

be associated with interwar internationalism – including its problematic link with colonial activities and with strategic consolidations of geopolitical power – as a starting point for their case studies; in other words, internationalism is their subject rather than their method.

Performing Internationalism: The ISCM as a ‘Musical League of Nations’

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After the First World War, some musicians embraced ‘international’ identities in novel ways, requiring novel strategies.⁶ During the 1920s, internationalist initiatives were launched in musicology, music education, folk music and more, joining a more general proliferation of institutions devoted to cultural internationalism.⁷ In the domain of Western art music, the most high-profile internationalist organization of the era was the ISCM, founded in Salzburg in 1922.⁸ The ISCM’s principal activity during the interwar period was to organize an annual contemporary music festival. This peripatetic event, hosted in a different European city each year, served two intertwined ambitions: to promote contemporary music and to further international cooperation. The latter aspiration gave rise to an unofficial nickname – the ‘musical League of Nations’ – encapsulating the ISCM’s perceived affinities with other, heftier internationalist endeavours.⁹ A ‘musical League of Nations’ was, however, an ambivalent and

will be examined in this round table. These manoeuvres served not only to exclude certain figures from participating in the discipline on the basis of status and character, but also to ‘subjugate or objectify peoples of the global south’, according to Levitz. Internationalism is cast in this way as an original sin of the American Musicological Society, an organization founded in 1934, seven years after the IMS.

⁶ I am grateful to Heather Wiebe, Roger Parker, Flora Willson and the editors of the round table for their feedback on this article. I would also like to thank Melita Milin for sharing her expertise on Ljubica Marić, and Henry Balme and Sasha Ockenden for their advice on translations.

⁷ Sibille, ‘The Politics of Music in International Organisations in the First Half of the Twentieth Century’; Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, 51–90. The harbinger of the initiatives of the 1920s was the Internationale Musikgesellschaft (1899–1914), the predecessor of the IMS (1927–).

⁸ As Anne C. Shreffler notes, ‘In spite of the fact that the ISCM had no real authority and few resources of its own [...] there was no other institution of comparable legitimacy and scope’; Shreffler, ‘The International Society for Contemporary Music and Its Political Context’, 61.

⁹ For an extended riff on this trope, see Paul Stefan, ‘Ein Völkerbund der Musik’, *Atti del primo Congresso internazionale di musica, Firenze, 30 aprile–4 maggio 1933* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1935), 233–9. The League of Nations itself made some tentative steps into the musical sphere through its International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC): meetings were organized, proposals drafted and questionnaires circulated, but little was achieved in the way of practical action. See Christiane Sibille, ‘La musique à la Société des Nations’, *Relations Internationales*, 155 (2013), 89–102, and Sibille, ‘The Politics of Music in International Organisations in the First Half of the Twentieth Century’, 265–72.

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precarious project: the moniker recognized, through analogy, a necessary proximity to the era's chief prototype of an international structure; but it clung, by way of its adjective, to a degree of detachment from the treacherous waters of politics and diplomacy.

What was the 'I' in the ISCM? It was certainly not equivalent to *global*, a term usually more associated with late twentieth- and twenty-first-century patterns of globalization (often depicted teleologically), and thus implying the emergence of an increasingly interconnected human community on the terrestrial scale.¹⁰ Internationalism, by contrast, typically involves imagining oneself as belonging to a common framework of national units – that is, a 'league of nations' – whose geographical horizons might be more circumscribed.¹¹ The early twentieth-century activities discussed here were conceived within a fundamentally colonial paradigm in which Europe was assumed to be both the default location of culture and the primary arena of international affairs.¹² Other internationalisms, such as pan-Africanism or pan-Americanism, involve quite different geographies and visions of modernity.¹³

Nor was 'international' a synonym for *transnational* or *cosmopolitan*. The ISCM might be described as a transnational network, in that it involved border-crossing circulations, linkages and affiliations, outside the workings of official diplomacy.¹⁴ What distinguishes it as an internationalist project is, first, the formality of its institutional structure – as a federation of national sections – and, second, the way in which that structure was imbued with a particular form of idealism: a self-conscious aspiration, in the spirit of a tradition of liberal internationalism that enjoyed widespread public enthusiasm after the First World War, to extend and deepen cooperation between nations in the name of peace and mutual understanding. To label oneself 'international', in 1922, signified a moral-political commitment (an *internationalism*) and an associated subject position (as an *internationalist*) that were closely related to, and perhaps ultimately derived from, the ethics of cosmopolitanism (the belief in a single human community). But whereas the cosmopolitan world view foregrounds the rights and responsibilities of 'world citizens', the liberal internationalist one upheld the principle of national sovereignty. Working primarily towards inter-national reconciliation, early twentieth-century musical internationalists, like their contemporaries in other fields, tended to channel their efforts into institutional arrangements that elevated their participants into national representatives. Consequently, those arrangements had a character quite distinct from that of the much older tradition of musical cosmopolitanism

¹⁰ The relationship between music and globalization has been an important topic of research in ethnomusicology. For an overview, see Martin Stokes, 'Music and the Global Order', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33 (2004), 47–72.

¹¹ Liisa Malkki, 'Citizens of Humanity: Internationalism and the Imagined Community of Nations', *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 3/1 (1994), 41–68. See also Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*.

¹² The League of Nations was directly embroiled in colonial governance through its mandates system; see Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). A draft of the ISCM's original statutes reportedly defined 'contemporary' music as that 'of all European countries written within the last fifteen years' (emphasis added). After an outcry from American musicians, the word 'European' was removed. See Carol J. Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 290–1. In her contribution to this round table, Kate Bowan explores Anglo-American links relating to the ISCM and outlines the history of the organization's American Section.

¹³ Some of the intersections between music and these movements are discussed in Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Carol A. Hess, *Representing the Good Neighbor: Music, Difference, and the Pan American Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁴ Patricia Clavin, 'Defining Transnationalism', *Contemporary European History*, 14/4 (2005), 421–39.

(more often discussed in relation to free-floating individuals or urban culture), which has recently attracted scholarly attention.¹⁵

For those who participated in ISCM festivals, international cooperation was always, at least in part, a means to an end. As proponents of what Martin Guerpin refers to later in this round table as a ‘minority internationalism’ – or an ‘internationalism by necessity’ – these musicians sought to further the cause of a loosely defined aesthetic movement (‘new’ or ‘contemporary’ music) which they believed to be unfairly marginalized by mainstream concert institutions in their local contexts.¹⁶ In this article, however, I focus on one strategy by which ISCM adherents attempted to go beyond – or at least to legitimize – this agenda and constitute their collective endeavours as international in a fuller sense: by appropriating the conventionalized behaviours of diplomats. I suggest that shifting norms within diplomacy, and the mediation of those norms in the public sphere, informed how musicians undertook their internationalist activities and projected them to the outside world, as they sought to forge an institutional framework in which they would be recognized as valid international actors. In other words, I describe how one group of musicians in interwar Europe *performed* their internationalism: how they adopted and displayed a certain repertoire of collective behaviours to inhabit an identity that was novel to the musical field.

Those behaviours vividly demonstrate one of the central challenges faced by early twentieth-century musical internationalists: how to position themselves in relation to statespersons and diplomats, the emblematic protagonists of the international sphere. The conundrum was how to become ‘international’ without being drawn into the geopolitical arena that, to a large degree, defined the field to which the term referred. The ISCM could never fully resolve this problem: at its heart was the paradox, highlighted by Anton Haefeli in his 1982 history of the ISCM, of an organization that embraced the politics of internationalism yet still claimed to be ‘non-political’.¹⁷ Yet what Haefeli seems to have viewed as hypocrisy can also be described, more generously, as a delicate balancing act. The ISCM’s adherents sought to serve new music and internationalism from a position at the margins of international politics, without relinquishing the possibilities associated with that marginality: not only prestige and relative independence (commonplace rewards for artists who assert their detachment from politics), but also the opportunity to pursue avenues of international cooperation unworkable at the level of interstate relations.¹⁸

My emphasis on internationalism’s performative aspect allows me to describe how that balancing act, and the pressures to which it was subject, played out at the level of institutional structures and conventions. The first section of my article introduces the ISCM’s General

¹⁵ On pre-First World War musical cosmopolitanism, see Dana Gooley (convenor), ‘Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Nationalism, 1848–1914’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 66 (2013), 523–49.

¹⁶ The idea of internationalism as a response to marginalization emerges clearly from Rudolph Réti’s recollections of the ISCM’s founding: Réti, ‘Die Entstehung der IGNM’, *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, 12/3 (1957), 113–17.

¹⁷ Anton Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (IGNM): Ihre Geschichte von 1922 bis zur Gegenwart* (Zurich: Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag, 1982), 190–232; Haefeli, ‘Politische Implikationen einer “unpolitischen” Organisation: Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik zwischen 1933 und 1939’, *Musik im Exil: Die Schweiz und das Ausland 1918–1945*, ed. Chris Walton and Antonio Baldassarre (Berne: Peter Lang, 2005), 103–19. On the conceptual complications attendant on the ISCM’s pairing of the ‘international’ and the ‘contemporary’, see Collins, ‘What Was Contemporary Music?’

¹⁸ Germany, for example, was a key player in the ISCM from its foundation in 1922 (until 1933), even though it only became a member state of the League of Nations in 1926.

Assembly, an annual conference of national representatives. At this meeting, ritualized mimicry of political behaviour, emptied of much of the content and stakes of actual politics, helped to paper over the paradox of a 'non-political' internationalism. The second section homes in on a specific sequence of incidents from autumn 1935 to assess how the habitual practices of musical internationalism were disrupted by the political crises of the mid-1930s. With its liberal, democratic values under threat, the ISCM would be compelled to decide whether to move beyond imitation and intervene more directly in diplomatic affairs. For those who insisted on a firm boundary between artistic and political activities, the prospect was deeply unsettling. But for others, it was a logical consequence of the new geopolitical edge that the enactment of internationalism had lent to musical culture in interwar Europe.

We do not have to look far to find evidence that diplomacy framed how the ISCM was understood: the discourse about the organization was saturated with it. Its founding, recalled Alfredo Casella in his memoirs, 'was truly a peace treaty between musicians'.¹⁹ In Weimar Germany, the ISCM's national section was described as a musical 'foreign office' undertaking 'foreign propaganda'.²⁰ Edward J. Dent, the Cambridge-based musicologist who served as the ISCM's president from its foundation until 1938, was regularly praised for his 'talent for diplomacy'.²¹ In the run-up to his eventual departure, one proposal was that Dent should continue to serve as the 'foreign minister' to his successor's 'state secretary'.²² The ISCM's General Assembly demonstrates that these analogies provided more than a convenient language for explaining what the organization did; they also inflected its structure and practices. Alongside the concerts and receptions, the General Assembly meeting was a fixture of the annual festival. Chaired by Dent until his departure, it was attended by delegates representing the ISCM's national sections, who voted on decisions such as electing the committee of jurors to choose the music for the following year's festival. As the ultimate seat of institutional sovereignty, it was fundamental to the ISCM's democratic and international legitimacy.

We are granted a striking glimpse of the General Assembly in [Figure 1](#), which shows the 1931 meeting, hosted in Oxford. The men in the photograph – they are indeed all men – are gathered collegially around tables much laden with papers.²³ The tableau could come from

¹⁹ Alfredo Casella, *Music in my Time: The Memoirs of Alfredo Casella*, trans. and ed. Spencer Norton (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955; originally published as *I segreti della giara* (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1941)), 165.

²⁰ Martin Thrun, "Feste und Proteste": Über das nationale Prinzip der Organisation der "Internationalen Gesellschaft für Neue Musik" nach 1922', *Nationale Musik im 20. Jahrhundert: Kompositorische und soziokulturelle Aspekte der Musikgeschichte zwischen Ost- und Westeuropa: Konferenzbericht Leipzig 2002*, ed. Helmut Loos and Stefan Keym (Leipzig: Gudrun Schröder Verlag, 2004), 457–70 (p. 469).

²¹ Basil Maine, *Behold These Daniels: Being Studies of Contemporary Music Critics* (London: H. & W. Brown, 1928), 28. After the death of his successor, Edwin Evans, in 1945, Dent would take up the post again until 1947. For an overview of Dent's internationalist outlook and activities, see Annegret Fauser, 'The Scholar behind the Medal: Edward J. Dent (1876–1957) and the Politics of Music History', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 139 (2014), 235–60.

²² Letter from Egon Wellesz to Dent, 9 May 1937, Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge, The Papers of Edward Joseph Dent, EJD/4/446.

²³ In other fields, especially humanitarian ones, contemporaneous internationalist institutions provided opportunities for women to attain positions of influence; but this was not the case with the ISCM. Women did participate in its festival as performers and sometimes as composers. But national sections tended to send composers, conductors, critics or musicologists as their representatives at the meetings, and these professions were dominated by men. One impressive exception was Pauline



Figure 1 The 1931 meeting of the ISCM General Assembly, Rhodes House, Oxford, 25 July 1931 (photographer unknown). Heinz-Tiessen-Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 2342. Dent is sitting in the middle of the back row, with Edwin Evans on his right (with the beard) and Alfredo Casella on his left. Alois Hába, representing Czechoslovakia, is in the inner circle, fourth from the front.

almost any of the multitude of international conferences held in interwar Europe. Since at least the end of the nineteenth century, such gatherings had served as one of the core components of the ‘mechanics of internationalism’.²⁴ As a group of historical geographers has highlighted (with the aim of resituating internationalism’s seemingly abstract ideals in particular historical sites), ‘conferencing the international’ was crucial to how internationalism was envisaged and experienced after the First World War.²⁵ Conferences not only proliferated across humanitarian, political and technical domains, but also became more central to the conduct and public

Hall, who founded the Norwegian Section of the ISCM in 1938 and led it until 1961. See Astrid Kvalbein, ‘Musikalsk modernisering: Pauline Hall (1890–1969) som komponist, teatermenneske og Ny Musikk-leiar’ (Ph.D. dissertation, Norwegian Academy of Music, 2013), 274–376.

²⁴ Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann, ‘Introduction: The Mechanics of Internationalism’, *The Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War*, ed. Geyer and Paulmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1–25.

²⁵ I refer to the AHRC-funded research project ‘Conferencing the International: A Cultural and Historical Geography of the Origins of Internationalism (1919–1939)’, led by the historical geographer Stephen Legg at the University of Nottingham between 2015 and 2020 (<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/interwarconf/home.aspx>, accessed September 2019).

profile of international diplomacy. ISCM festival participants could hardly have failed to notice the parallels between diplomatic summits and their own endeavours. At the same time as those delegates were photographed in Oxford on 25 July 1931, for instance, the newspapers were speculating as to the consequences of the recently concluded seven-power conference on the German economic emergency.²⁶ In its subject matter and framing, the image restages the conventionalized visual language of internationalist and diplomatic conferencing in all its starchy earnestness.

The greater prominence of conferences in international affairs after the First World War was a symptom of the so-called ‘new diplomacy’. This development has been little discussed in the growing literature on music and diplomacy, which, in common with research on cultural diplomacy more generally, has focused above all on the USA, especially during the cold war period.²⁷ Yet in the standard literature on international relations, post-First World War Europe is depicted as the site of an epoch-defining paradigm shift. Before the war, the usual narrative runs, European stability had been largely reliant on secretive negotiations between the ‘great powers’; however, the reputation of this system was severely damaged by its self-evident failure to preserve peace in 1914. The new aspiration, encouraged especially by Woodrow Wilson, was for a diplomacy based on transparency, national self-determination and collective security – principles that would, in theory, be embodied and safeguarded by the newly founded League of Nations.²⁸

As the 1931 photograph indicates, the musicians involved in the ISCM developed habits, in their efforts to build and legitimize their novel project, that echoed the practices of the new diplomacy. The ISCM’s General Assembly paralleled that of the League of Nations, likewise a gathering of national representatives who convened on an annual basis.²⁹ (In 1929, those present at the ISCM festival would have experienced this connection especially vividly, since that year’s event, hosted in Geneva, included a tour of the League of Nations’ headquarters.³⁰) This kind of imitation is far from unique: research on the ‘unofficial diplomacy’ of ‘state-like non-state’ bodies has demonstrated how extensively mimicry of official diplomats’ practices has been employed by those attempting to gain recognition as – and thus, in effect, to become –

²⁶ ‘Conference and After: New Steps; Expert Inquiries on Foot; Mr. Stimson’s Mission’, *The Times*, 25 July 1931, 13.

²⁷ Two landmark monographs are: Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2004); and Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America’s Cold War Diplomacy* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015). On the US State Department’s post-9/11 musical diplomacy, see Mark Katz, *Build: The Power of Hip Hop Diplomacy in a Divided World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

²⁸ See, for example, Henry Kissinger, ‘The New Face of Diplomacy: Wilson and the Treaty of Versailles’, *Diplomacy* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 218–45; and Corneliu Bjola and Markus Kornprobst, ‘The New Diplomacy after World War I’, *Understanding International Diplomacy: Theory, Practice and Ethics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 28–43.

²⁹ One crucial difference was that the League of Nations also had the Council, its executive body, which ensured a privileged position for the ‘great powers’ – initially Britain, France, Italy and Japan – that formed its core of permanent members.

³⁰ *VII^{me} festival de la Société internationale de musique contemporaine: Genève 6–10 avril 1929* (Geneva: ISCM, 1929), 10.

legitimate international actors.³¹ The pursuit of international credentials could also serve more localized ends. By invoking the basic template set down by the League of Nations, the ISCM's General Assembly putatively established musicians associated with the modernist tendencies favoured by the organization as *the* representatives of a nation's music-making, a cultural-political move working to the advantage of both specific individuals and the broader movement of 'contemporary music' they supported.

The ISCM's General Assembly positioned the diplomatic conference as an aspirational model for musicians, as the organization sought to appeal to the moral authority of League of Nations-style internationalism in the post-First World War climate. Yet the emulation was also a repudiation, involving as it did an insistence that politics could be superseded by the transcendence of the musical. 'Will it be the mission of artists to redeem the institution of international conferences from the discredit which statesmen have brought upon it?' asked Edwin Evans, the chairman of the ISCM's British Section, in 1923.³² Mimicry allowed musicians to have their cake and eat it: to declare that their activities were at once ethically valuable and supra-politically neutral. The sacrifice – and the boundary to be carefully policed – was forgoing the possibility either of accruing more worldly forms of political power, or of using the General Assembly as a platform for campaigning or any other directly political action. The payoffs included opportunities for enhanced prestige, and, more selflessly, the hope of serving music and internationalism in a deeper and more lasting sense, albeit a less tangible one.

For mimicry to sustain the paradox of a 'non-political' internationalism, musicians needed to be kept at arm's length from the activities of official diplomats. By the mid-1930s, when economic and political crises presented a profound threat to internationalist projects in Europe, those who sought to sustain this separation faced formidable difficulties. In 1935, the ISCM was led as never before to a reckoning with the increasingly troubled state of international politics. That year's festival in Prague has been described, most notably in Anne C. Shreffler's meticulous account, as a pivotal test of the organization's 'non-political' mandate.³³ It thus seems an apt starting point for considering the related (but more specific) question of how the pressures of the 1930s recast the ISCM's practice of enacting internationalism through allusion to diplomacy. At this difficult crossroads, the habits of detachment formed under the conditions of the previous decade encountered political upheavals whose impacts on the lives of individual musicians were becoming increasingly stark.

The ISCM festival in Prague was dominated by efforts to negotiate a 'neutral' path between political extremes. On the one hand, delegates had to consider how to respond to the recently founded Permanent Council for the International Cooperation of Composers (Ständiger Rat für die internationale Zusammenarbeit der Komponisten), which was perceived as a direct challenge by Nazi Germany to the ISCM's previously unassailed position in European musical life.³⁴ On the other, they were presented with an offer of support from the Soviet Union. Just

³¹ Fiona McConnell, Terri Moreau and Jason Dittmer, 'Mimicking State Diplomacy: The Legitimizing Strategies of Unofficial Diplomacies', *Geoforum*, 43 (2012), 804–14 (p. 806).

³² Edwin Evans, 'The International Conference', *The Chesterian*, 29 (February 1923), 139–41 (p. 139).

³³ Shreffler, 'The ISCM and Its Political Context'. The events of 1935 are also described in Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik*, 196–9, 228–31, 236–43.

³⁴ Shreffler, 'The ISCM and Its Political Context', 66–71. For further discussion of the Permanent Council's founding and its activities in 1934–5, see Benjamin G. Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 17–26, 32–43. See also Ian Pace's essay in this round table.

weeks before the Prague festival, the Communist International (Comintern) had officially committed itself to Popular Front internationalism – a broad-based coalition of anti-fascist politics and activism – and there were hopes in its affiliated International Music Bureau (IMB) that the ISCM might be brought into the fold. The IMB's chairman was the composer Hanns Eisler, an itinerant exile from Germany since 1933. He and his colleague Herman Reichenbach, another German émigré, came to the ISCM gathering in Prague to convey overtures from the USSR, including an offer to host the 1936 festival. Acting under instructions from Moscow, they attended the General Assembly as observers.³⁵ For some delegates, Eisler's and Reichenbach's roles as go-betweens and intelligence gatherers pushed uncomfortably beyond the 'non-political' imitation of diplomacy. Their presence was welcomed by the Czechoslovakian hosts, especially the left-leaning Alois Hába. But according to Paul Sacher, president of the Swiss Section, everyone else 'was somewhat astonished by this strange "Russian" delegation' – not least because, as Dent drily observed, neither of them could speak Russian.³⁶

Ultimately, Eisler and Reichenbach failed to bring the ISCM into the Popular Front. After three days of fractious meetings, the General Assembly agreed to issue a declaration, yet another gesture revealing how the delegates modelled their actions on the conventions of diplomatic summitry. This text affirmed the ISCM's commitment to intellectual and spiritual freedom, and decreed that suitable composers would never be excluded from its festival programmes on the basis of nationality, race or religion.³⁷ In its emphasis on the freedom of the individual artist, the resolution represented an attempt to renounce both Nazi Germany's extreme nationalism and Soviet Russia's restrictive understanding of the artist's social responsibilities.³⁸ This affirmation of a purportedly apolitical centre, argues Shreffler, anticipated the basic ideological divide of the cultural cold war, between socially committed communist art and the high modernist ideals of the West.³⁹

The ISCM was also rocked by other vectors of conflict – ones related to the ideological schism Shreffler describes, but not reducible to it. A further subplot from September 1935 exemplifies the split between socially committed leftist musicians and those who claimed non-political neutrality. During the Prague festival, news spread that three young Serbian-Yugoslavian composers – Dragutin Čolić, Ljubica Marić and Vojislav Vučković – had been arrested and tortured by the Yugoslavian police. As was typical for modernist-inclined Yugoslavian musicians of their generation, all three had previously studied at the Prague Conservatoire, where their tuition had included Hába's quarter-tone composition class. Influenced by the politics

³⁵ Shreffler, 'The ISCM and Its Political Context', 71–6. Eisler and Reichenbach could not appear as official delegates in the General Assembly because the Soviet Union had not had an ISCM section since the dissolution of the Moscow-based Association for Contemporary Music (ASM) in 1932. This situation emerged as something of a sticking point in the negotiations and was never resolved.

³⁶ 'Ich glaube, dass in Prag, ausser den Tschechen, jedermann etwas über diese merkwürdige "russische" Delegation erstaunt war.' Letter from Sacher to Werner Reinhart, 18 December 1935, Briefwechsel Werner Reinhart, Musikkollegium Winterthur, deposited in Stadtbibliothek Winterthur, Dep MK 339/27. Translations from German- and French-language sources are my own. Dent's remark is recalled in Ernst Krenek, *Im Atem der Zeit: Erinnerungen an die Moderne*, trans. Friedrich Saathen, rev. trans. Sabine Schulte (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1998), 909.

³⁷ The full text of this proclamation is provided in Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik*, 197.

³⁸ Shreffler, 'The ISCM and Its Political Context', 77.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 80–2.

advocated by Hába and others in Prague, they returned to Yugoslavia as young radicals in both the aesthetic and the political sense. As the events of 1935 would prove, their overt support for the Left in a politically unstable country where the Communist Party had been banned since 1920 involved considerable personal risk.⁴⁰

These musicians endured real political violence, a situation that divided the ISCM's General Assembly. Some called for immediate action. Shortly after the 1935 festival, Hába sent the ISCM's national sections a draft appeal protesting the 'arrest, imprisonment and inhumane torture' of his former students.⁴¹ He asked each national section to sign a copy of this declaration and send it to Dent, as well as requesting Dent to contact the justice minister in Belgrade and the Yugoslavian embassy in London on behalf of the ISCM.⁴² Dent responded that he was 'very surprised and appalled by the grim news from Belgrade', and contacted a diplomat he knew 'to get more precise information'. But he did not write to Belgrade or the embassy; nor did he sanction the publication of the resolution.⁴³

Hába was motivated by a combination of personal ties, political sympathies and humanitarian concerns; but what ultimately convinced him to act, despite some initial hesitation, was insistent pressure from Eisler. According to his and Reichenbach's report on the 1935 festival, it was Eisler who dictated a first version of the appeal, and who instructed Hába to circulate it.⁴⁴ The attempt to persuade the ISCM to campaign on behalf of the Serbian composers must therefore be understood in the context of efforts to pivot the organization towards the USSR.⁴⁵ This complicates the question of how we should assess the appeal: the concern for the welfare of like-minded colleagues was genuine; but it also dovetailed conveniently with the desire for a gesture that would, as Reichenbach reported to Hába in October 1935, make 'an excellent impression' in Moscow.⁴⁶ This political agenda was obscured in the text of the appeal itself, which, in a nod to the ISCM's recent resolution on artistic freedom, made its demands 'in the name of

⁴⁰ Before long, the dangers would become graver still: in 1942, Vučković, forced into hiding in German-occupied Belgrade, was tracked down and murdered by the Gestapo. On the place of Vučković and his contemporaries in the cultural politics of Yugoslavia in the 1930s, see Melita Milin, 'Continuities and Discontinuities in Serbian Music, 1930–1950', *Musicology Today: Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest*, 27 (2016), 229–38.

⁴¹ 'Verhaftung, Einsperrung und unmenschlichen Martern'. 'Appell der Mitglieder der IGNM zur Befreiung der jugoslawischen Komponisten' (September 1935), in Vlasta Reittererová and Hubert Reitterer, 'Musik und Politik – Musikpolitik: Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik im Spiegel des brieflichen Nachlasses von Alois Hába 1931–1938', *Miscellanea musicologica*, 36 (1999), 129–310 (p. 215).

⁴² Hába to ISCM national sections, [September 1935], in Reittererová and Reitterer, 'Musik und Politik – Musikpolitik', 216.

⁴³ 'Ich war ganz überrascht und entsetzt über die grauenhafte[n] Nachrichten aus Beograd. Ich habe sofort an einen mir bekannten Diplomaten geschrieben, um genauere Informationen über Alles zu haben.' Letter from Dent to Hába, 16 September 1935, in Reittererová and Reitterer, 'Musik und Politik – Musikpolitik', 212.

⁴⁴ Hanns Eisler and Herman Reichenbach, 'Bericht über die Verhandlungen der IRTB mit der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Zeitgenössische Musik anlässlich des Festivals in Prag' (1935), printed in Eisler, *Gesammelte Schriften 1921–1935*, ed. Tobias Faßhauer and Günter Mayer (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2007), 287–306 (pp. 304–5).

⁴⁵ The cause was also taken up enthusiastically by leftist musicians elsewhere. The American composer Marc Blitzstein even began sketching a song, 'Marić and Colić', protesting their imprisonment ('We the musicians of America say no!' the text proclaimed). See Howard Pollack, *Marc Blitzstein: His Life, his Work, his World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 146.

⁴⁶ 'Besonders Deine Resolution in der jugoslawischen Sache machte hier [Moscow] einen ausgezeichneten Eindruck.' Letter from Reichenbach to Hába, 13 October 1935, in Reittererová and Reitterer, 'Musik und Politik – Musikpolitik', 219.

humanity and freedom of artistic creativity'.⁴⁷ Further underlining the moral urgency, it also asserted norms of interpersonal responsibility – on a scale ostensibly remote from geopolitics – by invoking an explicitly gendered obligation for 'the delegates of the national sections [to] protest as men out of gentlemanly feelings' against the brutal torture of the pregnant Marić.⁴⁸

If this way of putting the case was intended to persuade Dent, it did not prove effective. After Prague, he was wary of efforts to pull the organization towards Moscow, and especially suspicious of Hába, with whom he had clashed repeatedly. Citing the failure of a comparable appeal in 1934 (this time to the Austrian government on behalf of David Josef Bach), he dismissed the Czech composer's actions as posturing: the only answers they were likely to get would be 'polite and evasive' ones, telling them 'that we foreigners have no right to get upset about it'.⁴⁹ Dent's justification of his refusal to act implied a mixture of principle and pragmatism. The plight of the musicians in Yugoslavia, however terrible, was beyond the ISCM's remit as he understood it: an internationalist organization might promote friendship between nations, but should exercise caution about intervening in the affairs of sovereign states. And in any case, what was the appeal expected to achieve? To Dent, the gesture appeared futile: it seemed unlikely that the declaration would help the musicians (it could even have made things worse), but it was certainly liable to draw the ISCM into political controversy and thus, in an already challenging year, undermine its capacity to facilitate international cooperation. To put all this another way, the ISCM might have borrowed patterns of behaviour from diplomacy to structure its internationalist gatherings, but Hába and Eisler were mistaken to think that it could therefore become empowered to act as a political entity. Dent felt able to write to a diplomat in a personal capacity, but not as the holder of an office that was somehow equivalent. During the 1930s, as Annegret Fauser has observed, Dent's internationalist activities involved a tension between his antipathy to fascism – expressed with increasing clarity in the anti-Nazi tenor of his scholarship – and his propensity to prioritize mediation and conciliation when faced with potential conflict.⁵⁰ In this instance, he chose discretion. But from another perspective, Dent's appeal to pragmatism could not explain away a basic question of integrity: what kind of association, as Eisler pressed Hába, 'does not protest against the torture of its delegates'?⁵¹

To be clear: although Dent was wary of Moscow, he was not opposed to the Left; his own politics broadly aligned with Fabianism. But he had long positioned himself strongly against the ISCM's involvement in politics as such. Accordingly, he interpreted the General Assembly's resolution on artistic freedom in quite different terms from those implied by Hába and Eisler's appeal. 'Our proclamation in Prague', he told Hába, 'explicitly emphasizes that we want to

⁴⁷ 'Im Namen der Menschlichkeit und Freiheit des künstlerischen Schaffens'. 'Appell der Mitglieder der IGNM zur Befreiung der jugoslawischen Komponisten'.

⁴⁸ The appeal claimed that Marić had 'been abused in brutal ways, such that her sexual organs have been injured' ('... ist besonders die Komponistin Frau Ljuba Marićova [Ljubica Marić] in grausamer Weise misshandelt worden, wobei ihre Geschlechtsorgane verletzt worden sind [...] protestieren die Delegierten der Staatssektionen schon als Herren aus Gentlemansgefühlen'). *Ibid.* In July 1935, Marić was admitted to hospital; it is thought that she had an abortion (Melita Milin, personal communication to the author). Marić's detainment is also discussed in Milin, *Ljubica Marić: Komponovanje kao graditeljski čin* ('Ljubica Marić: Composition as a Creative Act') (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology SASA, 2018), 89–92.

⁴⁹ 'Man bekommt nur höfliche und ausweichende Antworte[n] [...] dass wir Ausländer kein Recht haben, uns darüber aufzuregen'. Letter from Dent to Hába, 16 September 1935, in Reittererová and Reitterer, 'Musik und Politik – Musikpolitik', 212. Bach had suffered financially after Vienna's *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was banned in February 1934. See *ibid.*, 151–3.

⁵⁰ Fauser, 'The Scholar behind the Medal', 242.

⁵¹ 'Gegen die Marterung ihrer Delegierten nicht protestiert'. Eisler and Reichenbach, 'Bericht über die Verhandlungen der IRTB', 305.

remain distant from all politics.⁵² (In fact, the resolution did not *explicitly* mention politics at all.) Dent had long maintained a divide between his personal commitments, which during the 1930s included significant efforts to help refugee musicians, and the more limited duties of the ISCM. Back in 1923, he had declared: 'The International Society for Contemporary Music has neither political nor financial interests. It concerns itself with music, and only with music. It does not even want to come to the aid of composers.'⁵³ As Eisler's outrage demonstrates, this narrow commitment to the perceived needs of an abstracted art form was coming under growing pressure in the 1930s, when the lives of an increasing number of its human creators became disrupted and imperilled.

Dent's continued upholding of the distinction between music and politics – even in the face of torture – evinced an anxious defensiveness about the whole project of a musical internationalism. From the moment of the ISCM's founding, conservative nationalists, especially in Germany, lambasted the organization as encapsulating a pernicious symbiosis between cosmopolitanism and modernism; for these critics, a 'musical League of Nations' was, by definition, complicit with the anti-German conspiracy of the Versailles settlement.⁵⁴ Such accusations targeted the foundational disjunction of an organization that claimed to be international but not political. They had a lasting impact on Dent. '[W]e do not want to give the impression that the International Society is linked to any particular political movement,' he told Hába; 'otherwise everyone will immediately say that our music is only a fig leaf for political agitation.'⁵⁵ While Shreffler is right to stress the significance of Prague as a turning point for the ISCM, Dent's efforts amid the turbulence of the mid-1930s to steer the organization away from public controversy were consistent with his established approach to the hostile Right.

Entangled in the more overtly ideological confrontations of 1935 were unresolved conundrums about what exactly an institution of musical internationalism should be, and how the agents of internationalism that such an institution had come to produce – male musicians as would-be diplomats – ought to act. Dent, abidingly anxious about how the ISCM might be perceived, sought to preserve a stage for the performance of multilateral diplomacy, set apart from the domain of governments and embassies. The boundary between 'performed' and 'real' diplomacy was, however, becoming uncomfortably ambiguous. Invoking the cosmopolitan ethics of humanitarianism, Eisler and Hába's appeal urged the ISCM to draw on its unique status in European musical life – accrued, in part, through its miniaturized restaging of League of Nations-style summitry – to become an actor in international affairs, a diplomatic agent in its own right with the authority to converse with nation states on behalf of musicians as a transnational collective.

⁵² 'Unsere Proklamation in Prag betont ausdrücklich, dass wir von aller Politik fern bleiben wollen.' Letter from Dent to Hába, 16 September 1935, in Reittererová and Reitterer, 'Musik und Politik – Musikpolitik', 212.

⁵³ 'La Société Internationale pour la Musique Contemporaine n'a ni intérêts politiques ni intérêts financiers. Elle s'occupe de musique, et ne s'occupe que de musique. Elle ne veut même pas venir en aide aux compositeurs.' Dent, 'Internationalisme et Musique', *La revue musicale*, 4/10 (August 1923), 58–60 (p. 60).

⁵⁴ Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik*, 77–80. The cultural-political context for such sentiments, which were steeped in antisemitism, is surveyed in Eckhard John, *Musikbolschewismus: Die Politisierung der Musik in Deutschland 1918–1938* (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1994); and Nicholas Attfield, *Challenging the Modern: Conservative Revolution in German Music 1918–33* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2017).

⁵⁵ 'Wir wollen nicht den Anschein geben, dass die I. G. mit irgend einer bestimmten politischen Bewegung in Zusammenhang steht; sonst sagen alle Leute sofort, dass unsere Musik nur ein Deckmantel für politische Agitation sei.' Letter from Dent to Hába, 16 September 1935, in Reittererová and Reitterer, 'Musik und Politik – Musikpolitik', 212.

In the short term, Dent succeeded in resisting Hába and Eisler's campaign: Čolić, Marić and Vučković were released, putting an end to the dispute, without the ISCM issuing a statement.⁵⁶ Yet in hindsight, the episode hints that his era of musical internationalism would soon be drawing to a close. In the 1920s, it had been crucial to the ISCM's 'non-political' internationalism that it could emulate the etiquette of statecraft while remaining semi-independent of states themselves.⁵⁷ But this independence looked increasingly fragile. Political agents were intervening more directly in the ISCM's internal affairs, as exemplified by the 'strange "Russian" delegation' in Prague. And as a result, the organization was being pushed to move beyond the mere performance of diplomacy and intervene more directly in the affairs of states. There are premonitions here of the years after 1945, the period of the ISCM's so-called 'stagnation'.⁵⁸ At mid-century, its multilateral conferences of unofficial musician-diplomats would become largely overshadowed by the activities of governments, which significantly extended their patronage of the arts and, in the cold war context, developed more organized programmes of cultural diplomacy.⁵⁹ Situated in the *longue durée*, the ISCM's General Assembly – enacting League of Nations-style internationalism through ambivalent imitation – represents one unstable configuration, distinctive to interwar Europe, of the possibilities emerging from the rapidly transforming relationship between artists and the state.

Worker Internationalism, Local Song and the Politics of Urban Space

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At the height of the strikes and factory occupations that marked Turin's *biennio rosso* ('two red years', 1919–20) a series of songs circulated among the workers. I will focus on two of these

⁵⁶ Marić was released in October 1935; Vučković was probably freed before the appeal was even circulated (Melita Milin, personal communication to the author).

⁵⁷ Direct support from private patrons was crucial to the organization in its early years. During the 1920s, the Swiss patron Werner Reinhart covered many of the expenses of the central office and of the jury meetings. See Ulrike Thiele, 'Musikleben und Mäzenatentum im 20. Jahrhundert: Werner Reinhart (1884–1951)' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Zurich, 2016), 22–9.

⁵⁸ Haefeli, *IGNM*, 286–344.

⁵⁹ Some have recently called into question the narrative that European high-modernist composers were funded by US intelligence agencies during the cold war. See Ian Pace, 'Modernist Fantasias: The Recuperation of a Concept', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 144 (2019), 473–93 (pp. 475–6). But I refer here to the many other cultural activities of the US State Department and other governments, as discussed in the work of Fosler-Lussier and Von Eschen (cited above) or, for example, in Kiril Tomoff, *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War, 1945–1958* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2015).

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