

Booklet für CD von Volker Höh „Deutsche Gitarrenmusik“

The Background:

It was Volker Höh's idea to record a CD with works by Germany-based guitarist-composers from the first half of the twentieth century. He well knew that enough music was available. He concentrated on three composers, each born about 15 years apart: Heinrich Albert (1870-1950), Simon Schneider (1886-1971) and Bruno Henze (1900-1978). These three have much in common: they taught and published teaching material which is still in use today. They were active chamber-music players. Albert and Henze played in trios and quartets with *Terz-, Prim- and Quintbassgitarre*; Schneider too brought these instruments into trios. And they made regular broadcasts. Regarding composing techniques, one can see a development from Albert to Schneider and on to Henze. With Albert guitar-typical compositional procedures from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries are still present, Schneider already uses relatively modern sounds, but in the first movement of the Notturmo in D major traditional patterns are used. In Henze's music we are faced fully with the Modern, orgies of tremolo for example are entirely absent. This development is also to be found as a microcosm in the output of each of the three composers.

Volker Höh contacted relatives or decades-long administrators of the legacies of these three protagonists. He had both printed and manuscript material sent to him, studied these and discovered many jewels. Thus the CD offers a musical cross-section of a period in which the classical guitar was not yet widely used in Germany. According to old learned magazines good guitar teachers were found only in Munich, Berlin and Hamburg. Research has shown that this is not the whole truth, but more was not widely known then: the Internet was a long way off. That too was typical of the times: regular exchange of ideas was not usual, meetings of guitarists or even festivals were rare, the instrument was not taught at German academies. Thus it is no coincidence that pieces immortalised on this CD are by composers who were active in Munich and Berlin. Volker Höh chose compositions which all have a particular appeal, all are recorded here for the first time. This recording from 2011

shows his sure touch - not only because it is the 125th birthday of Simon Schneider, the 40th anniversary of Schneider's death, and the 111th birthday of Bruno Henze - but even more because here are treasures waiting to be discovered, which guitarists willing to leave the mainstream will definitely want to bring into concert programmes.

About the Three Composers and Their Recorded Works:

Heinrich Albert

was born on July 16th 1870 in Würzburg. From 1881 to 1888 he visited the Royal Music School. His first instrument was the violin, but he changed to the horn on the advice of his horn-playing father. Rather than complete his exams he preferred to accept his first offer of employment with the Municipal Orchestra of Duisburg. Up to 1900 he was first horn in several orchestras, from 1895 to 1900 in the *Kaim-Orchester*, which later became the *Münchner Philharmoniker*.

The old lute with guitar-strings, which he bought around 1894 for its attractive form, was to shape his destiny: using the teaching-literature of Carcassi and Sor he taught himself to play the guitar. The guitarist and mandolinist Silvio Negri from Triest helped him to understand the whole potential of these instruments. In 1898 he founded the *Circolo Mandolinistico lombardo Monaco* (20 players), which he also conducted. From 1900 Munich became his home, and he became the guitarist at the Royal Bavarian Theatre.

In 1901 he appeared for the first time as a chamber musician with his newly acquired skills: as the leader of a *Lombardian Quartet* (six-stringed Milanese mandolins) and already as a member of a guitar quartet, although the *Münchener Gitarrequartett* with Albert leading and with Karl Kern, Fritz Buek and Hermann Rensch - all protagonists of the *Internationler Guitarristen-Verband*, founded 1899 - was not to come together until 1907. To begin with one played on four *Primgitarren*, then with two *Terzgitarren*, until Franz Halbmeier built the *Quintbassgitarre* for Rensch in 1911. Regarding literature and technique Heinrich Albert was influenced by Luigi Mozzani from 1905; after 1913 it was the Spanish School represented by Miguel Llobet.

Armed with the 1909-awarded title *Chamber-Virtuoso of Her Majesty Queen Maria Sophia of Both Sicilys*, the way was clear to a career as soloist and to the publication of widespread teaching-literature, this reaching its climax in the *Moderner Lehrgang des künstlerischen Gitarrespiels* (5 volumes, Munich 1914-1919). Particularly at his solo concerts (which gradually replaced his ensemble playing) throughout Germany and in Moravia, Austria, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland one could experience his sound-ideal (warmth, large tone, carrying-power).

Besides this he was a regular private guitar and mandolin teacher. He died on March 12th 1950 in Gauting (near Munich), where he had lived since around 1914. His most prominent pupils are Heinrich Jordan, Margarethe Müller, Fritz Mühlhölzl, Anny Claassens, Hans Tempel, Luise Walker, Heinz Teuchert and Franz Bumaier.

His compositions, arrangements and teaching material are published by Lienau and Zimmermann, amongst others. Recent research by the guitarist Andreas Stevens brought much of interest to light; this text is indebted to his highly recommendable publications.

Heinrich Albert wrote the *Walzer* in 1947 for his pupil Marianne Rauschmayr. It is in D major with a brief excursion into G major. It is typical of this genre, has something of the specific vagueness of impressionism. The introduction appears again at the end.

Sonata Nr. 1 (1920) pleased Luise Walker, famous Austrian guitarist, so much that she persuaded the publisher Zimmermann to reprint it in 1964, it is well worth performing. It begins *Energisch bewegt (moving with energy)* with a memorable E minor theme and a luminous E major section. The second movement *Langsam und mit viel Wärme (slowly and with much warmth)* is a purely romantic piece. The final *Rondo* begins with an attractive one-voiced theme, only to flow away in twinkling Quavers to ever higher climaxes. Making an exception with this piece Volker Höh chose the *Quintbassgitarre*, to be able to benefit from its wonderfully voluminous sound.

Albert wrote the *Quartet Nr. 2 in C minor* in 1913 for his Munich guitar quartet, thus for the following instruments: 2 *Terzgitarren*, 1

Primgitarre, 1 *Quintbassgitarre*. The first movement is an *Allegro* (with energy), followed by an *Adagio* made more demanding by its many syncopations, its theme reminiscent of an East European dance; the *Minuet* has clear affinity with the Bavarian *Ländler*. The last movement, a Rondo, borrows thematic material from the *Adagio* and with fast scales works itself up to a whirling finale.

Simon Schneider

was born on December 4th 1886 in Pasing (near Munich). He had his first zither lessons at the age of 11 with Eduard Högner. The director of the *Tegernseer Bauerntheater*, J. Schmid, took him on at 17 as zither-player for tours in Germany and Austria. Later he was to give concerts in the Netherlands as well. During 1908 he followed courses in music-theory and piano with Michael Schricker. From 1909 he became interested in the guitar: with his teacher Ludwig Resch he worked on the Carcassi-school, but his model was nonetheless Miguel Llobet, whom he heard in 1913 in Munich. In 1920 he moved to Hanover and worked there as guitar and zither teacher. Added to this he continued singing studies with Franz Notholt and sang tenor in choral performances. Occasionally he was heard as a soloist and chamber musician.

The beginnings of inflation in 1923 made it easier for him to decide to accept an invitation to Argentina. After difficult beginnings he was able to build an existence there as teacher and singer. He gave various concerts in Buenos Aires, Bahía Blanca, Santa Fe, Córdoba und Montevideo. Having served as a tenor at the church of Espíritu Santo for seven years and as choirmaster for two, most of his compositions are influenced by church music.

In 1937 he returned to Munich and gave concerts, sometimes with his daughter Gabriele. At first teaching guitar and zither at the *Trapp'sche* conservatoire, he obtained a position for guitar and folksong at the Didactic Academy Munich/Pasing. He died in Pasing on June 20th 1971. His compositions, arrangements and teaching-works for zither and guitar are published, amongst others, by Hofmeister (*Gitarreschule*, Op. 125), Bachmann and privately by himself (managed now by his daughter

Gabriele). She was taught initially by her father, held a position as guitar teacher at Munich University, watches over his estate and provided the basis for this article. Interesting, that she played for some time in a quartet with *Terzgitarre*, two *Primgitarren* and *Quintbassgitarre*. She in turn taught her own daughter Ursula who also taught guitar at Munich University.

Simon Schneider's works are not dated, but are probably written between 1920 and 1950. *Recuerdos de Córdoba* Op. 129, reminiscent of the Argentinean City of Córdoba, is a tremolo-piece dedicated to his daughter Gabriele. Leaving aside the introduction, its form seems to be based on that of Tárregas *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*.

The *Vals lento* and the Tango *Anita* Op. 109 are two genre pieces demanding considerable empathy and a warm tone from the player. *Anita*, a rather catchy piece, is printed in an Argentinean volume (Buenos Aires) together with the inspirational love-poem by J. Frontiñan; all other pieces by him played here are published by his own firm Simon Schneider.

The first movement *Allegro moderato* of the *Notturmo in D major* Op. 173 with its airy theme reminds one of Fernando Sor's composing-style, whilst the *Larghetto* is coloured by a slow melody with interesting rhythms. This thematic material is altered and re-used in the *Rondino*, now in a freer 6/8 and close to the spirit of Sor again.

Bruno Henze

was born on May 12th 1900 in Berlin. His father Carl Henze (1872-1946), a pioneer of music for plucked strings, gave him his first guitar lessons. The child Bruno played his first Carcassi-soli during performances of the *Berliner Mandolinen- und Lauten-Orchester*. He taught guitar from 1915 to his death. As early as 1920 he founded a guitar-choir and his first compositions were published in 1921, from 1922 to 1926 he studied harp, piano and composition at the *Hochschule für Musik*. In 1922 a concert critic wrote about a chamber-music evening with guitar: "Bruno Henze has a perfect touch and so prevents the usual side-effect sounds in cantilena and accompaniment". He played

harp in several orchestras in central and west Germany.

From 1932 he worked in Berlin, as guitarist and harpist at several theatres with Max Reinhardt and with the *Philharmonisches Orchester*; founded with Willi Schlinske (1st *Terzgitarre*), Gerhard Tucholski (2nd *Terzgitarre*) and Erich Bürger (*Primgitarre*) the *Berliner Gitarrenquartett*, in which he took the *Quintbassgitarre*. He often told of the difficult radio-recordings, always live, and that with those sensitive gut strings! To his chagrin he was called up during the war but often freed from duty for film work.

From 1946 he was harpist in the *Friedrichstadtpalast* in Berlin-Mitte, founded the *Berliner Zupforchester (Orchestra of Plucked Instruments, 1950-1953)*. In 1950 he began to publish his guitar school "*Das Gitarrespiel*" (17 volumes). From 1954 to 1978 he taught a very active guitar-class at the music-school in Berlin-Wedding, founded there in 1955 the *Gitarrenchor*, still performing regularly under the name of *Gitarrenensemble "Bruno Henze"*. Whilst the Berlin Wall stood (from 1961) he kept active contact with musical colleagues in the East, particularly with "his" guitar-maker Adolf Meinel in Markneukirchen, and always visited the Exhibition in Lipsia. Sadly he was not to see the fall of the Wall, as he passed away on February 10th 1978 in Berlin.

His most prominent pupils are Erich Bürger, Adalbert Quadt, Hans-Lutz Niessen, Yvonne Gaes, Dieter Rumstig, Friedhelm Steltner, Egon Puls, Bernd Romahn, Rolf Kaiser and Christian Bänsch. His compositions, arrangements and didactic works are found at the publishers Hofmeister, Köster, Zimmermann and Trekel. His partner Else Goguel, once a pupil and duo-partner, later for 50 years herself a guitar teacher, looks after his inheritance with the assistance of his pupil Rainer Stelle. His house in Berlin-Kreuzberg was marked by the City on May 12th 1991 with a remembrance plaque.

Bruno Henze wrote the *Konzertante Spielmusik fis-Moll Op. 106* (1948) in order to have a concert-piece in F sharp minor for his teaching volume "*Das Gitarrespiel*" (published by Friedrich Hofmeister, Lipsia); it appeared there in 1951 in volume 3. The *Allegro moderato* begins with an excitable bass-theme which leads into romantic broken chords.

The tension is held through to the final semiquaver scale, often newly fired by changing tempi, staccato, tenuto. There follows a lyrical *Andante con espressione* and a romantic *Rondino*, this almost permanently in dotted rhythm, turning at the end to a variation of the excitement of the first movement.

The *Variationen und Finale über das Volkslied "Ach, wie ist's möglich dann"* Op. 95 (around 1947) were published in the periodical "*Der Gitarrefreund*" (Nr. 3-4, 1955). The piece is in E major, begins with the theme (a love-song from the 19th century), this being followed by four variations, the furious finale and a reminiscence with gentle arpeggios.

In the *Impromptu* Op. 117 Nr. 2 from the *Melodische Etüden* (around 1957) Bruno Henze fascinates his listeners with continuous broken chords in semiquavers and melody in an upper voice. It is found with the publisher Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne (Krakau 1959) in volume 2 of the collection "Wybór etiid" of Józef Powroźniak. Played here by Volker Höh on the *Quintbassgitarre*.

Henze wrote the *Suite d-Moll* Op. 100 (1949) for his *Berliner Gitarren-Trio*, thus for *Terz-*, *Prim-* and *Quintbassgitarre*. A work as yet not published, in which Henze leaves Romanticism behind him and approaches the Modern. All the movements have attractively dissonant passages and fluctuating tempi. The *Präludium* surges in fast scales up and down, only then to back-pedal. The central movement *Lamentoso* stirs the listener deeply, only twice for two bars allowing respite where the major-key theme of the first movement is quoted. The open end of the movement leads to the cheeky theme of the *Allegro con brio* with a dancing central section.

Rainer Stelle, Berlin