instance, the tonic key, although defined, is highly evasive (for an annotated version of this see figure 35): the initial statement of C major in bar 12 is immediately followed by a modulation to the key of E in the same bar, after which the music moves kaleidoscopically through different tonalities before the next tonic arrival point in bar 22.

Figure 34: Adolf Busch, 'Wonne der Wehmuth' Op. 3a no. 2 for voice, viola and piano, bars 1-6.

Colour Scheme: C sharp minor/major (yellow). D major (pink).

³⁶⁶ Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 117.

³⁶⁷ Adolf Busch, *Three Songs* for voice, viola and piano Op. 3a (Berlin: Simrock, 1922).

³⁶⁸ See also Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 113.

Figure 35: Adolf Busch, *Fantasy*, bars 12-22.
Colour Scheme: C major (yellow)

In some of his piano pieces Busch uses a simpler, less ambivalent tonal language: particularly his *Three Pieces in Old Style* and *Two Canons and a Little Fugue*. The beginning of ‘Invention’, the first of the *Three Pieces*, with its unequivocal statement of the tonic key, reveals a clearly different compositional approach to the previous examples (see figure 36). Amongst the early songs, this harmonic simplicity is probably only matched by ‘Wenn schlanke Lilien wandelten’ Op. 11a no. 4; this can be evidenced by looking at the opening of the song (see figure 37³⁶⁹). Röth describes the harmonic language here as “diatonically simple” – an attribute which makes this song stand out in the context of the other cycles.³⁷⁰

Figure 36: Adolf Busch, ‘Invention’ from *Three Pieces in Old Style*, bars 1-5

³⁶⁹ Adolf Busch, *Four Songs for voice and piano* Op. 11a (Berlin: Simrock, 1929).

³⁷⁰ Röth, “Der Komponist als Philologe”, 181.

Bewegt

Wenn schlan-ke Li-lien wan-del-ten, vom We-steleis ge-schwun-gen, war

p legato

Figure 37: Adolf Busch, 'Wenn schlanke Lilien wandelten' Op. 11a no. 4 for voice and piano, bars 1-4

Whilst 'Wenn schlanke Lilien wandelten' Op. 11a no. 4 and the two historicised piano pieces are perhaps equally unambiguous harmonically, their textural properties are very different. The song texture is one of clearly defined vocal melody and piano accompaniment, with the piano merely harmonising the melody and introducing a second 'voice' in parallel thirds, sixths or contrary motion.³⁷¹ In contrast, the piano pieces are mostly written in two-part counterpoint: the 'Andante', the second of the *Three Pieces*, is the exception. For reasons primarily inherent to the genre, we do not find two-part contrapuntal writing in the songs, but there is evidence of this elsewhere in Busch's oeuvre. For example, his *Duet for Violin and Viola*,³⁷² written in 1920, displays a texture similar to the two piano works in question (see figure 38). Overall, two-part polyphony is a recurring feature of Busch's early period, but it occurs only as an isolated event in his piano works, aligning them more with the songs.

Presto

Figure 38: Adolf Busch, *Duet for violin and viola*, bars 1-12

³⁷¹ Ibid., 182-183.

³⁷² Adolf Busch, *Duet for Violin and Viola* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1920).

One textural feature common to Busch's earlier piano pieces and songs is the use of expressive countermelodies, usually consisting of flowing quavers and semiquavers (see also discussion in section 3.2.3). In bars 19-23 of the *Klavierstück* for instance, the left-hand counterpart to the right-hand chords begins with a bass figure in broken octaves. This soon transforms into a meandering line that harmonises the main part whilst creating new melodic patterns (see figure 39). The use of fast countermelody is continued throughout the following section, beginning in bar 24, exploring leaps across wider intervals and greater expressivity (see figure 40).

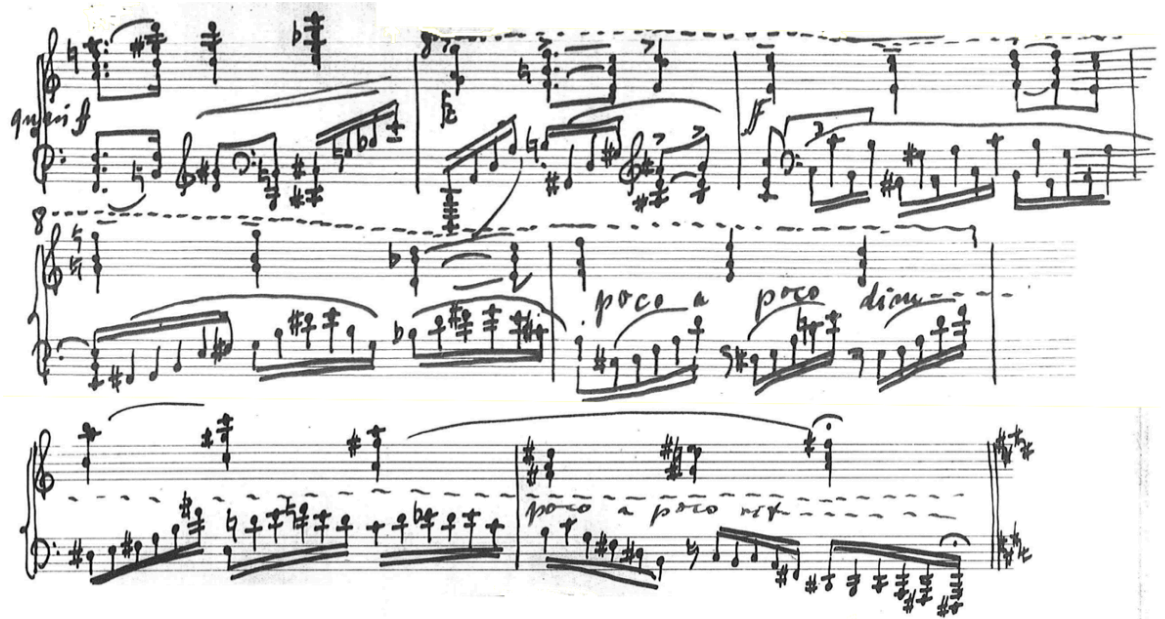


Figure 39: Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück*, bars 17-23

Figure 40: Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück*, bars 24-32

Another example is the closing section of the C sharp minor *Intermezzo*, beginning in bar 49. Here, the left-hand quaver melody is more exposed and autonomous than in the previous example: the quaver line covers a wide register and includes large and expressive intervals, whilst being densely interlaced with the rest of the texture at times, evidenced by the voice crossing in bar 54. This countermelody also displays a higher degree of rhythmic and articulatory independence than that in the *Klavierstück*: the hemiola groupings in bars 54-56 and the off-beat four-quaver groups in bars 64-67 — which also act as syncopated hemiolas — create a melodic line that is at one and the same time somewhat independent and fulfils a harmonically supportive role (for the entire final section see figure 41). Furthermore, there are examples in which Busch places the fast countermelody at the top of the register. This can be seen in bar 28 of the first movement of the *Sonata* Op. 25 where the main chordal part in the left hand is complemented by an expressive semiquaver figure in the upper register (see figure 42).

The image displays a handwritten musical score for the closing section of the C sharp minor *Intermezzo*, spanning bars 48 to 69. The score is presented on five systems of grand staff notation. The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *mp* and the instruction *sempre dolce*. The second system includes the instruction *tranquillo* and *espr.*. The third system features *sempre espr.* and *(cres)*. The fourth system has *pizz f*, *dim*, and *una corda*. The fifth system concludes with *ppp* and a double bar line.

Figure 41: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor, bars 48-69

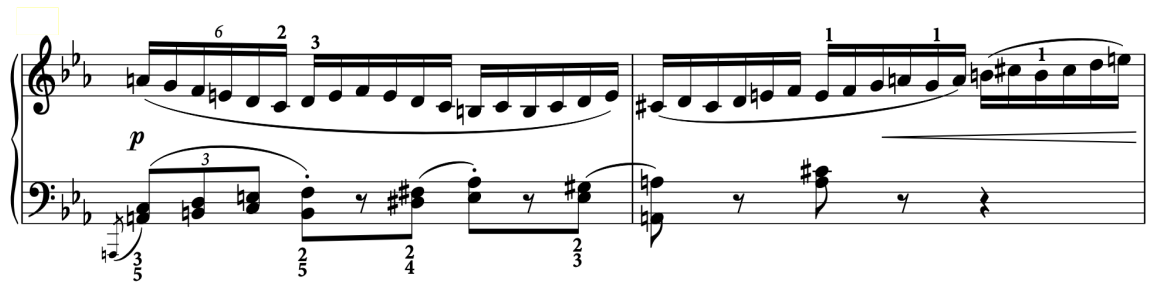


Figure 42: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, first movement, bars 28-29

Again, the parallels between this tendency in the piano writing and the lieder are revealing: the same stylistic device can be found in Busch's earlier songs. Jens Röth refers to the continuous semiquaver line in his analysis of 'Der Mond steigt aufwärts' Op. 11a no. 3 (see figure 43)³⁷³ and to the quaver line in bars 6-8 of 'In der Frühe' Op. 12 no. 1³⁷⁴ (see figure 44³⁷⁵). All the excerpts in question are of a contrapuntal nature, but the countermelodies reach a higher level of independence and intricacy in the piano pieces than in the songs.

Ruhig (aber nicht schleppend)

Figure 43: Adolf Busch, 'Der Mond steigt aufwärts' Op. 11a no. 3 for voice and piano, bars 1-2

Figure 44: 'In der Frühe' Op. 12 no. 1 for voice and piano, bars 6-7

³⁷³ Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 172.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 216.

³⁷⁵ Adolf Busch, *Five Songs for voice and piano* Op. 12 (Berlin: Simrock, 1922).

Examining structural features in Busch's early piano pieces reveals that, despite some originality and innovation, the composer's approach is largely traditional. Most of the works follow an established architecture: the *Fantasy* is written in sonata form, whereas *Agitato* and two of the four *intermezzi* follow a clear ternary structure. Only the *intermezzi* in C sharp minor and A minor are less easy to categorise, structurally, both being much freer in form. The historicised pieces, *Three Pieces in Old Style* and *Two Canons and a Little Fugue*, comprise miniatures also somewhat free in form. The fact that the opening motive returns at the end of each movement is suggestive of ternary structures, though, and Busch therefore somewhat fulfils conventional expectations. Nevertheless, whilst mainly following tradition, Busch takes some liberties within given structural frameworks. For example, an additional introductory section is added to *Agitato*, and its middle section can itself be subdivided into three separate, largely autonomous segments. These deviations are, however, only minor in nature, and do not distort the overall structure. Established forms are also chosen for the *Five Variations* and each movement of the *Sonata*, but looking at Busch's Op. 25 as a whole the architectural concept is unique: a sonata-form movement is followed by a set of variations and a fugue. This is discussed at greater length in Chapter 6.

A similar, relatively conservative attitude towards structure can also be evidenced in Busch's lieder, but manifested differently, more in relation to the approach to text. Jens Röth explores the way in which the song structures are mainly determined by those of the poems.³⁷⁶ This is most apparent in the settings of strophic poems, such as 'Wenn schlanke Lilien wandelten' Op. 11a no. 4: here, the strophes are clearly separated by piano interludes.³⁷⁷ This text-structure relationship is also evident in non-strophic settings, particularly 'Rondel' Op. 12 no. 5, where the symmetrical organisation of the one-verse poem is clearly matched by the music.³⁷⁸ As with the use of conventional structures in the piano pieces, Busch's adaptation of a text-related structural principle can be seen as broadly traditional. As Röth says, Busch's approach follows a nineteenth-century aesthetic ideal, in which a balanced correlation between the poetic model and its musical setting is pursued.³⁷⁹ While some composers and critics were, at this time, pushing for more innovative approaches – the influential critic Paul Bekker, for example, urged composers to abandon conventional strophe-based settings of poetry³⁸⁰ – Busch evidently was uninterested in fulfilling such demands.³⁸¹

³⁷⁶ Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 133, 202.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 181.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 253.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 278.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 333.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.* 336.

These examples show that Busch remained within a certain stylistic domain, but at the same time experimented with tonality, structure and texture. In the discussed works we encounter a composer in search of his own musical language. A willingness to try out various possibilities is clearly evident, but it seems to be stifled by a somewhat inherent conventionality. There are, for instance, moments where the music reaches a high level of harmonic intricacy, then followed by a seemingly trivial perfect cadence. The modulation to E flat major in bar 21 of the B flat major *Intermezzo* could, for example, be criticised as rather blunt (see figure 45). Another excerpt displaying a similar trait is bar 32 of *Agitato*: here, the somewhat abrupt introduction of F sharp minor seems contrived and ill-suited to the more complex harmonic environment (see figure 46). Examining the lieder reveals similarly problematic harmonic twists. For example, bar 8 of *Der Mond steigt aufwärts* Op. 11a no. 3 resolves into A major by means of a perfect cadence, which seems somewhat banal after the previous bar's exploration of tonal ambiguity and a more enigmatic musical character (see figure 47). The argument can certainly be made that other, more subtle harmonic solutions might have been artistically more convincing in these places.

The image displays a musical score for Adolf Busch's *Intermezzo* in B-flat major, specifically bars 21 and 22. The score is written for piano and is in 3/4 time. The key signature is two flats (B-flat major). The first system shows bars 21 and 22. Bar 21 is in B-flat major, and bar 22 modulates to E-flat major. The score includes a '3' (triple) marking and the instruction 'espresivo' in bar 22. The second system shows bars 23 and 24, continuing the modulation to E-flat major.

Figure 45: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in B flat major, bars 21-22

Figure 46: Adolf Busch, *Agitato*, bars 29-33

Figure 47: Adolf Busch, 'Der Mond steigt aufwärts' Op. 11a no. 3 for voice and piano, bars 6-8

Naturally such criticism is always subjective and reflecting on alternative solutions is purely speculative. It is, however, evident that Busch created some highly persuasive music in his early piano works. This is, for example, the case at the end of the aforementioned C sharp minor *Intermezzo* (see figure 41), where, having already been anticipated at the start of the section in bar 57, the final arrival point in C sharp major is elegantly and eloquently approached within an environment of harmonic, polyphonic and polyrhythmic intricacy. It is passages like this which reveal Busch's full potential as a composer. Moreover, even if some other passages are perceived as less successful, these should be viewed as part of a journey of experimentation; part of the search for a unique compositional voice.

Returning to the core question of whether we can identify tangible stylistic developments across Busch's early piano works, any simple answer is problematic. Although certain recurring features can be identified in Busch's early period, no unifying style defines his

compositional language. As shown above, harmonic complexity and ambiguity coexist alongside an often quite simplistic approach to tonality, and intricate romantic textures are contrasted with strict classicist polyphony. Therefore, Busch's stylistic evolution in the early period can best be described as fluctuating between complexity and simplicity, traditionalism and innovation. For instance, the opening section of Busch's early *Fantasy* displays a high level of harmonic ambiguity and complexity, whilst the *Three Pieces in Old Style*, written nine years later, are composed using a much simpler, less ambivalent tonal language. This, however, does not point towards a general trend in Busch's writing, as the *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor, conceived in the same year as the *Three Pieces*, is inherently sophisticated and complex in its harmonic language.

Overall, to answer the question on stylistic advancement we must look at different entities separately — piano works, songs and sub-genres within. It is perhaps most apt to speak of evolutionary strands in Busch's writing, rather than of a clear stylistic trajectory. The above discussion shows that the conclusions for each of these are not entirely uniform, at times contradicting one another and making it difficult to make an overall claim for overarching development towards more complex and modernist traits in Busch's works of the 1910s. Examining the *Sonata* Op. 25 tentatively supports this trend, though: this is discussed in some detail in the next chapter, which considers the position of the *Sonata* in Busch's oeuvre. The diversity of styles and techniques in Busch's early period reveals a high level of artistic curiosity and musical experimentation. This quality is, in my opinion, what makes these works vibrant and interesting for research and performance.

5.2.2 Pianistic Features of the Early Piano Works

In his early period, Busch was not only searching for his own musical language, stylistically, but also trying specifically to find his 'voice' as a piano composer. It is evident throughout his early pieces that he was always mindful of the nature of the instrument and its technical demands. This is, for example, demonstrated by the fact that he added markings for the technical realisation of certain passages. However, whilst always showing consideration for the possibilities and limitations of the instrument, it is often apparent that the piano was not Busch's own instrument as a performer, and that he at times struggled with idiomatic compositional practice. Before identifying any developments in Busch's writing style for the piano, this issue of un-pianistic scoring is discussed with reference to the most typical examples.

In the early piano pieces one often has to make technical adjustments to realise the score; these are mostly to do with the division of notes between the hands and the need for multiple silent finger changes. For instance, in *Klavierstück*, legato execution of bar 4 requires the right hand to take over some of the left-hand notes, and in order to play the first chord of bar 9 one needs a change of fingering on all notes (see figures 48 and 49). Of course, this is not necessarily indicative of un-pianistic writing overall, and similar features can be found in the works of many piano composers, including the most canonised. However, it is the frequency with which these situations occur in Busch's early piano writing that leads to the sense that occasional instrumental inconvenience is one of its characteristics.

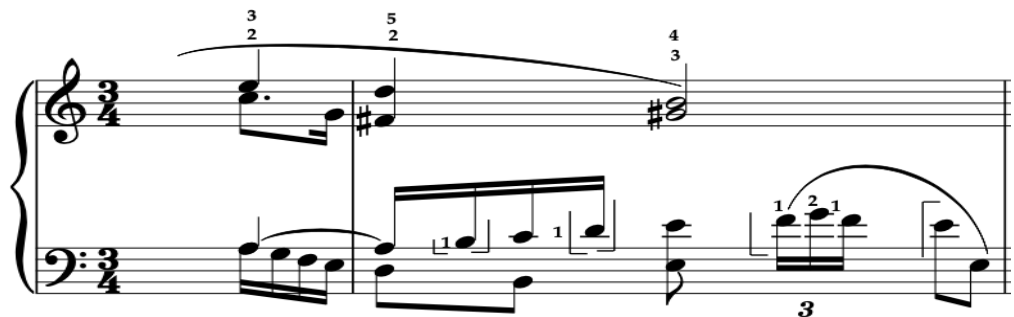


Figure 48: Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück*, bar 4

Figure 49: Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück*, bars 8-9

Issues with the piano idiom occur mostly in polyphonic textures. This can, for instance, be seen in bars 5 and 6 of the *Fantasy*: here, the accurate delivery of the music demands uncomfortable stretches (see figure 50). Particularly unidiomatic is the third beat of bar 6 in the right hand, where a semiquaver line doubles the G of the E flat major chord. The integration of semiquaver lines is equally challenging elsewhere: for example in the right hand of bar 11 of the *Klavierstück* (see figure 51).

Figure 50: Adolf Busch, *Fantasy*, bars 5-8

Figure 51: Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück*, bars 11-12

The link between legato chords is also often unpianistic. This can be seen at the end of bar 16 of *Klavierstück*, where the last two chords are slurred, despite the extent of the stretch between the second and fourth fingers in the final chord (see figure 52). In the section from bar 19 of the *Agitato*, the combination of legato chords and octaves with a

meandering triplet figure is another example of pianistically problematic writing (see figure 53).



Figure 52: Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück*, bars 14-16

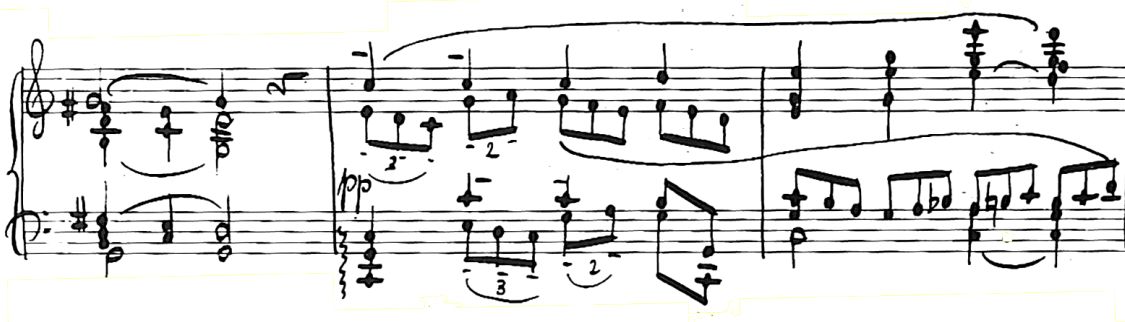


Figure 53: Adolf Busch, *Agitato*, bars 18-20

Voice-crossings and hand-crossings can be similarly awkward at times: this is the case, for example, in bar 9 of the *Agitato* and bar 31 of the *Klavierstück* (see figures 54 and 55).



Figure 54: Adolf Busch, *Agitato*, bars 7-9



Figure 55: Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück*, bars 28-31

Furthermore, some of the leaps and the uses of large intervals in Busch's early writing are often not very pianist-friendly. For example, the notes following the semiquaver tenths in the left hand of bars 48 and 49 of the *Fantasy* demand a rapid and uncomfortable change of hand position (see figure 56), and the right-hand leap from bar 41 to 42 makes it difficult smoothly to connect the two bars (see figure 57).

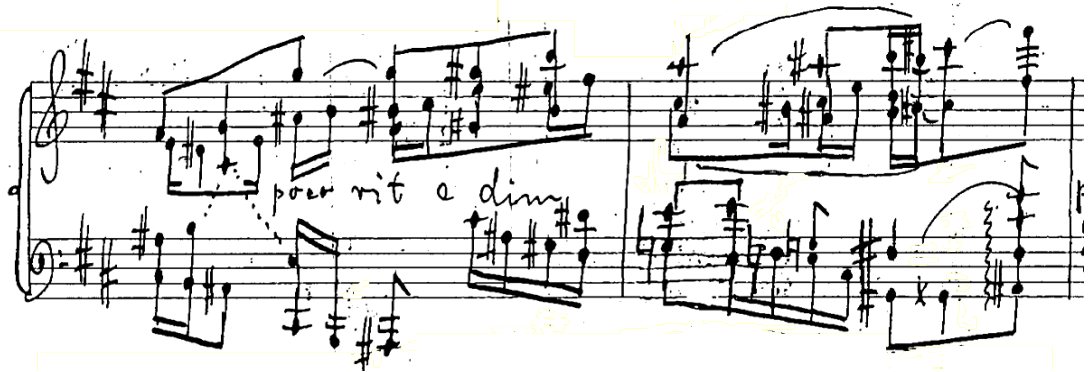


Figure 56: Adolf Busch, *Fantasy*, bars 48-49



Figure 57: Adolf Busch, *Fantasy*, bars 41-42

Examining the compositions in more detail, including through performance,³⁸² shows that one reason for the unidiomatic nature of Busch's early piano writing is that the piano often seems to have the status of a substitute for a different instrument or group of

³⁸² I recorded this repertoire in 2015 for Toccata Classics and have performed some of the pieces on various occasions since.

instruments. Sometimes it is as if the piano represents the sonorities of an organ, a chamber ensemble or even a symphony orchestra, rather than acting as an instrument in its own right. There is hardly any first-hand testimony regarding Busch's approach to the piano — as previously noted, he wrote relatively little about his own compositional processes. However, practical experience of performing this repertoire has led to this understanding. Moreover, examining his songs with piano, we find hard evidence to support this hypothesis. Busch included suggestions for possible instrumentation in the piano parts of 'Der Mond steigt aufwärts' Op. 11a no. 3 and *Das Leben draußen ist verrauschet*,³⁸³ both completed in 1917. These markings appear not only in the manuscripts of both songs, but also at the beginning of the printed version of 'Der Mond steigt aufwärts' (see figure 58).³⁸⁴ It can safely be assumed that the composer approved of this inclusion, and it seems most likely that it is intended to benefit the pianist's timbral imagination. Later, Busch created versions of all his Op. 11a songs and *Das Leben draußen ist verrauschet* for voice and orchestra, and together they form Op. 11b, completed in 1920.³⁸⁵ As Jens Röth points out, Busch did not always adhere to his original markings when producing the orchestral versions.³⁸⁶ Therefore, we should consider them initial suggestions only, but their inclusion in the published scores indicates some significance in the overall conception.



Figure 58: Adolf Busch, 'Der Mond steigt aufwärts' Op. 11a no. 3 for voice and piano, bar 1

A specific example can be seen in bars 3-5 of *Das Leben draußen ist verrauschet*. Busch writes 'Streicher' ('strings') here (see figure 59). Aside from indicating the composer's idea of timbre, this marking also points towards a creative process by which idiomatic string writing is directly transferred to the piano texture, prioritising characteristics of the string model over more pianistic possibilities. This can be evidenced by examining the legato articulation in combination with the very wide stretches required by the chords at the beginning of bar 3: this rather unpianistic writing would be highly idiomatic for a string

³⁸³ Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 171, 190.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 171.

³⁸⁵ Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch*, 11.

³⁸⁶ Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 205.

ensemble. Such markings, indicating specific instrumentation, do not appear in his piano pieces, but given the commonalities between the two sets of pieces it is not too far-fetched to assume that his approach to the instrument would be similar, and this is borne out in the experience of playing the pieces. One good example of that is the texture of the *tranquillo* section of the A minor *Intermezzo*: the pianistically inconvenient combination of chords might indicate that the composer had other timbres in mind, rather than those of the piano when conceptualising the music (see figure 60) — similar to the ‘string section’ of the previous example.

Figure 59: Adolf Busch, *Das Leben draußen ist verrauschet* for voice and piano, bars 1-4

Figure 60: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo in A minor*, bars 9-14

It is important to stress that the pianistic challenges of Busch’s compositions are not insurmountable, and that creative solutions can be found, most of the time. For example, I offer one such solution in my edition of the *Sonata*, suggesting a possible technical rearrangement of bar 73 of movement 3 (see figure 61).



Figure 61: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, third movement, bar 73

As noted above, Busch never went so far as to disregard instrumental practicalities: the technical notes in his manuscripts prove that he did, at times reflect upon questions of pianistic viability. However, even this evident consideration for pianistic feasibility cannot hide the fact that his understanding of the instrument was based more on competent abstract reflection than intimate knowledge of the pianistic idiom.

Finally, we should note that even if Busch's piano writing is often unidiomatic, there are some passages which seem more informed, instrumentally. This is particularly evident after 1916, when Busch's confidence with the idiom seemingly grew stronger. The connectivity of chords in the section beginning in bar 13 of the C sharp minor *Intermezzo*, for instance, is pianistically more elegant than in previous examples: there seems to be some underlying compositional consideration of the smoothness of hand-position changes, thanks to the introduction of single notes in between the chords and the avoidance of big stretches that have to be made at speed (see figure 62). The second subject of the first movement of the *Sonata* Op. 25 (from bar 41) also comprises instrumentally-informed writing: the introduction of middle voices can be accommodated within the shape of the hands, with the avoidance of the rapid position changes found elsewhere in Busch's earlier piano works (see figure 63).

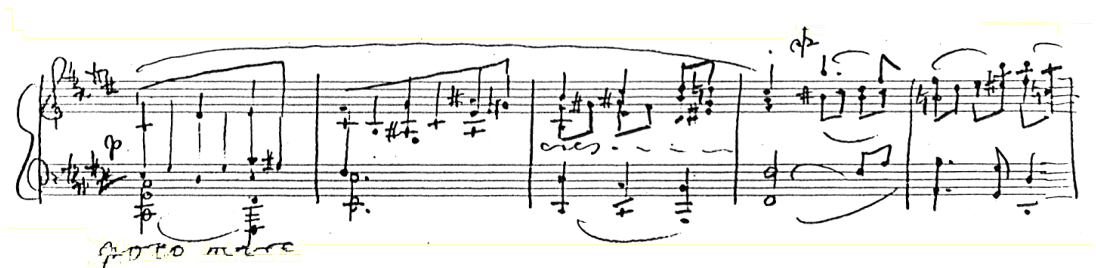


Figure 62: Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor, bars 13-17

Figure 63: Adolf Busch, *Sonata Op. 25*, first movement, bars 40-42

Overall, there are clear signs that Busch adopted a progressively more idiomatic approach to the instrument in the early period of piano composition: this is supported by the examples from pieces written after 1916. This development would later be accelerated by his collaboration and close friendship with Rudolf Serkin, whom he first met in 1920.³⁸⁷ This will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter, with respect to the later small pieces, and in the subsequent consideration of the *Sonata Op. 25* and the *Concerto Op. 31* in the next chapter.

5.3 Busch's Late Period Piano Compositions

5.3.1 Stylistic Features of the Late Piano Works

All of Busch's late piano works were written after 1941, well after he relocated to the United States of America in late 1939.³⁸⁸ Dominik Sackmann attributes a certain "compositional radicalness"³⁸⁹ to Busch's works written after the emigration, implying that the move to the US was not only a drastic life-changing event in the composer's biography, but also the primary cause of significant changes in his writing style.³⁹⁰ Sackmann speculates that having to leave Europe, and arriving in an environment in which Busch was unknown as a composer, caused him to lose trust in the mutual understanding between audience and composer.³⁹¹ Due to these fundamental changes to Busch's life and his degree of recognition as a composer, Sackmann argues, his

³⁸⁷ Serkin-Busch ed., *Adolf Busch, Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 564.

³⁸⁸ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 710.

³⁸⁹ Dominik Sackmann, "Dreimal ins Exil getrieben", 390.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

reliance on musical tradition wavered.³⁹² As a result, Busch's post-emigration pieces reveal a new compositional approach. In order to illustrate this perceived shift, Sackmann compares Busch's *Sonata* for clarinet and piano Op. 54, written in 1939, just before moving to the States, with the *Sonata* for violin and piano Op. 56, written in 1941.³⁹³ The musical narrative of the former is described as developing naturally, striking a balance between the processing of existing motives and the integration of new material,³⁹⁴ whereas a more condensed, constructivist approach is attributed to the latter.³⁹⁵ Sackmann proposes that the *Sonata* for violin and piano lacks the natural flow and appearance of the earlier piece and therefore can come across as somewhat manufactured:³⁹⁶ the more condensed approach brings the underlying formal thinking more to the surface.

In my view, Sackmann's claim in relation to Busch's Op. 56, however thought-provoking and even if relevant to some pieces, is not applicable to the whole of Busch's late period. These compositions are, like in the early period, stylistically heterogeneous; therefore, we can, at best, identify evolutionary strands, rather than any obvious, broader shifts. This is evidenced by the diversity of the late piano pieces: whilst they can be divided into three loose groups — two *Allegros*, two *Andantes* and the *Suite* Op. 60b — these are mainly defined by title or opus number rather than stylistic unity. The free-form and tonally fluid *Allegro Bizarro* (1941) is, for example, very different to the approach evident in *Allegro Vehemente* (1945), which is harmonically less ambiguous and in ternary form. Similarly, *Andante Affetuoso* (1946), with its polyphonic intricacies and tonal ambiguities, finds its relatively simplistic counterpart in *Andante Espresso* (1952), an album-leaf style miniature. Furthermore, the three movements of the *Suite* Op. 60b ('Song without Words', 'Scherzo', 'Albumblatt'), the only late piano work with opus number, differ greatly in character, length and complexity.

Acknowledging these aspects of stylistic diversity, one unifying factor in Busch's late piano pieces is his choice of moderate tempo markings. This is also identified as a general trend in Chapter 3 in relation to Brahms' influence on Busch. At the slower end of the spectrum, the composer shows a proclivity for *andante* headings: in addition to the two *Andantes*, the 'Song without Words' Op. 60b no.1 is entitled *Andante un poco agitato*. 'Albumblatt' Op. 60b no. 3 is the only moderately slow piece with a different

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid., 388-390.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 388.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

marking: *Tranquillo e cantabile*. In the same way that Busch chooses moderate tempo markings for his slower pieces, he avoids extremes of tempo in the faster works. The two character descriptors, *bizarro* and *vehemente*, do not in themselves point towards an increased speed for the *Allegros*, and even the *presto* indication for the 'Scherzo' is qualified: it is only *quasi presto* (see also discussion in section 3.2.1).

In addition to the length of pieces and the use of the piano, the general propensity towards moderation in the tempo markings is a clear common denominator between the piano pieces and songs of Busch's late period. As in the late piano pieces, *andante* or *andantino* headings are disproportionately frequent in the songs, with other markings also pointing towards a moderately slow tempo (for example, *Tranquillo ma con moto* in 'Weary Traveler' Op. 58c no. 9³⁹⁷) or moderately fast (for example, *Un poco Vivace* in 'Lit'le David play on yo' harp' Op. 58c no. 2³⁹⁸). The only exception is the *Molto Adagio* marking in 'Death's gwineter lay his cold icy hands on me' Op. 58c no. 8.³⁹⁹ The many parallels between Busch's piano pieces and songs provide foundation for a meaningful comparison of the two genres. Aspects of his songs can therefore be considered in the process of contextualising the properties and recurring features of Busch's late piano works: this is examined in more detail, and in relation to possible stylistic trends, below.

Broadly speaking, the harmonic language of Busch's late period is smoother and more elegant than that of the early period. However, whilst a certain perfection of craftsmanship is evidently a unifying factor, there is, nevertheless, considerable variation in the degree of harmonic intricacy and tonal centricity. *Allegro Bizarro*, with its many surprising and unpredictable modulations, fits Jens Röth's characterisation of "harmonic elusiveness", mentioned earlier in relation to the early pieces, whereas works such as 'Albumblatt' Op. 60b no. 3 and *Andante Espressivo* follow a significantly more consolidated tonal path. This stylistic and harmonic diversity is matched in his later songs: here, the relatively simplistic harmonisation of *Du bist min, ich bin din* for voice and piano (1942)⁴⁰⁰ is in contrast to the highly complex harmonic language of songs like *Herbst* (1941)⁴⁰¹ and to the influence of jazz in *Ten Songs on Negro Spirituals* Op. 58c for voice and piano (1943).⁴⁰²

³⁹⁷ Adolf Busch, *Ten Songs on Negro Spirituals* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1943).

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Adolf Busch, *Du bist min, ich bin din* for voice and piano (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1942).

⁴⁰¹ Adolf Busch, *Herbst* for voice and piano (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1941).

⁴⁰² See also Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 339.

More specifically, the composer's attitude towards tonal centrality in these later pieces is similar to the early period in its variety of approach. Whilst the tonic key is always somewhat generally defined, the degree of clarity with which the tonal centre is established is quite varied. This can, for instance, be evidenced by the different approaches to tonality at the opening of Busch's two *Allegros*. In *Allegro Bizarro*, the tonic key of D minor makes a fleeting appearance in bar 1 (see figure 64) but, in spite of a few cadential hints along the way, it cannot truly be clearly identified as such until fully established at the end of the piece (see figure 65).



Figure 64: Adolf Busch, *Allegro Bizarro*, bars 1-2

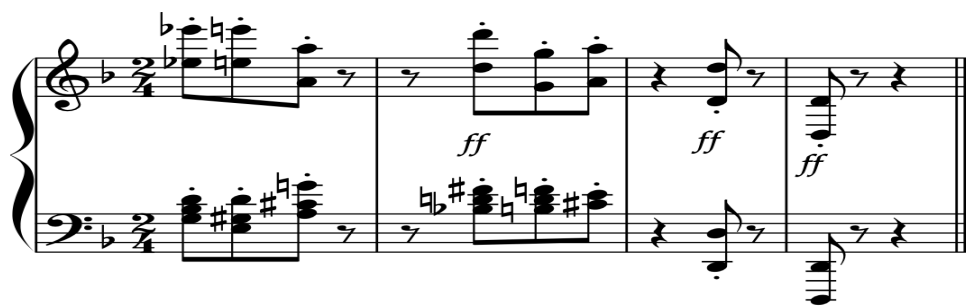


Figure 65: Adolf Busch, *Allegro Bizarro*, bars 127-130

In contrast, greater tonal stability is evident in *Allegro Vehemente*, where the teleology of the opening bars clearly points to the tonal centre (also D minor), quickly and firmly established in bar 4 (see figure 66).

The image shows a musical score for Adolf Busch's 'Allegro Vehemente', bars 1-7. The score is written for piano and features a tempo marking 'Allegro vehemente' and a dynamic marking 'Piano'. The music is in 2/4 time and shows complex harmonic shifts and chord progressions. The score is written on two staves, with the upper staff in treble clef and the lower staff in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals, along with performance instructions like 'ten.' (tenuto) and 'f' (forte).

Figure 66: Adolf Busch, *Allegro Vehemente*, bars 1-7

The initial manifestation of the tonic key is certainly one way to measure Busch's approach to tonal centrality, but the manner in which harmonic shifts and chord progressions generally gravitate towards the tonal centre is another important factor in this discussion. Busch's late works incorporate intricate and complex modulations on a micro-level, but this sometimes veils an underlying purposive tonal direction that is traditional in terms of functionality. In his late period, unlike in some of his earlier pieces, straying into distant harmonic realms often seems more like a playful tease rather than a genuine search for tonal stability. In this respect, harmonic elusiveness and tonal ambiguity are employed not to question tonal centrality but to reaffirm it indirectly.

A good example of this is the lead into the tonic key of F sharp minor in bars 34-41 of 'Song without Words' Op. 60b no. 1. After the diminished chord at the start of bar 34, representing the dominant key of C sharp major, the melody in bar 35 outlines a modulation to the subdominant key of B minor. Introducing a dominant pedal point on C sharp in the subsequent bar, above which the chord sequence (incorporating a derivative of G sharp major, itself leading to the dominant in bar 39) clearly and elegantly leads to the tonal centre in bar 41, here appearing in its first inversion: this is illustrated in figure 67 by coloured annotation.

Figure 67: Adolf Busch: 'Song without Words' Op. 60b no. 1, bars 32-43.
 Colour scheme: F sharp minor (yellow), C sharp major (red), B minor (green), G sharp major (blue)

The harmonic complexity characterised above as a 'playful tease' is exemplified by one of the most common features of Busch's late piano works: repeated motivic patterns appearing successively in different harmonic contexts. Here, two differing principles can be identified: one in which the tonal trajectory moves away from the tonic key, and another wherein the harmonic direction leads towards the tonal centre. The first principle can be evidenced in bars 84-97 of *Allegro Bizarro*: here, the repeated figure consisting of the notes D, E and F — in itself somewhat implying the tonic key of D minor — begins with an affirmative harmonisation in the tonic key. However, the subsequent harmonies of the left-hand broken chords imply a gradual move away from the tonal centre (see figure 68). The second principle, whereby harmonisation of a repeated melodic pattern leads unequivocally to the tonic key, can, for example, be found in bars 53-55 of 'Song without Words' Op. 60b. no. 1. Whilst the right-hand motive consisting of the notes A sharp, B, C sharp and D first appears in the context of B minor (the subdominant key), in bar 53 the same pattern is underscored by the dominant key (C sharp major) in the subsequent bar. A third appearance of the motive, in bar 55, then initiates the lead to the tonic key, arrived at in bar 56 (see figure 69).

Handwritten musical score for Adolf Busch's *Allegro Bizarro*, bars 83-98. The score is written on four systems of staves. The first system shows a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a complex accompaniment. The second system continues the melodic and accompaniment lines. The third system shows the melodic line with some chromaticism and the accompaniment with triplets. The fourth system concludes the passage with a *dim* marking and a *pp* dynamic.

Figure 68: Adolf Busch, *Allegro Bizarro*, bars 83-98

Handwritten musical score for Adolf Busch's *'Song without Words' Op. 60b no. 1*, bars 53-55. The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system shows a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a simple accompaniment. The second system continues the melodic and accompaniment lines. The tempo marking *molto spor.* is visible.

Figure 69: Adolf Busch, *'Song without Words' Op. 60b no. 1*, bars 53-55

Examining the broader picture of Busch's late period, contextualising his piano pieces in relation to his songs largely endorses the above observations with regard to the composer's harmonic language, suggesting that these characteristics are not specific to the piano pieces but more broadly indicative of Busch's style at the time. As in the piano works, we find a wide spectrum of tonal complexity and simplicity in the songs. This is best shown by comparing the harmonically highly intricate Rilke settings (*Herbst* and *Der König von Münster*,⁴⁰³ both written in 1941) with his two Hesse songs (written in 1948, on poems from the collection *Für Ninon*).⁴⁰⁴ In the first Hesse song, for instance, the tonal centre of F major is introduced by a short dominant pedal on C: it is established unequivocally and subsequently reaffirmed throughout the song (see figure 70). This affirmative approach to tonal centricity is similar to that in some of the late piano pieces, such as the 'Albumblatt' Op. 60b no. 3. In sharp contrast to this at times almost simplistic tonality is the quasi-bitonal sound-world of parts of *Herbst*. However, here, as in the earlier examples from the piano pieces, harmonic ambiguities are underpinned by the teleologic progression of key-based harmonies. This can, for example, be evidenced by the second piano interlude, in bars 21-27, where a relatively conventional harmonic progression is somewhat hidden by suspensions and passing notes (see figure 71: a simplified harmonic analysis is provided here). At the end of the song, we are again confronted with a synchronicity of harmonically ambiguous and tonally affirmative elements, here in the form of a vocal part which clearly implies the tonic key of C major, set against a highly complex harmonic subtext in the piano part (see figure 72).

Figure 70: Adolf Busch, *Dass Du bei mir magst weilen*, bars 1-3

⁴⁰³ Adolf Busch, *Der König von Münster* for voice and piano (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1941).

⁴⁰⁴ Adolf Busch, *Two Songs* for voice and piano (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1948).

Handwritten musical score for Adolf Busch's *Herbst*, bars 19-28. The score is written on five staves. The first staff contains the vocal line with lyrics "denn ein sam keit". The second staff is the piano accompaniment. The third staff is a vocal line with lyrics "dolea opt." and "Wir al-le fal-len.". The fourth and fifth staves are piano accompaniment with lyrics "denn" and "so ho vor". The score is annotated with colored circles and boxes: a blue circle on the second staff, a red circle on the third staff, a yellow box on the fourth staff, and a red box on the fifth staff.

Figure 71: Adolf Busch, *Herbst*, bars 19-28.
 Colour scheme: A minor (yellow), E major (red), B major (blue)

Handwritten musical score for Adolf Busch's *Herbst*, bars 44-50. The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system has a vocal line with lyrics "hält un-ent-loch saunt in seinen Händen" and a piano accompaniment with dynamics "p cantabile e rall..." and "adagio". The second system has a vocal line with lyrics "hält" and a piano accompaniment with dynamics "ppp" and "col.gb.". The score is annotated with "(rall.)", "adagio", and "(4)". A date stamp "New York 21. Dec. 1941" is visible at the bottom right.

Figure 72: Adolf Busch, *Herbst*, bars 44-50

The technique of attributing different harmonies to a repeated figure, as discussed above in relation to the late piano pieces, is also used in Busch's late songs. For example, in his other Rilke setting, *Der König von Münster*, a pattern consisting of the notes g, a and b — indicative of the tonic key (here G major), as in the example from *Allegro Bizarro* — appears four times at the end of the song in various different harmonic contexts. Despite the intricate nature of the chords, the directionality towards the tonal centre is clearly evident: whilst the bass line approaches the dominant, chromatically from above and below, G major is finally arrived at in the last bar (bars 36-41: see figure 73). The examples from both Rilke songs confirm the above claim that Busch never abandoned the concept of tonal centrality, despite the tonal complexities of his music. They also provide support for the argument that the compositional techniques and harmonic properties of the late piano pieces are more broadly characteristic of his wider body of works in this period.

Figure 73: Adolf Busch, *Der König von Münster*, piano postlude, bars 34-41

Busch's approach to piano texture in his late pieces is, like his approach to tonality, variable in its degree of innovation. Whilst some passages justify Sackmann's claim of "compositional radicalness", others represent a rather traditional approach. An examination of the different contexts in which similar textural features occur is revealing: while the fast-flowing expressive countermelodies and two-part polyphony of the early period persists in the late period, their stylistic framing is often somewhat different. Key

examples are considered below, but overall, juxtaposing the periods, it is clear that Busch's musical language underwent gradual changes over the years in this respect, too.

The degree of expressiveness in Busch's fast countermelodies increases somewhat in the later pieces compared to examples from the early period. For instance, an intensifying effect is achieved by the introduction of dense chromaticism and synchronous intervals in *Andante Affetuoso* (see figure 74). An intensification of a different kind can be found in bars 54-62 of *Allegro Bizarro*. As in the example from the *Sonata Op. 25* (see figure 42), the registers are reversed here and, dissimilar to the early pieces, the countermelody seems to be contesting the main line rather than harmonising, creating the momentary impression of taking over as the leading voice, particularly in bars 54-55 (see figure 75). Dissonant clashes are also indicative of the conflicting nature of this passage, briefly creating a musical language reminiscent of modernist counterpoint, such as can be found in the second movement of Hindemith's third *Sonata* or the third movement of Stravinsky's *Serenade in A*, for example.

Figure 74: Adolf Busch, *Andante Affetuoso*, bars 1-8

The image shows a handwritten musical score for three systems of grand staves. The first system is marked 'stringendo' and 'a tempo'. The second system is marked 'sempre f'. The music features complex, rapid passages in both hands, with frequent changes in key signature and rhythm. The notation is dense and includes many accidentals and dynamic markings.

Figure 75: Busch, *Allegro Bizarro*, bars 53-61

This style of contrapuntal writing, consisting of the synchronous appearance of two thematically conflicting fast passages, can be found elsewhere: for example, in bars 40-48 of the 'Scherzo' Op. 60b no. 2, where it is combined with two-part polyphony, a technique Busch used in the baroque-inspired pieces of the early period. However, the rapid alteration of the left-hand register (bars 42-45) and the isochronous juxtaposition of two contrasting patterns — a sequence in the right hand and cascading thirds in the left — constitute a clear shift away from traditional counterpoint based on voice leading (see figure 76).

Figure 76: Adolf Busch, 'Scherzo' Op. 60b no. 2, bars 37-52

The various instances of modernist features in these pieces do not, however, constitute a general trend across the late period piano pieces. Evidence for this can for example be seen in those works where Busch uses less dense counterpoint, often more supportive of the melody. The semiquaver line in 'Albumblatt' Op. 60b no. 3, which mostly follows the shape of the melodic line, is representative, here (see figure 77). Another good example of a more traditional approach is *Andante Espressivo*, where the roles of main and supporting voices are clearly defined (see figure 78).

Adolf Busch.
Brucke 6000 Ver.
June 29 1895

Tranquillo e cantabile

Pianissimo

sin legato

Figure 77: Adolf Busch, 'Albumblatt' Op. 60b no. 3, bars 1-4

Adolf Busch.
Brucke 6000 Ver.
June 29 1895

Andante espressivo

Figure 78: Adolf Busch, *Andante Espressivo*, bars 1-6

Again, contextualising the use of texture in the piano pieces with that of the songs, we find certain common features that might be regarded as similarly radical in each genre. However, due to the inclusion of the voice, the execution is often different in the lieder compared to the piano works. Röth notes that, in general, Busch's use of counterpoint is focused on melody.⁴⁰⁵ For example, the introduction of an ascending chromatic line in the third of the *Ten Songs on Negro Spirituals*, 'We am clim'in Jacob's Ladder' Op. 58c no. 3 clearly adheres to a melodic principle: here, two melodic elements — derived from

⁴⁰⁵ Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 341.

the spiritual and the chromatic scale — unfold at the same time, but independently (see figure 79). The dissonante sonorities resulting from this uncompromising juxtaposition are indicative of a somewhat more radical approach in the songs of the composer's later years. Busch achieves similar effects, for example, in both of his Rilke settings, *Herbst* and *Der König von Münster*. Whilst the all-encompassing role of the melody is clearly evident in Busch's songs, this is less true of his piano music. There are passages in his piano works, such as the very beginnings of the 'Scherzo' and *Allegro Bizarro*, where melody is the main textural focus. However, unlike in the songs, its significance is somewhat reduced, and conflicting fast passages sometimes become the main feature (see figure 75). This can be seen as an indicator of a more modernistic approach as the role of *melos* becomes less important.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song 'We am clim'in' Jacob's Ladder' Op. 58c no. 3, bars 1-4. The score is written on four staves. The top staff is labeled 'Voice' and contains the lyrics 'We am clim'in' Jac- ob's lad- der, —'. The second staff is labeled 'Piano' and contains a complex piano accompaniment with various chords and melodic lines. The bottom two staves are labeled 'Piano' and contain further piano accompaniment details, including a 'coll.' marking.

Figure 79: Adolf Busch, 'We am clim'in' Jacob's Ladder' Op. 58c no. 3, bars 1-4

In summary, identifying definitive stylistic developments in Busch's late period is problematic, given the heterogeneity of his output. Nevertheless, as in the early period, we find tendencies in certain strands of works. As a result, Sackmann's postulated "compositional radicalness" can be accepted for the works of the early 1940s, but the pieces written thereafter are by trend more traditional and tonally affirmative. This observation is supported by examination of piano pieces such as *Allegro Bizarro* (1941), *Allegro Vehemente* (1946) and *Andante Espressivo* (1952). Other examples from Busch's piano works and songs, however, run counter to any simplistic narrative of linear development towards the more traditional, showing that this is by no means consistent. The song *Du bist min, ich bin din* (1942), for instance, complicates the picture. An even more complex picture emerges when we look at Busch's later works as a whole. This is

exemplified by the dichotomy between his last two major works, the *Flute Quintet* Op. 68⁴⁰⁶ and *Psalms 6 for Choir, Orchestra and Organ* Op. 70,⁴⁰⁷ both completed in 1952. Tonally affirmative and serene in character, the former clearly leans towards a classicist aesthetic. The latter contrasts with this in almost every way: it has been described as one of the composer's "most dissonant"⁴⁰⁸ works, in which the "violent outpouring"⁴⁰⁹ of words and emotions contribute to its highly expressive character. This juxtaposition is testimony of Busch's musical aesthetics and his approach to tonality, apparent across his whole oeuvre.

5.3.2 Pianistic Features of the Late Piano Works

An examination of Busch's later piano pieces reveals a compositional approach more instrumentally idiomatic than that of the early period. Whilst the composer did not write any solo piano pieces between 1922 and 1941, his piano-writing practice developed in other contexts: in these years, Busch composed at least thirteen chamber, orchestral and choral works that include the piano.⁴¹⁰ Additionally, the artistic collaboration and close personal friendship with Rudolf Serkin, who was twelve years younger than Busch, undoubtedly contributed to the refinement of his piano writing, either directly, when the composer sought advice, or indirectly, simply by virtue of Busch witnessing Serkin's playing in rehearsals and concerts.

A comparison of the autograph of the *Sonata* Op. 25 from 1922 with the first edition of 1925 provides circumstantial evidence of Serkin's contribution to Busch's piano works. Quite a few passages underwent revision, mostly resulting in greater technical feasibility and effectiveness in the 1925 version. A good example of pianistic improvement to the score is the left hand of bar 166 of the second movement: here, the bass line was simplified in the second version in order to achieve greater textural clarity and playability (see figure 80, with the autograph version in the ossia). Naturally, we can only speculate about Serkin's influence here, because there is no means of verification. However, Serkin

⁴⁰⁶ Adolf Busch, *Quintet* for flute, violin, 2 violas and cello Op. 68 (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1951).

⁴⁰⁷ Adolf Busch, *Psalms 6* for choir, orchestra and organ Op. 70 (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1952).

⁴⁰⁸ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1214.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Busch's works with opus numbers that include the piano: *Piano Concerto* Op. 31 (1925), *Piano Quintet* Op. 35 (1925), *Suite* for violin and piano Op. 38 (1927), *Concerto for Strings and Piano* Op. 42 (1929), *Piano Trio* Op. 48 (1931), *Handel Variations* for piano duet Op. 52 (1937) and *Sonata* for clarinet and piano Op. 54 (1939). There are also at least six works with piano but without opus number. For a list of these works see Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch*, 15-19, 26.

premiered the *Sonata*⁴¹¹ and remained in close contact with the composer thereafter: it is likely that he was consulted on such matters.

Figure 80: *Sonata* Op. 25, second movement, bars 164-166

In addition to changes of notes, the fingerings in the autograph and first edition are likely testimony to Serkin's input — it can safely be assumed that these are his performance notes, because he is the only known pianist to have played the *Sonata* until my first recording in 2015. Generally, Serkin's lifelong involvement with Busch's music, as performer, editor, advocate and friend, might also suggest that he had some influence on the compositional processes of these pieces. The fact that Busch's *Piano Concerto* Op. 31 is edited by Serkin is one example of his commitment — this is discussed in Chapter 6.

The strong relationship between Busch and Serkin as performers is another reason to believe that some exchange is likely to have taken place on issues of piano writing. Their collaboration on stage and in the recording studio has been the subject of numerous reviews and other testimonials.⁴¹² Potter speculates on the artistic cross-fertilisation, including the suggestion that Serkin's aptitude for *cantilena* playing can be attributed to working with a string player such as Busch, and that the artistic collaboration inspired Busch's playing in a significant way, too. Potter describes Serkin's effect on Busch as his "natural rhythmic drive" becoming "airborne",⁴¹³ suggesting a gain in freedom and playfulness. Anecdotally, this is supported by the late Peter Serkin: in his interview with

⁴¹¹ Serkin premiered the *Sonata* at the *Singakademie* in Berlin on September 22, 1913. See also Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1249.

⁴¹² For a general description of the artistic and personal relationship between Busch and Serkin see, for example, Philipp Naegele, "Busch and Serkin," in Stephen Lehmann and Marion Faber, *Rudolf Serkin, A Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 250-252.

⁴¹³ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 290.

me he refers to the witticism that characterised the relationship between his father and Busch (see Appendix IV).

Busch's increasing, and increasingly effective, exploitation of technical characteristics unique to the piano is evident in his later works. As in the early pieces, the different textures and dynamic markings of the later period works imply a large variety of timbres, but here these techniques are realised more idiomatically, allowing for smoother execution. One of the noticeable innovations in Busch's later piano pieces is the use of rapidly alternating hands for sequences of chords or octaves, a technique often used by Liszt (for instance in 'Vallée d'Obermann' from *Années de Pèlerinage* or 'Wilde Jagd' from *Études d'exécution transcendantes*); good examples are bars 103-105 of *Allegro Vehemente* (see figure 81) and bars 27-28 of 'Scherzo' (see figure 82).



Figure 81: Adolf Busch, *Allegro Vehemente*, bars 103-106

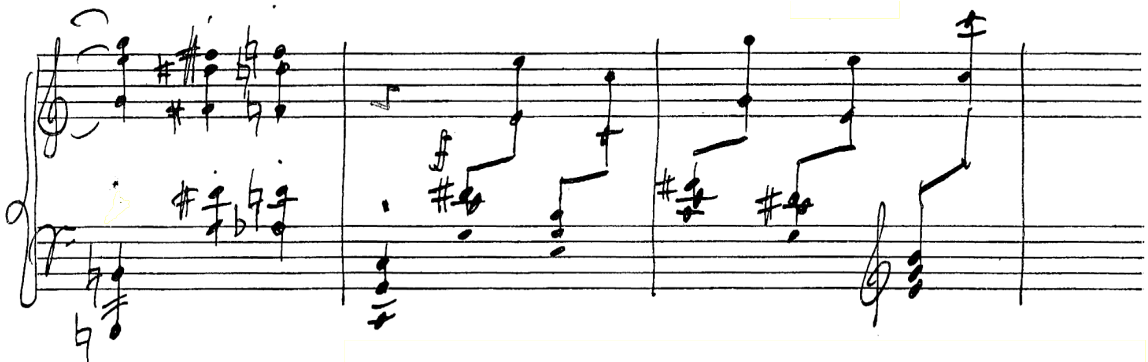


Figure 82: Adolf Busch, 'Scherzo' Op. 60b no. 2, bars 26-28

This technique is also apparent beyond Busch's piano pieces, for example in the left-hand legato quaver line in bar 16 of *Der König von Münster*, and in bar 38 of the first movement of the *Sonata* for clarinet and piano Op. 54 (1939), where the quaver-triplet

line doubles the right-hand octaves a semiquaver or semiquaver-triplet apart (see figures 83 and 84).⁴¹⁴

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The tempo is marked '(piu mosso)'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes dynamic markings: *f* (forte) in the first measure, *mf* (mezzo-forte) in the second measure, and *f* in the third measure. There are also performance instructions: 'Red.' (Reduction) under the first measure and an asterisk '*' under the second measure. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including semiquaver and semiquaver-triplet figures.

Figure 83: Adolf Busch, *Der König von Münster*, bars 16-18

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes dynamic markings: *f* (forte) in the first measure, *cresc.* (crescendo) in the second measure, *ff* (fortissimo) in the third measure, and *f* in the fourth measure. There are also performance instructions: *piu f* (piano fortissimo) in the second measure. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including semiquaver and semiquaver-triplet figures.

Figure 84: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* for clarinet and piano Op. 54, first movement, bars 37-38

Busch's later piano works are equally as complex as the pieces from the early period, but the pianistic realisation of musical complexity is generally more idiomatic in the late period. Even when a passage needs some rearranging for easier playing, we encounter a more genuine understanding of instrumental features. The three-part texture of bars 16-25 of *Andante Affetuoso*, for example, demands a somewhat creative approach to the division of musical material between the hands. Unlike in some of the previous examples, though, once those arrangements are implemented the realisation of the score is pianistically efficient, requiring none of the rapid stretches and finger-changes of some of the early works (see figure 85). Likewise, the advancement in Busch's piano writing is

⁴¹⁴ Adolf Busch, *Sonata* for clarinet and piano Op. 54 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2016). With kind permission from the publisher.

apparent in pieces with less complex textures: this is exemplified by his last composition, *Andante Espressivo*. Here, the realisation of the freely homophonic texture, somewhat reminiscent of a string quartet or small chamber orchestra, is pianistically idiomatic, and the legato middle lines in bars 6 and 7 are integrated in a technically effective manner (see figure 86).

The image displays a musical score for Adolf Busch's *Andante Affetuoso*, specifically bars 16 through 26. The score is written for piano and is in 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system (bars 16-18) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes markings for *dim.* (diminuendo) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The second system (bars 19-21) features a *(ten.)* (tenuto) marking and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The third system (bars 22-24) is marked *f dolce espr.* (forte dolce espressivo). The score includes various fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7) and articulation marks such as accents and slurs. The texture is homophonic, with a clear melody in the upper voice and a supporting bass line.

Figure 85: Adolf Busch, *Andante Affetuoso*, bars 16-26



Figure 86: Adolf Busch, *Andante Espressivo*, bars 6-8

As indicated above, Busch's late piano writing remains rich in tonal colours and can thus be described as orchestral in places. Simultaneously, though, he adapted a more instrumental approach specific to the piano. Examining the middle section of the 'Scherzo' aptly illustrates this point. The texture here might easily lend itself to orchestration, with the upper chords played by higher strings or woodwind instruments and the bass notes by pizzicato in the cellos and double basses. Unlike in some of the early pieces, however, the piano writing is technically effective despite its symphonic character: chords are arranged such that they can be smoothly and comfortably connected, and there is enough time calculated to apply the middle pedal where necessary, so that the 'pizzicato notes' can be aptly detached (see figure 87).

Meno mosso

(poco mar.)

I

dim.

p.

Figure 87: Adolf Busch, 'Scherzo' Op. 60b no. 2, bars 78-93

In summary, the development towards greater pianistic effectiveness, apparent already in the early *intermezzi*, was almost certainly greatly accelerated by Busch's close collaboration with Rudolf Serkin. As a result, the piano writing of the late period is generally more sophisticated than in his early pieces. The deepening of the composer's understanding of the idiom is apparent in the introduction of piano techniques unique to the instrument and in the more effective and practicable deployment of the somewhat orchestral textures across the keyboard.

5.4 Conclusion: Idiomatic Development and Stylistic Plurality

Overall, a clear and quasi linear development towards greater refinement and sophistication in piano writing is apparent across Busch's works for solo piano. The pianistic awkwardness of some of the early pieces is superseded by a more elegant and

idiomatic instrumental style in the late period, and Busch's tendency to use the piano as a substitute for other instruments is processed into a pianistically more effective translation of tonal timbres and textures. Nevertheless, whilst the shift in pianistic writing is tangible, identifying overarching stylistic developments in Busch's multi-faceted piano works is challenging. Stylistic shifts in Busch's music are subtle, and his compositional approach across the entirety of his piano works can perhaps best be described as fluctuating between complex and simple, between tonally affirmative and experimental and between traditional and cautiously modernist. Examining the various strands of this oeuvre, it is possible to identify a tendency away from an early, tentatively experimental style towards a tonally more settled idiom, affirmative of tradition, manifested later in his life. This is apparent even where he adapts modernist elements in these later pieces, whereas his piano works of the early period often employ a more enigmatic tonal language.

Chapter 6: Busch's *Sonata* for piano in the Context of his Compositional Oeuvre

6.1 Introduction

The early 1920s were particularly formative years for Adolf Busch. As discussed in Section 2.3, moving to Berlin in 1918, following his appointment as violin professor at the Preußische Akademie Der Künste, he became part of a general trend: after Vienna had passed its zenith as the epicentre of modernism, Berlin developed a reputation as Europe's new cultural capital.⁴¹⁵ In the years between the wars many prominent artists such as Arnold Schönberg and Karl Kraus moved from Vienna to Berlin, which was seen as vibrant and full of opportunity.⁴¹⁶ As the discussion in Chapter 2 demonstrates the musical landscape of Weimar Germany was extremely diverse. Compositionally, this ranged from traditionalists like Hans Pfitzner to those perceived as more modern: Ferruccio Busoni, Franz Schreker and the aforementioned Arnold Schönberg, for example.⁴¹⁷ As elaborated earlier, Busch found himself in the middle of these conflicting approaches. He often took sides with the traditionalists, for instance when resigning from his teaching position over Schreker's appointment as Principal of the Preußische Akademie Der Künste.⁴¹⁸ Nevertheless, he was also an ardent supporter of Busoni,⁴¹⁹ one of the great visionaries of his time (see also discussion in Chapter 4).

Jens Röth aptly describes this musical environment in his dissertation on Busch's lieder,⁴²⁰ arguing that Busch, like every other contemporary composer, was faced with the difficult task of developing his own contemporary style against a backdrop of extreme stylistic diversity.⁴²¹ Considering this, it is reasonable to assume that he must have contemplated the stylistic direction his own music would take in the future. Since he hardly ever wrote about his creative processes as a composer, this can naturally only be

⁴¹⁵ Susanne Rode-Breymann, "'Alte' und 'Neue' Musikmetropolen. Wien und Berlin vor und nach 1918", in *Musikkultur in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Wolfgang Rathert and Giselher Schubert, (Mainz: Schott, 2001), 43-44.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ Wolfgang Rathert, "Konzeptionen des akademischen Kompositionsunterrichts in der Weimarer Republik" in *Musikkultur in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Wolfgang Rathert and Giselher Schubert, (Mainz: Schott, 2001), 105.

⁴¹⁸ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 269.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 931.

⁴²⁰ Jens Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe", 340.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

speculative. However, a nuanced examination of works written in the years 1918-1927 — from his move to Berlin until he left Germany for Switzerland — can provide some clues.

The *Sonata* Op. 25 was written in 1922 and therefore falls right into the centre of this period; one in which he wrote forty-two works with opus numbers, and at least thirteen without.⁴²² A study of a few select pieces from this pool of repertoire helps to provide a meaningful context for the *Sonata*. Choosing these pieces poses some challenges as, within Busch's oeuvre, his Op. 25 is singular in genre. However, looking at the totality of works written in the identified timespan, considering the aspects of structure, scale and character, the following compositions are particularly suitable for comparison with the *Sonata* and clearly demonstrate the artist's stylistic journey: *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Mozart* for chamber orchestra Op. 19, *Symphony* no. 2 in E minor Op. 39 and *Concerto* for piano and orchestra Op. 31. Like the second and third movements of the *Sonata*, Busch's Op. 19 — written in 1918, four years prior to the *Sonata* — consists of eleven variations and a fugue. The *Symphony* Op. 39, composed five years after the *Sonata*, in 1927, is similar to the *Sonata* in scale and length. Additionally, the somewhat orchestral nature of Busch's piano writing, especially in the opening movement of Op. 25, adds to the comparability of the two works. Written in 1924, only shortly after the *Sonata*, his *Concerto* Op. 31 is the only other large-scale composition for piano solo aside from the *Sonata*. Since the piano is accompanied by an orchestra, the *Concerto* is not discussed elsewhere, with the solo piano pieces that form the prime focus of my doctoral investigation. The work is, however, considered here in relation to the *Sonata* for the purpose of examining similarities and differences in stylistic traits and instrumental approach.

A comparison of the above-mentioned works with the *Sonata* Op. 25 needs to take into account the specificity of the genre. Considering the history of the piano sonata and its position in the canon of early twentieth-century music, it becomes apparent that it is this genre that was particularly inviting for stylistic experimentation, perhaps more than others such as the symphony or the duo-sonata. The roots of this phenomenon can be traced back to the mid nineteenth century: Liszt's visionary *Sonata* in B minor with its unique overarching quasi one-movement structure had somewhat revolutionised the genre as early as 1853. Structurally and from the viewpoint of expressivity, this work formed a precedent which palpably impacted future piano sonatas well into the twentieth century. The most prominent example in the Austro-German tradition is Alban Berg's *Sonata* Op.

⁴²² Potter, *Adolf Busch, 1242-1276*.

1, which was completed in 1908. The fact that, like Liszt's iconic work, it is also written in B minor, can be understood as a direct reference.⁴²³ More important than the choice of key is Berg's approach to textural density and expressivity, though. The "high degree of motivic economy and complex motivic transformations"⁴²⁴ in the Berg *Sonata* might be read as another reference to Liszt's *Sonata*, here in relation to its tendency of thematic unity.⁴²⁵

Taking a bird-eye view on canonical piano repertoire of the twentieth century, the genre of the piano sonata seems somewhat under-represented. Many composers referred to sonata structures, for instance Schönberg in parts of his Ops. 11 and 23,⁴²⁶ but stayed away from the genre itself. It is also conspicuous that neither Busoni nor Reger, both highly influential to Busch (see Chapter 4), wrote a piano sonata: both composers preferred the smaller form of 'sonatina'. This under-representation and apparent avoidance of the genre⁴²⁷ might lead to the conclusion that the piano sonata itself experienced a crisis, a crisis reaching as far back as Liszt.

However, despite the above there were other piano sonatas written around the time Busch's Op. 25 was conceived. These mainly lean towards neo-classicism: characteristic examples for that are the sonata by Stravinsky (1924) and Ernst Krenek's second sonata (1928).⁴²⁸ But also the sonata by Bartók (1926) — here, the composer experiments with the percussive aspect of the instrument⁴²⁹ — and Hindemith's three piano sonatas, all written in 1936⁴³⁰ and thus more than a decade later than the Busch *Sonata*, fall broadly into this category. A noteworthy exception to the neo-classical sonata style is Hanns Eisler's *Piano Sonata* Op. 1 (1923), with its atonal language very much written under the spell of his teacher, Arnold Schönberg.⁴³¹

⁴²³ Allen Forte, "Alban Berg's Piano Sonata, Op. 1: A Landmark in Early Twentieth Century Music", *Music Analysis* 26, no. 1/2, (2007): 21.

⁴²⁴ Dave Headlam, *The Music of Alban Berg*, (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 13-14, quoted in Forte, "Alban Berg's Piano Sonata, Op. 1", 18.

⁴²⁵ For more on the thematic treatment in Liszt's *Sonata* see John Ogdon, "The Romantic Tradition", in *Keyboard Music*, ed. Denis Matthews (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972), 251-252.

⁴²⁶ Susan Bradshaw, "The Twentieth Century", in *Keyboard Music*, ed. Denis Matthews (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972), 323.

⁴²⁷ See also Abstract of Henry Samuel Wolf, "The Twentieth Century Piano Sonata" (PhD Thesis, Boston University, 1957), accessed November 6, 2022, <https://open.bu.edu/handle/2144/6888>.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 334, 364.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 319.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 332.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 329-330.

It is against this backdrop that Busch created his piano sonata, and it was perhaps because of the above-mentioned perceived crisis of the genre that he felt inclined to apply a higher degree of experimentation than in most other works of the time.

As Röth points out — and as my own research for the preceding chapters has further confirmed — the presence of modernist traits is always subtle in Busch's music.⁴³² Consequentially, any stylistic shifts are also highly nuanced — sometimes to the point that an evaluation becomes highly speculative and nearly impossible. Nonetheless, in this chapter I examine the following three questions:

- Comparing Busch's *Sonata* with the three selected works — *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Mozart* for chamber orchestra Op. 19, *Symphony* no. 2 in E minor Op. 39 and *Concerto* Op. 31 — are there tangible changes in Busch's approach to structure and syntax?
- What does this comparative approach reveal with regard to Busch's approach to compositional complexity and harmonic ambiguity; are there any shifts in tonal language?
- Drawing on the findings of the first two questions, to what extent does the *Sonata* mark a turning point in Busch's writing?

Whilst some details of comparison are illustrated in the main text of this chapter, with examples provided in the figures, the full score of the *Sonata* can be viewed in my edition, which is part of this submission.

6.2 Busch's Mozart Variations Op. 19 and his Piano Sonata: Stylistic Shifts towards the more Adventurous

The above-mentioned structural similarity between Busch's *Mozart Variations* Op. 19 and the second and third movements of his *Sonata* — comprising a theme with eleven variations followed by a fugue — provides the basis for comparing the two pieces. In order to identify any shifts in musical language, it is essential to examine comparable material, but the common architecture is not in itself sufficient to establish meaningful comparability. Indeed, certain structural differences might be seen as undermining the relevance of this analysis. For example, in contrast to the fugue in the *Mozart Variations*, the third *Sonata* movement also contains a short prelude — 'Introduzione' — and the

⁴³² Röth: "Der Komponist als Philologe", 343.

proportional relationship between variations and fugues is also significantly different: the *Mozart Variations*, the theme of which consists of thirty-two bars, are followed by a ninety-nine-bar fugue, whereas the *Sonata* finishes with a 210-bar prelude and fugue, preceded by a set of variations on a sixteen-bar theme. The fugue of Op. 19 therefore appears much more like a supplement to the variations, whilst the fugue in Op. 25 is a separate movement in its own right.

More detailed scrutiny of the structure of the two pieces, however, reveals further striking similarities (see table in figure 88 below). These endorse the comparability of the music and thus help to identify shifts in Busch's tonal language. The variations of Op. 19 are grouped as follows: the first three variations form one group, the end of which is clearly marked by a fermata; then, Variation 4, 'Andante sostenuto', can best be described as an *intermezzo*, whilst Variation 5, with its key change to E minor, marks the beginning of a new section consisting of three character pieces; this is then followed by three dance-like variations, culminating in the festive fortissimo of Variation 10;⁴³³ finally, introducing the fugue, Variation 11 is a slow and expressive piece. Upon examining the second *Sonata* movement, architectural parallels can be evidenced. After Variations 1-4, which form a loose group, Variation 5, analogous to that of Op. 19, forms the beginning of a new section of the second *Sonata* movement. Donald Francis Tovey, in his programme notes of 1934, describes Variations 1-4 as the slow movement and Variations 5-10 as the 'Scherzo' of the *Sonata*.⁴³⁴ However, akin to the *Mozart Variations*, this 'Scherzo' can itself be divided into two parts: Variations 5-7 resemble the traits of character pieces, and a dance idiom is introduced in Variations 8-10, in the form of a polonaise. As in the *Mozart Variations*, Variation 10 culminates in a triumphant fortissimo,⁴³⁵ which is then followed by the final slow variation introducing the fugue. Despite their differences in proportion, both fugues are thematically linked to the preceding variations: the theme

⁴³³ For greater clarity, the ending of Variation 10 of Op. 19 is referred to as 'fortissimo'; strictly speaking the 'fortissimo' already appears four bars before the end of the variation and is followed by a 'crescendo' from 'mezzoforte' culminating in a 'sforzato'.

⁴³⁴ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1219-1220.

⁴³⁵ For greater clarity, the ending of Variation 10 of Op. 25 is referred to as 'fortissimo'; strictly speaking Busch notates 'sforzatissimo' which is preceded by a crescendo.

reappears as cantus firmus in bar 174 of the third *Sonata* movement and in bar 73 of the fugue of Op. 19.

<i>Mozart Variations</i> Op. 19 (grouping)	<i>Mozart Variations</i> Op. 19 (titles)	<i>Sonata</i> Op. 25 – 2nd mvt. (titles)	<i>Sonata</i> Op. 25 – 2nd mvt. (grouping)
	Theme (Tempo di Minuetto)	Theme (Andante con variazioni)	
Group 1 (Variations 1-3)	Variation 1 – Allegretto	Variation 1 – L'istesso tempo	Group 1 ('Slow Movement' – Variations 1-4)
	Variation 2 – Allegretto grazioso	Variation 2 – un poco piu lento	
	Variation 3 – L'istesso tempo	Variation 3 – Adagio	
Intermezzo	Variation 4 – Andante sostenuto	Variation 4 – un poco piu mosso (Andante)	
Group 2 (Character Pieces – Variation 5-7)	Variation 5 – Allegro vivace	Variation 5 – Poco scherzando (Allegretto vivace)	Group 2 ('Scherzo' I, Character Pieces – Variations 5-7)
	Variation 6 – Molto vivace	Variation 6 – Vivace	
	Variation 7 – Molto sostenuto	Variation 7 – Molto vivace	
Group 3 (Dance idiom – Variations 8-10)	Variation 8 – Molto vivace	Variation 8 – Allegretto (alla polacca)	Group 3 ('Scherzo' II, Dance Idiom Polonaise – Variations 8-10)
	Variation 9 – Allegretto	Variation 9 – Più mosso	
Fortissimo ending	Variation 10 – Maestoso	Variation 10 – alla polacca	Fortissimo ending
Slow and expressive final Variation	Variation 11 – Un poco adagio	Variation 11 – Molto tranquillo	Slow and expressive final Variation
	Fugue	Introduzione e Fuga	

Figure 88: Comparison of the grouping of variations in Busch's *Mozart Variations* Op. 19 and movement 2 of *Sonata* Op. 25

Whilst Busch tends to introduce the fugue with a slower variation in other comparable works — for instance, the variation preceding the final fugue in his *Schubert Variations* Op. 2,⁴³⁶ here Variation 14, is marked 'sostenuto' — the grouping of variations as described above is unique to his Ops. 19 and 25, and thus make these two pieces particularly apt for comparison. Examining the stylistic and aesthetic differences then reveals shifts in the composer's musical language in the early 1920s. Even on listening to both pieces for the first time, the succession of variations in Op. 25 creates a greater impression of fragmentation and diversity than in the *Mozart Variations*, where a stronger sense of logical continuity and coherence is evoked. A more detailed examination of the opening group of variations largely supports this first impression. For instance, Variations 1-3 of Op. 19 develop further but never abandon the original theme: they build on one

⁴³⁶ Adolf Busch, *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Schubert* Op. 2 (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBusch Archiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1909), 30-33.

another quite logically in terms of increasing textural density and harmonic complexity. However, the equivalent segment of the second *Sonata* movement is much more fractured: the broadly homophonic theme is followed by a demisemi-quaver variation containing chordal and polyphonic elements. The melodic and harmonic outline of the theme is still present, but often veiled by the embellishing passagework. The largely chordal slower second variation strays quite far, melodically, from the original model: only fragments of the theme can be traced here. This can be evidenced by comparing the opening bars of the theme (see figure 89) with those of the second variation (see figure 90). Variations 3 and 4 are clearly constructed around the cantus firmus, but the textures and harmonies are distinctly more complex and diverse than in Op. 19.

Andante con variazioni

Figure 89: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, second movement, bars 1-4

un poco più lento

Aug F Dim Dim A D D7 E7 F D E A Dim B7 A6 G7 (unresolved)

Figure 90: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, second movement, bars 33-36 with simplified harmonisation (aug.=augmented; dim.=diminished)

Even more striking than the differences in thematic approach is the contrasting treatment of harmony: most of the time, a significantly more complex tonal language can be found in Op. 25 than in the *Mozart* Variations. A brief comparison of the opening phrases of the second variations of each piece is indicative: in the first eight bars of the example from Op. 19, the harmonic pendulum swings predictably between G and D major, the tonic

and dominant chords, with the brief appearance of A major serving as dominant to D major in bar 7 (see figure 91⁴³⁷). In contrast, the harmonies explored in the first four bars of the example from Op. 25 are much more peripheral in relation to the tonal centre. Furthermore, the chords themselves are unambiguous in the second variation of Op. 19, whereas the harmonies in the other example are often veiled and their progression based on functional reinterpretation — for instance the third chord in bar 33 is introduced as a derivative of D major and then reinterpreted as a derivative of B major (see figure 90).

II

D7 G D7 G D G

D7 G E A6/4 A7 D

Figure 91: Adolf Busch, *Mozart Variations* Op. 19, bars 65-72 with simplified harmonisation

⁴³⁷ Adolf Busch, *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Mozart* Op. 19 (Berlin: Simrock, 1920).

The different approach to harmony reveals a fundamental conceptual shift in style and aesthetic. Opening the second variation of Op. 25 with an augmented chord expressively conveys a sense of restlessness, lacking centricity. This chord is drawn towards one on F major, but only in its first inversion instead of the more definitive root position, and is followed by a diminished seventh on F sharp. There is a momentary sense of arrival in the form of A minor in bar 2, immediately put into question, however, by a dominant seventh on D later in the same bar. The four-bar-phrase concludes on a dominant seventh on G, which remains unresolved. As indicated above, this is contrasted by a distinctly unambiguous tonal language in the second variation of Op. 19. A simplified harmonic analysis has been added to figures 90 and 91 in order to illustrate the above.

Thus, juxtaposing the openings of the two variations reveals a general trend across the two compositions, best described as a shift from a classicist approach to a tonally more experimental language bordering on expressionism. This can be evidenced throughout the two works.

The fundamental difference in textural coherence and harmonic complexity in the final variations of both pieces provides another indication of overall developments in Busch's style. As noted above, the two variations are somewhat similar in tempo and character; again, this supports the relevance of the comparison. Within this broad similarity, however, the distinct sudden changes in texture in the last variation of Op. 25⁴³⁸ add to the more fractured effect compared to Op. 19, where textural changes are fluid and subtle throughout.

The same applies to the treatment of harmony. Despite the remoteness of some harmonies in relation to the tonal centre, the chord progressions of Op. 19 always follow a clear teleological path. This is, for example, the case in bars 22 and 23 of Variation 11, where the momentary appearance of the diminished seventh, representing a dominant to B minor, quickly and logically leads to the tonic key of G major. Busch takes a fundamentally different approach in the parallel excerpt from the Sonata: here, the seemingly incoherent juxtaposition of dominant sevenths and minor chords in bars 205 and 206 is indicative of the radical change in his attitude towards tonality since Op. 19. (These bars are discussed earlier as exemplifying modernist aspects of Busch's piano music in relation to influence of Busoni.: see section 4.2.2 and figure 26).

⁴³⁸ These textural alterations can be located in bars 201, 209, 213 and 217. Bars 205 and 207 also display smaller, less significant changes.

Overall, the comparison between Busch's *Mozart Variations* and the second and third movements of the *Sonata* highlights tangible stylistic shifts in aspects of structure, tonality, textural coherence and the divergence from the original theme. In all of these areas, the music of the *Sonata* moves away from the classicist idiom of the *Mozart Variations* towards a more experimental approach.

6.3 The Sonata and the Symphony Op. 39: A Return to the Classicist Ideal?

Unlike the above comparison with the *Mozart Variations*, examining Busch's *Sonata* in relation to his *Symphony* in E minor Op. 39, written in 1927, reveals only subtle stylistic shifts, rather than any more obvious idiomatic changes. The first movements of each piece have quite similar traits and are therefore apt for meaningful comparison. Firstly, looking at the overall character, Busch imbues the music of both sonata form movements with similar attributes; this is indicated in the titles: 'Allegro moderato con passione' for the *Sonata* and 'Allegro agitato e passionato' for the *Symphony*. Secondly, both pieces employ a similar harmonic language and are deeply rooted in late Romantic thematism. However, a detailed examination brings to light some differences in nuance, which might then be interpreted as an indication of a change in compositional approach.

The sonata form sections are clearly defined in both pieces. However, the proportionality differs considerably: whereas the *Symphony* is divided into broadly equally long sections, the structure of Op. 39 is less even. In Op. 39 the exposition (bars 1-122), development (bars 122-220) and recapitulation with short coda (bars 221-337) each comprises approximately one-third of the first movement. In contrast, the exposition of the first *Sonata* movement (bars 1-84) is followed by a short and highly condensed development section (bars 85-112), and after the recapitulation (bars 113-188) the movement concludes with a lengthy coda (bars 189-211). As the main structural differences lie in the weight and length of the development and coda sections, these are the focus of the following closer examination of two vital aspects of musical language: syntax and harmony.

To aid the understanding of similarity and variety in Busch's syntactical approach across these works, a brief overview of the motivic outline of both development sections is given here. (For a comparative structural overview, see figure 92). In the development section of the *Sonata*, the composer primarily uses two motives: the first subject, opening the

section in its augmented form, and variations of a march-like figure derived from bar 68, the closing section of the exposition. The two themes appear in juxtaposition with one another at the beginning of the development (bars 85-94) before they gradually amalgamate (bars 94-112). This culminates in a climactic transition (bars 112-113) into the recapitulation. In contrast, the thematic range is much wider in the development of the first movement of the *Symphony*. Like in the *Sonata*, the first subject opens the section. This is then followed by a quaver motive first heard in the transition to the second subject (bar 38), which later appears in various forms, introduced by dotted rhythms. After the repeat of a march-like motif from bar 185 – derived from the closing section of the exposition, beginning in bar 82 – the development closes with a repeat of the first subject in preparation of the recapitulation (from bar 212).

These structural differences between the development sections do not in themselves help to identify possible shifts in compositional language and musical syntax. However, within this, examining the duration of the appearance of each motive and the nature of the musical transitions reveals subtle changes. The development of the first movement of Op. 25 can be split into motivic micro-segments, some of which only last for one bar. In contrast, the sections in the equivalent part of the *Symphony* are generally longer, the opening four-bar repeat of the first subject being the shortest. Figure 92 provides an overview of the length and origin of the subdivisions of both development sections.

Development section – Sonata	Motive	Length	Development section – Symphony	Motive	Length
Bars 85-88	First subject (augmented)	Four bars	Bars 122-125	First subject	Four bars
Bar 89	Closing theme (march-like)	One bar	Bars 126-135	Introduction to second subject (quaver motive)	Ten bars
Bars 90-92	First subject (augmented)	Three bars	Bars 136-145	Introduction to second subject (quaver motive and dotted rhythms)	Ten bars
Bar 93	Closing theme (march-like)	One bar	Bars 146-151	Dotted rhythm motive	Six bars
Bar 94	First subject (augmented and in its original speed)	One bar	Bars 152-161	Variation of second subject (oboe)	Ten bars
Bar 95	Closing theme and continuation of augmented first subject	One bar	Bars 162-169	Variation of second subject (violin)	Eight bars
Bars 96-97	Interlude	Two bars	Bars 170-174	First subject accompaniment (timpani)	Five bars
Bars 98-99	Augmented first subject	Two bars	Bars 175-184	Second subject	Ten bars
Bar 100	Closing theme	One bar	Bars 185-200	Closing theme (march-like)	Six bars
Bars 101-103	Augmented first subject and closing theme	Three bars	Bars 201-211	Interlude with cross rhythms	Eleven bars
Bar 103 - 104	Closing theme	Two bars	Bars 212-221	First subject (Preparation for recapitulation)	Ten bars
Bars 105-108	Augmented first subject and closing theme	Four bars			
Bars 109-112	Augmented first subject and closing theme	Four bars			

Figure 92: Structure of the development sections of the first movements of Adolf Busch's *Sonata* Op. 25 and *Symphony* Op. 39

With regard to transitions, the segments are thematically autonomous at the beginning of the *Sonata* development, whereas the structuring of the development of the first movement of Op. 39 is based on motivic continuity by means of thematic metamorphosis.

In both pieces, some consecutive sections display little in the way of motivic connection but, unlike in the *Sonata*, in the *Symphony* such changes are always prepared by an introductory or transitional bar — this difference in approach can partially be explained by the nature of the genres: whilst the genre of a piano sonata is more prone to experimentation (see introductory remarks in 6.1), conditions of an orchestral performance had to be taken into consideration when writing a symphony. This subtle difference is exemplified by bar 185: here, an *animato* passage based on a march-like motif, underpinned by running quavers, takes over from the preceding *tranquillo* section based on minims and crotchets. This change in character and thematic material is swift but not abrupt, because of the transitional bar 184, consisting of an ascending quaver movement in the oboe and cor anglais, as well as a *stringendo* marking (see figure 93⁴³⁹). In contrast, in the *Sonata* some thematic segments unrelated to the preceding motivic context are inserted without transitional preparation: in bars 89 and 93, for example (see figure 94).

⁴³⁹ Adolf Busch, *Symphony* Op. 39 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1929).

stringendo - - - animato [a]

Fl.
Ob.
Engl. Hr.
Cl.
Basscl.
Fag.
Tromp.
Hr.
Tromb.
Bass Tromb.
Viol. I
Viol. II
Br.
Vcll.
Kb.

stringendo animato [a]

Figure 93: Adolf Busch, *Symphony* Op. 39, first movement, bars 183-186

sempre pp

L.H.

espress.

p

molto legato

meno p

Figure 94: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, first movement, bars 85-92

Despite these differences, both development sections can safely be described as stylistically traditional: Busch's musical language does not, here, point towards modernist syntax and its inherent "liberation from thematicism".⁴⁴⁰ However, while the rapid motivic changes in the *Sonata* do not undermine the fundamentally thematic conceptualisation, they nonetheless represent a degree of motivic incoherence, revealing the composer's curiosity and willingness to experiment with musical syntax. It is perhaps not too far-fetched to speculate that contemporary developments in musical style and aesthetics somewhat influenced Busch here — at least in a subtle manner. The move towards a more cohesive thematic continuum in the development of the first movement of the *Symphony* can thus be interpreted as an early indication of Busch's return to a more traditional, classicist idiom, established in later works such as the *Flute Quintet* Op. 68.

Overall, the tonal languages of the *Sonata* and the *Symphony* are similar: any shifts are subtle and open to interpretation. The ends of the two first movements — the final subsection of the Coda in the *Sonata* movement and the equivalent section in the *Symphony* — are particularly apt for harmonic comparison as they share many common traits. At first sight, the two *pianissimo* endings demonstrate a closely related harmonic concept, with tonal centrality gradually affirmed, before each movement closes with three chords in the tonic key. However, a more in-depth examination reveals small yet significant shifts in the treatment of harmony. Although the final eleven bars (bars 201-211) of the *Sonata* movement are underpinned by a tonic pedal, the section does not begin in the key of C, as one might expect, but with a chord which can be read as a derivative of either the Neapolitan or dominant keys (see figure 95). In contrast to this harmonic ambiguity, the Coda of the *Symphony* movement, spanning the final thirteen bars (bars 325-337), opens with an unequivocal tonic chord. Additionally, whilst the harmonies continue to stray further in the *Sonata* (as discussed below), with four tonic arrival points occurring before the final chord is reached in bar 208, in the *Symphony* the harmonies stay closer to the tonic. Here, after various forms of F sharp and B major have

⁴⁴⁰ Christopher Butler, "Innovation and the avant-garde, 1900-20" in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 76.

been explored, the movement ends with a dominant-tonic pendulum followed by the final three chords (see figure 96).

D flat or G C7 D flat D7 A D G

Figure 95: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, first movement, bars 200-202 with simplified harmonisation marked underneath and harmonically significant melodic notes above

Figure 96: Adolf Busch, *Symphony* Op. 39, first movement, bars 332-337

The examples share a certain harmonic complexity, and the final arrival at the tonic is somewhat similar. However, the chromatic lines of the Sonata movement, together with an altogether higher degree of textural density and tonal ambiguity, result in more conflicting tonal clashes and altogether a subtly more complex and adventurous approach to tonality. A good example is bar 202, where the chords suggest the harmonic progression D major - A major - D major - G major, leading to the first of the four tonic arrival points in 203. What might read, superficially, as a simple progression is actually quite ambiguous, with most chords represented by their diminished or harmonically

otherwise related derivatives. The introduction of melodic notes which clash with the underlying harmony, such as the f natural on the first and the e natural on the third beat of bar 202, further veil the chord progression and enrich the tonal language. Only the second D major chord (on the third beat of bar 202) contains its root note. Even this is qualified by the appearance of B natural in the left hand, though, here serving as an anticipation of the forthcoming chord but also forming an added sixth chord, adding a subdominant quality to D major. Figure 95 displays the tonal progression of the beginning of the final subsection of the first *Sonata* movement with simplified harmonic descriptions. The equivalent section of the *Symphony*, even at its most complex in bars 326-329, never reaches the same degree of ambiguity: here, the derivatives of F sharp and B major lead clearly and teleologically to the tonic arrival point in bar 330.

In the light of the conceptual similarities, reaching the tonic key at the end of the first movement of the *Sonata* seems more of a struggle than in the *Symphony*, as if arrived at from greater heights. As with the observations on musical syntax, this can again be interpreted as a return, in the *Symphony*, to a more classicist, less adventurous approach to tonality. The identified shifts are admittedly subtle, but they contribute to the understanding of Busch's stylistic journey and underpin the unique position the *Sonata* holds in his oeuvre.

6.4 Piano Concerto Op. 31 and the Sonata Op. 25: Structural Conservatism versus the Experimental?

Busch's *Concerto* Op. 31 is his only large-scale work including solo piano except for the *Sonata*. A comparison of features of the two can help to illuminate changes in Busch's compositional approach. This juxtaposition is particularly significant because the two pieces were written almost at the same time: the *Concerto* was completed and premiered in 1924,⁴⁴¹ only two years after the *Sonata*. The connection with the pianist Rudolf Serkin, later to become Busch's son-in-law, is another link between the two works: Serkin, who clearly served as a pianistic inspiration to the composer,⁴⁴² premiered the two works. Busch even dedicated his Op. 31 to Serkin, who also produced its first edition, including a piano reduction of the orchestral part. There is no hard evidence that Busch consulted Serkin when writing the *Sonata* or the *Concerto*: and none of the

⁴⁴¹ The *Piano Concerto* was premiered on December 19, 1924 with Rudolf Serkin as soloist accompanied by the Dresdner Staatskapelle under Fritz Busch. See Lehmann and Faber, *Rudolf Serkin*, 55.

⁴⁴² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 290.

descendants interviewed for my research — Thomas Busch, Judith Serkin, Peter Serkin and Hilde Grütters — knew of any explicit consultation. Judith Serkin stated that her father would not talk much about Adolf Busch due to the fact that “it was very, very hard for him because he felt closer to Busch than anyone else in the world”.⁴⁴³ However, because of the close personal and professional relationship, it is safe to assume that some communication about piano writing took place in one form or another. In agreement with this, Peter Serkin, speculates in his interview with me: “surely he [Rudolf Serkin] must have been consulted [by Adolf Busch]”. Quite possibly, then, exchange between the two artists led to the more idiomatically virtuosic piano writing in the *Concerto* compared to the slightly earlier *Sonata*. This change can be seen right from the start: the first piano entry, with its alternating octaves, is in stark contrast to the continuously complex piano textures of the *Sonata* (see figure 97⁴⁴⁴). The different role of solo piano in a concerto context is naturally an important factor here, but Busch’s increased collaboration with the dedicatee most likely fed into this development, too.

The image shows a musical score for Adolf Busch's Piano Concerto Op. 31, first movement, bars 21-24. The score is in G major and 2/4 time. It features two staves: I (Piano) and II (Piano). Staff I has a 'Solo' marking and a 'p' dynamic. Staff II has a 'p' dynamic and a 'Pk.' marking. The music shows alternating octaves in the piano part, with a 'cresc.' marking in the piano part.

Figure 97: Adolf Busch, *Piano Concerto* Op. 31, first movement, bars 21-24

As noted above, aspects of Busch’s tonal language and musical syntax in the *Sonata* can be seen as innovative and somewhat experimental — at least in the stylistic context of his oeuvre as a whole. This extends to matters of overarching structure, and the comparison with the *Concerto* is significant in this regard: in combining a sonata form movement with variations and fugue in his Op. 25, Busch enters uncharted territory. Whilst there are plenty of examples in canonical repertoire of a fugue or set of variations built into a sonata, the specific genre of variations followed by a linked fugue —

⁴⁴³ Transcripts of the interviews can be found in Appendix III.

⁴⁴⁴ Adolf Busch, *Piano Concerto* Op. 31 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1928).

combining the genres of variations and fugue had attracted increasing interest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, for instance, César Franck's *Prélude, Fugue et Variation* Op. 18 or the above-mentioned works by Max Reger — had so far not been tested.

Generally, Busch's willingness to experiment and explore new idiomatic realms is less evident in Op 31. Firstly, unlike the *Sonata*, this work fully matches the structural expectations of the genre of the Romantic solo concerto in three movements. The first movement, 'Allegro non troppo ma con brio', is in sonata form, followed by a lyrical movement in a free ternary structure, 'Andante tranquillo'. The final movement, 'Allegro moderato e giocoso', also in sonata form, concludes the work with much opportunity for the soloist to demonstrate their virtuosity. The instrumentation also fits the expected framework of the romantic symphony orchestra,⁴⁴⁵ and the relationship between the solo piano and orchestra follows the standard nineteenth-century pattern. This concerto demonstrates strong stylistic bonds with the piano concertos of Brahms and Reger, and can be seen as broadly conservative, stylistically. Here, Busch's compositional approach is in stark contrast to some of the parallel modernist developments of the time, in which radical innovations of timbre were explored, often inspired by the rising influence of jazz. Bartók's *Piano Concerto No. 1* of 1926, in which the piano often blends with a large percussion section, is particularly characteristic in terms of this discovery of new timbres and the assignment of a new, more collaborative role to the solo instrument. Busch's *Concerto* displays no such innovations.

Unlike the *Sonata*, the tonal language of the *Concerto*, whilst sometimes complex and intricate, is rarely experimental or ambiguous. The different levels of complexity and ambiguity can be exemplified by juxtaposing bar 4 of the third *Concerto* movement with bar 100 of the first movement of the *Sonata*. These two excerpts are apt for comparison because of their striking similarity in motive and gesture. Whilst the harmonic progression from A major to a G major dominant chord in the example from the *Concerto* is relatively clear-cut, the chords in the excerpt from the *Sonata* are more complex and afford several possible harmonic interpretations. A simplified harmonic analysis is added to figures 98 and 99 including an alternative reading for the excerpt from the *Sonata*. These different harmonisations are representative of a wider tendency: it is evident that Busch often chooses tonal ambiguity in the *Sonata*, whereas in the *Concerto* he reverts to more unequivocal territory.

⁴⁴⁵ The orchestra comprises two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two trumpets, four french horns, timpani and strings. It does not include any lower brass, harp or percussion instruments.

A7/9 D D7/9 G7

Figure 98: Adolf Busch, *Piano Concerto* Op. 31, third movement, bar 4 with simplified harmonisation

C# A7 B9 G# B F#9 B C#7
E A7 B9 B6 B F#9 B C#7

Figure 99: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, first movement, bar 100 with simplified harmonisation

6.5 Busch's *Sonata*: A Turning Point

Overall, comparing the *Sonata* with these three works written between 1918 and 1927 suggests that Busch's Op. 25 takes a unique place within his oeuvre. He seems to be at his most curious and adventurous in terms of structure, tonality and syntax, here. We might therefore tentatively affirm that the *Sonata* constitutes a turning point in Busch's compositional practice: affirm, because Busch engages in a number of musical innovations in the *Sonata*, but tentatively because these stylistic shifts are mostly subtle. The degree of complexity and ambiguity is generally higher in the *Sonata* than in the other examined works. Moreover, with its unique overall structure, the *Sonata* stands out in the context of his whole body of work.

Chapter 7: The Interrelationship of Research and Performance: Two Recordings of Busch's Sonata Op. 25

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines my two recordings of Busch's *Sonata* Op. 25, separated by just over four years, as a means of identifying the impact of research upon the approach to performance and considering ways in which knowledge accrued by playing the work has influenced interpretative decisions. The first recording was produced in July 2015 and has since been published with Toccata Classics; the second was produced in January 2020 in response to the changing understanding of this piece, after producing the published edition and undertaking other research. Therefore, the chapter draws out methodological aspects of the work towards the edition and subsequent editorial decisions where relevant to aspects of performance. Fundamentally, the aim here is to consider how an interpretation changes in response to multilayered investigation. The main strands of research are specific engagement with the score in the process of editing, wider research into analysis of Busch's works and consideration of the place of his piano music with respect to key influences and historical context. This research has become an integral part of performative decision making; relevant processes of interpretation finding are discussed below.

As explained in section 5.3.2, there are two sources of Busch's Op. 25: the autograph of 1922 and the first edition of 1925. Whilst my first recording of the *Sonata* is based exclusively on the 1925 edition, in re-learning the piece for the second recording I used my new edition, which drew upon both sources. The research for the edition revealed some significant discrepancies between the autograph and the first edition, alongside more numerous minor differences, often attributable to the composer's moments of carelessness. Most likely, Busch was consulted for the production of the first edition and the publication of 1925 thus constitutes his 'final will'. However, there are no letters or third-party evidence to substantiate the composer's authorisation with absolute certainty, and it might be argued that some of the alterations are accidental — it is, for example, unclear whether the *Quasi Adagio* marking in bar 201 of the autograph copy of the first movement was omitted from the first edition by mistake or deliberately. I largely adhered to the text of the first edition in my second recording, but in some instances I adapted the autograph version according to judgement; this tempo marking is one example.

Naturally, similar adaptations can also be made in the interpretation of works other than Busch's, thus my research on Busch's *Sonata* helped to rise my awareness of editorial issues across the piano repertoire.

7.2 Musical Recordings in Research Processes

My performance research focused on the *Sonata* is based on comparative listening to the two recordings. The aim is to examine the shifts in interpretation and to discuss how these might be linked to my wider research on Adolf Busch, thereby contributing to understandings of the interrelationship between performance and musicology. In the following I therefore illuminate the interaction of practice and research: the impact upon my interpretation of my growing explicit knowledge of the music and its context, developed through research. I also examine interpretative changes where the connection with research is less tangible.

In recent decades, recordings have become a more integral part of musical research, and recorded material has increasingly been studied as a source of information about performance practices, potentially revealing attitudes towards the music, listening practices, and even the very idea of the musical work-concept. However, the specific angle of this study – a comparative analysis of two recordings made by the researcher – is unique in the wider context of recording-based research; this can be illustrated by a brief overview of the different approaches most prominent in today's academic landscape. In the field of music performance studies, researchers have begun to study the wider impact of recordings on performers. For example, Georgia Volioti's and Aaron Williamon's recent empirical research examines how listening to extant recordings influences performers' processes of musical learning and the development of critical and creative insights towards interpretation.⁴⁴⁶ In other studies, software technology is used to visualise sound and thus achieve more detailed and granular analyses of recordings; this can, for example, be used to identify similarities and differences between performances of the same musical work, or as an analytical tool for examining performance details such as specific qualities of tone, timbre or texture, or the micro-level of musical phrasing and timing.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ Georgia Volioti, Aaron Williamon, "Performers' discourses on listening to recordings", *RCM Research Online*, 2020, accessed September 4, 2021, https://researchonline.rcm.ac.uk/id/eprint/934/3/GV_RSM_manuscript_Open%20Access.pdf.

⁴⁴⁷ Nicholas Cook, "Methods for analysing recordings", in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 212-245.

Such analytical tools are not used in my study, as the main objective is the identification of interpretational shifts, rather than the microscopic analysis of the material. However, recent research involving comparative analysis used in relation to historical recordings, both in musicological and performance research, perhaps has greater relevance to the approach outlined in this chapter. Musicologist Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, for instance, uses early recordings to evidence changes in performance styles and listeners' expectations.⁴⁴⁸ In addition to Leech-Wilkinson's musicological approach, other researchers have developed performance-based methodologies by working with early recordings.⁴⁴⁹ Amongst these is Anna Scott's work on Ilona Eibenschütz's interpretation of Brahms.⁴⁵⁰ Here, the researcher, taking a performer's viewpoint, analyses the original material as the basis for experiments in recreation, exploring the embodied experience of playing 'like' the historical interpretation (and recording the results), following the dynamics and tempo fluctuations of the original model. In doing so, Scott opens up wider critical questions of how interpretations are formed by experiencing historic performance.⁴⁵¹ It is not her aim to distill an 'authentic' interpretation from these early recordings, but to increase awareness of performative decision making.⁴⁵² Finally, some recent studies explore not only the issues of artistic interpretation, but also the significance to performance practices of the nature of early recording techniques, and how extra-musical circumstances might have influenced a performance.⁴⁵³ Perhaps most notable amongst such current research in this field is the project 'Redefining Early Recordings as Sources for Performance Practice and History',⁴⁵⁴ led by Eva Moreda Rodriguez, Inja Stanovic and Karin Martensen. Many of these projects involve comparative examination of recordings, but there is a fundamental difference to my project in that these comparisons are always related to a recording made by an artist different to the researcher.

There are, however, a small number of examples of performer-researchers using recordings of their own performances to help to examine issues of interpretation. In this

⁴⁴⁸ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Recordings and histories of performance style," in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 246-262.

⁴⁴⁹ An apt overview of various such projects can be found on pages 218-220 in Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, "Challenging Performance: Classical Music Performance Norms and How to Escape Them", *Challenging Performance*, April 31st, 2021, accessed February 20, 2022, <https://challengingperformance.com/the-book/>.

⁴⁵⁰ Anna Scott, interviewed by Rosalind Rei, "Anna Scott", *Challenging Performance*, undated, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://challengingperformance.com/interviews-recordings/anna-scott/>.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

⁴⁵³ Inja Stanovic, "(Re)constructing Early Recordings: a guide for historically informed performance" in *Research Hands on Piano* ed. Alfonso Benetti, Francisco Monteiro, Jorge Salgado Correia (Aveiro: UA Editora, 2019), 63-69.

⁴⁵⁴ Eva Moreda Rodriguez, Inja Stanovic and Karin Martensen, *Redefining Early Recordings*, Accessed September 4, 2021, <https://early-recordings.com>.

context there has been some use of ‘stimulated recall’, a research method which has its roots in research on jazz improvisation undertaken in the 1980s⁴⁵⁵ and has more generally been applied in school education.⁴⁵⁶ More recently it has been used for intercultural and intersubjective performance research.⁴⁵⁷ The technique is employed when artists listen to or watch their own recordings, to help them retrieve the thinking concurrent to a particular performance, thus increasing “the efficacy of interpretation finding.”⁴⁵⁸ However, despite some overlap, the approach taken in my study is significantly different. In ‘stimulated recall’, recorded material from past performances and rehearsals is used to uncover aspects of a performance that usually remain tacit. In re-capturing an awareness from the moment of performance this can contribute to artistic processes.⁴⁵⁹ In contrast, my objective was to compare two recordings of the same material, deliberately not consulting the first rendition when preparing for the second recording. Therefore, my approach is distinctly different to ‘stimulated recall’ and any other method listed above.

7.3 Two Recordings: Comparative Analysis

As noted above, the two recordings took place over four years apart. Whilst working on the edition and studying the background of the *Sonata*, I did not perform the piece in-between the two recordings. Naturally, the new recording was produced under very different circumstances than in 2015: four years of editorial and wider research have fed into the development of an interpretation here. As mentioned above, I deliberately abstained from revisiting my 2015 rendition for the duration of the preparation of the second recording in order to avoid inadvertently copying features of the earlier, less informed interpretation as far as possible. Below, I examine the significant differences in approach evident in the two versions, especially in terms of tempo and the details of tone and textural balance, attempting to identify the main drivers for the interpretational shifts.

⁴⁵⁵ David T. Bastien, Todd J. Hostager, “Jazz as Process of Organizational Innovation,” *Communication Research* Vol.15 no. 5, (Sage Publications: October 1988), 582-602.

⁴⁵⁶ Wendy Fox-Turnbull, ‘Stimulated Recall Using Autophotography – A Method for Investigating Technology Education’ (online), in proceedings *Pupils’ Attitudes toward Technology Conference* (Delft, the Netherlands, 24–28 August 2009), 205, accessed November 8, 2019, <http://www.iteaconnect.org/Conference/PATT/PATT22/FoxTurnbull.pdf> 2. quoted in Christian Fernqvist, “Creativity and Resistance in Experimental Music Performance Practices,” (Phd thesis, University of York, 2020), 14, accessed May 31, 2022, <https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/27996/>.

⁴⁵⁷ Stefan Östersjö, *Listening to the Other* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020), 94-95.

⁴⁵⁸ Stefan Östersjö, “Shut Up ‘n’ Play! Negotiating the Musical Work” (PhD thesis, Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University, 2008), 14. quoted in Fernqvist, “Creativity and Resistance,” 15.

⁴⁵⁹ David Hebert, Henrik Frisk, Stefan Östersjö, Thanh Thuy Nguen, “Intersubjective knowledge through artistic research: approaches to transcultural dialogue through stimulated recall,” *Digitala Vetenskapliga Arkivet*, 2020, accessed September 5, 2021, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1508858&dswid=6220>.

Some are traceable to the broader research on Adolf Busch, while others are potentially the result of a more general evolution in playing style.

The process of examining the two recordings comparatively started with identifying specific changes in interpretation which could be directly attributed to my editorial work. An overview of the extent and types of changes is provided below, but in addition each change is itemised in the table given in figure 100, with full details and a brief justification of the resulting performance decision in the second recording. These alterations are either adaptations from the autograph or mere corrections to obvious errors made by the composer — the latter is the case, for example, in bar 78 of the first movement, where the notation in the first edition is slightly unclear. After identifying and defining these changes, I noted and investigated those shifts in interpretation not directly linked to my study of the available sources, and therefore more complex to evaluate in terms of the reasons for their emergence. Some fundamental differences came to light here. Most notably, the tempi are often significantly slower in the 2020 performance, signified by the considerable difference in duration: the second recording, at 35'29'', is almost four minutes longer than its 2015 counterpart, which only lasts 31'39''. To explore aspects of the interpretational differences, I identified three representative sections for closer examination, discussed below: one passage from each movement.

Importantly, both recordings form part of an ongoing artistic process. As a performer and researcher, I intend to continue playing this work in the future, and further changes will most likely occur along the way. As with all recordings, these are documents of particular moments in time, but they highlight creative tendencies towards interpretational choices. Overall, the critical evaluation of these interpretations concludes that the later account sometimes lacks the drive and energy of the first recording, but at the same time characterises certain musical details more expressively. In what follows I base the discussion on traceable facts and minimise personal views as much as possible. Of course, reviewing and appraising my own creative processes poses significant challenges, and inevitably any attempt will be obscured by the subjectivity of the process. Nonetheless, this examination is vital to understand the formation of my interpretation, the potential impact of research and other changing knowledge on my performance, and also the processes by which I, as a performer, have developed over time.

7.4. The Impact of Editorial Research on Performance

Before looking at the more global changes in my interpretation, this section sets out the specific changes in performative decisions that can be directly attributed to my editorial research. Full details are given, preceded by an overview discussion, in particular highlighting where significant differences between the sources offer concrete playing alternatives.

The vast majority of alterations between the autograph and the first edition comprise note changes: there are over forty such cases. These discrepancies range from mere note doublings to more complex harmonic differences, sometimes significantly determining the tonal logic and/or melodic outline. Often, both versions are equally plausible: this is the case, for example, in bar 72 of the second movement, where a C sharp minor triad in the autograph is changed to an E minor triad in the first edition.

Whilst variations in rhythm and metre, as well as alternative articulation, tempo, dynamic and pedal markings are more singular, these are no less significant. Four of the entries in the table below are solely concerned with rhythm and metre. These are primarily changes of note value, but there is also a change in time signature in bar 112 of the second movement: here, a 6/8 time is altered to 7/8, hence the additional beat allowing Variation 7 to end with greater finality on the tonic key.

In two cases, tempo markings are included in the autograph but missing in the first edition: these have been taken account of in the second performance as they aid the general character of the music. These markings were either deliberately omitted in the first edition or missed by the negligence of the editor. Both possibilities should be considered but, as noted at the relevant points in the table, musically speaking these markings are appropriate: it seems likely they should have been maintained in the edition.

Two of the three articulation changes listed in the table concern the contrapuntal texture in the third movement, and the one difference in pedalling refers to a *una corda* marking in the autograph of the first movement. The very few dynamic changes somewhat affect phrasing and the structuring of each musical section. Finally, some moments include changes to more than one parameter: for instance, the increased complexity in bars 67-70 of the second movement concerns both notes and rhythm.

The table in Figure 100 lists all significant interpretational changes, including a short description of the reason for each performance decision.

M	B	D	Autograph (A)	First Edition (E)	Dc	Defense
1	14	c3	r.h. b-d-f-b l.h. g Resulting in G major 7 chord	r.h. b-d-g-b l.h. g Resulting in G major triad	E	Whilst recognising the expressive scope of the dominant seventh chord, the later version is somewhat smoother as voice leading is more logical and the clash between the f in the right hand and the f sharp following the bass note g in the left hand is avoided. Most likely the harmony was altered intentionally for the benefit of greater elegance.
1	24	c1-2	demisemiquaver triplets (incorrect note value)	demisemiquaver triplets (incorrect note value)	n/a	The layout and the incorrect note values in both sources (with demisemiquaver instead of semiquaver triplets) led to my grouping of the chords in pairs in my first recording. In my new edition I attributed the accurate note values to the chords and subsequently changed my interpretation to an even execution.
1	30	r.h. 10/ 11	b flat/a	c/b flat	E	Whilst the earlier version is denser and more chromatic, the later version is smoother and less dissonant. Other similar passages in this movement match the version of the first edition (for example bar 28). Therefore, it is assumed that this has been adjusted intentionally in the first edition.
1	41 + 45	n/a	<i>una corda</i> and <i>tre corde</i> markings	no left pedal markings	A	Generally, the use of the left pedal depends on the nature of the instrument and the acoustic conditions of the venue and is therefore often optional. However, I agree with the intent apparent in the autograph, colouring bars 41-45 differently.
1	58	r.h. q4	single note d	octave d	E	Including the lower octave makes the voice leading more logical and the texture more complete.
1	78 + 182	r.h. c2- 3	3 part texture, quavers	unclear notation	A	Due to ambiguous printing in the 1925 edition, the notes of the right hand were played as a two-part texture in the first recording (the autograph clearly indicates three parts). This has been corrected in the second recording.
1	103	r.h. 3	d natural	d sharp	A	D natural matches dominant seventh chord on the second crotchet.
1	106	l.h. sq8	octave f	single note f	E	Voice leading is more logical with single note.
1	116	l.h. q2	chord: e-a-c	chord: e-g-c	A	Context suggests A minor (possibly misprint in E).
1	135	l.h. qt9	chord: c-f-a	chord: f-a	A	Voice leading more logical with bass note (alterations in E are possibly for technical reasons)

Figure 100: Table of changes in my recordings of Adolf Busch's *Sonata* Op. 25

M	B	D	Autograph (A)	First Edition (E)	Dc	Defense
1	137	l.h. qt6	chord: a-c#-f#-a	chord: c#-f#-a	A	Voice leading more logical with bass note (alterations in E possibly for technical reasons)
1	154	r.h. c3	chord: c-e-b-c	chord: c-b-c	E	Additional note e is unessential as the left hand already anticipates the note e on q4.
1	201	n/a	<i>Quasi Adagio</i>	no tempo marking	A	Tempo marking seems logical at the end of the movement and in line with the musical character of this passage.
2	15	r.h. 1	top note a	top note c	A	The note a is consistent with the repeats of the main theme later in the movement. Possibly misprint in E.
2	22	l.h. 1	chord: g-d-g-b flat	chord: g-d-b flat	E	Additional note g is unessential and has been omitted in E, presumably for reasons of playability.
2	23-26	n/a	23: pp cresc. 24: mp dim. 26 (beginning): ppp	23: mp cresc. 25: mf dim. 26 (end): ppp	E	The overall dynamic shape of the first edition seems more logical, but I have made subtle changes in my performance by introducing a lighter, airier tone suitable to the character of this variation.
2	27	r.h. dsq 15+ 16	e + d	g + d-f	E	The full diminished triad at the end of each 8-demisemiquaver group seems harmonically more consistent and complete.
2	31	r.h. dsq 7+8	d-b flat/f-b	f-b flat/a flat-b	E	Small change in chords is probably intentional.
2	40	r.h. sq 2+4	e-g-c-e/c#-e-g-c#	e-g#-c-e/c#-e-a-c#	E	I deem the element of surprise triggered by the augmented chord suitable to the character of the passage.
2	50	l.h. sq1 0	dotted quaver	the triplet motion in the tenor part continues to the end of the bar	A	I omitted the last tenor note in my recording of 2015 as its inclusion would have significantly compromised the flow. This is further improved by only playing a dotted quaver (as suggested in the autograph).
2	56	l.h.	texturally less complex	texturally more complex	A	The increased complexity does not add any harmonic value.
2	67-70	l.h.	simplified version	more complex version	E	More density and finesse suit the character of the variation.
2	71	dsq 11	d# (both hands)	d natural (both hands)	E	The harmonic progression from F# minor to G major and then to a diminished chord on G# is slightly smoother than the earlier version with the augmented chord in the middle and was likely intended here.

Figure 100: Table of changes in my recordings of Adolf Busch's *Sonata Op. 25*

M	B	D	Autograph (A)	First Edition (E)	Dc	Defense
2	72	r.h. 30	g#-c#-e	g-b-e	E	The change to an E minor chord was most likely intentional, despite the logicity of the C# minor chord of the earlier version.
2	73	l.h. 2	g#-c#-e	g#-c#-e#	E	The alternating semitones (F sharp - E sharp) in the tenor part better match the surrounding figures.
2	77	l.h. sq4	f# 2 octaves higher than E	f# 2 octaves lower than A	E	The sonority of the low bass note in bar 77 is preferable: it underlines the overall harmonic narrative in a more definitive way.
2	79	mid. line	additional notes (possibly crossed out)	no additional notes	E	The suggested additional notes undermine the clarity and are unnecessary harmonically for the voice leading.
2	83	r.h. q4	c-e	c#-e	E	C# matches the harmonic context better.
2	86	c2	C major 7 chord — melodic passing note b flat	A minor 7 chord — melodic note c sustained (no passing note)	E	C major 7 chord seems harmonically clumsy in this context, and the chordal progression of the later version is therefore more elegant.
2	94	r.h. sq1 6	single note a	interval e-a	A	Single note matches pattern of the rest of the bar and is also technically more accessible.
2	95	r.h. c4	single note a flat	interval f-a flat	E	Interval matches the pattern of the rest of bar.
2	101	l.h. q6	g	b flat	E	B flat is harmonically more logical as it matches the augmented chord of the arpeggio and underlines the chromaticism in the bass.
2	112		6/8 time — finishing on dominant note	7/8 time — finishing on tonic note	E	Both versions have merits. The 7/8 bar makes this section end with greater finality, whilst the less defined ending of the first version suggests a more seamless transition into the next variation. Second version most likely authorised by the composer.
2	125	r.h. q4	a flat-f	a (natural)-f	E	The contrary motion voice leading is more consistent here (a-f/a flat-f sharp/g-g).
2	125 - 126	l.h.	all chords detached	q 6 (bar 125) and 1 (bar 126) as well as q 3 and 4 (both bar 126) are slurred together.	E	The slight variation in articulation helps to highlight the polyphonic texture.
2	156	r.h. sq8	a	b	E	The E major seventh of the later version is harmonically more coherent and more fitting melodically (matching the ascending third on the first crotchet).

Figure 100: Table of Changes in my recordings of Adolf Busch's *Sonata* Op. 25

M	B	D	Autograph (A)	First Edition (E)	Dc	Defense
2	166	l.h.	generally more complexity — 2 parts are more consistently sustained	slightly simplified here	E	Second version offers greater clarity and is technically more accessible.
2	185	r.h. q2	c-f#-a-c	octave c-c	A	The full chord has a bigger impact on quaver 2 and supports the syncopated rhythm with greater conviction.
2	185	l.h. sq2	c#-f#-c#	octave c#-c#	E	Voice leading is more logical in A, but E is easier to realise technically.
2	207 - 208	n/a	no passing note (b) r.h. c2 (207) — additional bass note (a) l.h. c3 (208)	passing note (b) r.h. c2 (207) — no additional bass note (a) l.h. c3 (208)	E	The additional bass note in bar 208, adding greater tonal definition, was probably omitted intentionally in order to create a sense of tonal disorientation.
3	3	l.h. c3	d-g#	d#-g#	E	Both versions are harmonically logical, but d# matches bass notes in the subsequent bar.
3	21- 24	n/a	r.h. (lower part) c 3 - 4 (21) and c 1 - 2 (23 - 24) slurred	r.h. (lower part) c 3 - 4 (21) and c 1 - 2 (23 - 24) detached	A	Attractiveness to slightly vary the articulation in different appearances of the same motivic material.
3	32	l.h. 1-4	octaves	single notes	A	The octaves better match the rest of this section.
3	60	r.h. 4	d-f-d	d-f#-d	E	D major matches the harmonic pattern continued in bar 61: all cadences are resolved into major chords here.
3	67- 68	r.h.	different melodic pattern	different melodic pattern	E	Repetition of a 2-note group in A (67 q3-6) slightly awkward. E probably authorised by composer.
3	112	l.h. q7	g natural	g#	E	G natural is harmonically logical as it matches the dominant 7-9 chord leading to the key of B. However, g# is part of the ascending B melodic minor scale, which consequently descends with a and g natural in the subsequent bar. E honours the polyphonic texture and the melodic nature of each part.
3	123 + 125	l.h. c4	f#-g#	g#-f#-g#	E	E provides greater tonal clarity in an otherwise already complex harmonic context: 7th chords in root position rather than third inversion.
3	141	r.h. q4	d-f#	d-f	E	E better matches the rest of the bar: all two-quaver-groups ascend or descend a semitone.

Figure 100: Table of changes in my recordings of Adolf Busch's *Sonata* Op. 25

M	B	D	Autograph (A)	First Edition (E)	Dc	Defense
3	157	c3	<i>Animato</i>	no marking	A	Due to the <i>stringendo</i> in bar 160, I was already taking a slightly faster tempo here in my first recording. The additional reinforcement of this characteristic in the autograph is reassuring but has had no significant impact on my interpretation.
3	158	r.h. q8	d-c-d	octave d-d	E	E better matches the recurring pattern in bar 161.
3	176	r.h.	q5-6 detached, q7-8 slurred	q5-6 slurred, q7- 8 detached	E	E matches subsequent articulation patterns. However, breaking the pattern, as proposed in the earlier source, also has the potential to be musically persuasive.
3	187	r.h. q5	g-g	g-a-g	E	As the melodic line (in the middle parts) is doubled for the remainder of the bar, I regard the note 'a' as an integral part of the texture.
3	191	l.h. q3	a-a	a-d#-a	E	Chords seems more complete when including the lower d#.

Abbreviations: M: Movement; B: Bar; D: Detail; Dc: Decision; r.h.: Right hand; l.h.: Left hand; c: crotchet; q: quaver; sq: semiquaver; dsq: demisemiquaver; t: triplet (for example qt: quaver-triplet)

Figure 100: Table of Changes in my recordings of Adolf Busch's *Sonata* Op. 25

7.5 Tracing Interpretational Shifts

Beyond the performance changes directly attributable to research, broader shifts in interpretation are evident in the second recording. As mentioned above, reviewing one's own performance comes with some challenges, and the risk of too subjective a perspective is high. Whilst there are limitations to this approach, an outside perspective would come with different limitations: no one can provide insights into the specifics of the research, performance process or their interaction in the same way as the performer themselves. In her elaboration of the impact of research on the performance of baroque flute music, Jennifer Cohen argues that in trying to understand the underlying processes of musical decision-making in practice, a "self-reflective methodology ... [is] wholly

appropriate”⁴⁶⁰ because “objective paradigms fail to reveal the full story or grasp the bigger picture surrounding experiential phenomena.”⁴⁶¹ Likewise, Fiona MacKeller writes, “there is no empirical way to get at what is going on inside someone’s head.”⁴⁶²

With this in mind, the focus here is upon verifiable alterations in tempo and phrasing, and on the approach to articulation, balance and timbre. Three sections, representing general interpretative tendencies, are identified for closer examination: the development section of the first movement (bars 85-112); the eleventh variation of the second movement (bars 193-224); and ‘Introduzione’, the opening of the third movement (bars 1-38).⁴⁶³

Consideration of these specific instances allows for subsequent discussion of potential correlations between interpretational changes and editorial and wider research on Busch.

7.5.1 *Interpretative Comparison 1: A More Experimental Approach*

The first comparison focusses on the development section of the first movement (bars 84-112): track 13 of the first recording, 4’03’’-5’21’’; track 1 of the second recording, 4’28’’-5’54’’.

Standing as the condensed centrepiece of the first movement, the development section, with its fractured nature, different motives and variety of musical characters, is particularly open to interpretation. Therefore, juxtaposing the two performances of this section is especially interesting. A close examination reveals a shift from a more neutral, quasi-classicist approach in the first recording to greater expressive intensity in the second. This results primarily from the differences in tempo and the approach to dynamic gradation.

In terms of tempo, the pace of this section is slightly slower in the second recording than in the 2015 rendition: approximately 64 crotchet beats per minute as opposed to 72. The approach to rubato is quite different, too, with the tempo changes in the second recording more radical than in the earlier version. For instance, in the later recording the crotchet beat slows down from metronome mark 64 in bar 85 to 44 two bars later, giving

⁴⁶⁰ Jennifer Cohen, “Playing with Time, The Creative Embodiment of Knowledge in the Performance of Baroque Flute Music” (PhD thesis, University of York, 2020), 27, accessed May 31, 2022, <https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/23580/>.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶² Fiona MacKeller, “Subjectivity in Qualitative Research”, *EDUC 867 WEBSITE*, undated, accessed January 23, 2022, <http://www.sfu.ca/educ867/htm/subjectivity.htm>.

⁴⁶³ For the sections of the *Sonata* referred to in this chapter, see my edition which forms part of this doctoral submission.

particular expressive weight to the tonal ambiguity of bar 87, produced by a hybrid chord combining diminished and augmented elements. Flexibility of speed is also used elsewhere in this recording to highlight expressive moments. The extra time taken over the top notes in the middle of bar 94, within the context of a slightly increased pace, is exemplary here (see figure 101). The tempo in the second half of the development fluctuates less: it returns to broadly 64 crotchet beats per minute in bar 100 and continues to flow regularly, with some broadening at the *un poco sostenuto* marking in bar 109 and at the end of the section in bar 112. In contrast, tempo changes are generally less extreme in the first recording, but there are a few more moments of greater liberty in the second half of the development: for example, at the ends of bars 106 and 108.

Figure 101: Adolf Busch, *Sonata* Op. 25, first movement, bars 93-95

The trend towards greater expressivity in the second recording, evidenced by this flexibility of tempo, can also be traced in the treatment of dynamic gradation. The amplitude of the crescendos towards the expressive high points in bars 87, 91, 94, 96, 104, 106 and 109 is generally greater in the 2020 performance than in the earlier version. In addition, there is also a clear tendency towards more overlapping in the pedalling, and thus greater tonal density, in the later performance. This is particularly apparent in bar 87 but also evident in other places, such as bar 92 and 96. Furthermore, subtle differences in voicing and balancing can be found, with the 2020 recording tending towards a clearer prioritisation of the upper melodic line against the rest of the texture. For instance, in the passage from bar 105 the bass line is played with a little more weight in the earlier version. Likewise, the top line of the opening of the development is somewhat more projected in the more recent rendition.

These shifts result in an emphasis on individual motivic gestures, thus generating an expressive, sometimes quasi-expressionistic effect. The syntactical fragmentation of the

music is also less apparent in the earlier performance, which favours a more continuous musical line. This general interpretative change cannot be directly attributed to my editorial research but has its root — at least partially — in the wider engagement with Adolf Busch's music. At the time of the first recording, I had little knowledge of his oeuvre beyond the piano works. Examining the *Sonata* in the context of his stylistic transformations and various influences has encouraged me to bring out the modernist elements in his Op. 25 with greater confidence. This was only partially due to conscious reflection and often led by intuitive processes. These might have also been influenced by the changing understanding through research. It is, however, not possible to know to what extent this is the case, and how other contributing factors, such as my broader development as a performer, are relevant here. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, Busch was trying out innovative musical features at the time of writing the *Sonata*. Understanding this more fully, I have concluded that a freer, more experimental performative approach is demanded.

7.5.2 Interpretative Comparison 2: Another Experiment

The second comparison is of the two recordings of the eleventh variation of the second movement (bars 193-224): track 14 of the first recording, 11'24"-14'27"; track 2 of the second recording, 12'37"-16'17".

The final variation of the second movement offers a useful point of focus for this discussion, due to its structural significance within the *Sonata* as a whole. It provides a reflective after-thought to all the frenzy and diversity of mood and character in the preceding variations, concluding the set and thus preparing for the third movement. Sitting between the cascading chords of the second polonaise (the tenth variation) and the highly energetic introduction to the Fugue, it seems like the calm in the eye of a storm. Comparing the two performances of the eleventh variation largely confirms the observations from the previous example: there is a tendency towards greater expressivity and intensity in the second recording. However, this is achieved differently.

As in the previous example, from the first movement, the speed of this variation is generally slower in the second recording, with approximately 36 crotchet beats per minute as opposed to 44 in the 2015 rendition. A certain use of rubato is apparent in both accounts, but particular features are evident in the second recording, such as the broadening at the peak of the phrase in bar 215 and the slightly reduced tempo,

generally speaking, in the section from bar 217. Beyond this, the tempo fluctuations are quite similar: only subtle variations can be perceived. Instead, the significant differences can be found not in the principal tempo changes themselves, but in their amplitude. Often the changes are more pronounced in the early recording; a good example is the quickening pulse in bar 207, which is much greater here than in the 2020 performance.

Both recordings follow the same general dynamic profile, with just a few changes in the performance detail. For instance, the lower- and middle-part figures of bars 201-203 are played with a crescendo in the second recording, unlike the slight diminuendo in the earlier version. Bar 208 ends in a diminuendo in the 2015 recording but is changed to a crescendo in the later recording leading to the accented d sharp in 209. The upper melodic octaves are brought out against the chords in bars 201-204 with greater clarity in the second recording than in the earlier rendition, but in bars 205-206 both performances place equal emphasis on voicing the inner parts of the harmonies. Furthermore, expressive diminuendos, such as those in bar 206 or at the end of the variation, are defined more strongly in the second rendition.

The tendency towards more expressiveness in the second recording can be evidenced by the above examples. Here, however, this effect is achieved by slightly different means than in the excerpt from the first movement, where it is the increased use of rubato that produces more expressivity. In the example from the second movement the opposite is the case, with greater expressivity generated by the reduction in the frequency of the changes in speed. The more obviously defined tempo changes in the first recording contribute to the more playful and lighter character, whereas the overall slower speed in the second version evokes a quasi-ritualistic, almost solemn atmosphere, emphasising the intensity and chorale-like character of the piece. The subtle shifts in dynamics noted above — with some diminuendos changed to a crescendo, thus replacing moments of decreasing intensity with increasing tension — point to a heightened degree of expressiveness.

Fundamentally, comparative analysis of the recordings reveals two quite different interpretative approaches, each with potential merits and flaws: whilst the first recording might be criticised for underplaying certain expressive details, the second might be called out for its lack of momentum. Considering my artistic research journey between the two performances, I conclude that the increased willingness to make use of more extreme tempos and expressive dynamics in the 2020 recording is at least partially a result of in-depth research into Busch's stylistic developments. This opens up the wider

discussion of ‘extreme’ tempos, and whether the avoidance of extreme tempo markings, as is the case with Busch (see section 3.2.1), allows for greater fluctuation in speed or limits the performer to moderating tempos altogether. As a performer I conclude that the former is true: Busch’s music often attracts a wide range of tempos within a given framework, i.e. a particular tempo marking such as ‘Andante’. As with the example from the first movement, discussed above, it seems that greater awareness of the composer’s experimentation with features of tonal language, syntax and structure in the *Sonata* has emboldened me, encouraging a spirit of experimentation in performance.

7.5.3 Interpretative Comparison 3: A Step Back from Experimentation

The third comparison focuses on the ‘Introduzione’ of the third movement (bars 1-38): track 15 of the first recording, 0’00”-1’03””; track 3 of the second recording, 0’00”-1’10””.

The introduction to the final fugue — Busch gave it the Italian title ‘Introduzione’ — is chosen due to its core function in the architectural context of the *Sonata*. With the inclusion of this prelude, the fugue, as mentioned above, cannot be heard merely as a supplement to the preceding set of variations, but rather is constituted as a piece in its own right, despite its close thematic connection to the second movement. Thus the ‘Introduzione’ gives clear autonomy to the third movement. Unlike the comparisons from the first and second movements, simply characterising the later recording of the ‘Introduzione’ as more expressive and intense than the 2015 version does not do justice to the interpretative differences. Instead, they might be more strongly contrasted: attributing the adjectives ‘sprightly’ to the first and ‘stately’ to the second recording probably constitutes a more apt description.

In terms of tempo, this example follows the pattern of the others, insofar as the general pace is palpably slower in the second recording: the minim beat per minute is 66 here as opposed to 80 in the earlier rendition. Likewise, the trend towards less rubato in the 2020 account, observed in the excerpt from the second movement, is also evident in the ‘Introduzione’. For instance, the rests in bar 2 and 5 are slightly extended in the 2015 version, and a considerable *accelerando* is added to bars 8 and 9. Moreover, the *ritardando* in bar 16 is clearly defined, after which the beat slows down to approximately 72 minims per minute. Another *accelerando* is placed over bars 27 and 28 followed by a tangible *sostenuto* in bar 35. In contrast, the tempo is much more uniform in the later version, displaying only a slight *accelerando* in bar 9 and a minimal *ritardando* in bar 16,

after which the pulse continues at its initial speed. The broadening at the end of the section is also less obvious than in the earlier performance, perhaps due to the slower tempo, overall. Unlike the example from the second movement, where dynamics are generally more expressive in the more recent performance, in the 'Introduzione' the higher degree of tempo flexibility in the first recording is matched by a wider dynamic range. This is, for instance evident in the differing contrasts between the *fortissimo* and *piano* moments in bars 7-8 and 16-17: the definition of the opposing dynamics is weaker in the second rendition.

The slower overall tempo, smaller fluctuations in speed and less extreme dynamics result in the second recording achieving a measured, almost ceremonial character, whereas the more extensive use of rubato combined with a generally faster pace and stronger dynamic contrasts contribute to the more playful and at times spontaneous-feeling approach of the earlier rendition. Unlike the previous two examples, there is no apparent correlation between the interpretational shift for the second recording of the 'Introduzione': no explanation is to be found in my research activities or changing understanding of Busch's music. Perhaps this simply underlines the fact that the relationship between research and performance is not always linear or causal. As discussed above, whilst interpretative decisions can sometimes be attributed to research processes or other explicit changes in knowledge or practice, the underlying reasons for performance decisions are at other times more amorphous and always complex.

7.6 The Interaction of Performance and Musicological Research

Listening back to my recorded performances of the *Sonata*, nearly seven years after producing the first and over two years after the second version, I evaluate them as two attempts to achieve coherence in interpretation. However, the material makes this task challenging at times. Written at the height of Busch's experimental phase, his Op. 25 offers significant insights into the composer's creative processes. In what was, for Busch, a somewhat daring approach, he achieved moments of artistic depth in the *Sonata*, often using a highly expressive musical language. However, the work also displays significant structural weaknesses, and the overall logic and congruity is not always convincing. In particular, the third movement might be regarded as simply too convoluted and self-conscious in its construction. In contrast, the fugue of the *Mozart Variations* Op. 19 seems better balanced and more proportionate, length-wise, in relation to its preceding eleven variations. The claim might therefore be made that whilst Busch

was pursuing the classicist ideal of perfect proportionality and natural integration in Op. 19, in the *Sonata* he deliberately pushed the structural and stylistic boundaries, and one consequence of this is the difficulty of generating a stringent interpretation.

Clearly, some of the shifts in my interpretative approach to the *Sonata* can be traced back to my editorial and wider research. The awareness of Busch's own development towards greater stylistic innovation encouraged me to experiment and to test the constraints of the notated music at times. This is, for instance, evident in the example from the first movement, where the interpretation moved away from the strict 'letter' of the score to a freer approach in the second recording. However, elsewhere the correlation between research and interpretation is less apparent, especially in the excerpt from the third movement. Rather than seeking a singular explanation for such interpretative shifts, these changes are perhaps better described as the result of multiple factors, including, but not limited to, the work on Busch. After all, research and performance do not take place in a vacuum and cannot be separated from the rest of my professional activities such as performing, teaching and listening to a vast range of repertoire. In my experience, interpretative preferences change, often making it impossible precisely to pinpoint the reasons for these shifts.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This doctoral research has coincided with a wider rediscovery of Busch as a composer. In recent years, Busch's compositions have been increasingly performed, and new recordings and editions of some of his works have been published. In particular, the Adolf-Busch-Kollegium — an ensemble of professional musicians based in Karlsruhe⁴⁶⁴ — has promoted his works in concerts and recordings over the past ten years: their two CD's of Busch's chamber music are testament to their dedication to the composer.⁴⁶⁵ In addition to increased performance of Busch's chamber and orchestral pieces, his piano music has generated more interest, as Florence Millet's performance of Busch's *Piano Concerto* early in 2022 demonstrates.⁴⁶⁶

Adolf Busch's corpus of solo piano works is relatively small, consisting of merely fifteen pieces: around ninety minutes of music. Despite this, the scope of this doctoral research, which incorporates questions of compositional style, influence and context in addition to practical matters of editing and performance, reveals the complexity and significance of this music. Two aspects of this provided the main source of motivation for my research: firstly, the intrinsic qualities of Busch's music, and secondly, its context within the stylistic plurality of twentieth-century music. Like many composers of the time, Busch's works were conceived against the backdrop of a dichotomy between convention and innovation, between emancipation from tonality and its reaffirmation, and between enshrining and challenging traditional concepts of syntax and structure. What makes Busch a fascinating figure is that outwardly he remained a traditionalist, but a closer look reveals that many characteristics of modernism can be found in his works. In this respect, the focus on Busch's piano works sheds light upon his search for aesthetic orientation in a complex historical and artistic situation.

The thesis explores the development of Busch's writing style over the years and also the relationship between his music and that of the composers most influential to him. The framework of a doctoral dissertation, however, inevitably limits the extent to which certain stylistic questions can be discussed. To different degrees, therefore, each chapter is in itself a potential starting point for further investigation. In particular, the

⁴⁶⁴ *BuschKollegium*, Busch Kollegium, accessed January 15, 2022, <http://busch-kollegium.de>.

⁴⁶⁵ Adolf Busch, *Chamber Music Clarinet and Strings, Vol. 1 and 2*, performed by Bettina Beigelbeck and Busch Kollegium Karlsruhe (London: Toccata Classics, 2013 and 2015), CD.

⁴⁶⁶ "5. Sinfoniekonzert", *Vogtland Philharmonie*, Vogtland Kultur, accessed February 21, 2022, https://v-ph.de/konzerte/veranstaltungsart/konzert?tx_theatre_event%5Baction%5D=showEvent&tx_theatre_event%5Bevent%5D=524&cHash=14376669135cfff1ab16d4f384a5798.

analysis of the impact on Busch of the music of Brahms, Reger and Busoni would ideally be extended into the examination of the influence of other contemporary composers. Volkmar Andreae (1879-1962), a Swiss composer and conductor, is particularly relevant in this context. The correspondence between the Busches and Andreae has been the subject of critical consideration⁴⁶⁷ — Dominik Sackmann examines this, mainly in relation to the political situation after 1933 and Busch's naturalisation in Switzerland⁴⁶⁸ — but there is, to date, no consideration of the compositional cross-fertilisation between them. This would be particularly interesting to investigate, as the two artists performed each other's works, and dedicated compositions to one another: Andreae dedicated his *Violin Concerto* Op. 40 to Busch,⁴⁶⁹ and Busch his *Capriccio* Op. 46 to Andreae.⁴⁷⁰ Also of potential relevance is the music of other Swiss composers whose works were programmed in concerts given by Busch in the 1920s and 1930s: these include Fritz Brun (1878-1959), Walther Geiser (1897-1993) and Hermann Suter (1870-1926),⁴⁷¹ who, like Andreae, dedicated his *Violin Concerto* Op. 23 to Busch.⁴⁷² Likewise, a stylistic comparison of Busch's music with that of other contemporary composers whose music he included in his own concerts, such as Robert Kahn and Ernst Toch,⁴⁷³ might also contribute to the overall picture. Furthermore, a closer examination of Busch's correspondence with Donald Francis Tovey on compositional matters⁴⁷⁴ could also prove informative in the context of research on Busch's compositional style.

Overall, the integration of performance, editorial and musicological research has proved particularly fruitful for investigating Busch's piano music. The interweaving of these different avenues of research has facilitated a rewarding and eye-opening journey of discovery.

⁴⁶⁷ Sackmann, *Einswerden von Schaffen und Nachschaffen*, 105-114.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁴⁷⁰ Potter: *Adolf Busch*, 1255.

⁴⁷¹ Sackmann, *Einswerden von Schaffen und Nachschaffen*, 68-69.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

⁴⁷⁴ See, for example, letter to Donald Francis Tovey, dated September 11, 1913, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 71-78.

APPENDIX I

Score, Adolf Busch: *Intermezzo* in B flat major (1908)

Score, Adolf Busch: *Klavierstück (Intermezzo)* in A minor (1916)

Score, Adolf Busch: *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor (1917)

Score, Adolf Busch: *Intermezzo* in A minor (undated)

Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in B flat major (1908)

Frieda Grütters angeordnet.

Intermezzo

A. Busch. 1909.

Pianoforte

3

(non legato)

6

ppp

poco espr.

9

cresc.

f sempre legato

12

stringendo cresc.

mf poco agitato

(Etwas bewegter.)

14

pdu f espr.

sempre legato

16

18

20

a tempo

f espr.

poco rit.

22

23 *poco rit.*

dim. *poco f. espresso*

26 *p* *pp*

30 *tr.* *B3* *dim.* *tranquillo*

35

38

40

43

pf

pp

pp

Empty staves at the bottom of the page.



Adolf Busch, Klavierstück (*Intermezzo*) in A minor (1916)

Andante

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 1-20. The score is written in treble and bass clefs with a 3/4 time signature. It includes various dynamics and performance instructions:

- Measure 1: *p*
- Measure 4: *mp* *espressivo*
- Measure 8: *sempre espressivo*
- Measure 11: *agritanto*
- Measure 14: *sempre $\frac{1}{2}$ esp.*
- Measure 17: *quasi f*
- Measure 20: *poco a poco dim.*

The score features complex harmonic structures with many accidentals and slurs. A dashed line is drawn across measures 17 and 20.

Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 22-44. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo and dynamics markings include *poco a poco rit.*, *sempre ben legato*, *ppp una corda*, *tre corde cresc.*, *marc.*, *poco a poco*, *cresc.*, *sempre*, and *tranquillo (poco cresc.)*. The notation features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and various articulations such as slurs and accents. A small logo is visible in the bottom left corner of the page.

48

esp. (tranquilla)
p

52

poco appassionato

56

pp (una corda)
p poco sostenuto

59

mp dolce

62

agitato
cresc.

65

cresc.

68

grand

71

8

poco a poco rit.

molto cresc.

molto tranquillo

75

legato

sostenuto

pp

Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor (1917)

Meiner lieben Frau
(Weihnachten 1917)

Intermezzo cis moll

Allegretto agitato ed espressivo für Klavier Rudolf Strauß

p beim Beginn

7

13

rit.

rit. molto

18



23

28

ff

mol a poco dim.

33

p dolce cantabile

38

43

mp

molto esp.

48

pp *sempre dolce*

53

tranquillo *espr.*

58

sempre espr. (cres)

63

pizz *dim* *una corda*

ppp

Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* in A minor

Intermezzo

- a moll -

Agitato

Pianoforte

molto esp. recitativo

3 *(Ten.)* *molto esp.*

5 *cresc. più f. (quinto) sempre legato*

7 *per rit. e dim.* *mp esp. sostenuto*

Tranquillo

9 *rit.* *p legato*

12 *mp* *mp* *cresc.* *molto esp.*

15 *dolce espress.* *mp*

18 *cresc.* *poco sostenuto* *molto espressivo*

21 *cresc.* *molto legato poco a poco*

24

26

28

30

32

cresc.

agitato molto espressivo

molto

molto espressivo

molto

meno rit ----- *dolce*

34

36

38

Tempo I
meno f

40

Allegro

42

noce rit - Capr. sostenuto

44

mp Adagio espressivo

Ped.

APPENDIX II

Max Reger, *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Bach* Op. 81, bars
145-155 (ninth variation)

Grave e sempre molto espressivo (♩ = 68-72) (tempo rubato)
sempre ben marcato, ma dolce la melodia

(145)

sempre assai delicato e molto espressivo
pp *molto* *pp*

147

molto *quasi f* *poco stringendo*

148

ritardando *a tempo* *poco ritardando*
pp *sempre dolcissimo*

149

a tempo *molto sostenuto*
pp

150

stringendo (*poco animato*) (♩ = 92)
pp *sempre espressivo e dolcissimo*
sempre assai legato

151

Musical score for measures 151-152. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). Measure 151 features a series of chords and moving lines in both hands. Measure 152 continues this texture with some melodic movement in the upper staff.

152

poco ritardando

a tempo (♩ = 68-72)
sempre molto es -

pp

Musical score for measures 152-153. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three sharps. Measure 152 includes the instruction *poco ritardando* and *pp*. Measure 153 begins with *pressivo* and continues with dense chordal textures.

153

pressivo

molto

pp

Musical score for measures 153-154. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three sharps. Measure 153 includes the instruction *pressivo*. Measure 154 includes the instruction *molto* and *pp*.

154

stringendo

poco a

molto

quasi ff

Musical score for measures 154-155. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three sharps. Measure 154 includes the instruction *stringendo*. Measure 155 includes the instruction *poco a*. The system concludes with *quasi ff* and *pp*.

155

poco ritardando

p

pp

p

ppp

Musical score for measures 155-156. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three sharps. Measure 155 includes the instruction *poco ritardando*. The system concludes with *p*, *pp*, *p*, and *ppp*.

Appendix III: Overview of Busch's Piano Works

Introduction

The aim of Appendix III is to provide a broad overview of Busch's piano works and their biographical and historical context. The fact that this music has never yet been the subject of scholarly discussion and, with the exception of the *Sonata* Op. 25, remains unpublished makes this overview necessary. The original manuscripts of the piano works are in possession of the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, with digital copies being held at the Max Reger Institut in Karlsruhe, which houses the BrüderBuschArchiv: most of the oeuvre is not in the broader public domain. Moreover, this overview provides a backdrop for the deeper research of the main body of the thesis. An attempt has been made to reconstruct the genesis of each work, but this has been somewhat challenging: the history and processes are rarely documented, and often the only available sources are the manuscripts themselves. Therefore, much is open to speculation, and even vital data can sometimes only be inferred from circumstantial evidence: for example, in cases where a composition does not include a date, the brand of manuscript paper is used to narrow down the timeframe.

This overview is based on research into primary and secondary sources and draws primarily upon biographical information, providing the context of each piece but also the supporting backdrop for the thesis more generally. Naturally, it cannot be the objective to provide a comprehensive outline of Busch's biography, instead, Appendix III introduces the reader to material central to the thesis. An overview of the key events in Busch's biography can be found in the timeline given in Appendix V, and references are provided to further discussions of each piece in the thesis. The composer's association with the dedicatees of his works has been given some emphasis: this is often vital to contextualise the music, biographically. Historical events have also been considered wherever relevant. Stylistic features are only mentioned if they contribute to the understanding of the overall context: these issues are discussed at great length later in Chapters 3-6.

Fantasy in C major⁴⁷⁵ (1908)⁴⁷⁶

The *Fantasy* in C major, written in 1908 and dedicated to Otto Grütters (1880-1971), Busch's future brother-in-law, is the first documented piano work. Busch first met the dedicatee in 1905 at a brass ensemble event at Siegburg Gymnasium.⁴⁷⁷ Grütters, a teacher at the Gymnasium (where Adolf's brother Fritz was a student), became highly influential over the young composer: in addition to sparking the adolescent's enthusiasm for poetry, Grütters introduced Busch to his father, the conductor and composer Hugo Grütters (1851-1928), then the Musikdirektor (principal conductor) in Bonn. Later, Hugo Grütters, a friend and supporter of Max Reger, would become Busch's mentor and private composition teacher.⁴⁷⁸ Perhaps most importantly, Otto introduced Busch to his sister, Frieda, later to become the composer's wife.⁴⁷⁹

In 1908, Busch was still a student at the Cologne Conservatoire, studying violin with Bram Eldering (1865-1943) and composition with Fritz Steinbach (1855-1916). Like Hugo Grütters, both teachers were strong advocates of the music of Max Reger,⁴⁸⁰ whose works Busch was first introduced to when he heard Steinbach's performance of the *Sinfonietta* in A.⁴⁸¹ Subsequently, Reger's style had a significant impact on Busch's early compositions, and the *Fantasy's* intricate textures, expressive details and somewhat organ-like idiom of the writing are indicative of this. A more in-depth discussion of Reger's influence on Busch is included in section 4.3.

In contrast to most of Busch's other piano works, for which the compositional processes cannot be reconstructed, the *Fantasy's* genesis is partially documented. In a letter to the dedicatee, dated June 7, 1908, the composer wrote that he had not completed a coda to finish the piece in time for Grütters's birthday, and therefore called the *Fantasy* his "Op. 0.75".⁴⁸² This indicated that the coda, which appears in the archived manuscript, was probably conceived in some haste, shortly after the letter had been written. Perhaps due to the work's rather conventional structure — sonata form with a short introduction —

⁴⁷⁵ Adolf Busch, *Fantasy* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1908).

⁴⁷⁶ The bracketed dates are those given on the manuscripts. In some cases dates are incomplete: here, for instance, only the year is noted.

⁴⁷⁷ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 76.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸² Letter to Otto Grütters, dated June 7, 1908, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Blider, Erinnerungen*, 5-6.

Busch seems to have felt the need for a conclusive section. The decision to include this coda could be criticised, however: apart from transitioning back to the tonic key and finishing the piece with a grand C major ending, the final section seems to lack purpose. Such evaluations are naturally subjective, but the composer's admission that the final section of this work was added later supports the suggestion that it was probably an afterthought, added mainly to fulfil a structural convention. Performing the piece, I always viewed this ending as the weakest part of the *Fantasy*. Finding the letter, later in my research, endorsed this initial impression.

Sonata in B flat major⁴⁸³ (fragment, undated, presumably 1909)

Only the first two pages of the *Sonata* in B flat major are preserved. Most likely the work is that mentioned in Otto Grütters' personal data sheet of Adolf Busch's life.⁴⁸⁴ The manuscript is undated, but the sometimes rather unidiomatic piano writing (see discussion in section 5.2.2), as well as the appearance of the handwriting, are notably similar to characteristics of the *Fantasy* of 1908, suggesting that it was written around the same time. Grütters' notes suggest that Busch completed the *Sonata*: he records that on February 25, 1909 the composer was working on the third movement, a theme and variations,⁴⁸⁵ and the entry for March 19 of the same year reveals that the complete *Sonata* was dedicated to Fritz Grütters (Otto's brother, who also was a teacher at Siegburg Gymnasium).⁴⁸⁶ The *Sonata* is one of a number of partially preserved or unfinished pieces from that time: these include a string quintet (1909, manuscript presumably lost)⁴⁸⁷ and a symphony (which exists only as sketches produced in 1907),⁴⁸⁸ as well as a sonatina for violin and piano, which was also promised to Fritz Grütters.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸³ Adolf Busch, *Sonata B flat major* (fragment, Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, undated).

⁴⁸⁴ Grütters, *Adolf Busch's Lebenslauf*, 17.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁸⁸ Heidi Zimmermann and Petra Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch, Musikmanuskripte. Inventory of the Paul Sacher Stiftung* (Mainz: Schott, 2004), 36.

⁴⁸⁹ Letter to Fritz Grütters, one section dated December 13, the other section December 26, 1909, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 20-21.

Intermezzo in B flat major⁴⁹⁰ (August 30, 1909)

This *Intermezzo* was written after Busch had finished his studies in Cologne and was beginning to establish himself as a performer and composer. It is dedicated to Frieda Grütters, his future wife. In a letter to Frieda's mother, dated September 1, 1909, Busch asked her to hand over some music to her daughter.⁴⁹¹ This was two days after the *Intermezzo* was completed; it is therefore likely that Busch was writing about this piece.

This dedication prompts consideration of the piece in the context of Busch's personal life. Perhaps its stark atmospheric contrasts and the changing moods — from the serene to the agitated — are a reflection of the conflicting emotions he most likely endured at the time, being torn between his love to Frieda and the loyalty to his mentor, Hugo Grütters. Adolf and Frieda were still teenagers, and her family was rather sceptical of the relationship, cautioning over too early a commitment:⁴⁹² at some stage they even introduced a ban on direct communication between the young lovers.⁴⁹³ Hilde Grütters, the daughter of Adolf Busch's brother-in-law confirmed this in my interview with her: "the parents were completely opposed to this early engagement [between Frieda and Adolf]. They thought that Adolf was not mature enough."⁴⁹⁴

Busch always maintained contact with Frieda's parents and continued to take private counterpoint lessons with Hugo Grütters.⁴⁹⁵ As with all of Busch's compositions of the time, the influence of Brahms and Reger is evident here — partly due to his lessons with Grütters — alongside early signs of a more individual musical language. A more in-depth examination of this *Intermezzo*, investigating its stylistic influences is undertaken in section 3.2.2.

⁴⁹⁰ Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* B flat major (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1909).

⁴⁹¹ Letter to Frieda Grütters (sen.), dated September 1, 1909, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder Erinnerungen*, 14-15.

⁴⁹² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 103.

⁴⁹³ Letter to Fritz Busch, dated November 1, 1909, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder Erinnerungen*, 18-19.

⁴⁹⁴ For the full interview, see Appendix III.

⁴⁹⁵ Letter to Otto Grütters, dated September 23, 1909, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder Erinnerungen*, 16.

Intermezzo in A minor⁴⁹⁶ (undated, presumably 1909)

The reason for discussing this undated *Intermezzo* between the B flat major *Intermezzo* and the *Agitato* is a Roman numeral 'i' at the top of the manuscript. The Roman numeral 'ii' is clearly marked at the top of the *Agitato*, which is dated November 1909 (see figure 102 for both headings⁴⁹⁷). This does not constitute absolute proof that these two pieces belong together, chronologically. However, a comparison of Busch's handwriting styles also suggests a similar time of conception — the appearance of his handwriting changed significantly throughout his oeuvre. This is further endorsed by numerous parallels in both atmosphere and tonality. An entry in Otto Grüters' unpublished list of works by Adolf Busch also states that the pieces were written in the same few months: 'Intermezzo in A minor and Klavierstück [presumably *Agitato*], completed in August and November 1909'.⁴⁹⁸ The fact that the opening of the *Intermezzo* is also marked 'Agitato' tentatively supports the likelihood of a somewhat cyclical conception.

Unlike most of Busch's piano works, there is no dedicatee marked on this score. Therefore, any attempt to provide biographical context has to be based on the likely date of the piece's origin. If the hypothesis that the *Intermezzo* and *Agitato* belong together is correct, then both pieces were written under similar circumstances, discussed in the previous section. The stylistic aspect of the piece, and its more radical harmonic elements, are explored in section 3.2.5. Generally speaking, aside from the few stylistic subtleties and moments of compositional experimentation, this *Intermezzo* is no exception to Busch's generally traditional and tonally affirmative approach.

Agitato in C major⁴⁹⁹ (November, 1909)

As with the A minor *Intermezzo*, there is no dedicatee marked on the score of the *Agitato*. Again, except for the date, no specific biographical information is available here. 1909 was a particularly creative year for the young composer: in addition to the works for piano solo, he wrote two serenades for small orchestra⁵⁰⁰ — one of which he labelled his

⁴⁹⁶ Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo* A minor (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, undated).

⁴⁹⁷ Digital copies of all manuscripts shown in the figures are held at the BrüderBuschArchiv.

⁴⁹⁸ Grüters: *Verzeichnis der Kompositionen Adolf Buschs*, 2.

⁴⁹⁹ Adolf Busch, *Agitato* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBusch Archiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1909).

⁵⁰⁰ Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch*, 33.

“Op. 0.75”⁵⁰¹ (same as the *Fantasy* for piano, see earlier remarks) — three songs (*Abendlicht*, *August* and *Kennst Du das auch?*),⁵⁰² and *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Schubert* for two pianos, which became his official Op. 2.⁵⁰³ The aforementioned unfinished works were also written around the same time.⁵⁰⁴

The fact that Busch worked on numerous pieces at the same time as embarking on a performing career demonstrates his sincerity as a composer and his desire to develop his own musical language. At the end of November 1909, Busch visited his brother Fritz in Riga: Fritz had been invited to the Latvian capital to conduct the orchestra of the Deutsches Theater.⁵⁰⁵ Here, the two brothers studied Reger’s music together, usually followed by much discussion of the topic.⁵⁰⁶ It is not possible to verify whether the *Agitato* was written before or during Adolf’s stay in Riga, or whether the lively exchanges with his brother and the intense occupation with Reger’s music inspired the piece. In any case, *Agitato* is testimony to his vibrant musical curiosity at the time.

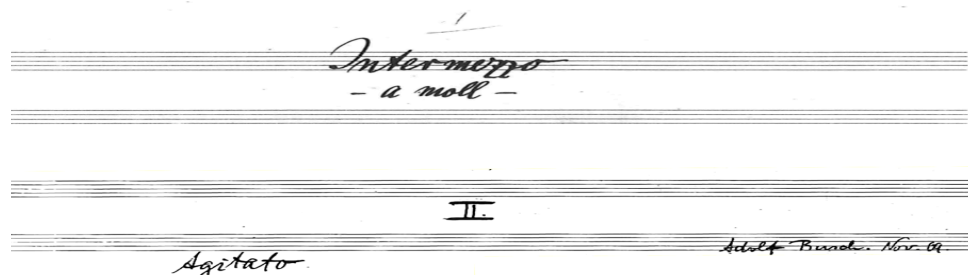


Figure 102: Headings of *Intermezzo A minor* and *Agitato* with Roman numerals

*Zwei Canons und eine kleine Fuge*⁵⁰⁷ [Two Canons and a little Fugue] (March 24, 1916)

This small triptych is dedicated to the ten year-old Anna Amadea (Dea) Gombrich (1905-1994), the daughter of Karl Gombrich (1874-1950) and Leonie Gombrich-Hock (1873-1968), close friends of Adolf and Frieda Busch. Busch first met the Gombrich family after

⁵⁰¹ Letter to Otto Grüters, dated May 31, 1909, in Serkin-Busch (ed.). *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 10-11.

⁵⁰² Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch*, 24, 26.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 24, 26.

⁵⁰⁵ Fritz Busch, *Aus dem Leben eines Musikers*, 69.

⁵⁰⁶ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 105-106.

⁵⁰⁷ Adolf Busch, *Zwei Canons und eine kleine Fuge* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1916).

he had taken up the position of Konzertmeister of the Wiener Konzertverein-Orchester in 1912.⁵⁰⁸ Leonie Gombrich-Hock was an excellent pianist and former assistant to Theodor Leschetitzky in Vienna; she also took composition lessons with Anton Bruckner.⁵⁰⁹ On many occasions, she and Busch would play together privately: they had plans to give public concerts, but these never came to fruition.⁵¹⁰ Many illustrious figures from the cultural life of the city came together at the Gombrichs' house, and it was through them that Busch would make his first acquaintance with Arnold Schönberg,⁵¹¹ an artist whom, according to Dea Gombrich, Busch would only appreciate later in life.⁵¹² Another of Busch's important encounters at the Gombrich house was with the British musicologist and composer, Donald Francis Tovey,⁵¹³ with whom he exchanged lively letters about composition⁵¹⁴ and who would later become a staunch advocate of his music.⁵¹⁵

Anna Amadea Gombrich studied violin with Busch from 1915 until he moved to Berlin in 1918.⁵¹⁶ She would continue to take lessons from him sporadically, and they maintained a life-long friendship.⁵¹⁷ It perhaps comes somewhat as a surprise that it is a piano work that Busch dedicated to his young violin student. It is likely that she would also have had piano lessons at the time, probably with her mother. Notably, given these observations, the pedagogical intent apparent in the small cycle of pieces is more holistically musical: while no doubt being written for the refinement of instrumental skills, it also acts as an introduction to contrapuntal style. In this respect, this little set, clearly written for a private occasion and most likely not intended to be published or performed in public, indicates that Busch viewed studies in counterpoint and polyphonic playing as an integral part of an education in music. In dedicating the three pieces to a young learner, he implicitly advocates that these aspects of musicianship should be introduced early on in the learning process. Although none of the music makes high-level technical demands, it poses numerous challenges in the coordination of the various expressive markings. The set opens and closes with a mostly strict two-part canon — for practical reasons the two parts are written an octave apart. The short two-part fugue is placed in the middle, between the canons. On the last page of the manuscript, we find some faint sketches for

⁵⁰⁸ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 155-157.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, 174.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁵¹⁴ See for example Busch's letter to Tovey, dated September 11, 1913, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 71.

⁵¹⁵ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 601.

⁵¹⁶ Claudia Maurer Zenck, "Dea Gombrich," *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit*, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Peter Petersen, Sophie Fetthauer (ed.), Universität Hamburg, 2016, accessed September 10, 2021. https://www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00005349.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

another composition, possibly a solo violin piece. Most of these sketches have been crossed out, though, and there is no apparent musical link to the piano pieces.

Klavierstück (Intermezzo)⁵¹⁸ in A minor (July 30, 1916)

This *Klavierstück* has the title *Intermezzo* added to the second of the preserved copies held in the archive. It is dedicated to Käthe Römisch, wife of Dr Wolfgang Römisch, with whom Busch underwent a lengthy treatment at the sanatorium in Arosa, Switzerland, following a serious lung condition. During their many visits to Arosa, the Busches became close friends with the Römisch family: they stayed at the sanatorium for the first time in 1914 and continued to visit Arosa in the subsequent years. Adolf and the dedicatee, herself an accomplished pianist and student of Clara Schumann,⁵¹⁹ would play music together on many occasions.⁵²⁰ The Römishes took great interest in Busch's work as a composer, as is apparent in a letter discussing the premiere of his Symphony Op. 10,⁵²¹ and the composer would later dedicate his *String Quartet in One Movement* Op. 29 to the couple,⁵²² alongside the *Klavierstück* and *Three Little Pieces in Old Style*. The home of the Römisch family was frequented by major cultural figures of the time: for instance, Thomas Mann was a regular guest at the sanatorium and modelled Hofrath Behrens, one of the characters in *Zauberberg* on Dr Römisch.⁵²³ Another guest was the actor Alexander Moissi, with whom Adolf and Frieda Busch became close friends.⁵²⁴

This work was written against the backdrop of World War I. Like many at the time, Busch passionately associated himself with the Austro-German side, stating that neutrals were a "Lausepack" (literally "a pack of lice").⁵²⁵ Busch went so far as to write music in support of the war: he called his *Variations on Radetzky-March* for orchestra Op. 9 (written in 1914 and completed in 1915)⁵²⁶ "war-music,"⁵²⁷ and wrote an *Armee-Marsch* (*Military*

⁵¹⁸ Adolf Busch, *Klavierstück (Intermezzo) A minor* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1916).

⁵¹⁹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 188.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ Letter to the Römishes, dated November 15, 1916, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 177.

⁵²² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 189.

⁵²³ Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 162.

⁵²⁴ Letter to Paul Hellmann, dated June 9, 1916, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 161.

⁵²⁵ Letter to Fritz Grüters, dated January 1915, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 118.

⁵²⁶ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1243.

⁵²⁷ Letter to Fritz Grüters, dated October 29, 1914, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 111.

March) for infantry band in 1915.⁵²⁸ His uncompromising support for Germany in the war was perhaps to some degree an act of solidarity with conscripted family members and friends — Busch himself was never conscripted because of his lung condition. However, it might also have been genuine patriotism that led him to take sides so radically. It was only later in life that Busch deviated from this unquestioningly nationalist position, most notably in his unequivocal condemnation of the rise of the National Socialist movement, which resulted in the cancellation of all his performances in Germany.⁵²⁹

Whilst there is no reference to the political turmoil of the time in the *Klavierstück*, in a broader sense it might be argued that the stark contrast between the stormy outer sections and the serene and Apollonian middle part somewhat reflects the inner conflict of Busch in the war years: this is at least probable, given the proximity to the composition of the *Radetzky-March Variations*. Outwardly, Busch was echoing German war propaganda, but cracks in his convictions might already be apparent here: unlike in the war-inspired ensemble works, there is no heroism or unreflective optimism in this piece. The intimate character of a short piano piece and the private nature of its genesis perhaps felt better suited to the expression of a more subtle musical response to the war.

Drei Stücke im Alten Styl⁵³⁰ [Three Pieces in the Old Style] (July 29, 1917)

These three pieces, consisting of 'Invention', 'Andante' and 'Bourrée', are exercises in baroque style. The dedication reads "Für meinen lieben Dr Römisch zur Zigarre componiert" ("composed for my dear Dr Römisch to accompany his cigar"), clearly indicating that this little triptych is of a light-hearted nature. As mentioned in relation to the *Klavierstück*, Römisch was treating Busch for his lung condition in Arosa, Switzerland, and formed a friendship with the composer. This set of pieces was most likely not intended for wider dissemination, written merely as a token of thanks to Dr. Römisch and in appreciation of their friendship.

⁵²⁸ Letter to Fritz Busch, dated June 16, 1915, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 128.

⁵²⁹ Letter to an unknown German Concert Agency, dated April 4, 1933, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 286.

⁵³⁰ Adolf Busch, *Drei Stücke im alten Styl* [Three Pieces in the Old Style] (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1916).

Despite the slightly tongue-in-cheek character of this work, it reveals Busch's excellent skills in contrapuntal writing and his sincerity towards the music of the baroque era, an affinity which would become even more important later in his life when re-discovering and re-interpreting Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* in the mid-1930s.⁵³¹ Like the *Two Canons and a Little Fugue*, the *Three Pieces in the Old Style* are a testimony to Busch's high regard for the art of counterpoint. As Jens Röth puts it, Busch viewed voice-leading and counterpoint as significant criteria by which to judge musical beauty and craftsmanship; qualities he believed to be timeless.⁵³²

In this work, Busch introduces baroque features reminiscent of *concerti grossi* (mainly in movement one) and concertino styles (mainly in movement two). The 'Invention' clearly is a reference to Bach's two-part inventions, and the closing piece, 'Bourée', is written in the tradition of a movement of a baroque dance suite. The use of two-part counterpoint, another baroque feature, is examined at greater length in Chapter 5.

Intermezzo in C sharp minor⁵³³ (Christmas, 1917)

Presumably Busch's last intermezzo, this piece was written as a Christmas present for his wife. Reminiscent of a slow and melancholy waltz, it can be read as an homage to his years in Vienna (1912-1918). It seems that Busch developed a love-hate relationship with the city: in 1917, he enthusiastically described Vienna as the place with the highest public regard for music;⁵³⁴ elsewhere, though, he expressed his dissatisfaction with aspects of the city's musical scene, characterising it as 'gründlich daneben' ('completely off the mark').⁵³⁵ Busch implicitly refers to atonality and the dodecaphonic serialism of the Schönberg school here, and therefore this statement underlines his position in the musico-stylistic landscape in Vienna in the late 1910s. This is apparent musically in the tonal language of the *Intermezzo*, which clearly continues on the path of traditional harmony, notwithstanding its occasional testing of boundaries. A more in-depth examination of the stylistic context of this piece is given in the next two chapters.

⁵³¹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 602-603.

⁵³² Jens Röth, "Der Komponist als Philologe," 76-77.

⁵³³ Adolf Busch, *Intermezzo C sharp minor* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1916).

⁵³⁴ Letter to Otto Grüters, dated February 28, 1917, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 182-183.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

This *Intermezzo* can also be seen in the context of the political situation of the time: the world was in turmoil due to the ongoing war, and the recent breakdown of Tsarist Russia was a clear sign that old orders were about to change. Busch continued to associate himself with the German Kaiserreich and its representatives: this is evidenced by his friendship and correspondence with Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, chancellor of imperial Germany between 1909 and 1917.⁵³⁶ However, Busch's music from the end of the war no longer bears any reference to wartime propaganda. As with the *Klavierstück*, the small and intimate format of the *Intermezzo* is particularly suited to a more reflective character. Also, though, when Busch does choose a grander and less inwardly-focused context, such as in his *Overture to King Oedipus* for orchestra Op. 11,⁵³⁷ written in 1917, or his *Mozart Variations* Op. 19,⁵³⁸ written in 1918, the tenor of these pieces is quite different to the earlier 'war-music' of 1915. Other works from 1917-1918 are mainly chamber music and songs: compositionally, Busch primarily withdrew into a more private sphere. This might also be somewhat connected to the birth of his daughter, Irene,⁵³⁹ early in 1917 and hence a greater emotional focus on family life.

Five Variations on an Original Theme⁵⁴⁰ (December 24, 1920)

This set of variations is dedicated to Busch's wife, Frieda, presumably as a Christmas present (as with the *Intermezzo* in C sharp minor). There is no mention of this work or any performance of it in letters or other first-hand testimonies.

1920 was mainly a year of revision and reflection for Busch, and his compositional output was rather limited: in addition to the *Five Variations* he wrote only a duet for violin and viola.⁵⁴¹ The fact that he did not deem either work worthy of an opus number perhaps suggests a certain loss of confidence in his work as a composer. This is endorsed by letters of the time in which he seeks reassurance. For example, in a letter to the Swiss conductor and composer Fritz Brun (1878-1959), who conducted the first performance of Busch's *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Mozart* Op. 19 in 1919⁵⁴² and openly

⁵³⁶ See, for example, Letter from Bethmann-Hollweg to Busch, dated November 2, 1917, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 194.

⁵³⁷ Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch, Musikmanuskripte*, 11.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵³⁹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 222-224.

⁵⁴⁰ Adolf Busch, *Five Variations on an Original Theme* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1920).

⁵⁴¹ Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch, Musikmanuskripte*, 27.

⁵⁴² Dominik Sackmann, *Einswerden von Schaffen und Nachschaffen*, 132.

defended his music against a critical review,⁵⁴³ Busch conveys his gratitude for Brun's confirmation "that my composing makes any sense".⁵⁴⁴ Likewise, in a letter to Hugo Grüters (Busch's former teacher, his father-in-law and the dedicatee of his *Symphonic Fantasy for Orchestra, Organ and Mixed Choir* Op. 17)⁵⁴⁵, Busch notes that the choral writing of his Op. 17, which he revised in 1920, is strictly in four parts — Busch claims that this is due to Grüters's teaching⁵⁴⁶ — and comments: "the work is dedicated to you, and I hope that it finds your approval."⁵⁴⁷ In addition to revealing the close artistic ties with Grüters and his teaching of strict voice-leading and harmony, these lines also seem to represent another call for reassurance and recognition.

Examining Busch's entire oeuvre, it is apparent that theme and variations is one of his favoured forms. He makes extensive use of it for piano duets — in the *Schubert Variations* for two pianos Op. 2 (1909)⁵⁴⁸ and *Theme and Variations* in B flat minor Op. 63 (1944), as well as *Theme and Variations* in E flat minor (undated) for piano duet⁵⁴⁹ — but also in works for chamber ensembles and orchestra. There are only two sets of variations for solo piano, however: the *Five Variations* and the second movement of the *Sonata* Op. 25, written two years later. The numerous similarities suggest that to some extent the *Five Variations* were a precursor to the *Sonata* movement. This is particularly evident in the first variations of both, where running demisemiquavers dominate the texture. However, the later piece is considerably larger in scale and compositionally more adventurous.

Despite being composed at the end of a less productive period, compositionally, the *Five Variations* mark the start of a more creative phase: in 1921, Busch wrote two of his most significant and substantial works, the *Violin Concerto* Op. 20⁵⁵⁰ and his three cycles of *Hausmusik* Op. 26 a, b and c.⁵⁵¹ These were then followed by his most important works for the piano: the *Sonata* Op. 25 (1922) and his *Concerto* Op. 31 (1924).⁵⁵²

⁵⁴³ Letter to Fritz Brun, dated January 11, 1920, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 218-219.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁵ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1245.

⁵⁴⁶ Letter to Hugo Grüters, dated July or August 1920, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 220-221.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁸ Adolf Busch, *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Schubert* Op. 2 for two pianos (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1909).

⁵⁴⁹ Busch, *Theme and Variations* for piano duet Op. 63 (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copies of unpublished manuscripts, 1944); Adolf Busch, *Theme and Variations* E flat minor for piano duet (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copies of unpublished manuscripts, undated).

⁵⁵⁰ Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch, Musikmanuskripte*, 13.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 14-15.

Sonata Op. 25⁵⁵³ (July 15, 1922)

The *Sonata* — the focal point of my research, with two recordings, a published edition, and detailed discussion in Chapters 6 and 7 — is first mentioned by Busch in a letter to the dedicatee, Otto Grütters.⁵⁵⁴ Here, Busch jests that listening to music will help Grütters to transition from a teacher into a human being.⁵⁵⁵ This remark somewhat reflects the fact that Grütters was formerly Busch's teacher but now has become his close friend and brother-in-law. They even embarked on artistic collaboration in an opera, *Die Schwarzkünstler*, for which Grütters wrote the libretto.⁵⁵⁶ Starting in 1915, this project was pursued with much seriousness and dedication, evidenced by over 260 pages of sketches, dated 1919.⁵⁵⁷ However, it seems that Busch did not feel very at home with the idiom, and he also expressed some dissatisfaction with the libretto.⁵⁵⁸ the opera was never finished. Although not directly evidenced by letters or any secondary sources, it can be speculated that Busch chose Grütters as the dedicatee for the *Sonata* to show his appreciation for their collaboration and perhaps to 'apologise' for never finishing the work. Looking at the genesis of the *Sonata*, Rudolf Serkin would probably have been the more obvious choice of dedicatee, as the pianist who premiered the *Sonata*.⁵⁵⁹ Serkin's influence and involvement is discussed at greater length in chapters 5 and 6.

Busch's correspondence at the time suggests that he withdrew further from historical and political circumstances, focussing entirely on his artistic and family life. Indeed, Busch hardly ever references the broader political situation. For example, in a letter written just before the end of the war, Busch expresses his sadness at leaving Vienna but also his satisfaction at becoming a professor in Berlin and thus a successor of Joseph Joachim.⁵⁶⁰ Given the tumultuous historical context, the absence of any mention of the political uncertainties which might well have affected his move to the German capital is remarkable.

⁵⁵³ Adolf Busch, *Sonata Op. 25* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1922).

⁵⁵⁴ Letter to Otto Grütters, dated March 4, 1922, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 232.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁶ Otto Grütters, *Die Schwarzkünstler* (libretto, (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1919).

⁵⁵⁷ Adolf Busch, *Die Schwarzkünstler* (sketches for an opera, Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1919).

⁵⁵⁸ Letter to Otto Grütters, dated June 1, 1915, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 126-127.

⁵⁵⁹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1249

⁵⁶⁰ Letter to Paul and Irene Hellmann, dated June 9, 1918, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 203.

The stylistic and aesthetic context of the *Sonata* within Busch's oeuvre and the music of the time is discussed in Chapter 6, arguing that it is in this work that Busch is perhaps at his most experimental as a composer. Overall, though, the *Sonata* provides testimony to the fact that Busch flirted with modernism but never really embraced it. A relative openness to new aesthetics was encouraged by a general widening of his horizons and encounters with different styles and composers. An exchange of letters with his brother — here in relation to Hindemith, then seen as one of the great atonalists⁵⁶¹ — sums up Busch's position in the stylistic landscape of the time: both siblings reveal their appreciation for Hindemith's talent, but strongly oppose the young composers's novel and somewhat provocative approach.⁵⁶² Fritz Busch, for instance, writes that "Hindemith is a highly talented chap" but that "unfortunately, he is on the completely wrong path."⁵⁶³

The *Sonata* is Busch's only work for piano solo previously to have been discussed by writers on Busch (though even here there is no detailed consideration of the piece).⁵⁶⁴ The author and composer Donald Francis Tovey aptly summarises the structure and expressive character of the piece in an unpublished essay of 1934: for instance, he describes the first movement as "very passionate...(with a beautiful *Cantabile* second theme)."⁵⁶⁵ All three movements — 'Allegro moderato con passione', 'Andante con variazioni', 'Finale: Introduzione/Fuga' — are written in a somewhat symphonic piano style and test the boundaries of the instrument like none other of Busch's solo piano works. As examined in Chapter 6, this is at least partially due to the composer's collaboration and close friendship with Rudolf Serkin.

Allegro Bizarro⁵⁶⁶ (November 19, 1941)

Allegro Bizarro is Busch's first piano piece after a long break: he did not write any solo piano music between 1922 and 1941. He did, however, continue to compose for the piano as an ensemble instrument throughout these nineteen years and thus deepened his familiarity with the pianistic idiom. Specific stylistic and tonal features of the *Allegro Bizarro* are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

⁵⁶¹ Eric Salzman, *Twentieth Century Music, An Introduction* (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1967), 62-63.

⁵⁶² Letter to Fritz Busch, dated June 28, 1921, and letter from Fritz to Adolf Busch, dated July 3, 1921, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 226-228.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁴ The only piece of writing is an unpublished essay by Donald Francis Tovey of 1934. See Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1219-1220.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁶ Adolf Busch, *Allegro Bizarro* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1941).

In order to contextualise *Allegro Bizarro*, we need to consider relevant aspects of Busch's biographical circumstances in the early 1940s. Relocating to America in 1939 brought with it significant changes in Busch's professional life. Establishing a sustainable concert career in war-time US was challenging, even for a celebrated artist of international renown: the market was already over-saturated with excellent soloists and chamber ensembles, native and immigrant. Busch therefore had to adapt to new circumstances. In 1942, whilst appreciative of having secured some performing work, he wrote about his struggle with the fact of performing fewer concerts than in Europe before the war.⁵⁶⁷ Performance fees were also more modest than he was used to,⁵⁶⁸ with the general population less willing to spend money on concert tickets in wartime and promoters mostly dependent on private sponsorship.⁵⁶⁹ Above all, Busch found the difference in culture and audience expectations between Europe and America difficult to accept: in numerous letters he bemoans what he perceives as the superficiality of the music industry and music education in America, claiming that in the New World virtuosity is mostly an end in itself, rather than a means to "make good and beautiful music".⁵⁷⁰

Busch's professional struggles as a performer were exacerbated by having to adapt with his family to new living situations and environments: the Busches moved several times, between New York, Gloucester (Massachusetts) and Rhode Island, before settling in Brattleboro (Vermont) in 1945. It is therefore remarkable that Busch continued to compose regularly and to proactively promote his works, mainly by dedicating his compositions to performers and other influential people. Most prominently, his *Three Studies for Large Orchestra* Op. 55 were premiered in November 1940 in New York under the baton of the dedicatee, Wilhelm Steinberg.⁵⁷¹ Other dedicatees included benefactors such as Elizabeth Sprague-Coolidge, the curator and financier of concerts at the Library of Congress in Washington,⁵⁷² for whom Busch wrote his *Piano Quartet* Op. 59,⁵⁷³ and

⁵⁶⁷ Letter to Benedict Vischer, dated June 8, 1942, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 434-437.

⁵⁶⁸ Letter to Herrmann Busch, dated January 22, 1940, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 397-398.

⁵⁶⁹ Letter from Agnes Meyer, dated December 18, 1941, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 431-432.

⁵⁷⁰ Letter to Volkmar Andreae, dated August 23, 1941, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 426-428.

⁵⁷¹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1257.

⁵⁷² Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 398.

⁵⁷³ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1260.

Hettie Heinemann, who financed a tour to Brussels for the Busch Chamber Players:⁵⁷⁴ one of his *Songs on Negro Spirituals* Op. 58c⁵⁷⁵ is dedicated to Heinemann.⁵⁷⁶

Allegro Bizarro can also be seen in this context of Busch building a new career as a composer in America. It was written as a Christmas present for Rudolf Serkin, by then a close family member and a pianist with a large following, who had established a career as a soloist in America in the mid 1930s, well before Busch's relocation.⁵⁷⁷ Busch does not directly reference the *Allegro Bizarro* in any of his letters of the time. It can, however, be safely assumed that by dedicating this piece to Serkin, Busch not only expressed affection for his son-in-law and longstanding duo partner, but also the hope that Serkin would perform the work, generating wider recognition for Busch as a composer.

Drei Klavierstücke (Suite) Op. 60b (partially undated; likely between 1941 and 1946)

This collection of three piano pieces consists of 'Song without Words' in F sharp minor,⁵⁷⁸ 'Scherzo' in A minor⁵⁷⁹ and 'Albumblatt' in B major.⁵⁸⁰ Most likely, the pieces were not conceptualised as a unit but collected together retrospectively for a performance by Rudolf Serkin at Carnegie Hall on December 6th, 1946.⁵⁸¹ The first two are dedicated to Rosalie J. (Winnie) Leventritt, and the *Albumblatt* is written for her daughter, Rosalie Berner (née Leventritt). The former was a great benefactor of the arts and one of the most ardent supporters of Adolf Busch in America. On numerous occasions she underwrote concert fees for the Busch Quartet,⁵⁸² in return the group would play at parties in the Leventritts' apartment in New York.⁵⁸³ Leventritt also helped the Busches when they needed accommodation in America, generously inviting them to

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 741.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 1260.

⁵⁷⁶ Letter from Hettie Heinemann, dated August 17, 1942, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 440-441.

⁵⁷⁷ See, for instance, a letter from Rudolf Serkin to Adolf Busch, dated December 25, 1936, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 361-363.

⁵⁷⁸ Adolf Busch, 'Song without Words' (from *Suite* Op. 60b, Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, presumably 1941).

⁵⁷⁹ Adolf Busch, 'Scherzo' (from *Suite* Op. 60b, Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1941).

⁵⁸⁰ Adolf Busch, 'Albumblatt' (from *Suite* Op. 60b, Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, between 1944 and 1946).

⁵⁸¹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1261.

⁵⁸² Ibid., 694, 758.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 758.

stay at the various Leventritt residences in Gloucester (Massachusetts) and Narragansett (Rhode Island).⁵⁸⁴

Busch first met Winnie Leventritt and her husband Edgar on his tour to America in 1931 and developed close friendships with both. After Edgar's death in 1939,⁵⁸⁵ his friendship with Winnie continued. She took a genuine interest in Busch's career as a performer and composer and assisted him in creating his composition based on African-American spirituals by singing the original songs to him.⁵⁸⁶ Their association also had a strong personal component and after the death of his wife in 1946, Winnie was a source of solace for the composer.⁵⁸⁷ At that time, their relationship deepened to the point where they even considered getting married.⁵⁸⁸ Dedicating music to Winnie Leventritt can therefore be seen not only as a token of thanks for her help and generosity, but also a sign of genuine friendship and affection. Aside from the 'Song without Words' and the 'Scherzo', Busch also dedicated his *String Quartet* Op. 57 and some of his *Madrigals After Negro Spirituals* Op. 58b to her.⁵⁸⁹ The Busches also developed a friendship with Winnie's daughter, Rosalie, and her husband Ted Berner. In addition to the 'Albumblatt', he dedicated some of the above-mentioned madrigals to Rosalie and his *Sonata* for violin and piano Op. 56 to the couple.⁵⁹⁰

Identifying the date of origin of Op. 60b is somewhat problematic, as only one of the three pieces — 'Scherzo' — is clearly dated: December 22, 1941. "June 29th" is noted on the manuscript of the third piece, but the year is not specified. Busch's addition of the place of composition — Brattleboro, Vermont — limits the possible years to 1944-1946, though: the Busches started to spend summers in Vermont from 1944.⁵⁹¹ Whilst 'Song without Words' is undated, the choice of manuscript paper (Carl Fischer, New York) tentatively points towards an earlier date: he uses the same brand of manuscript paper for the 'Scherzo' (and for *Allegro Bizarro*, also written in 1941), whereas different paper (Maestro, Independent Music Publisher, New York) is used for the 'Albumblatt'. Given all this, the date given for the whole cycle in the *catalogue raisonnée* of the Paul Sacher Stiftung (1941)⁵⁹² is verifiable only for the 'Scherzo', somewhat likely for the 'Song without

⁵⁸⁴ Letter to Björn Andreasson, dated July 16, 1943, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 446 and Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 746-747.

⁵⁸⁵ After Edgar Leventritt's death a foundation was launched in his memory to facilitate a competition for young musicians. See Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 721.

⁵⁸⁶ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 747.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 805.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 806.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1258-1259.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 777.

⁵⁹² Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch*, 21.

Words', but demonstrably false in case of the 'Albumblatt'. The Potter and Sackmann catalogues merely mention the dates found on the relevant manuscripts.⁵⁹³

The question of cyclicity and the use of the term 'suite' is discussed in some detail in Chapter 5 but has some bearing here. The three pieces are rather different in length and complexity, and in this respect their collection might seem arbitrary — at least at first sight. A loose connection to Mendelssohn can, however, be seen as a common denominator. Whilst in 'Song without Words' this reference is clear, there is perhaps an indirect association in the other two pieces; the character of the 'Scherzo' is somewhat reminiscent of works of the same title by Mendelssohn, such as the 'Scherzo' from *Midsummer Night's Dream* Op. 61, and 'Albumblatt' shares textural features characteristic of Mendelssohn's lyrical writing (as apparent, for instance, in his *Song without Words* Op. 102 no. 2). Busch's musical language is, however, more diverse than Mendelssohn's — both harmonically and in terms of texture — and modernist elements coexist with traditional traits in the *Suite*.

Andante Affetuoso⁵⁹⁴ (December 23, 1945)

This piece was composed at a time of great political and private uncertainty for Adolf Busch: political because of the global situation after the end of World War II, and private due to his wife becoming ill with thyroid cancer.⁵⁹⁵ These external circumstances are important for contextual understanding, even though there are no direct links to the music of *Andante Affetuoso*. The end of the war opened up the possibility of returning to Europe. Busch received many offers of work from the 'Old World', and prominent figures in politics and culture tried to persuade him to visit Europe — or even return for good — to help rebuild the cultural life. For example, Konrad Adenauer, then mayor of Cologne, tried to involve Busch in re-establishing the Cologne Conservatoire,⁵⁹⁶ and Otto Maag, nephew of Busch's composition teacher, Fritz Steinbach, and an influential Swiss music critic, wrote numerous letters with the aim of convincing Busch to perform in Switzerland again.⁵⁹⁷ However, Busch was hesitant and initially refused to play in Europe as long as

⁵⁹³ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1261; Sackmann, *Werkverzeichnis, Adolf Busch*, 33.

⁵⁹⁴ Adolf Busch, *Andante Affetuoso* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1945).

⁵⁹⁵ Letter to Irene Serkin, dated November 3, 1945, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 473-474.

⁵⁹⁶ Letter from Konrad Adenauer to Busch, dated July 1945, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 465.

⁵⁹⁷ Letter from Otto Maag to Adolf Busch, dated July 18, 1945, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 465-468.

artists who had collaborated with the Nazis were still being celebrated.⁵⁹⁸ It therefore took him until 1947 to play in Europe again, with no performances in Germany until 1949.⁵⁹⁹

Whilst there were evidently political and moral motivations not to tour Europe straight after the war, the strongest reason to keep international travel to a minimum was his wife's poor health.⁶⁰⁰ Naturally, the prospect of her death put a significant strain on the whole Busch family, who attempted to keep the terminal nature of her disease a secret from her.⁶⁰¹ That she was nonetheless aware of her nearing death is supported by evidence from Ernst Drucker — a violinist and friend, and a member of the Busch Quartet from 1946 until 1947 — to whom she made it clear that their goodbye would be final, before he went away over the summer of 1946.⁶⁰² It is against this sombre backdrop that Busch wrote *Andante Affetuoso* as a Christmas present for Frieda, also the dedicatee of many of Busch's other works of the time (including the *Scherzo Concertante* Op. 65 for piano trio and chamber orchestra, also written in 1945).⁶⁰³ Another work closely linked to Frieda, though not explicitly dedicated to her, is *Variations on a Theme of Frieda Busch* for chamber orchestra Op. 66, composed in the following year.⁶⁰⁴

It is quite likely that Frieda played *Andante Affetuoso* herself: she was a good pianist and accompanied her husband in concerts in the early years of their relationship.⁶⁰⁵ There is, however, no mention of this piece or any performance of it in Busch's letters or elsewhere in the literature on his music, and it is therefore impossible to know whether it was ever played before my recording in 2016. It can safely be assumed that the piece was written for personal purposes and not intended to be published or performed in concert. The character of this miniature is probably best described as pensive and lyrical; it does not in any obvious way reflect the dark and pessimistic backdrop described above. Busch combines melodic simplicity with harmonic and textural complexity here, as he does throughout his oeuvre. This is discussed in more depth in Chapter 5, which provides an examination of specific characteristics of his late period.

⁵⁹⁸ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 784–785.

⁵⁹⁹ "Busch Biographien", *BrüderBuschArchiv*, Max Reger Institut, accessed October 8, 2021, <https://www.max-reger-institut.de/de/bruederbuscharchiv/kurzbiografien>.

⁶⁰⁰ For Busch's concerns regarding his wife's state of health see Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 785.

⁶⁰¹ Letter to Irene Serkin, dated November 3, 1945, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 473–474.

⁶⁰² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 791.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1262.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 201, 210, 253.

Allegro Vehemente⁶⁰⁶ (August 13, 1946)

Also dedicated to Frieda, *Allegro Vehemente* was completed only nine days before her death. Shortly before this, the Busch family was struck by a bereavement: Frieda's brother, Fritz Grütters, died on July 31, a fact, which was shared with her only on August 19.⁶⁰⁷ The family initially shielded her from the sad news about her brother's death, whilst also trying to keep from her the true state of her own health.⁶⁰⁸ Maybe this explains the overall energetic and positive undertone of *Allegro Vehemente*, which might be read as an attempt to put on a 'brave face', a term Busch used when describing his efforts to maintain a level of positivity for the benefit of Frieda's wellbeing.⁶⁰⁹ However, it does not do the piece justice to portray it merely as an act of deception; it is probably more appropriate to view it as a celebration of life in the face of expected loss and grief. In his correspondences at the time, Busch expressed not only sadness and fear at what was likely to come, but also genuine hope that his wife's health would still improve, however unrealistic this might have been.⁶¹⁰ Earlier in 1946, he even wrote of his expectation that she would be fit to accompany him on an upcoming tour to Iceland in the autumn of the same year.⁶¹¹

Comparing the *Allegro Vehemente* with the other single-movement *allegro* piece, *Allegro Bizarro*, it becomes apparent that the former's stark contrast between the energetic outer sections and the lyrical middle section, as well as its strict adherence to a ternary structure, is distinctly different to the latter's playful nature and free structure. Busch also takes a more affirmative harmonic stance in the later piece: tonal centricity is more clearly established here than in the earlier composition. The composer holds on to conventional musical frameworks in *Allegro Vehemente*, both structurally and tonally, which in a biographical context might be interpreted as a metaphor for holding on to hope and positivity in difficult times.

Busch composed relatively few new pieces in 1946: alongside the *Allegro Vehemente* and the aforementioned *Variations on a Theme of Frieda Busch* Op. 66, he wrote only a

⁶⁰⁶ Adolf Busch, *Allegro Vehemente* (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, 1946).

⁶⁰⁷ Letter to Otto and Hanna Grütters, dated August 20, 1946, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 483.

⁶⁰⁸ Letter to Otto Grütters, dated August 2, 1946, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 481-482.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹¹ Letter to Ragnar Jonsson, dated May 12, 1946, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 477-479.

musical setting of Rilke's *Der Ölbaumgarten* for high bass voice and chamber orchestra, completed in June and initially designated Op. 67 (but this number was later attributed to his *Toccata and Fugue* in E major, written in 1948).⁶¹² It is probably no coincidence that Busch chose this generally rather despondent and pessimistic poem, which describes Jesus facing death and expressing despair at His inability to find God.⁶¹³ Reflecting Busch's state of mind, this composition forms a vital part of the overall contextualisation of *Allegro Vehemente*.

Andante Espressivo⁶¹⁴ (June 9, 1952)

Andante Espressivo was written on the last day of Busch's life, planned as a birthday present for his second wife, Hedwig Busch. After a compositionally less creative period, following his first wife's death — in 1947 Busch expressed his complete loss of motivation to compose⁶¹⁵ — he regained interest and inspiration in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This new-found creativity was paired with an openness towards new influences. He was, for instance, so enthused by a performance of Fauré's Requiem, a piece he had not previously known, that he revisited his *Psalm 6* Op. 70, to make changes.⁶¹⁶ Ardently approving as he was of some of the new works he encountered, he dismissed others, as is evidenced by a passionate exchange with Rudolf Serkin in which Busch expresses his disapproval of Honegger's Fifth Symphony.⁶¹⁷

The two main works from Busch's final years — the *Flute Quintet* Op. 68 (composed in 1950 and revised in 1952) and the aforementioned *Psalm 6* Op. 70 (1951-1952)⁶¹⁸ — encompass an aesthetic range from the classicist and sanguine in the former to the densely chromatic and highly expressive in the latter. This dichotomy in style and character might be interpreted as reflecting the emotional contrasts in his life at the time: Hedwig gave birth to two sons, Nicholas Ragnar on December 7, 1948, and Thomas Andreas on November 18, 1950, and starting a young family was a new and rejuvenating beginning, but at the same time Busch was hit hard by the death of two of his siblings,

⁶¹² Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1263.

⁶¹³ Thilo von Pape, "Der Ölbaumgarten", *Rilke.de*, accessed October 9, 2021, <https://www.rilke.de>.

⁶¹⁴ Busch, *Andante Espressivo*.

⁶¹⁵ Letter to Rudolf and Irene Serkin, dated June 3, 1947, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 506-507.

⁶¹⁶ Letter to Luigi Ansbacher, dated May 23, 1952, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 543.

⁶¹⁷ Letter to Rudolf Serkin, dated March 18, 1952, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 538-539.

⁶¹⁸ Zimmermann and Kupfer, *Sammlung Adolf Busch*, 23.

Fritz and Willi.⁶¹⁹ *Psalm 6* can be heard as a requiem for his brothers, particularly Fritz, to whom he was very close: Adolf mentions his Op. 70 in relation to Fritz in a letter to Otto Grütters.⁶²⁰

After semi-retiring from concert life, Busch was planning to spend more time composing: he wrote about this to Günter Henle in February 1952.⁶²¹ Even on the last day of his life, in a letter to Ernst Drucker, Busch expressed his appreciation of the freedom he now felt to dedicate his time fully to writing music.⁶²² He had also returned to teaching, taking on a position as chamber music coach at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia in 1952⁶²³ after having co-founded the Marlboro School of Music in 1951.⁶²⁴ It is apparent that Busch viewed this new focus on teaching and composing with much positivity and excitement. His sudden and surprising death destroyed these plans — he collapsed on June 9, 1952, with a heart attack. Despite the fact that it was written so close to his end, *Andante Espressivo* includes nothing one might read as a reference to death or mortality. This miniature, alongside the late works mentioned above, provides further insights into the development of Busch's style: whilst maintaining some idiomatic intricacy compared to the earlier piano music, an overall reduction in textural complexity and harmonic ambiguity is evident. Naturally, its time of origin heightens the significance of the piece. The work's genuine expression and musical integrity — values that seem congruent with Busch's own character — make this piece, concise though it is, a deeply moving if unintended farewell to a difficult but fulfilled life.

⁶¹⁹ Willi died on May 10, and Fritz on September 14, 1951. See "Busch Biographien".

⁶²⁰ Letter to Otto Grütters, dated October 1, 1951, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 531-532.

⁶²¹ Letter to Günter Henle, dated February 18, 1952, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 536.

⁶²² Letter to Ernst Drucker, dated June 9, 1952, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 543-544.

⁶²³ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 886.

⁶²⁴ "History", *Marlboro Music*, Marlboro Music, accessed October 11, 2021, <https://www.marlbormusic.org/about/history/>.

APPENDIX IV

Interview with Peter Serkin

Interview with Judith Serkin

Interview with Thomas and Brigitta Busch

Interview with Hilde Grütters

Interview with Peter Serkin

Peter Serkin, the son of Irene and Rudolf Serkin and grandson of Frieda and Adolf Busch, was a pianist of international renown and professor at Bard College, New York. This interview was held at Bard College on April 10, 2017. It was recorded and then transcribed by the author. Sadly, the final version of the transcript could not be authorised by the interviewee due to his death in February 2020. However, Professor Serkin agreed to the inclusion of the interview in the thesis, and standard ethical research procedures have been followed throughout.

JF: In our email exchange you write that today you feel closer to Busch than ever.⁶²⁵ Why is that?

PS: The first 5 years of my life are essential.⁶²⁶ I remember him fondly, as ‘Opapa’. I loved the library at Busch's house. I remember walking down the hill with my violin — my mother wanted me to learn the violin. I was with him all the time. I remember his smile, his warmth, his accepting, his generosity, his humanity. I felt thoroughly welcomed and close to him. He was fine with just taking a beginner like me and playing together on two violins — an accomplished player with a complete beginner! He had that quality generally, not just for family. He was easy-going in some ways, but could also be very serious in other ways. He would get together with friends [to play music], sometimes amateurs, and thoroughly enjoy it, unlike my father [the pianist Rudolf Serkin], who was a bit uptight about it. Adolf enjoyed making music. I remember him performing, too, in Brattleboro, in a movie-theatre. Marlboro Festival was just beginning at that time. He led the orchestra [in this performance]. It was very home-grown, in the extreme actually: starting from nothing. Something developed from that. This was tremendously exciting for a four year old: there is my grandfather up there playing. He had a wonderful tone, eloquent; not just tone, but meaningfulness and spiritual quality as well.

JF: For me, as someone who didn't know him it strikes me that he was a person of political integrity. With hindsight, how do you remember him in that way?

PS: It is integral in his case. There was enormous appreciation. We were proud of him: to speak out and to renounce a country he very much loved. Not being kicked out or being Jewish. On the contrary they tried to keep him there.

JF: It also meant that he lost his audience as a composer.

⁶²⁵ Peter Serkin, email message to the author, March 24, 2017.

⁶²⁶ Peter Serkin was 5 years old on June 9, 1952, the day of Adolf Busch's death.

PS: I can't speak to that. I wasn't alive then, and I didn't properly interview my parents about that. Sometimes, I just was not even paying attention to that. I rebelled. My mother was so adulating. Of course she would be like this: he [Adolf Busch] was her father. Now I appreciate it, but back then I rebelled. We always need to stay sceptical. I didn't want to make a religion about it. Having said this, Adolf Busch was extraordinary. After years of my resisting because it was family, I appreciate him. All these years as an adolescent I had a different attitude. All these recordings I listened to: after his death this was painful. His tone and sound was so personal.

JF: Let's talk about Busch as a composer.

PS: I don't know about how much he wanted his pieces to be performed. Not every composer is ambitious in that way.

JF: You grew up hearing much of his music. Soon you will be playing his Piano Quintet [Op. 35].⁶²⁷ What does Busch as a composer mean to you and how would you evaluate his music?

PS: I don't evaluate too well about anybody because I change my mind often. It is tricky with Adolf's music. My mother was keen for me to play *Andante espressivo* [for solo piano, 1952].⁶²⁸ I remember when he [Adolf Busch] died; I love playing it [*Andante Espressivo*]. It is very simple. No middle section. I played with my dad the 4-hands variations [*Theme and Variations* for piano 4-hands Op. 63]. There are two recordings [of Rudolf and Peter Serkin; 1961 and 1980]:⁶²⁹ the better one is the one when I was 13 or 14 years old. In Adolf Busch's honour, they would play a piece of his at the Marlboro Festival on his birthday [August 8th]. There was a lot of snickering amongst the younger musicians, probably just an attitude. They said [Busch was only performed in Marlboro because] he was my mother's father etc. Others like Leon Kirchner [American composer, 1919-2009], who didn't know him, always defended him [saying that Busch's music] shows what a remarkable musician he was.

JF: I think some of Busch's pieces are better than others. As a composer he was experimenting a lot. He went through various phases. Apart from the *Quintet*, have you performed other chamber pieces by Adolf Busch?

⁶²⁷ Peter Serkin, email message to the author, January 21, 2017.

⁶²⁸ *Andante Espressivo* was written on the last day of Adolf Busch's life (see Chapter 2).

⁶²⁹ Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1210.

PS: I have been derelict in that regard. Same with Reger: I only played five or six pieces by him. I decided to arrange the [Busch's] four-hand variations for full orchestra. I was encouraged by Thomas [Busch]: "He [Adolf Busch] would look over your shoulder while you work". There is no performance planned, though.

JF: The *Piano Sonata* [Op. 25] is the most substantial work for solo piano. It has its weaknesses, too, but it is incredibly fascinating, breaking out of the small form and becoming more adventurous pianistically, almost writing organistically in this piece.

PS: Yes. He [Adolf Busch] has that background [referring to the organ] as did Brahms.

JF: The second movement [of Busch's *Piano Sonata*] relates to Reger in many ways: for example in Variation 3. It was Busoni, as well, who influenced his [Busch's] writing. There are some sources saying that Reger viewed Busch as his successor. There is no evidence to back this up, though. Do you know of any acknowledgment of Busch's music by either Reger or Busoni?

PS: I can't say. I don't know anecdotes about that. I would imagine Reger would have seen Busch's pieces. In those days, good musicians also composed. Fritz [Busch] also did some composing. I imagine Reger would have wanted to look at Adolf's compositions. Do you know the whole story of Busch and Serkin playing for Busoni? They went to play for Busoni. They played his *Second Sonata*, which they loved. He was very complimentary and didn't change anything. Six months later, Egon Petri and Busoni played the same piece in London on two pianos. They went backstage. Adolf said to him: "Why didn't you tell you wanted it so much faster?" Busoni: "It was so compelling the way you did it, I didn't want to change it."⁶³⁰

JF: It shows that perception of tempo is relative. How about other composers' perceptions of Busch's music? Donald Francis Tovey obviously has written about it.⁶³¹

PS: There are letters [between Busch and Tovey] in both directions.

JF: To your knowledge, are there any other composers or great performers who commented on Busch's music. Perhaps [the cellist, Pablo] Casals?

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 249.

⁶³¹ Donald Francis Tovey, *A note on the music of Adolf Busch*.

PS: Not particularly. Definitely not Casals. There is quite a bit of gossip: [but I want to disregard that], it doesn't matter what so and so thought. [The pianist, Eugene] Istomin had the manuscript of the *Cello Sonata*, but never played it. There has not been much interest [in Busch's music], but recently interest has grown. [There is, for example, the] Adolf Busch Kollegium in Karlsruhe.

JF: I have been in touch with Bettina Beigelbeck [clarinettist and member of the Busch Kollegium]. She edited the *Clarinet Sonata* for Breitkopf. I intend to do the same with the *Piano Sonata*. There already is a first edition from Breitkopf. This was the only source I had when learning the piece, but there is also a manuscript, which has a few significant differences [to the first edition].

PS: My father played the *Sonata*.

JF: He played it at Carnegie Hall.

PS: He told Rachmaninoff that he was playing it. [Sergei] Rachmaninoff said: "I don't want to come to your crucifixion."⁶³² I don't know if Rachmaninoff actually knew the piece. [Arthur] Schnabel, I don't know, he must have come across Adolf's music. Busch's relationship was not as negative towards modernism [as sometimes said]: it wasn't as black and white.

JF: I always have found that at the beginning of the twentieth century music is particularly interesting, and that the divide between tonal and atonal writing is artificial. There are many connections between all styles and the question of tonality and atonality becomes less and less important [with hindsight].

PS: I agree. Schönberg, Berg and Webern would agree too. No doubt, there was a shock, though [referring to Schönberg's atonality]. Schönberg appreciated Rudolf's playing. Then Rudolf Serkin renounced Schönberg, but studied many of Schönberg's scores⁶³³ — many of the scores belonged to Adolf Busch. He [Adolf Busch] never played Schönberg's string quartets. He was never a Schönbergian but he had much interest.

JF: There is an arrangement of [Schönberg's piano piece] Op. 11 No. 2 by Busoni. This shows that there is so much connection between the different schools. The Busoni-Schönberg connection is relevant for my research in general, when asking the question on Busch's relation to modernism.

⁶³² See also Lehmann and Faber, *Rudolf Serkin, A Life*, 132.

⁶³³ See also *ibid.*, 33-39.

PS: Adolf Busch was adventurous and curious. I don't think he would have gotten the *Second String Quartet* [Op.10, by Arnold Schönberg]. My father always adored Schönberg as a musician. Klemperer said the best lessons on Beethoven symphonies were given by Schönberg. Adolf Busch was also interested in Stravinsky: *Petrushka* [Ballet, 1911], the *Octet* [Octet for wind instruments, 1923] and other wind music.

JF: How about Bartók?

PS: My father liked Bartók. I am not sure about Adolf Busch's attitude to Bartók.

JF: Do you have any insight into what way Adolf Busch consulted your father when writing for the piano? It seems to me that Busch's piano writing becomes more refined, instrumentally, later in life.

PS: I don't remember Rudolf Serkin saying anything about this. Surely he must have been consulted. Intuitively, I feel there is some prankster aspect of it: it [Busch's writing] is so difficult at times. There is a back-and-forth of playing tricks on each other, joking around: a lot of witticism.

JF: Busch's humour can be seen in pieces like *Allegro Bizarro* (1941) for example. I would like to travel back in time and see if he sat down together with your father [when writing the piece]. These sort of questions occur.

PS: He wrote a lot of pieces for various people. Some of it is very personal music. Sometimes for amateurs. For my mother [Irene Serkin-Busch] or for Hedwig [Hedwig Busch-Vischer, Adolf Busch's second wife]: for example, the *Flute Quintet* [for flute, violin, 2 violas and cello Op. 68]. He wrote this out of love for these people. He was a painter too. I remember him sitting there in front of the easel. I didn't pay enough attention to family, though. Often I wish I had asked more questions.

JF: Perhaps something might come to mind later. It would be great to stay in touch. Maybe to conclude: do you see a future for Adolf Busch's music in concert programmes — in the light of the recent Busch renaissance?

PS: It is very difficult to say. There are so many composers to be rediscovered. Stefan Wolpe [German-Jewish-American composer, 1902-1972], I like, for example. It [Wolpe's music] is gratifying for me. Some pieces [by Adolf Busch] I have known through recordings: for example,

the *String Sextet* [Op. 40], the *Flute Quintet*, the *Sixth Psalm* [Op. 70]. When I was a kid, Eugene Ormandy programmed the *Psalm* together with Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. My mother was so moved. I still felt resistance when asked to play the Piano Concerto [Op. 31]. I actually declined the offer. I don't know his overall oeuvre. I know some songs, the second Violin Sonata — it is a nice piece. Last year I found another set of variations for 4-hands in E flat major. My father never mentioned it. We learnt it, but never performed in a concert.

JF: Many thanks for this interview.

Interview with Judith Serkin

Judith Serkin, daughter of Irene Serkin-Busch and Rudolf Serkin and granddaughter of Frieda and Adolf Busch, is a cellist and founding member of the Brattleboro Music School. The interview was held at a cafe in Brattleboro, Vermont on April 10, 2017. It was recorded and then transcribed by the author. The final version of the transcript has been authorised by the interviewee for inclusion in the thesis. Standard ethical research procedures have been followed throughout.

JF: What goes through your mind when you hear the name Adolf Busch?

JS: Warmth and generosity. He was very central in everyone's lives [of the Busch-Serkin family]. He was an important figure for me, although I don't have a conscious memory of him. However, when I was in my twenties or early thirties I once woke up from a powerful dream, weeping for my grandfather. It seemed that he was in the room. I was suddenly conscious of the loss of him. This was a very profound experience. We must have had a close connection, even though I was only a baby when he died.

JF: Reading about him, what strikes me most is his political integrity. Because of his principled stance against the Nazis,⁶³⁴ he lost a lot of money.

JS: I have admired him deeply for that. And I think that this principled view was important for the entire family.

JF: Have you performed music by Adolf Busch?

JS: Yes, for example the *Divertimento* for 13 Solo instruments [Op. 30]; the *Suite* with clarinet and string trio [Op. 62a]; the *Romanze* — a very short piece for clarinet, 2 violas and 2 cellos [Op. 53d]. I also performed his *String Quartet* [A minor Op. 57] and the *Flute Quintet* [Quintet for flute, violin, 2 violas and cello Op. 68].

JF: Is there any work that stands out for you?

JS: Yes, definitely both the *Divertimento* and the *Romanze*. It [*Romanze*] is short but a real jewel.

⁶³⁴ See also Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 501-503.

JF: What are the main features of Busch's music for you?

JS: There is the obvious complexity, yet there is lightness and such good humour. The *Flute Quintet* is a fantastic piece as well, beautiful and incredibly complex. If you are not careful it can be too dense, a bit like Reger. However, if you can distill it and make the lines clear, there is a surprising transparency.

JF: It would be interesting to programme Busch's *Flute Quintet* with Reger's *Clarinet Quintet* [Max Reger, *Quintet* for clarinet and strings Op. 146]. Both pieces are from the late period of each composer. Reger was one of Adolf Busch's big heroes. Do you know if Reger acknowledged Busch's compositions?

JS: No idea.

JF: How about Busoni?

JS: Maybe you should speak to Thomas [Busch]. Generally, my impression from my parents was that Adolf Busch was disappointed that he wasn't recognised or appreciated as much as a composer as he was as a performer.

JF: How about the influence of your father [Rudolf Serkin] on Adolf Busch's piano writing, looking at it mainly from an instrumental viewpoint?

JS: My father didn't mention anything about this. He didn't talk much about Busch at all. I think it was very, very hard for him because he felt closer to Busch than anyone else in the world.

JF: Your father performed many of Busch's pieces in Marlboro, at Carnegie Hall and elsewhere. Did he ever mention what this music means to him?

JS: He really didn't talk much about Adolf Busch. He actually didn't speak about any composers in these terms. He was not such a verbal person. But he always made sure that at least every summer one of Adolf Busch's pieces was performed.

JF: Would he have approached Adolf Busch's music in any other way than works by other composers?

JS: No! (By the way, I also performed the *Saxophone Quintet* [for saxophone and string quartet Op. 34] and some songs with piano and cello [*Nacht Op. 3b*].) Regarding my father, he had to really believe in the piece he was playing. That's why he stopped playing Schönberg! Certain pieces [by Adolf Busch] he thought were valuable, and he pushed for these to be performed, even if he wasn't playing in them himself.

JF: How about other great musicians, composers? Was Adolf Busch talked about a lot?

JS: Not as a composer. Many people didn't understand his music.

JF: Recently, Busch has been performed again more often. In the past ten years or so, there seems to be a new awareness of his music. Why is that, do you think?

JS: It might have something to do with his political stance. People admire him for that. The decisions and choices he made were largely unrecognised until about twenty years ago.

JF: He lost his audience as a composer by abandoning Germany. He was regularly published and reviewed before the Nazis came to power. Later his career as a composer never took off again in the same way.

JS: I didn't realise that [the fact that Busch was regularly published and reviewed in Germany before 1933].

JF: I feel Adolf Busch is often experimenting in his music, and not all pieces are of the same quality. The *Sonata* [Op. 25] is incredibly interesting as a piece of music. What's your view on Adolf Busch's relation to modernism, to the avant-garde of his time?

JS: Busch was also influenced by jazz later on. This was very important to him. Certainly there are moments of experimentation — these often seem almost atonal. Otherwise the harmonic structure is very clear. I don't have any idea what his thought process was. Just speculating.

JF: Let's take his early *Fantasy* (1908): the piece is great but also has its flaws. A good example is the coda. I was intrigued when I stumbled across Busch's correspondence with Otto Grüters about this coda;⁶³⁵ it seems he tacked it on later in the process. [Busch initially wrote the *Fantasy*

⁶³⁵ Letter to Otto Grüters, dated June 7, 1908, in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 5-6.

without the coda.] His letter exchanges with Donald Francis Tovey are also interesting, though these are mainly about Tovey's music.⁶³⁶ Still, this [correspondence] reflects a lot about Adolf Busch's approach to composing. Do you know of any other composer contemporary to Adolf Busch who acknowledged him as a composer?

JS: No idea. Have you heard of Hilde Grütters, the daughter of Otto Grütters? Maybe you should speak to her — she actually knew Adolf Busch. He [Adolf Busch] was very funny. He did a lot of practical jokes. And there are a lot of moments in his music which are funny and good humoured.

JF: The dedication "zur Zigarre komponiert" [composed to accompany the cigar],⁶³⁷ his miniature *Allegro Bizarro* (1941) or the small pieces written for Dea Gombrich [*Two Canons and a Little Fugue* (1916)] are testimonies of his humour. Did you hear your father play the *Sonata*? Or other solo piano music by Adolf Busch?

JS: No. I remember him playing the 4-hands piece with Peter [Serkin; *Theme and Variations* for piano 4-hands Op. 63]. And maybe the *Piano Quintet* [Op. 35], but I must have been very young.

JF: In your view what is the future for Adolf Busch's music?

JS: I'd love if people get the chance to hear Adolf Busch's music. I feel this also about Reger — and Haydn! All this music has a very unique quality and is seriously overlooked. I get disappointed that people are so dismissive [of Busch's music], as they are with Reger, as well — especially in this country. I just performed Reger's *Clarinet Quintet* last week. Everybody is surprised that this is such a wonderful piece!

JF: It was very inspiring to talk to you. Many thanks for this interview.

⁶³⁶ See, for example, letter to Donald Francis Tovey, dated September 11, 1913, in *ibid.*, 71-78.

⁶³⁷ Busch, *Three Pieces in Old Style* (1917).

Interview with Thomas and Brigitta Busch

The interview was held at the house of Thomas Busch, the youngest son of Adolf Busch, and his wife Brigitta Busch, in Vienna on April 13, 2018. The interview, conducted in German, was recorded and then transcribed and translated by the author. The final translated version of the transcript has been authorised by the interviewees for inclusion in the thesis. Standard ethical research procedures have been followed throughout.

JF: First of all: thank you. I would like to ask some introductory questions about yourselves, just to learn about your own background. I assume you grew up in America and then you moved to Austria.

TB: We [Hedwig Busch, widow of Adolf Busch, and her two sons, Nicholas and Thomas] left the USA when I was 5. Then we lived in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and then in Basel, where I also was born, coincidentally. My brother [Nicholas Busch] was born in the USA and we both grew up in Switzerland.

JF: What is your professional background?

TB: Both of us [TB and his wife BB] have a common background as far as the first stage of our professional life is concerned. It was in agriculture. In the context of the 1968 movement we co-founded an agricultural commune in Kärnten. We were both involved not just in agriculture but also in politics. Our activities were journalistic as well, and we volunteered working with refugees and migrants – already at quite an early period in time.

JF: And you worked with the refugees in agriculture/farming?

TB: Yes, this was part of it. We tried to improve the conditions of refugees and migrants. And then we both developed further, professionally. My wife went into academia [linguistics] and I into publishing via journalism. I worked for a publishing company in Klagenfurt [DRAVA Verlag⁶³⁸]; I later became its director.

JF: It is of course very interesting for me to hear about your own background. However, it's your father's work which is at the centre of my research. When you hear the name Adolf Busch, which

⁶³⁸ *Drava, Drava*, accessed November 14, 2021, <https://www.drava.at>.

chord does that strike? I assume you wouldn't have any personal memory of him, but what do you think of first when you hear his name?

TB: Definitely a warm feeling. I don't have any personal memories, but through my mother or members of the Serkin family I feel that an impression was given that my father was somebody I could easily identify with — especially because of the fact that he wasn't personally present in my life.

JF: It is interesting to see how the various characteristics attributed to your father have been consistent in different accounts. Thinking of what Peter and Judith Serkin said about him last year: warmth and generosity were repeatedly mentioned.

TB: Of course these qualities were also transmitted through music, through his many recordings.

JF: What I found particularly interesting was Peter's mention of Adolf Busch's joy in making music. Adolf Busch seemed to have enjoyed playing together with friends, many of them amateurs, simply for the pleasure of making music. According to Peter this was different to Rudolf Serkin's approach.

TB: He [Adolf Busch] often played the viola, so that he wasn't 'too good' for the others.

JF: This quality surely has something to do with the fact that as a child he played dance music in pubs and at parties.

TB: Yes, there definitely must be a connection.

JF: What is your own connection to music? I see you have a piano.

TB: The piano belongs to my wife. She started very late, though. For me it was always the violin. I had my first violin lesson at the age of three with Irene [Serkin-Busch, daughter of Adolf and Frieda Busch]. This was still in Brattleboro. As a child I had regular violin lessons. Later with Bruno Straumann [second violinist of Busch quartet since 1947], who was a great teacher. At the age of fifteen I stopped playing the violin, because I was more drawn to literature. I also recognised my own limitations on the violin. Later in life I started again, and I now play with much enjoyment.

JF: Do you sometimes play together?

TB: Yes we sometimes do.

BB: But as mentioned before, I started very late.

TB: We enjoy it very much. Brigitta has a fantastic Russian piano teacher. I also play with her [the Russian piano teacher] sometimes.

BB: We enjoy going to concerts very much. Obviously, Vienna is a good place to do so.

TB: Especially for chamber music.

JF: Your mother, Hedwig Busch-Vischer, played the flute, and your father dedicated his *Flute Quintet* Op. 68 to her.

TB: Well, she was almost angry at the fact that he overestimated her skills in that way. She was a beginner on the flute. Certainly, she was musical and a music lover. She had an especially strong and intimate connection to his [Adolf Busch's] music. But she knew from the outset that she would never be able to play that piece.

JF: As a child, and also later, in what way was Adolf Busch's legacy present? How was he remembered and talked about in the family?

TB: His legacy was always present. Of course, especially through Rudolf Serkin and the Serkin family. We had much contact [with the Serkins] after we had left America. We visited the States again in 1958, when his [Adolf Busch's] *Psalms* 6 Op. 70 was performed under Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. This left a strong impression on me. There was also the Busch Society in Siegen (Westfalia). They worked hard to promote performances of his works. One concert including Pina Carmirelli [Italian violinist, 1914-1993] I remember particularly well. She played his Sonata with Rudolf Serkin and his Piano Trio with Hermann Busch. We lived in Basel and Hermann Busch came to us for rehearsals. So I really got into the repertoire.

JF: I get the sense that in your family Adolf Busch was very much talked about as a composer, rather than only as a performer.

TB: As a violinist he was present through his recordings. In our home this was almost a ritual: on Sundays we always listened to music; most of the time to recordings of Adolf Busch. My mother was almost 'monocultural' in that respect. She was highly moved listening to these recordings.

JF: Your mother was a good friend of Irene.

TB: Yes, even as children. She often mentioned her experiences of Adolf Busch in her youth: both through music and his personality.

JF: Surely there was a symbiosis of music and personality. During his life his identity as a composer was often overshadowed by his stellar career as a performer.

TB: Of course he was mainly seen as a performer.

JF: But as far as I know he saw himself as a composer just as much.

TB: Yes, that's also what my mother kept saying. Especially in his final years, when he had to reduce the amount of performing because of health reasons: composing became more important.

JF: As far as I know the composer Adolf Busch had a real audience in Germany prior to the rise of the Nazis. His works were regularly performed and reviewed. Then, after his refusal to perform in Germany, he lost his audience.

TB: Yes, he lost his 'Resonanzraum' [space of resonance].

JF: As a violinist he was famous enough for an international career.

TB: But even this [continuing as a performer] was really hard. Especially in America.

JF: He always kept composing though. When you think of his compositions is there a piece which stands out for you?

TB: Definitely the *Flute Quintet* Op. 68. Then the *Ten Songs on Negro Spirituals* 58c. Also *Psalm 6* Op.70. All these pieces are part of his late period.

JF: When I look at his piano works it is interesting to consider that most of these pieces were written earlier, with the exception of a few miniatures. In his early works he was very much under the influence of Max Reger's music. This is still true for his late works, but different influences became important as well. What I am interested in is what other colleagues, composers and performers, thought about Adolf Busch, not just as a violinist but also as a composer. I would like to mention a few names suggested by Peter Serkin.

TB: Peter has also played some works by Adolf Busch; for example the *Variations* for piano 4 hands op 63.

JF: Peter actually told me that you encouraged him to arrange this work for orchestra.

TB: Yes, that's true.

JF: Apparently you told him that your father would look over Peter's shoulder approving his work.

TB: Yes.

JF: He mentioned names such as Kirchner, Tovey, Casals, Schnabel and Rachmaninoff.

TB: I am sure Peter would know much more than I about this. I know that there was some connection with Rachmaninoff. Either Peter told me or it is in the Tully Potter book; one can find quite a lot in there. We tend to say that Tully knows more than Adolf would have known.

JF: There are many questions within my field of research which have not been written about. So, inevitably a lot is open to speculation. One question relates to the reception of Adolf Busch's music by two composers: Max Reger and Ferruccio Busoni. Reger obviously admired the young Busch due to his performances. Reger cherished the fact that Busch played his *Violin Concerto* from memory, probably better than Henri Marteau, who premiered it. What we know very little about is whether Reger knew about Busch's compositions. There are a few sources, not the most reliable ones, indicating that Reger viewed Busch as his compositional "successor": an article in the *Morning Herald*, Uniontown Pennsylvania,⁶³⁹ and a contribution to one of the festschrifts.⁶⁴⁰ Was the artistic partnership between Reger and Busch the subject of family conversation?

TB: I heard many anecdotes about Reger: about the music and his sense of humour and sarcasm. However, I am not able to help you with this specific question. I am certain that my mother would have known more about it.

⁶³⁹ "Adolf Busch has unusual life story," *The Morning Herald (Uniontown, Pennsylvania)*, November 12, 1945, 8.

⁶⁴⁰ Otto Grütters, "Adolf Busch — Mensch und Werk" [Adolf Busch — Man and Oeuvre], in *In memoriam Adolf Busch*, ed. Wolfgang Burbach (Dahlbruch: Brüder Busch Gesellschaft, 1966), 24.

JF: These questions are obviously very interesting. It is a known fact how much Reger's music influenced Busch as a composer. But in what way Reger took notice of Busch's oeuvre is largely unknown.

BB: Did Tully Potter actually record the interviews with your mother?

TB: I don't know.

BB: It is of course possible that he [Potter] did not use all the material for his book.

JF: I will follow this up. Many people have told me that Reger had no knowledge of Busch's compositions.

TB: I can't imagine that, as it [the relationship between Busch and Reger] was such a friendly and collegiate relation. But I can't provide you with an anecdote in that regard.

JF: How about Busoni: another very important name? His influence is especially apparent in the [Busch's] *Sonata* Op. 25.

TB: He played a lot of Busoni.

JF: Did Busoni know about the compositions of your father? Was he at all interested, or did he see him only as a performer?

TB: Busoni was much less present than Reger in the family. The idea was for Rudolf Serkin to study with Busoni in Berlin. But it never came to that. I don't know anything about the personal connection of Busch and Busoni.

JF: Another very important aspect for me is the development of his style of writing for the piano. Since he had this strong musical partnership and close friendship with Rudolf Serkin, I think that he must have consulted Serkin when writing for the piano. My dilemma is that I am speculating a lot but can't find any hard evidence. I have been speculating much about this when comparing the 2 versions of the *Sonata* Op 25. There doesn't seem to be any documentation here [of the collaboration between Busch and Serkin]. I checked in the Breitkopf archive, as well. Has your father's collaboration with Rudolf Serkin been the subject of conversation within your family?

TB: It was clear that my father often had a specific performer in mind when writing a piece; the works for solo viola, for example.⁶⁴¹ In most cases I wouldn't remember the names. An intimate connection to the piano was also supported by Fritz Busch [brother of Adolf Busch] — from an early age. Of course they would exchange their views. However, again I wouldn't have anything concrete to say in this regard.

JF: [Generally in my research] there are sometimes hints in letters and elsewhere. The rest is speculation. This makes it interesting as well; especially as far as the *Sonata* is concerned.

BB: Are there any major changes here [between the two versions of the piece]?

JF: Yes. Sometimes notes were added or omitted. For example, semiquaver octaves were added between the main chords in the second movement. There are also some small changes, probably as a result of negligence in the autograph, but there are also some major harmonic or melodic discrepancies. It is my assumption that he would have discussed those changes with Rudolf Serkin, who premiered the piece in 1922.

BB: Do these changes result in technical simplifications?

JF: At times it's getting even more difficult in the later version. But in some cases also easier. When I learned the *Sonata* I only had the first edition at my disposal. Most likely, your father would have been involved in preparing the first edition. He must have seen the galley proof. It was published in 1925, three years after the autograph had been completed.

Another topic I would like to talk about is Adolf Busch's relationship to 'new music': the so-called avant-garde. More and more, I come to the conclusion that the divide between Adolf Busch's music and the avant-garde isn't as clear cut as one might think. Of course, he had his standpoint and composed tonally all his life, but the divide between the two worlds — the Reger-style on the one hand and the Viennese School on the other — is rather artificial.

TB: Adorno drew that line.

⁶⁴¹ Busch wrote two works for solo viola, which were both dedicated to the violist of his quartet at the time. *Suite* in A minor Op. 16a (1924) was written for Karl Doktor, and *Prelude and Fugue* in E minor (1948) was written for Hugo Gottesmann. See Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1247, 1265.

JF: The fact that Reger was one of the most frequently performed composers in Schönberg's Society for Private Musical Performances makes the arbitrariness of this divide even more evident. Peter Serkin confirmed my general observation — at least in parts. According to him, Busch was much more open to new music than it might look at first sight; also to jazz. This is obvious in his *Ten Songs on Negro Spirituals* Op. 58c. When you spoke about his music in the family or with close family friends, was the aforementioned aspect a subject of your discussions?

TB: I am sure you spoke to Peter Serkin about this, since I am sure he would be able to contribute much to this discussion. I struggle with the term 'Late Romanticism' in this context. In literature or in the fine arts it is more common to speak about 'Expressionism'. For me Adolf Busch's music is highly expressionistic. He loved that style in paintings. He did, however, draw a line: he had high regard for Picasso's early works, but didn't warm to his Cubism. However, I think his attitude gradually changed in this regard. The radical rejection [of atonality and modernism in general], which was prevalent in his time in Vienna certainly mellowed later on. He also showed respect for Arnold Schönberg.

JF: I agree that the term Expressionism reaches beyond atonal music and includes works of Reger and Busoni. These composers are not Late Romantics in the way Bruckner and Brahms were. However, there is much connection between the Late Romantics and the Expressionists. Reger, as well as Schönberg, was influenced by Brahms. Your father's music is also sometimes defined by the expressive gesture and in that way I can see a connection with the Viennese School.

TB: Of course, it is easier to come to these conclusions with hindsight than from a perspective contemporary to Adolf Busch.

JF: Of course: that wasn't any different with Brahms and Wagner.

TB: However, my father was convinced that atonality would reach a dead end, that music would return to tonality at some stage and that his music would receive greater recognition in the future.

JF: Maybe he was right, as his music is performed more often now.

TB: Why do you think that is?

JF: Difficult question. Martin Anderson [executive producer of Toccata Classics] and Tully Potter drew my attention to Adolf Busch in the first instance. This was in 2010. There are, I think, several ways to explain this. One explanation is that Adolf Busch's extraordinary political and moral integrity helped to initiate a Busch renaissance. Obviously, this doesn't have anything to do with the quality of his music. I was asked this question several times as well, for example in my interview with *Fanfare Magazine*,⁶⁴² and I do honestly think that initially this could have been the reason. However, it [the Busch renaissance] wouldn't have lasted long if this were the only reason. I therefore believe that his compositions have been explored further because of genuinely musical qualities. It is always difficult to say how 'great' a composer is. In any case, I feel that Busch's music is highly interesting; surely not all of his works are on the same level. Looking at his piano works he wrote much for private and domestic purposes.

TB: He actually wrote 'Hausmusik'⁶⁴³ as well.

JF: How important was Adolf Busch's principled political stance in the family?

TB: It was very important. It was highly inspirational for me and my brother and had an impact on our decisions and activities.

JF: You mentioned that you worked with refugees in the 1970's and 1980's. I always find Adolf Busch's sacrifice [losing all German concert engagements because of his refusal to perform in Nazi Germany] remarkable.

TB: To be honest, it was easier to live up to the political legacy than the musical. My brother played the violin very well, but of course such a father is difficult to live up to in this regard. The decision to reject any work in Germany resulted in major difficulties. It became worse because at the start there still was France and Italy to perform in; then towards the end of the war it was mostly only the USA. Above all, it was obvious that he suffered from the political situation. After all, he loved Germany and the German culture. Generally, he was a jolly person but then he had depressive spells. In the USA, particularly, he didn't have the same sort of audience as in Europe.

JF: This is especially true for the composer Adolf Busch but also to some extent for the performer. Have you had much contact with the Grütters family? I know you aren't directly related.

⁶⁴² Jakob Fichert, interviewed by James A. Altena, "Busch-League, Not Bush-League, Repertoire: Jakob Fichert and the Piano Music of Adolf Busch", *Fanfare*, July/August 2017, 58.

⁶⁴³ *Hausmusik* Op. 26a and Op. 26b are duets for clarinet and violin; Op. 26c is a trio for clarinet, violin and cello. See Potter, *Adolf Busch*, 1248.

TB: As a child we had much contact with Otto Grütters and his wife Hannah. Later, after Otto Grütters' death, it decreased. Judith Serkin had much more contact with them. Otto Grütters was an uncle to us; he was very supportive. One thing I can think of spontaneously: Adolf Busch's compositions are full of energy. I often think of craftsmanship here. The material aspect plays an important role in his music. His father was a carpenter and instrument maker.

JF: He loved C major. Quite an archaic key. However, when looking at the *Sonata*, for instance, it becomes apparent how far he moves away from the central key.

BB: It is quite remarkable that Adolf Busch's works are being performed more frequently these days.

TB: Particularly the clarinet pieces, solo and in chamber music, are interesting. Bettina Beigelbeck performed and recorded those recently.⁶⁴⁴

BB: We also found out that students of the University of Music [in Vienna] played some of Adolf Busch's saxophone pieces for their final recitals.

T.B: Also the Koll Trio performed one of his works for two violins and viola a week ago. For a long time, the Marlboro Festival was somewhat of a 'reservation' for Adolf Busch's works, but they are now also recognised elsewhere.

JF: Yes, this is something Peter Serkin mentioned to me: Adolf Busch's works were often looked down upon, and colleagues would say that his works were only performed because of his connection to the festival.

BB: [Renaud] Capucon performed a cycle of several concerts in memoriam Adolf Busch a few years ago, but none of his compositions. We then met with him (we didn't know him personally). It was very interesting the way he talked about Adolf Busch's integrity, as a person and musically.

TB: And about Adolf Busch's many facets and identities: soloist, chamber music, chamber orchestra, composition, orchestra, teacher, the festival.

JF: He also painted.

⁶⁴⁴ Adolf Busch, *Chamber Music, Volume 1 and 2*, CD.

TB: We have a few paintings of him. Also, music lives on in the family. One of my brother's sons studied piano in Sweden and now studies pedagogy in Vienna. His brother plays the violin very well. He likes world music.

JF: Many thanks for this interview.

Interview with Hilde Grütters

Hilde Grütters is the daughter of Otto Grütters (1880-1971), Adolf Busch's mentor, friend and brother-in-law. The interview was held in Berlin at the house of Professor Peter Nusser, friend of Hilde Grütters, on December 18, 2021. The interview, which was conducted in German, was recorded and then transcribed and translated by the author. The final translated version of the transcript has been authorised by the interviewee for inclusion in the thesis. Standard ethical research procedures have been followed throughout

JF: First of all, thank you for meeting with me today. I am so happy that we can meet in person despite the global crisis. I have prepared a few questions, but it's perfectly fine if the conversation takes a completely different turn. Firstly, it would be great to know a bit more about yourself. Am I correct that you were born in 1937?

HG: Yes, I was born 1937 in Basel. The first few months I stayed at the house of Busch and Serkin. Once my aunt Frieda⁶⁴⁵ and Adolf [Busch] — I always called him Uncle Adolf — heard that my parents were expecting a child, they said that it would be better for me to be born in free Switzerland rather than in Nazi Germany. My parents came to Basel in September: I was born in October. In January, however, my parents and I went back to Germany. Adolf Busch offered to employ my father as his secretary, so that he wouldn't have to go back to Germany, but my father declined because his two siblings, Fritz and Elli, lived in Germany. And he did not want to abandon them.

JF: This was in 1938. Therefore you grew up in Nazi Germany. Did you also go to school there?

HG: No.

JF: Where did you live?

HG: We lived in Düsseldorf, but during the air raids I was given into the care of an aunt and an uncle in Trossingen, a small town near Villingen-Schwenningen. The sister of my mother was married to a Mr Hohner — he was one of the heads of a company, which manufactures accordions and mouth organs — and I stayed with them during the war and until 1946. My

⁶⁴⁵ Frieda Busch née Grütters (1891-1946), sister of Otto Grütters and wife of Adolf Busch.

mother was Hanna Kühn, not Hanna Hohner: this name was erroneously attributed to her by Irene.⁶⁴⁶

JF: So, you grew up in Trossingen. What happened after that?

HG: In 1946 I returned with my parents to Düsseldorf and stayed there until 1956. I went to school there. This wasn't always easy because my father was well known as a pedagogue and professor. People asked: 'What's your name?' [I responded:] 'I am Hilde Grütters' [they would continue:] 'You must be the granddaughter of Professor Grütters' [I responded:] 'No, I am his daughter, honestly'. And then people always compared me with my father and if I was as intelligent as him. I always felt that I failed that test. Therefore, I did not have a good time in my school years, but I did my Abitur at the age of eighteen and then went on to study in Tübingen, Munich and Bonn.

JF: What subjects did you study?

HG: English and History. I studied History in order to understand how it was possible that the National Socialist movement came to power. So, I focused on the Weimar Republic and wrote my dissertation on the Kreisauer Kreis.

JF: And after your studies you wrote a PhD?

HG: No, I started a PhD but never finished it. I wanted to write about the Weimar Republic; in particular, how German and French foreign policy was impacted by the press. [Gustav] Stresemann [German Foreign Minister from 1923 to 1929] and [Aristide] Briand [French Prime Minister in the 1910s and 1920s] got on well with each other and tried to develop a more friendly relationship between Germany and France. But every time they met, the German press would write that Stresemann was yielding to French demands in an unacceptable way, and in France the press was equally suspicious towards any deal with Germany. So, in my view, the press played a fatal and disastrous role here. I wanted to defend this in a PhD and went to my professor, [Max] Braubach [1899-1975, German historian]. He laughed at this proposal and said: 'You probably don't know that the archives are not accessible for 50 years after 1945. Therefore you can only do some meaningful research on this topic around the year 2000.' Then he suggested a different topic, something to do with the Spanish succession war. I spent a few wonderful months at the records office in London [for my research]. And then I thought I could write the PhD alongside working as a junior teacher at the school. But this was not feasible, so I tried to get a year off to

⁶⁴⁶ Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 568. Irene Serkin-Busch (1917-1999) was the daughter of Adolf Busch and wife of Rudolf Serkin (1903-1991).

finish my doctorate, but this was not granted by the authorities as they urgently needed English teachers at the time. I still could have taken a year out, but would have lost my employment status and any guarantee for re-employment. If I had been writing about the Weimar Republic, a topic much closer to my heart, I might have done it, but I wasn't so keen on the other topic. Therefore I decided to fully qualify as a teacher. I worked in this profession, first in Duisburg, then in Düsseldorf, until my retirement in 2000.

JF: And then you moved to Berlin?

HG: Not yet. The wife of Dr [Peter] Nusser [German literary scholar and then emeritus professor at Freie Universität in Berlin] was a very close friend of mine. After she passed away in 2004, Dr Nusser and I (we knew each other since 1962) got together. In 2014 I moved to Berlin; not to his house but to a residential home.

JF: It is so important to know who my interviewees are. So, thanks for sharing this with me. Obviously, my research is about Adolf Busch...

HG: I first met Adolf Busch when he came to Germany for the first time after the war, giving a concert in Bonn in May 1949. He stayed at the same hotel as my parents and myself. I remember precisely walking together from the hotel to the concert hall. He was approached by a man, who said: 'Adolf, remember me?', and he seemed incredibly nervous in response. For him this was highly upsetting, and he refused to have any contact [with this man]. He just walked on and did not turn around. Hedwig⁶⁴⁷ then said to this person: 'Don't you see my husband doesn't want to talk to you!'. And then I realised how difficult it must have been for him to play again in Germany, and particularly in Bonn, because of all the memories.

JF: He had already been touring Europe and Iceland after the war before he started to give concerts in Germany again. Playing for a German audience, partially consisting of Nazis, must have been very hard. I have a few questions about your parents. I know quite a bit about your father from the Potter biography and some letters. But just to confirm a few facts: he was professor at the Pädagogische Akademie [teacher-training college] in Dortmund...

HG: First in Kassel, then in Dortmund. Actually, like myself, he was a school teacher — first at the Humboldt Gymnasium, formerly Hindenburg Gymnasium. In 1930 he was appointed professor in Kassel. There he met my mother, who was a lecturer in psychology at the same university. Then

⁶⁴⁷ Hedwig Busch-Vischer (1916-2006), second wife of Adolf Busch.

the entire institution in Kassel closed down because of austerity measures introduced by Heinrich Brüning [1885-1970, German Chancellor 1930-1932]. My mother had to leave the profession — as a married woman she was not allowed to continue to teach. Then my parents moved to Dortmund, but only my father was teaching there.

JF: Your mother was a psychologist?

HG: Yes, she wrote her dissertation under the supervision of [William] Stern [1873-1938, German psychologist and philosopher] in Hamburg. She wrote him a letter in 1933, asking if there was anything she could do to help him. Stern replied that he was already in Amsterdam. Later, he emigrated to America. Well, my father was teaching in Dortmund. And then came 1933, and my father, being half-Jewish, was immediately forced into early retirement. He got a small pension, though, due to the fact that he was an army officer in World War I. These people [who served in World War I] were initially treated better [than other half-Jewish citizens]. His mother, Frieda Grütters, was Jewish.

JF: To come back to your father's professional career: before he was teaching at the Humboldt Gymnasium, he was a teacher in Siegburg?

HG: Yes, when he was very young.

JF: This is when he met Adolf Busch. I read that your father was highly influential for the young Busch. He [Otto Grütters] also introduced him to literature and poetry. I assume that at the Gymnasium he mainly taught German?

HG: Yes. My father introduced Adolf to his [Otto's] father, Hugo Grütters⁶⁴⁸. He [Adolf] also met Frieda [junior, his future wife] there. The parents were completely opposed to this early engagement [between Frieda and Adolf]. They thought that Adolf was not mature enough. I have read some letters of that time. My father gave Frieda instructions as to how she should behave towards Adolf Busch. And what she should read in order to educate him. All these letters are in the Stadtarchiv in Bonn. I read some of them. It is astonishing to see how much literature Frieda was supposed to read, so she could involve Adolf in conversations in order to educate him in literature and history. My father was of the opinion that an artist could only be truly great if they have read and understood some of the great German and European literature.

⁶⁴⁸ Hugo Grütters (1851-1928), Generalmusikdirektor in Bonn at the time he met Adolf Busch.

JF: He probably had a point there. But interesting that he assigned the job of educating Adolf Busch to his [Otto's] sister. What happened to your parents after 1945?

HG: My father became Oberschulrat [school inspector] in Düsseldorf. The British occupying forces instated him in this position. They found out soon after the war that my father was anti-Nazi and half-Jewish. So they appointed him with the view of reforming school curricula in North Rhine-Westphalia. He also chaired the Wissenschaftliches Prüfungsamt [state authority for academic assessments] in Cologne. He found this particularly interesting as he was working with university professors to develop exams. My father was born in 1880, so he should have been retired, but he worked until 1950.

JF: Was he still active after 1950?

HG: Yes. He co-edited the *Siegerländer Lexikon* together with his friend, Dr. Herrmann Reuter, director of the municipal library in Düsseldorf. Also, we had many friends who asked my father to tutor their children. So, he was also knowledgeable in maths.

JF: I read that he also taught French.

HG: Yes. French, German and English. And philosophy.

JF: How about your mother. Was she working after the war?

HG: She would have liked to. She actually got an offer to teach at the Pädagogische Akademie in Bonn. This would have meant that she needed to travel to Bonn every day. This would have conflicted with the professional activities of my father. So she declined the offer, but she continued to write articles for a psychology magazine. She also helped out in the Protestant/Reformed church. My mother was the daughter of a pastor and felt obliged to help.

JF: When did your father die?

HG: He died in 1971 at the age of 90. My mother died in 1999 — my parents were 22 years apart. My father used to joke about whether he should adopt or marry my mother. He decided to do the latter (laughs).

JF: How about your extended family. There are these family trees in the book [by Irene Serkin-Busch], but unfortunately they do not include any dates.

HG: I never met my grandparents: they died before I was born. I did not really know Frieda: when I stayed at the Busches' I was three months old, and she died in 1946. Hedwig I remember very well: I visited her in Basel many times. I hardly knew Fritz — he was actually my godfather, together with [godparents] Adolf Busch, Irene and my mother's sister. He voluntarily resigned from his school job in 1938 because of a rather unpleasant young colleague, a real Nazi, who persistently bullied him. His house [in Düsseldorf] was damaged during the war. Being half-Jewish he did not have access to building materials. So they moved to the Westerwald. I never saw him again after that. I also never met Elli, and Hugo [Otto's brother] had already died, in 1925.

JF: Let's turn to Adolf Busch and his family. So, you remember Rudolf and Irene Serkin, their children: Ursula, Liz, John, Peter, Judith and Margie.

HG: Ursula stayed with us for half a year in 1954. She had some minor learning difficulties and couldn't keep up with school. She and her siblings went to Putney,⁶⁴⁹ but she couldn't cope. So Rudi [Rudolf Serkin] and Irene asked if she could stay with us and get some tuition in German and other subjects from my father. So, I knew Ursula best. I vividly remember Judith's baptism, though — Judith is my mother's goddaughter. My mother was supposed to go with Judith, who was three years old at the time, to the front [of the church]. And Judith said: 'I want to go with this young lady!' — this was me. So, she refused to go with my mother. In 1954 the Serkins, my parents and I accompanied Rudi on one of his tours to Italy. I was fascinated by Peter Serkin. There was something radiant about him as a child — this was really impressive.

JF: It was great that I was able to meet him in 2017. His personality made a lasting impression on me. And, of course, he was a great pianist. It must have been difficult to be the son of his father.

HG: Yes, absolutely. Their relationship was bad for some time, and Peter wrote an article in the New York Times which included comments on the tensions between him and his father. My father was furious that Peter did that and wrote him a forthright letter.

JF: Peter told me in the interview that he rebelled [against the family]. Having musical legends such as Busch and Serkin amongst his ancestors probably made it necessary for him to liberate himself from family heritage before being able to appreciate it again.

⁶⁴⁹ Putney School, a private boarding school in Vermont.

HG: I am close friends with Judith. My mother was her godmother and bequeathed two beautiful necklaces to her, which I gave her after my mother died. Then we got on really well, and I went to visit her, later also with Peter [Nusser].

JF: I am also in touch with Judith regarding my new edition of Busch's *Flute Quintet* Op. 68. You already mentioned that you knew Hedwig very well. I assume you knew both their sons, Nicholas [Ragnar Busch, 1948-2005] and Thomas [Andreas Busch, born in 1950].

HG: After the death of her husband, Hedwig moved to Geneva and then to Basel. She once came to visit us with Nicky and Thomas. I was concerned because Nicky could only fall asleep when the light was switched on in the hallway — so strong was the trauma of his father's death that he was deeply afraid to lose his mother as well. Thomas' mood seemed to be much more positive. I saw them once to twice when they went to school in Basel and later in Hilchenbach and Dahlbruch. Nicky started to study law, but then decided that the professors couldn't teach him anything meaningful anymore and pulled out of university. Then the whole Longo Mai episode started. Longo Mai was an initiative, an agricultural commune in France. Both of them worked there.

JF: Thomas Busch actually told me about this. Also, that they worked with refugees at the time.

HG: Hedwig supported them financially. She also came to visit them there and helped out.

JF: It was great to meet Thomas and Brigitta Busch. I went to visit them in Vienna in 2018 for an interview. A year later, I had a concert in Vienna, which they came to as well. We are still in touch. I also have questions about your father and his friendship with Adolf Busch. At first this was more of a mentor-student relationship, and your father had an enormous influence on Adolf Busch. Just to recap: they first met in 1905 at a brass band project which never came to fruition. And then your father introduced Adolf to poetry and literature.

HG: He also tried to educate Adolf's brother, Fritz. Once they went to a museum looking at a painting of Jesus and Judas Ischariot. And then my father asked Fritz: 'Be honest, what did you think about when looking at the painting?' Fritz responded: 'I counted the silver coins to make sure they are exactly 30.' And my father said: 'Thank you. That's what I expected.' Legend has it that when Adolf was introduced into the Grütters' household, he asked his brother, Fritz, whether he thought he might marry Frieda. Fritz, according to the family records, said: 'Yes, if you practise well!' The [Frieda's] parents did everything to prevent this early liaison.

JF: Interesting that around 1909 Adolf dedicated a piano piece to Frieda: the *Intermezzo* in B flat major.⁶⁵⁰ There is a mention of a piano piece in one of the letters from that time, most likely this refers to this *Intermezzo*, saying that the mother of Frieda should hand it to her daughter as a present from Adolf.⁶⁵¹ I feel that the conflict of loyalties Adolf felt due to his love for Frieda in the face of the disapproval of her father, his esteemed teacher, Hugo Grüters, is reflected in the music. Anyway, it all ended well in the end and Adolf and Frieda got married.

HG: Yes: after much to and fro her parents realised that there was nothing they could do.

JF: Your father is also the dedicatee of Busch's *Sonata* Op. 25, written in 1922. Adolf Busch wrote a rather humorous postcard to your father: "Dear Otto, I produced a proper piano sonata for you (in C minor, believe it or not!!!), and you couldn't make me any happier than with you and your parents coming and listening to it. — Furthermore, on this occasion you can listen to some music for quartet, apt to transfer a schoolmaster into a human being."⁶⁵²

HG: That is funny — I don't remember him being funny. Actually, I did not know him, really. I just remember my father telling me that he could be rather hot tempered. Very emotional and choleric. He got quite short tempered when Irene didn't practise enough. But generally he was of a very good nature — also very affectionate.

JF: It is interesting to hear about problematic personality traits of Adolf Busch as well as his undoubted positive qualities. The existing literature — for example contributions in festschrifts — mainly consists of praise for Busch.

HG: He was sometimes hot-tempered but never malicious. My father was very close to Adolf Busch. He called him 'eine Natur' [a natural] — he also used that description for my mother. The Grüters family was very disharmonious, and he [Otto Grüters] saw Busch as being balanced in nature and therefore a counterbalance [to his family]. He [Otto Grüters] truly loved him. Adolf and Fritz Busch were rather exceptionally talented, and it was rare for my father to have such promising pupils.

JF: This mentor-student relationship [between Adolf Busch and Otto Grüters] over the years changed into a life-long friendship. Your father and Adolf Busch were actually planning to write an

⁶⁵⁰ See section 2.4.

⁶⁵¹ Letter to Frieda Grüters (sen.) dated September 1, 1909, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 14-15.

⁶⁵² Postcard to Otto Grüters, dated March 4, 1922 in Serkin-Busch (ed.), *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 232.

opera together [Otto as librettist and Adolf as composer]: *Der Schwarzkünstler*, after a novel by Emil Gött [1864-1908, German author].

HG: I don't know anything about that.

JF: Here is a copy of the libretto (a copy of the first page is shown to the interviewee).⁶⁵³ Do you recognise your father's handwriting?

HG: No. His handwriting must have changed later in life.

JF: This opera was never completed.

HG: I know that my father wanted to write an opera libretto about Manfred von Hohenstaufen [1232-1266, last King of Sicily]. My mother always said that my father did not have any talent as a writer.

JF: This is interesting, as Busch writes to your father complaining about the libretto: "I ask you in advance to forgive me if I have the misfortune to hurt your poetic feelings and offend you in your honour as a poet".⁶⁵⁴ Later he dissects the libretto in a rather critical way. Here is the beginning of the libretto. [The first few lines are read to the interviewee in German.]

HG: (laughs) Thank God that the opera was never completed.

JF: I find it interesting that Busch dedicated the *Piano Sonata* to your father and not to Serkin, who premiered it. Maybe this could have been something of a compensation for the fact that the opera project was never completed.

HG: That may be so, but I don't know.

JF: I interviewed Judith and Peter Serkin, and both spoke about your father with much fondness and warmth.

HG: Actually, my father wanted to write a book about Adolf Busch. In 1956, he went to Vermont together with my mother to talk about this project with Rudi. Rudi didn't have much time for it

⁶⁵³ Adolf Busch, *Der Schwarzkünstler*, sketches, (Karlsruhe: Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, digital copy of unpublished manuscript, around 1919).

⁶⁵⁴ Letter to Otto Grüters, dated June 1, 1915, in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder Erinnerungen*, 126-127.

then — in fact, I think he did not really want to be involved — and the book was therefore never written. All the data my father collected was later used by Tully Potter.⁶⁵⁵

JF: It's absolutely fantastic that your father collected so much biographical data and minutely listed all this information on Busch's life.⁶⁵⁶ He also produced two catalogues of Busch's compositions⁶⁵⁷ and contributed to the festschrift for Adolf Busch's 75th birthday.⁶⁵⁸ On that occasion he also gave a speech in Dahlbruch.⁶⁵⁹ I have a copy of the manuscript with me. Maybe here you can recognise your father's handwriting better?

HG: Yes.

JF: At the end of this speech, your father prognosticates that the day will come when the composer Adolf Busch will be recognised because "the same great human and artist everyone admires [in his playing] speaks through his compositions as well."⁶⁶⁰ This shows how much he must have admired and loved Adolf Busch. They must have had a very close connection indeed — something very special.

HG: I remember coming home from school one day, and my father was in tears. Then my mother told me that Uncle Adolf died. No one expected him to die so young.

JF: Yes, he was only 60 years old when he died. I look at stylistic traits of Busch's piano music in my dissertation. At first sight he was a traditionalist, but a more nuanced examination reveals some flirtation with modernism as well.

HG: I see a lineage: Brahms, Reger, Busch.

JF: Absolutely, but there is also Busoni. Sometimes you can find polytonality in his [Busch's] music.

HG: Do you think this could be an ironic commentary on modern music?

⁶⁵⁵ Potter, *Adolf Busch*.

⁶⁵⁶ Grütters, *Adolf Busch's Lebenslauf*.

⁶⁵⁷ Grütters, untitled list of compositions of Adolf Busch; Grütters, *Verzeichnis der Kompositionen Adolf Buschs*.

⁶⁵⁸ Burbach, ed. *In memoriam Adolf Busch*.

⁶⁵⁹ Grütters, *Ansprache*.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

JF: I don't think so. He was genuinely experimenting in my view. Especially in the *Sonata*, but only in some places. Later he was in contact with Schönberg [whose music he disapproved of]⁶⁶¹ when producing a new version of Reger's *Violin Concerto*. Peter Serkin also mentioned in the interview that Busch's view of modernism was not quite so obviously negative as one might think. Nonetheless, Reger was clearly the most important influence for Busch.

HG: I was especially impressed by his [Busch's] *Psalm 6* Op. 70. I saw a performance in Basel with [Charles] Munch [1891-1968, French conductor], I think. I thought this was truly fascinating.

JF: Yes, this music is very beautiful. Highly dissonant and dense at times. Interesting that he wrote the *Psalm 6* at the same time as the *Flute Quintet* Op. 68, which has a completely different, almost sanguine and serene character. There is a coexistence of neo-classical and almost expressionist qualities in his late writing.

HG: He also painted.

JF: Yes, I saw some paintings in Thomas Busch's house. Beautiful watercolours.

HG: The Grütters family was completely untalented in painting. So, the Busch family was ahead here. My grandfather, Hugo Grütters, was a pupil of Ferdinand Hiller [1811-1885, German composer], who wanted him to pursue a career as a pianist, but my grandfather did not regard this as the right professional path for himself.

JF: Well, he became Musikdirektor in Bonn.

HG: Yes, in 1898 at the age of 47. Before that he had been in Saarbrücken and Duisburg. Then he came to Bonn, where Adolf Busch met him. I knew Fritz [Busch] and his wife Grete Busch [1886-1966]. Also Willi Busch [1893-1951, actor and brother of Adolf Busch] and his wife — her name was also Grete — and their son, Frieder, who became professor of English and American literature in Mainz. I also met Gisela Busch, the daughter of Fritz, and Hans-Peter, his son. They all came to visit my parents, sporadically.

JF: What about Hermann Busch [1897-1975, cellist and brother of Adolf Busch]?

⁶⁶¹ See, for example, letter to Otto Grütters, dated February 28, 1917, in in Serkin-Busch (ed.) *Adolf Busch: Briefe, Bilder, Erinnerungen*, 182-183.

HG: Yes, I also knew him. He was always very nervous before concerts, and he did not play as well as Rudi, with whom he performed at times, would have wished. His [Hermann's] wife, Lotte, was in contact with my mother until she [my mother] died. I really liked her. Their daughter, Trudi, I also remember.

JF: Did you meet any of Busch's closer friends; for example Dea Gombrich?⁶⁶²

HG: No, I didn't. My father was appalled by Leonie Gombrich's ideas on education. Frieda Busch was highly impressed by the education of the Gombrich children (Lisbeth, Amadea and Ernst), which she tried to emulate [when educating her own daughter Irene]. The children were not allowed to read fairytales: they were not allowed to hear of anything bad or evil. So, Irene [as a child] was never confronted with the fact that evil exists. And then 1933 happened. For Irene, this was the shock of her life: [the realisation] that there was such a thing as evil. My father accused his sister of taking the wrong educational approach, but Frieda would not agree with him; this resulted in many a fierce argument.

JF: Do you remember any of Busch's other friends and colleagues?

HG: Yes, I remember Björn Andreasson [son of Gösta Andreasson, second violinist of the Busch Quartet, 1920-1946]. I also remember the last formation of the [Busch] quartet, with Hermann, Bruno Straumann [second violinist, 1947-1951] and Hugo Gottesmann [violinist, 1946-1951]. I heard them in Düsseldorf. Then I also knew Beni Vischer, the uncle of Hedwig. I also met the [Swiss] painter [Jean Jacques] Lüscher [1884-1955], very briefly, though — he also painted a portrait of Adolf Busch.⁶⁶³

JF: Thank you very much for this inspiring interview. Some more questions might come up. I intend to continue my research on Adolf Busch and perform his music beyond this doctorate, and it would be marvellous to stay in touch.

⁶⁶² Amadea Gombrich (1905-1994), violinist, daughter of Leonie and Karl Gombrich, friends of Adolf Busch in Vienna.

⁶⁶³ Jean Jacques Lüscher, *Adolf Busch Violine üabend* [Adolf Busch practising the violin], undated, oil on canvas, 33x41.3 cm, Max-Reger-Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung mit BrüderBuschArchiv, Karlsruhe.

APPENDIX V

Timeline of Adolf Busch's Life

Year	Significant biographical and historic Events	Works by Adolf Busch referenced in this Thesis (non-piano works are in blue)	Other Works referenced in this Thesis
1891	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolf Busch born, August 8th, Siegen, Westfalia. 		
1892			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Chaconne</i> for Piano (after Bach) • Brahms: <i>Fantasien</i> and <i>Intermezzi</i> Ops. 116 and 117
1893			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brahms: <i>Klavierstücke</i> Ops. 118 and 119
1895	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First performance, age 4. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strauss: <i>Till Eulenspiegel</i> Op. 28 (tone poem)
1897	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johannes Brahms dies, April 3rd. • Attends local school in Siegen (graduates in 1902). • Joins his father's family band, the <i>Busch Kapelle</i>, performing at various events such as parties and weddings. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Violin Concerto</i> Op. 35a
1898			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>Five Humoresques</i> for piano Op. 20
1899			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>Two Choral Fantasies</i> for organ Op. 40

Year	Significant biographical and historic Events	Works by Adolf Busch referenced in this Thesis (non-piano works are in blue)	Other Works referenced in this Thesis
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>10 Kleine Vortragstücke</i> for piano Op. 44
1900			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>Six Intermezzi</i> for piano Op. 45 • Busoni: <i>Violin Sonata</i> no. 2 Op. 36a
1901			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>Der evangelische Kirchenchor</i> WoO V/17
1902	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student at Cologne Conservatory studying with Bram Eldering (violin) and Fritz Steinbach (composition). 		
1903			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>52 Choral Preludes</i> for organ Op. 67
1904		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Max und Moritz</i> (fragments of a tone poem, collaborative composition with brother Fritz) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>Theory of Modulation</i> • Reger: <i>Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Bach</i> for piano Op. 81 • Reger: <i>Sinfonietta</i> Op. 90
1905	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance of Max Reger's <i>Sinfonietta</i> Op. 90 under Fritz Steinbach makes lasting impression on Busch and his brother Fritz (1905). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>Four Sonatinas</i> Op. 89 (1905)

Year	Significant biographical and historic Events	Works by Adolf Busch referenced in this Thesis (non-piano works are in blue)	Other Works referenced in this Thesis
1907			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music</i> • Reger: <i>Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Hiller</i> for orchestra Op. 100
1908		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fantasy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>Violin Concerto</i> Op. 101 • Schönberg: <i>String Quartet</i> no. 2 Op. 10 • Busoni: <i>Elegies</i> for piano BV 249
1909	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduates from Cologne Conservatoire. • Meets Max Reger and plays his <i>Violin Concerto</i> to him: start of a lifelong mentorship and friendship. • Private lessons in counterpoint with Hugo Grüters. • Meets future wife Frieda Grüters, daughter of Hugo Grüters. • Starts a career as a young virtuoso with debut performances in major European capitals: Berlin (1910), Vienna (1911) and London (1912). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Piano Sonata</i> (fragment) • <i>Intermezzo</i> in B flat major • <i>Intermezzo</i> in A minor (undated) • <i>Agitato</i> • <i>Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Schubert</i> for two pianos Op. 2 • <i>Serenade</i> for small orchestra A major • <i>Serenade</i> for large chamber ensemble F major • <i>Single Songs</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>An die Jugend</i> for piano BV 254 • Reger: Three songs for mixed chorus WoO VI/22 • Reger: <i>Three Motets</i> Op. 110 (1909-1912)

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1910			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Fantasia Contrappuntistica</i> for piano BV 256 • Busoni-Schönberg: <i>Piano Piece</i> Op. 11 no. 2
1911			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stravinsky: <i>Petrushka</i> (ballet)
1912	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Konzertmeister (Leader) of the Vienna Konzertverein-Orchester. • Founds Konzertverein-Quartet (later Busch Quartet) together with fellow players from the orchestra: Fritz Rothschild, Karl Doktor and Paul Grümmer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prelude and Passacaglia for two violins and piano</i> Op. 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Sonatina No. 2</i> for piano BV 259 (1912) • Reger: <i>Prelude and Fugue</i> for solo violin Op. 117 no. 6
1913	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage to Frieda Grütters. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Nocturne Symphonique</i> for Orchestra Op. 43 • Busoni: <i>Arlecchino</i> (one act opera) • Reger: <i>Four Tone Poems after Arnold Boecklin</i> Op. 128
1914	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of World War I, July 28th. Busch not conscripted due to medical reasons. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Mozart</i> for orchestra Op. 132 • Reger: <i>Variations and Fugue on a Theme of</i>

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			<i>Telemann</i> for piano Op. 134
1915	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busch's lung condition treated in Arosa, Switzerland, by Dr Wolfgang Römisch; becomes friends with him and his wife, Käthe, an accomplished pianist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Radetzky-March Variations</i> Op. 9 • <i>Armee Marsch [Army March]</i> for Infantry Band • Songs Op. 3a, 3b and 3c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Sonatina No. 3</i> for piano BV 268
1916	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Reger dies, May 11th. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Two Canons and a little Fugue</i> • <i>Klavierstück (Intermezzo) in A minor</i> • <i>Symphony</i> Op. 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger: <i>Clarinet Quintet</i> Op. 146
1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frieda and Adolf Busch's daughter, Irene, is born, June 21st. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Three Pieces in Old Style</i> • <i>Intermezzo in C sharp minor</i> • <i>Overture to King Oedipus</i> Op. 11 • Songs Op. 11a • Songs Op. 23b (revised in 1931) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Sonatina No. 4</i> for piano BV 274
1918	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocates to Berlin following appointment as Violin Professor. Joining prestigious violin faculty at the Berlin Hochschule for Musik, associated with illustrious names, such as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Mozart</i> for Chamber Orchestra Op. 19 	

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	<p>Joseph Joachim and Henri Marteau.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word War I ends, November 11th. 		
1919		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Die Schwarzkünstler</i> (unfinished opera) • <i>Fantasy</i> for organ Op. 19a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Sonatina</i> No. 5 for piano BV 280
1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets Rudolf Serkin. Start of a close and lifelong artistic collaboration and friendship. • Resigns from Berlin Hochschule following a row over the appointment of Franz Schreker as director. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Five Variations on an original Theme</i> • <i>Duet</i> for violin and viola 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Sonatina</i> No. 6 (<i>Carmen Fantasy</i>) BV 284
1921		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Songs</i> Op. 12 • <i>Violin Concerto</i> Op. 20 • <i>Hausmusik</i> Ops. 26a, 26b and 26c 	
1922	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mussolini's National Fascist Party comes to power in Italy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Piano Sonata</i> Op. 25 	
1923	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocates to Darmstadt. • Continuation of busy performing life. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stravinsky: <i>Octet</i> for wind instruments
1924	<p>Ferruccio Busoni dies, July 27th.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Passacaglia and Fugue</i> for organ Op. 27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busoni: <i>Doctor Faust</i> (opera, unfinished)

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>String Quartet in One Movement</i> Op. 29 	
1925		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Divertimento for 13 Solo Instruments</i> Op. 30 • <i>Piano Concerto</i> Op. 31 • <i>Quintet</i> for saxophone and string quartet Op. 34 • <i>Piano Quintet</i> Op. 35 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stravinsky: <i>Serenade in A</i> for piano
1926	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted by long-time benefactor Wilhelm Schmitz-Scholl. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Five Preludes and Fugues</i> for string quartet Op. 36 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bartók: <i>Piano Concerto No. 1</i>
1927	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocates to Basel, Switzerland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Symphony</i> in E minor Op. 39 	
1928		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>String Sextet</i> Op. 40 	
1931	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First tour to USA, performing under the batons of Kussevitzy and Toscanini. 		
1932	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocates to Riehen, near Basel. 		
1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Socialist Party takes power in Germany. • Refuses to perform in Germany after all Jewish colleagues including Serkin are disinvited from the Brahms Festival in Hamburg; last concert in Germany, April 1st. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Lord's Prayer</i> for choir, organ and orchestra Op. 44 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour to the USA with Busch Quartet and Serkin. 		
1934	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honorary Doctorate from the University of Edinburgh (together with brother Fritz). 		
1935	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founding of the Busch Chamber Players: recording of Bach's <i>Six Brandenburg Concertos</i>. • Marriage of Rudolf Serkin to Irene Busch 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hindemith: <i>Piano Sonata no. 3</i>
1936		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Symphony Op. 51</i> 	
1937		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Variations on a Theme of Handel</i> for small orchestra Op. 52 	
1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-founds the Luzern Festival together with Toscanini. • Refuses to perform in Italy following the introduction of racial laws, most evident in Mussolini's 'Manifesto of the Race'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of Max Reger's <i>Violin Concerto Op. 101</i> 	

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1939	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of World War II, September 1st. • Relocates to New York. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sonata for Clarinet and Piano</i> Op. 54 	
1940	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other members of the Busch Quartet relocate to the USA. • First signs of heart condition: heart attack at a duo recital with Serkin in New York's Town Hall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Three Studies for large Orchestra</i> Op. 55 	
1941	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-founding of Busch Chamber Players in America. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allegro Bizarro</i> • <i>Suite</i> Op. 60b (partially undated) • <i>Sonata for violin and piano</i> Op. 56 • Two songs after Rilke 	
1942		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>String Quartet</i> Op. 57 • <i>Seven Madrigals on Negro Spirituals</i> Op. 58b • <i>Du bist min, ich bin din</i> (song for voice and piano) 	
1943		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romanze for clarinet, 2 violas and 2 cellos</i> Op. 53d • <i>Ten Songs on Negro Spirituals</i> Op. 58c • <i>Piano Quartet</i> Op. 59 	
1944	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busch Quartet temporarily disbands due to other commitments and health issues of some members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Suite for clarinet and string trio</i> Op. 62a • <i>Theme and Variations in B flat minor for piano 4 hands</i> Op. 63 	

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1945	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busch Chamber Players extends to Busch Little Symphony. • World War II ends, September 2nd. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Andante Affetuoso</i> • <i>Scherzo Concertante</i> for piano trio and orchestra Op. 65 	
1946	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busch Quartet resumes with different personnel. • Frieda Busch dies, August 22nd. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allegro Vehemente</i> • <i>Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Frieda Busch</i> for orchestra Op. 66 • <i>Der Ölbaumgarten</i> for high bass voice and chamber orchestra (originally Op. 67) 	
1947	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour to Europe with Busch Quartet, including first appearance in Iceland. • Marriage to Hedwig Vischer, a close friend of daughter Irene. 		
1948	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedwig and Adolf Busch's first son, Nicholas Ragnar, born, December 6th. • Relocates to a farm house in Brattleboro, Vermont. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Two songs after Hesse</i> 	
1949	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerts in Germany for the first time since 1933. 		
1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedwig and Adolf Busch's second son, Thomas Andreas, born, November 18th. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Flute Quintet</i> Op. 68 (original version) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honegger: <i>Symphony No. 5</i>
1951	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-founds the <i>Marlboro School of Music</i> — Rudolf 		

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	Serkin amongst the other co-founders.		
1952	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retires from performing career due to health concerns. • Busch dies, June 9th. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Andante Espressivo</i> • <i>Flute Quintet Op. 68 (revised version)</i> • <i>Psalm 6 Op. 70</i> 	

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