

## HANS GAL AND THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL<sup>1</sup>

*Katy Hamilton*

In 1956, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama, Sir John Banks, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh remarked in his introduction to the Festival souvenir brochure:

The vision [in launching the Festival] was to provide a setting where the peoples of the world could assemble to enjoy the music and the dancing – a rendezvous where nobody would be a stranger, nobody an exile, and where nobody would be an enemy.<sup>2</sup>

In its first decade, the Festival had indeed succeeded in attracting artists and audience members from all over the world; it had reunited musicians separated by the Second World War and provided an important platform for new compositions by British and continental composers. As an internal Festival memorandum from 1953 neatly summarised:

The Festival has established itself as one of the most outstanding events of a cultural nature in post war Europe and it has in fact received worldwide recognition. It has achieved two results –

- (1) Artistic success.
- (2) A certain amount of recognition as an instrument of international understanding.<sup>3</sup>

This second point is particularly salutary since several key players in the early history of the Edinburgh Festival were themselves “international”. They had found themselves in Britain in the late 1930s, after being displaced from

<sup>1</sup> This article is an expanded version of ‘Singing a Song in a Foreign Land: Hans Gál and the Edinburgh Festival’, presented on 29 September 2012 at the conference *Continental Britons / Verfolgt, vertrieben – vergessen?* in Schwerin. I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to Eva Fox-Gál for her thoughts, advice and generous sharing of material relating to her father’s involvement with the Edinburgh Festival; and to Robert Ponsoy for his insights, explanations and inspiring reminiscences of his own time working at the Festival in the 1950s.

<sup>2</sup> *Edinburgh International Festival Souvenir Programme*, 1956, p. 5. I am grateful to Sally Harrower and her colleagues at the National Library of Scotland for their help in working with the Edinburgh International Festival archives.

<sup>3</sup> ‘International Festival of Music and Drama. Memorandum on Future Policy and Development’ [pencil dated May 1953], GB-En Dep. 378/61.

their homelands of Germany and Austria. Chief among them were Rudolf Bing (1902-1997), the Festival's first Director, and Hans Gál (1890-1987), whose important work in the founding of the Festival is rather less well documented. It is thanks to the work of both men that Edinburgh became such an important international cultural centre each summer, from 1947 onwards. This article is intended to provide an outline of Gál's many, varied – and considerable – roles in the early years of the Festival, which reflect the diverse nature of his professional life as an émigré musician living in post-war Britain.



*Figure 1: Hans Gál (centre) with Horst Günter, Kathleen Ferrier, Irmgard Seefried and Julius Patzak, Edinburgh Festival 1952 (reproduced by kind permission of Eva Fox-Gál and Anthony Fox)*

The initial idea to establish a festival of music and drama came from the Viennese-born impresario, Rudolf Bing. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Bing had worked in high-level administrative posts in opera houses in Darmstadt and Berlin and developed a particularly close professional relationship with the director and producer Carl Ebert (1887-1980). He returned briefly to Austria in 1933 when the National Socialists came to power in Germany; but moved to England in 1934, following an invitation from John Christie to

help establish his opera house at Glyndebourne as a public venue. Bing subsequently became the general manager of Glyndebourne in 1936.<sup>4</sup> Ebert was also a key figure in the early years of Christie's enterprise, as was the conductor Fritz Busch (1890-1951), and these two prominent German musicians, along with Bing, were able to make use of their continental contacts to enhance their staff still further.<sup>5</sup> This was highly unusual at a time when few posts in Britain were occupied by non-British musicians, as Erik Levi has pointed out.<sup>6</sup> Yet Glyndebourne remained exceptionally cosmopolitan in its recruitment, and proud of its international musical reach; each festival booklet included the nationalities (and, where appropriate, the regular opera companies) of its soloists.

See [Fig. 2. Cast details of *Die Zauberflöte* for the 1935 Mozart Festival at Glyndebourne (reproduced by permission)] below

It was, according to Bing, partly with an eye to establishing a second venue for Glyndebourne Opera Company performances following the war that he began to think of founding a festival of music and drama elsewhere in Britain, and thus boost the company's finances in a time of austerity. It seems that there was also an element of wishing to create an event to rival the best international festivals of the pre-war years – the majority of which had taken place in Germany and Austria – and in particular to incorporate staged works into a programme that would stand comparison with Bayreuth and Salzburg.<sup>7</sup> Oxford was initially suggested as a possible venue, but the necessary financial

<sup>4</sup> For further information regarding this period of Bing's career, see Rudolf Bing, *5,000 Nights at the Opera* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972) and Spike Hughes, *Glyndebourne. A History of the Festival Opera founded in 1934 by Audrey and John Christie* (Newton Abbot & London: David & Charles, 1965, 2/1981), pp. 45-46.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the musical staff for the 1935 Festival also includes Hans Oppenheim, 'formerly Head Conductor Deutsche Musikbühne, Berlin. Head Conductor Städtische Oper, Breslau'; Alberto Erede, 'formerly Conductor Augusteum, Rome, Italian Opera den Haag' and Hans Strasser, 'Professor of Singing, Vienna, Budapest, and Glyndebourne'. (Programme booklet of Mozart Festival 1935, p. 19.)

<sup>6</sup> 'In den dreißiger Jahren, als überall Xenophobie wucherte, verkörperte Glyndebourne den Kosmopolitismus.' See Erik Levi, 'Deutsche Musik und Musiker im englischen Exil 1933-1945' in Horst Weber, ed. *Musik in der Emigration 1933-1945. Verfolgung · Vertreibung · Rückwirkung* (Stuttgart & Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 1994), pp. 208-209.

<sup>7</sup> The Bayreuth Festival had stopped in 1944 and began again in 1951; the Nationaltheater in Munich was destroyed in 1943 and did not reopen until 1963, although other concert series were established soon after the end of the War. The Salzburg Festival did not run in 1944; American forces occupying the city in 1945 were determined to reinstate performances in that year. They succeeded in doing so, although many musicians were unavailable to participate (including Bruno Walter, Arturo Toscanini, Jascha Heifetz and Yehudi Menuhin) and it took a number of years to determine whether or not musicians should be included if they had previously performed with Nazi support. The Lower Rhine Festival was not held between 1933 and 1946. An interesting parallel to the Edinburgh International Festival is the Holland Festival, established in 1948 'as a means of revitalizing the nation's cultural life after World War II'. See Wilma Tichelaar, 'Holland Festival' in Stanley Sadie & John Tyrrell, eds. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol.11, pp. 625-626 and Percy Young et al., 'Festival' in *ibid.*, vol.8, pp. 733-744 (in particular pp. 737-738). See also Stephen Gallup, *A History of the Salzburg Festival* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), pp. 118-129.

## DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE (1791)

<i>Tamino</i>	- - - - -	WALTER LUDWIG (German)	(Reichsoper, Berlin)
<i>Sarasro</i>	- - - - -	IVAR ANDRÉSEN (Swedish)	(Staatsoper, Berlin, Bayreuth, Covent Garden)
<i>Papageno</i>	- - - - -	WILLI DOMGRAF-FASSBAENDER (German)	(Staatsoper, Berlin)
<i>Der Sprecher</i>	- - - - -	JOHN BROWNLEE (Australian)	(Grand Opera, Paris)
<i>Monostatos</i>	- - - - -	EDWIN ZIEGLER (American)	
<i>1st Priest</i>	- - - - -	D. MORGAN-JONES (Welsh)	(Sadler's Wells)
<i>2nd Priest</i>	- - - - -	GERALD KASSEN (South African)	(Sadler's Wells)
<i>1st Armed Man</i>	- - - - -	D. MORGAN-JONES (Welsh)	(Sadler's Wells)
<i>2nd Armed Man</i>	- - - - -	GERALD KASSEN (South African)	(Sadler's Wells)
<i>Pamina</i>	- - - - -	AULIKKI RAUTAWAARA (Finnish)	
<i>Die Königin der Nacht</i>	- - - - -	MÍLA KOČOVÁ (Czech)	(Prague, Metropolitan)
<i>Papagena</i>	- - - - -	IRENE EISINGER (Austrian)	(Salzburg)
<i>1st Lady</i>	- - - - -	LUISE HELLETSGRUBER (Austrian)	(Staatsoper, Vienna, Salzburg)
<i>2nd Lady</i>	- - - - -	SOFFI SCHOENNING (Norwegian)	(Oslo)
<i>3rd Lady</i>	- - - - -	BETSY DE LA PORTE (South African)	(Covent Garden)
<i>1st Boy</i>	- - - - -	WINIFRED RADFORD (English)	
<i>2nd Boy</i>	- - - - -	JEAN BECKWITH (English)	
<i>3rd Boy</i>	- - - - -	MOLLY MITCHELL (English)	
	<i>Conductor</i>	- - - - -	FRITZ BUSCH
<i>Producer</i>	-	CARL EBERT	<i>Scenery</i> - HAMISH WILSON
ACT I. SCENE I.	A Rocky Pass	SCENE V.	In the Temple
SCENE II.	Pamina's Boudoir	SCENE VI.	A Garden
SCENE III.	Courtyard of the Temple	SCENE VII.	Before the Temple
		SCENES VIII. and IX.	Fire and Water
ACT II. SCENE I.	Inside the Temple	SCENE X.	Garden
SCENE II.	Courtyard of Temple	SCENE XI.	Before the Temple
SCENE III.	Garden	SCENE XII.	In the Temple
SCENE IV.	A Vault		

Figure 2: Cast details of Die Zauberflöte for the 1935 Mozart Festival at Glyndebourne (reproduced by permission)

support was not forthcoming.<sup>8</sup> Following further discussions with members of the British Council in December 1944, the Scottish representative Henry ('Harry') Harvey Wood suggested that Edinburgh might prove a more suitable city for the event; and with Wood's help, Bing approached several important cultural figures within the city to ask for their support. Among them was Bing's fellow countryman, Hans Gál.

Gál was ideally placed to advise Bing on the possibility of setting up such a festival. A highly successful and well-known composer in Austria and Germany before the War, he had enjoyed particular acclaim for his opera *Die heilige Ente* Op. 15 (1924); as well as co-editing the first complete edition of the music of Johannes Brahms, and holding a distinguished teaching post in Vienna prior to being appointed Director of the Mainz Conservatorium in 1929.<sup>9</sup> In March 1933, with Hitler's rise to power, he was removed from the Directorship and performances of his music were banned in Germany.<sup>10</sup> Following a return to Vienna and, following the Anschluss, the decision to leave for London (initially as a brief calling point en route to America), he subsequently journeyed to Edinburgh in 1938 at the invitation of Donald Francis Tovey, the Reid Professor of Music at Edinburgh University, to catalogue the considerable music holdings of the University Library.<sup>11</sup> Tovey also encouraged his involvement in local concerts and, had illness not prevented him, would almost certainly have arranged a permanent position for Gál at the University. Following the outbreak of war, Gál spent the summer of 1940 interned as an "enemy alien" on the Isle of Man;<sup>12</sup> but he was able to return to Edinburgh in the autumn, where Sidney Newman, Tovey's successor, finally succeeded in negotiating a post for him within the University Music Department in 1945.<sup>13</sup> Over the course of the 1940s Gál established himself as not only an active teacher at the University and at his own home, but also undertook a great deal of public performance. He regularly featured as a pianist in chamber performances at the Royal Scottish Academy and the National Gallery of Scotland; he also conducted the Reid Symphony Orchestra, was frequently involved with the Edinburgh University Historical

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed history of the Festival from its foundation to 1996, see Eileen Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival, 1947-1996* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> For a concise biography of Gál, see E. Fox-Gál & A. Fox, *Hans Gál. Ein Jahrhundert Musik*, ed. G. Gruber (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2012). Gál and his former teacher, Eusebius Mandyczewski co-edited *Johannes Brahms: sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1926-7/R).

<sup>10</sup> See E. Fox-Gál & A. Fox, *Hans Gál*, pp. 35-37.

<sup>11</sup> For an outline of Gál's work at the Library, and his discovery of an early Haydn Symphony within the collection, see [n.a.], 'Haydn Symphony. Discovery in Edinburgh. An Early Work' in *The Scotsman*, 17 October 1938, p. 8; and [n.a.] 'New Works' in *Tempo* 1 (January 1939), p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Gál's diary for the period of his internment has been published: Hans Gál, *Musik hinter Stacheldraht: Tagebuchblätter aus dem Sommer 1940*, ed. Eva Fox-Gál (Bern & Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> E. Fox-Gál & A. Fox, *Hans Gál*, p. 47.

Concerts, and directed various amateur instrumental and vocal groups.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, a number of his compositions received first and early performances in such venues as the National Gallery of Scotland, the Usher Hall and the University itself.<sup>15</sup>

It seems likely that Bing approached Gál in late 1944 or early 1945.<sup>16</sup> Gál's initial response to Bing's suggestion was evidently not what he had hoped for. "It's a beautiful city, Rudy," Gál told him, "but you will never get a Festival here." Recalling these words in an interview in 1983, Gál then remarked: "I was wrong."<sup>17</sup> Bing was particularly adept at dealing with sponsors, local dignitaries and the press and soon garnered support for the idea, as well as financial backing from the city and the Arts Council of Great Britain. He assembled a General Committee to administer and promote the Festival – he was still the General Manager of Glyndebourne Opera, and relied upon his staff in Edinburgh to keep him apprised of developments – which included Lady Rosebery (wife of the Regional Commissioner of Scotland, a patron and supporter of the arts, and a pupil of Gál's), Sidney Newman, Harvey Wood and other notable members of Edinburgh cultural life.<sup>18</sup> Yet Gál's name is curiously absent from the paperwork. He was listed as a potential member of the General Committee in November 1945,<sup>19</sup> and he stated in an interview in 1983 that he served on the first Festival Council;<sup>20</sup> but he is not listed as an official committee member in the Festival papers and publicity until 1948, when he joined the General and Programme Committees.

Since the paperwork from these early planning stages is incomplete (and it took time to establish a sound administrative structure), it seems likely that this omission was simply a result of imperfect record-keeping. For, despite his absence from official documents in these crucial first months of planning, Gál seems to have been on hand as an important advisor for Festival organisers. He was deeply involved in the city's current (though admittedly

<sup>14</sup> Gál's various performances and initiatives were regularly reported in *The Scotsman*; his name appears over 55 times from 1940-1945. See, for example, 'University Concerts', 15 January 1940, p. 6; 'Dr Gal's Orchestra', 19 April 1940, p. 4; and 'Lunch-Hour Concerts', 20 November 1941, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> See for example, 'Lunch-Hour Concerts' in *The Scotsman*, 24 December 1942, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> The two men had already encountered each other in Vienna, prior to the War. Gál recalled his conversation with Bing in Sheila Mackay, 'The Vienna Connection 1' in *Festival. Edinburgh 1983*, p. 22. Although Gál states that the exchange took place in 1946, he goes on to say that it was after this that Bing spoke to Lady Rosebery, an influential music lover, supporter of the arts and pupil of Gál's. The early discussions with Lady Rosebery, Murray Watson (editor of the *Scotsman*) and Sidney Newman took place in early 1945, ahead of formal meetings between Bing and the Lord Provost later that year. See E. Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>17</sup> S. Mackay, 'The Vienna Connection 1', p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> A complete list of Council members was printed each year in the Festival Souvenir Brochure. Committee members included representatives from the British Council, the newly-formed Arts Council of Great Britain, the University, and various notable members of the city and its governing organisations.

<sup>19</sup> A list of names and addresses, Gál's amongst them, is given in the minutes of the meeting of the sub-committee appointed to consider additions to the General Committee, held on 19 November 1945. GB-En Dep. 378/61.

<sup>20</sup> S. Mackay, 'The Vienna Connection 1' p. 22.



modest) musical life; had an excellent local reputation in Edinburgh; and a superb list of musical contacts in Austria and Germany, including Georg Szell, Ernst Toch, Wilhelm Furtwängler and Fritz Busch.<sup>21</sup> It must be assumed that, since Edinburgh was Gál's home, the majority of the conversations in which he was involved were held informally and in person. Once he had officially joined the Festival Committee in 1948, he was to remain on it for many years – officially until at least 1961; and he evidently continued to offer advice and guidance far beyond this date.<sup>22</sup>

Bing's plans came to fruition in 1947 with a two-week Festival, held from 24 August – 13 September. Performers included Bruno Walter and the Vienna Philharmonic – their first performance together since before the war – as well as The Glyndebourne Opera, Artur Schnabel, Joseph Szigeti, Pierre Fournier, William Primrose, the Hallé (conducted by John Barbirolli), the Liverpool Philharmonic (conducted by Malcolm Sargent), the Menges String Quartet, the Sadler's Wells Ballet with Ninette de Valois (conducted by Constant Lambert), and the Old Vic Theatre Company.<sup>23</sup> Such a roll-call of major international performers was not merely impressive in the abstract; it represented a major shift in the musical and artistic fortunes of the city, which had previously enjoyed only occasional visits from non-Scottish soloists and ensembles.<sup>24</sup>

The first Festival was remarkable not only for the artistic line-up and the financial support offered by the Arts Council and the City of Edinburgh itself, but for the sheer complexity of the planning and logistics in bringing the event to fruition.<sup>25</sup> These ranged from discussions with assorted government ministries concerning food and petrol rationing and paper shortages, to

<sup>21</sup> Gál also counted a slightly older generation of performers and composers among his good friends, many of whom did not live beyond the 1940s: among them Arnold Rosé, Felix Weingartner, Alban Berg, Anton Webern and Richard Strauss.

<sup>22</sup> Gál's name does not appear among the list of Committee members (as provided in the Festival Souvenir Brochures) after 1961; but he maintained, when interviewed in 1983, that he had both been a member from the first Festival and was still part of the Committee. See S. Mackay, 'The Vienna Connection 1', p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> See *Edinburgh International Festival Souvenir Programme*, 1947.

<sup>24</sup> The majority of orchestral concerts in Edinburgh were given by the Reid Orchestra and the Scottish Orchestra (later the Royal Scottish National Orchestra). Occasionally these featured prominent international soloists such as Arthur Rubinstein with the Scottish Orchestra (see for example 'Paterson Concerts', *The Scotsman*, 4 February 1930, p. 8) and Myra Hess, Phyllis Sellick and Moiseiwitsch ('Reid Symphony Orchestra. Coming Season's Concerts', *The Scotsman*, 8 October 1943, p. 3); but such visitors seem to have been relatively rare. Similarly, the International Celebrity Concerts and Max Mossel Concerts could boast such artists as Elena Gerhardt, Albert Sammons and Paderewski in the autumn of 1930 ('Next Winter's Music', *The Scotsman*, 19 June 1930, p. 11); but there was nothing in Scotland to match the profile and frequency of such concert series as those of the Wigmore Hall or Queen's Hall in London.

<sup>25</sup> The Edinburgh Corporation provided £22,000 towards start-up costs of the first festival, and £15,000 each year until 1958 (when their donation increased). The Arts Council – later the Scottish Arts Council – also made annual contributions, as did a number of private donors. The basic financial statistics for each Festival from 1947-1996 is given in E. Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, pp. 389-392.

organising accommodation for the thousands of visitors predicted to visit Edinburgh over the Festival period.<sup>26</sup> The event was publicised and promoted internationally, and press invitations were sent to newspaper and journal editors all over the world. It is in this capacity that Gál's name makes its next appearance in the Festival paperwork, in a letter of 10 March 1947 from the Festival Manager, Hamish F. MacLennan, to William Buchanan Taylor, the Director of Press Information:

I have had a visit from Dr. Hans Gal [sic] who is very well-known in musical circles in Edinburgh. He showed me a card which states that he has been appointed representative for the National Zeitung of Bale [sic], Switzerland to attend the Festival. He is asking for press tickets and facilities. Perhaps you would like to discuss this question with Mr Bing in view of the special circumstances.<sup>27</sup>

The 'special circumstances' mentioned probably refers in part to the lateness of Gál's request (since all other press tickets had been assigned months before this date); yet he did indeed produce extensive reviews for the *Basel National-Zeitung* for many years.<sup>28</sup> But it is also surely a reference to the fact that he was already known to the organisers. He was evidently heavily involved with Festival work by this stage; just a few weeks later he provided one of the pre-Festival lectures, on the subject of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, on 31 March 1947.<sup>29</sup>

When the first Festival began, on 24 August 1947, Gál's name was to appear on official public paperwork in only one capacity: as a provider of programme notes. The three concerts to which he contributed notes were two programmes given by the Vienna Philharmonic under Walter,<sup>30</sup> and a recital of the three Brahms Violin Sonatas by Joseph Szigeti and Artur Schnabel.

<sup>26</sup> The substantial Festival correspondence books covering the period 22 October 1946 – 30 August 1947 (GB-En Dep. 378/136-149) are replete with references to – and direct correspondence with – the Ministry of Food, the Ministry of Labour, local hotels, travel agents, and many other individuals and organisations whose co-operation were crucial to the organisation of the event.

<sup>27</sup> Letter dated 10 March 1947; GB-En Dep. 378/139, letter no. 3.

<sup>28</sup> My thanks to Eva Fox-Gál for information on her father's involvement with the *National-Zeitung*. In order to write his reviews, Gál attended the majority of Festival events, and in several instances annotated his Festival programmes (now in the possession of his daughter) to indicate exactly what he had seen. He continued to provide annual reports for this paper until at least 1970.

<sup>29</sup> Gál's first pre-Festival lecture is mentioned in a typescript of what appears to be a press release, 'Edinburgh Gets down to it', hand-dated 4 February 1947 (GB-En Dep. 378/61). A list of forthcoming events was first announced in *The Scotsman* on 1 February 1947, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> The Vienna Philharmonic concert took place on 8, 9 and 13 September 1947 (the first programme was performed on two consecutive evenings) and included works by Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert and Johann Strauss II. The note for Walter's second programme with the Vienna Philharmonic on 11 and 12 September, were provided by Eric Blom and appear to be a reprint of the notes that appeared with Walter's recording of the work issued by Columbia in 1937. (Original programme consulted at GB-Lcm). A complete list of repertoire performed on each occasion is given in E. Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, p. 159.



Whether it was Bing or Gál who was responsible for organising the attendance of Walter (whom they both knew), history does not record; but the Brahms programme was almost certainly undertaken at Gál's prompting. The concert was planned at the very last minute, just a few days before the Festival was due to begin, when the soprano Lotte Lehmann cancelled two song recitals that she had agreed to offer with Walter.<sup>31</sup> In an effort to fill these now-vacant slots, two artists already in attendance were prevailed upon to offer one of the required additional programmes.<sup>32</sup> Schnabel and Szigeti had been booked to perform as part of the "Festival Piano Quartet" with William Primrose and Pierre Fournier;<sup>33</sup> Gál knew them both and, given his expertise in Brahms's music, it seems more than likely that the concert was his suggestion. The notes he provided are quite extensive, and include an introductory text in which he assesses the importance of the works performed and their place in public recitals.<sup>34</sup>

From the second year of the Festival onwards, Gál's involvement became rather more varied. The decision was taken to run an annual composition prize from 1948-1950, and he acted as an adjudicator for the competition in 1949.<sup>35</sup> He contributed no further programme notes, but did continue to give pre-Festival lectures on a variety of composers and subjects: indeed, in 1949 he provided three of the six presentations, on the works of Mahler, the Beethoven Septet and Schubert Octet, and Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*.<sup>36</sup>

On 2 September 1952, Gál made an appearance as a performer, in a unique recital at the Usher Hall with Irmgard Seefried, Kathleen Ferrier, Julius Patzak, Horst Günter and Clifford Curzon. Gál's own musical interests are clearly detectable in the programme: a selection of Brahms's vocal quartets, including a group of *Liebeslieder* opp. 52 and 65 for quartet and piano duet,

<sup>31</sup> The Festival records stored at the National Library of Scotland do not give a precise date of Lehmann's cancellation; but since her programmes were only received by the Festival staff on 12 July, and letters announcing the cancelled concerts were sent to patrons on 21 and 23 August, it must be assumed that she withdrew very soon before the start of the Festival. See GB-En Dep. 378/145 (letter 339, dated 12 July 1947) and 378/149 (letters 61 and 169 of 21 and 23 August 1947 respectively).

<sup>32</sup> Lehmann's two recitals with Walter were due to take place on 4 September at 7.30pm and 6 September and 2.30pm. The former slot was taken by Schnabel and Szigeti; the latter featured Elisabeth Schumann in an all-Schubert recital, accompanied by Walter. Since Schumann was not originally due to appear at all, it is possible that Lehmann suggested her as a replacement.

<sup>33</sup> The Festival Quartet gave three concerts, on 28 and 30 August and 1 September. Szigeti also performed Mozart's Violin Concerto no. 4 K218 on 31 August with the Hallé Orchestra under Barbirolli.

<sup>34</sup> *Sonata Recital. Artur Schnabel & Joseph Szigeti*, Thursday, 4th September 1947 at 7.30 p.m. (GB-Lcm).

<sup>35</sup> See 'Edinburgh Festival Prize' in *The Scotsman*, 8 January 1949, p. 3; see also E. Miller, *The Edinburgh International Festival*, p. 26.

<sup>36</sup> See *The Scotsman*, 27 December 1947, p. 1 (advert for 1948 series) and 26 March 1949, p. 1 (advert for 1949 series, which also includes a detailed overview of Gál's recent lecture on Mahler).

with piano works by Schubert for two and four hands. (He was later to publish biographies of both composers.)<sup>37</sup> Robert Ponsonby, then the Festival Director's assistant, recalled that it was he who initially proposed the *Liebeslieder* to Gál – certainly the best-known item in the programme – and in consultation with him, invited both Curzon and the four singers to take part. Whilst Seefried, Ferrier and Patzak were already booked to be involved in other concerts, a bass was needed to complete the ensemble:

I had, before consulting [Hans], engaged the bass-baritone, Frederick Dalberg, for the bottom line of the quartet. Dalberg was a Wagnerian, busy at Covent Garden, and I reckoned he had the necessary weight to 'anchor' Seefried's bright soprano and Patzak's curiously plangent tenor. [. . .] But there was a hiccup. Coaching Dalberg, Hans discovered that he lacked both charm and style (vital ingredients). This was embarrassing, but Hans then revealed another aspect of his remarkable character: by the subtlest of suggestive means – for example 'Are you *sure* the part is not too high for you, Mr Dalberg?' – he persuaded the singer that he would not do himself justice, and he withdrew, to be more than adequately replaced by Horst Günter from the Hamburg State Opera.

The performance went wonderfully and in the green-room afterwards I found Seefried and Ferrier waltzing together, enraptured.<sup>38</sup>

*See Figure 3 below: Programme of 2 September 1952, Edinburgh International Festival (reproduced by permission)*

Gál's career in Britain involved a tremendous variety of musical activities – from university lecturing to solo piano work, accompanying, conducting, writing both books and articles, and teaching privately. Yet his reputation in Austria and Germany had been founded largely upon his talents as a composer, and he had continued to write new works upon his arrival in Edinburgh (even completing several pieces whilst interned in 1940).<sup>39</sup> Between 1948 and 1956, his own compositions were performed at the Festival on four occasions:

<sup>37</sup> These were: *Johannes Brahms: Werk und Persönlichkeit* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1961) and *Franz Schubert, oder die Melodie* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1970). Both books were also published in English translations (Gál translated his Schubert biography himself), in 1963 and 1974 respectively.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Ponsonby, *Musical Heroes. A Personal View of Music and the Musical World Over Sixty Years* (London: Giles de la Mare Publishers Ltd, 2009), p. 47. Günter was there as a soloist with the Hamburg State Opera, playing Papageno in *Zauberflöte*. This concert was to be Kathleen Ferrier's last appearance at the Festival; she made her final public appearance in February 1953 and died later the same year.

<sup>39</sup> For details of these compositions, see H. Gál, *Musik hinter Stacheldraht*. The most substantial was a revue, *What a Life!*, performed in September 1940 – Gál actually requested a day's extension on his internment in order to be able to take part in the first performance (see pp. xxxiii-xxxiv and 144-147).

USHER HALL

Tuesday, 2nd September 1952  
at 8 p.m.

**SCHUBERT & BRAHMS**  
**RECITAL**

IRMGARD SEEFRIED (*Soprano*)  
KATHLEEN FERRIER (*Contralto*)  
JULIUS PATZAK (*Tenor*)  
FREDERICK DALBERG (*Bass*)

CLIFFORD CURZON (*Piano*)  
HANS GAL (*Piano*)

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*Of the distinguished artists in this joint recital, Irmgard Seefried was born in Bavaria and has been a member of the Vienna State Opera for nine years; Julius Patzak, Viennese by birth, spent seventeen years in Munich and at present is also a member of the Vienna State Opera Company; Kathleen Ferrier and Clifford Curzon are both British artists of international reputation; Frederick Dalberg has spent roughly equal thirds of his life in his native England, in South Africa and in Germany, where he sang at the Leipzig, Berlin and Munich opera houses; and Hans Gal, an Austrian composer, came to this country in 1938 and is a lecturer in music at Edinburgh University.*

Owing to the indisposition of Mr Frederick Dalberg, the bass part in the Brahms vocal works in this programme will be sung by Mr Horst Günter, who appears by kind permission of the Hamburg State Opera.

*In place of*

FOUR IMPROMPTUS, Op. 142 . . . . Schubert

*the following works will be performed:*

IMPROMPTU in A flat, Op. 90, No. 4 . . . Schubert

THREE MOMENTS MUSICALES . . . . Schubert

C sharp minor  
A flat major  
F minor

IMPROMPTU in E flat major Op. 90, No. 2 . . . Schubert

Figure 3: Programme of 2 September 1952, Edinburgh International Festival (reproduced by permission)

**Table 1: Performances of Gál's compositions at the Edinburgh International Festival, 1947-1956**

Date of Performance	Piece	Performers
11th September 1948	Trio for Oboe, Violin and Viola Op. 94	Carter String Trio, & Leon Goosens
3 September 1949	Lilliburlero Op. 48	BBC Scottish Orchestra, cond. Ian Whyte
5 September 1949	Concertina for organ and string orchestra Op.55	Jacques Orchestra, cond. Reginald Jacques. Soloist: Herrick Bunney
1951	Morgenhymnus	Wiener Akademie Kammerchor, cond. Ferdinand Grossman

These four works also trace a neat journey from Gál's pre-war music to new creations. The Trio Op. 94 had been composed in 1941;<sup>40</sup> *Lilliburlero* Op. 48 was written in 1945 and had received its British premiere in 1948, given by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra under Rudolf Schwarz.<sup>41</sup> The 1949 Festival performance of the Concertino Op. 55 was indeed a premiere;<sup>42</sup> and *Morgenhymnus*, performed by the Wiener Akademie Kammerchor, seems to have been an early a capella version of the first movement, *Der Morgen*, from the Cantata *Lebenskreise* Op. 70, completed in 1955.<sup>43</sup> Evidently Gál had strong advocates within the organisational committees of the Festival, and the local audiences of Edinburgh and Glasgow had already witnessed numerous concerts of his music in the previous few years, including performances of the *Pickwickian Overture* Op. 45, Serenade for String Orchestra Op. 46 and Piano Concerto Op. 57.<sup>44</sup> In addition to these performances of his original compositions, Gál was also involved in providing a performing arrangement of Mozart's *Idomeneo* for Glyndebourne Opera in 1951, and this production was brought to the Edinburgh Festival in 1953.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Curiously this does not seem to have been reviewed in the Scotsman. See the detailed catalogue of Gál's works, including details of early performances, at <http://www.hansgal.com/works/op94.html> (accessed 20 January 2013).

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.hansgal.com/works/op48.html> (accessed 20 January 2013).

<sup>42</sup> The performance was given by the Jacques Orchestra, conducted by Reginald Jacques. The soloist was Herrick Bunney, whose name was unaccountably not included in the programme (see [n.a.], 'The Festival. Jacques Orchestra' *The Scotsman*, 6 September 1949, p. 4).

<sup>43</sup> In its later form, this piece was recast as the first movement of *Lebenskreise*. This work is for the rather more expansive forces of four soloists (SATB), mixed choir (boys and SATB) and orchestra. My thanks to Eva Fox-Gál for confirming the connection of this early piece to the Cantata.

<sup>44</sup> Performances of these composition are mentioned in *The Scotsman* on 22 January 1947 (p. 1), 19 April 1940 (p. 4) and 3 September 1949 (p. 5) respectively. Sidney Newman's enthusiasm for Gál's compositions is clear from a letter that he wrote to the Programme Committee on 3 July 1950, recommending the inclusion of Gál's Cello Concerto Op. 67 in the 1951 Festival programme (GB-En Dep. 378/63).

<sup>45</sup> The name of Gál's sister, Erna, also appears in the Festival programme for this production; she is first listed as a member of musical staff at Glyndebourne in 1951 for the first performance there of her brother's edition of *Idomeneo*. Performances were given at Glyndebourne between 20 June and 14 July 1951. (Programmes viewed at GB-Lcm.)

Finally, as a member of the Programme Committee, Gál's influence also seems to be detectable in the choice of repertoire for each Festival. The Committee minutes are frustratingly sparse in their details of who provided suggestions. Evidently the Artistic Director played an active role in shaping the overall structure and pattern of events, and constructing concert outlines for consideration by particular performers; though in some cases it seems that artists simply sent a choice of proposals from which the Committee could choose their preferred programme.<sup>46</sup> But the kind of repertoire that was performed, particularly by visiting chamber orchestras such as the Jacques Orchestra and Boyd Neel Orchestra in the Festival's early years, are reminiscent of the kind of programming one can encounter in Gál's non-Festival performances. In particular, this reflects what was evidently a profound interest in earlier repertoire – Pergolesi, Corelli, Handel, Galuppi – as well as lesser-known pieces by Haydn and Mozart, and contemporary repertoire including Bartók, Bloch and Hindemith. The variety of programming is apparent from Boyd Neel's recollection of his orchestra's performances at the Festival in 1948:

The Edinburgh Festival of 1948 was exciting. Everything was new and no one in that lovely city had, as yet, got into a groove. But how we had to work! We gave *ten* concerts in eleven days, many including large and complex works. [. . .] We did among others works: *Music for Strings, Celeste and Percussion* by Bartók; Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht*; the Honegger *Second Symphony*; Benjamin Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*; Michael Tippett's *Concerto for Double String Orchestra*; Darius Milhaud's *Concertino de Printemps*, and Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et de la mer* with Maggie Teyte – this last a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Then there was the [Strauss] *Metamorphosen*; Rawsthorne's first *Piano Concerto*; Stravinsky's *Apollon musagète*; and the Britten and Dvořák *Serenades*. We also included many shorter eighteenth-century works. Not bad for ten days?<sup>47</sup>

Local Edinburgh audiences were used to the appearance of an occasional work from the early twentieth century; thanks to Gál, their familiarity with Baroque repertoire had also increased. But the list of music that Boyd Neel presents here demonstrates what must have amounted to an extreme onslaught of new repertoire in a city that did not previously have anything like the kind of musical infrastructure to put on such pieces.

By the end of its first decade, the Edinburgh Festival could boast that it had hosted musicians and other performing artists from England, Scotland,

<sup>46</sup> See GB-En Dep. 378/63.

<sup>47</sup> Jolyon David Finch, ed. *My Orchestras and Other Adventures. The Memoirs of Boyd Neel* (University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 143.

Wales, Ireland, France, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, Russia, Switzerland, Belgium, America, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Finland, Spain, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and Japan – in terms of creating a setting “where the people of the world could assemble to enjoy the music and the dancing”, as the Lord Provost put it in 1956, it had certainly succeeded. More than this: its success was due in no small part to the extreme hard work and dedication of several people who had indeed been considered strangers, exiles, and enemies of their own home countries when they had journeyed to Britain in the 1930s. Whilst Bing held the position of Festival Director for just three years and subsequently settled in New York as the general manager of the Metropolitan Opera, Gál spent the rest of his life in Edinburgh and continued to involve himself with the Festival for many decades. Although he never succeeded in establishing a compositional reputation in Britain equivalent to his fame in pre-war Austria and Germany, his music has been received with increasing interest and enthusiasm over the past few decades; and his legacy as a teacher (he coached several of Scotland’s leading composers from the 1960s onwards, including Thea Musgrave and Iain Hamilton),<sup>48</sup> scholar and practical musician cannot be underestimated. As the field of research into the lives and works of émigré musicians continues to grow, it seems that Gál’s story offers echoes of the very aim of the Edinburgh Festival, as its early proponents imagined it: artistic success, and international understanding.

**Abstract:**

Tracing the early history of the Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama, this article presents a consideration of the role of Hans Gál (1890-1987) in the Festival’s foundation and opening decade, from 1947-1957. An émigré from Vienna, Gál’s considerable international reputation in the pre-war years made him a powerful and knowledgeable advocate for the enterprise. Detailed information is provided of Gál’s involvement as a scholar, composer and performer, as well as his role as a member of the Festival Council.

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<sup>48</sup> See R. Ponsoyby, *Musical Heroes*, p. 58.