

Abstract

Petra Garberding: *Music and Politics in the Shadow of Nazism. Kurt Atterberg and Swedish-German Musical Relations* (Lund: Sekel Bokförlag 2007).

This thesis deals with relations between music and politics in Sweden and Germany during the 1930s and 40s. I study how music was used as a political tool, and the ideas that existed about musical expression of national and ethnic identity and about *ögoodö* and *öbadö* music. I argue that these conceptions became a driving force and were important to Swedish relations with Nazi Germany. The study focuses on material by and about the Swedish composer Kurt Atterberg (1887-1974). Atterberg was a central figure in the world of Swedish music during the first half of the 20th century and his life gives a glimpse of the spirit of the time. The theoretical platform arises from a critical discourse analysis combined with theories about modernity, nationalism and ethnicity. The empirical basis of the thesis consists of material from Swedish, German and Austrian archives, newspaper articles, radio programmes and interviews with composers of today. The themes of the study are conceptions of Nordic, Swedish and German identity and their musical expression and ideas about a national order in Swedish and German musical life.

My study shows how Sweden and Germany inspired each other in the musical relationship. Both countries encountered similar problems. In the first half of the 20th century, modernisation accelerated in Europe, which also meant dramatic changes in musical life. Music could be spread to a greater extent without the composer's control. New techniques, for example the sound movie, left many musicians unemployed. New musical styles appeared and challenged establishments. Different ideas were circulating on how to deal with these problems. Composer's rights organisations were founded and musical life became more bureaucratized. Many composers endeavoured to strengthen national identity. According to them, a clear national identity could provide security and stability in a changing world. They tried to find musical expressions of national identity. Other composers argued that music never could express national identity, because the character of music was supranational and cosmopolitan. I argue that the argument about national identity and its musical expression was important for the development of relations between Sweden and Nazi Germany. For many composers and musicians an engagement in Nazi Germany was interpreted as a contribution to the establishing of a strong national identity and the improvement of their own national musical life.

Swedish-German musical relations were also influenced by different views on music and politics. For Nazi politicians music and politics ran together and music was to give expression to Nazi ideology. In Sweden music and politics were to be kept apart. Different perspectives on music and politics made it possible for Swedish composers and musicians to be active in Nazi Germany and to define their engagement as purely musical work. The Nazi government could for its part use Nordic composers and music to confirm Nazi ideas on race biology and to spread Nazi propaganda.

Keywords: *nation, nationalism, Nazism, modernity, Sweden, Germany, Swedish-German relations, music, politics, identity, race, critical discourse analysis.*