



Berta Geïssmar

Two Worlds of Music

Music in Europe before
and during the Nazi years
—behind the scenes with
Furtwängler and Beecham.

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Title: Two Worlds of Music

Date of first publication: 1946

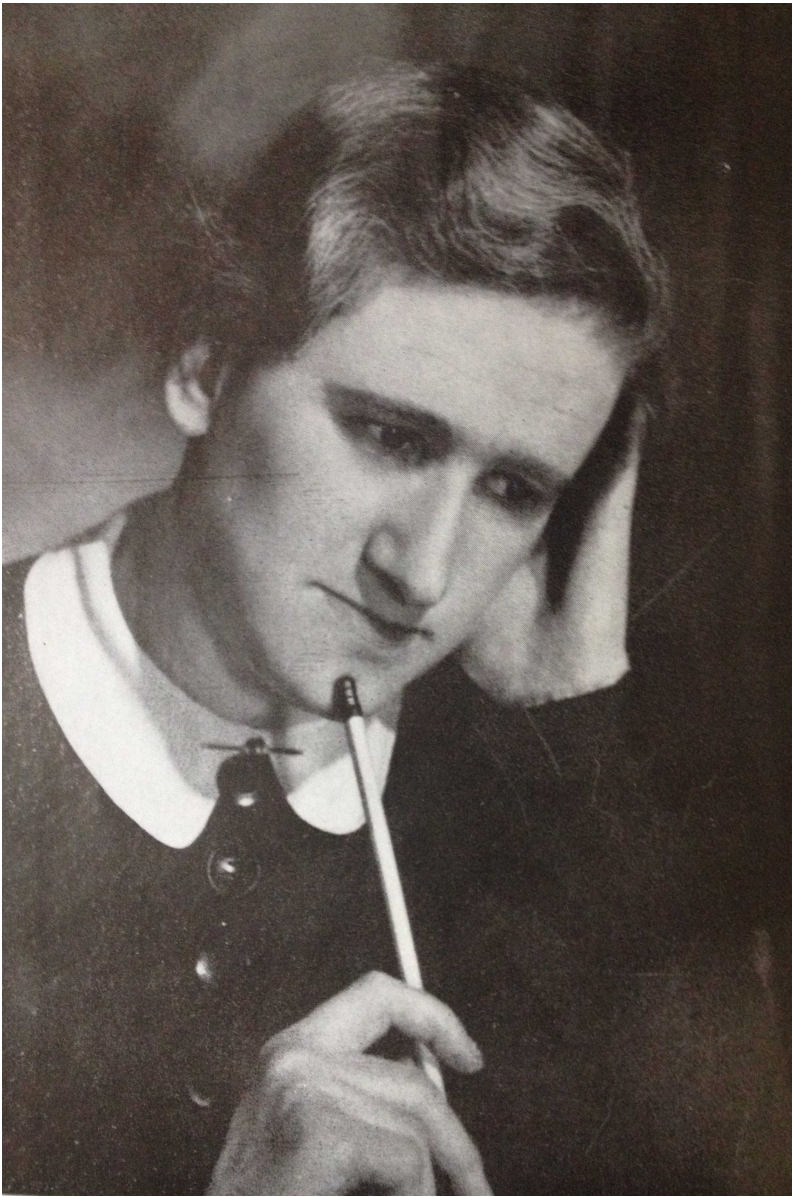
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Date first posted: Apr. 6, 2021

Date last updated: Apr. 11, 2021

Faded Page eBook #20210405

This eBook was produced by: John Routh & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>



The Author in her office at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

Berta Geissmar

TWO
WORLDS
OF
MUSIC

NEW YORK

Creative Age Press, Inc.

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AMERICAN BOOK—STRATFORD PRESS, INC., NEW YORK

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FOREWORD

This book touches on the musical life of seventy years ago and dwells on it for the last thirty. Music, as every other part of cultural life, is, to a certain extent, connected with the current social and economic conditions, but never before has it been seized and exploited for the purposes of the “absolute state” in which art ceased to be independent.

The events of this book have actually happened. It is a document of the problems that arose out of the circumstances of an epoch, of men behaving according to their disposition and character. It intends to be an honest record of a period in which tradition, evolution and freedom fought their battle against dictatorship; of music in Germany fettered to Hitler’s huge machine, and music in England, neglected perhaps, but free.

B. G.

PART ONE

Germany Before Hitler

CHAPTER ONE

A town of character bequeathes a rich heritage to its children. I was born in Mannheim, a town which since the reign of art-loving Elector Karl Theodor had endowed its citizens with a love of music and of drama, and had established a great cultural tradition which persisted through the years. The young Goethe admired its collections of art and literature; Mozart's visit to Mannheim was a milestone in his artistic development. Charles Burney, Dr. Johnson's friend, wrote in praise of Mannheim's Electoral band in 1773: ". . . Indeed, there are more solo players and good composers in this, than perhaps any other orchestra in Europe; it is an army of generals, equally fit to plan a battle, as to fight it." Lessing very nearly became director of Mannheim's theater, and the beginnings of Richard Wagner's career were influenced by his friend and early enthusiast, Emil Heckel, a citizen of Mannheim, founder of the first Richard Wagner Society in June 1871.

PRE-1914

Mannheim was my native town.

My mother descended from one of the venerable families which had made Mannheim its home for almost two hundred years. Both my paternal grandfather and my father, his junior partner, were well-known lawyers. My father, in addition, was extremely musical. Business was never mentioned at home, but his passionate love for music constantly invaded his office. The concert society that he founded was run from there, and he even kept a violin there to play at odd moments.

My father played the violin and viola extremely well, and was a respected connoisseur of string instruments whose judgment was consulted by people from all over Germany and even from abroad. He carried on a wide, fascinating correspondence about instruments. In 1900 the collector's dream came true. He was offered the Vieuxtemps Stradivarius. When he consulted Joachim, the famous violinist, about the instrument, he received a post card saying, "This Antonio is not a cardboard saint!" That decided him. He bought the Vieuxtemps, so called because it had been owned by the famous virtuoso.

The violin was made in 1710 which is considered Stradivarius' best period. It has always been in careful hands and is still in a fine state of preservation. The golden-orange color for which it is noted, and which most Strads of that time share, is reminiscent of the golden hue of Rembrandt's

best period. The late Alfred Hill, world renowned London connoisseur, considered it among the handsomest Stradivarii that exist.

The violin was the delight of my father's life, and he hardly ever parted from it. After his death my mother and I kept the instrument, for we cherished it far beyond all the tempting offers that we got for it. When I had to leave Hitler Germany, the export of such instruments was not yet forbidden, so the Strad was tucked under my arm, a symbol of all I had loved and was forced to leave behind. Except for a brief period in 1936 when I was in America, I kept it with me, until I placed it in the care of the Messrs. Hill during the blitz. It was removed from the danger zone during the blitz to one mysterious place after another. "Don't you worry," said Mr. Hill, "your fiddle is in the most illustrious company." The roster of other instruments removed to safety with my Vieuxtemps was indeed impressive, and for a while, by one of those strange coincidences of an emergency, the Vieuxtemps Guarnerius was sheltered with the Stradivarius with which it had formerly alternated.

After my father had acquired his Stradivarius, his collecting zeal abated. He always kept a floating population of instruments in the house, however, at least enough for a quartet; and once a week during his entire life, his own quartet which he had organized gathered to play at our house. Nor was his enthusiasm for chamber music satisfied with those superlative amateur evenings of music. In those days, innumerable concert societies flourished all over Germany, supported, for the most part, by music-loving amateurs, many of whom were competent musicians themselves. With a few others, my father had guaranteed the money to found a concert society which, in the course of its four annual winter concerts, engaged all the famous quartets.

Concert days of "our concert society" were always exciting. The artists were often our guests, so the rehearsals were almost always held at our house, and after the concert we invariably entertained the musicians and a group of friends.

The life of the family was inextricably bound up with music. We were constantly entertaining famous musicians. We loved and respected the works of the great masters, but at the same time were keenly aware of the newest aspects of that brilliant era of German musical development. When Brahms' works, particularly in chamber music, became more widely known, a big Brahms community sprang up in Mannheim. My family knew him personally and supported him ardently from the beginning, but their inherent devotion was to music, not to individuals, and for that reason they were able

to accept Wagner too. Controversy raged about the work of the two men, but my family listened to them both with enjoyment.

Mother loved to illustrate the degree of that controversy with an account of her visit to Karlsruhe to hear Felix Mottl conduct the first local performance of Brahms' Third Symphony which had had its premiere under Hans Richter in Vienna in December 1883. Mottl was frankly a Bayreuth man, a champion of Wagner, which in those days logically implied a sworn enemy of Brahms. After the Karlsruhe performance of the Third Symphony, Mottl burst into the artist's room quite out of breath, exclaiming, "Thank God! We made short work of that!" He had falsified Brahms' tempi to spoil the effect of the symphony.

Even Brahms himself was not a good interpreter of his work. When he played his concerto in B flat in the historic *Rokokosaal* of the Mannheim Theater, his clumsy fingers often hit the wrong notes, but in spite of it, the concert left a deep impression on the audience.

Mother went to Bayreuth, too. In 1889, when she was seventeen, she made the long, tiring journey to a Bayreuth far different from the one I was to know later. That year, royalty, musicians and people from all over the world flocked to hear Felix Mottl conduct *Tristan* with Alvary and Rosa Sucher, Hans Richter conduct *Die Meistersinger* and Hermann Levi, *Parsifal* with the incomparable Van Dyck in the title role and Amalie Materna and Therese Malten alternating as Kundry. And afterward they congregated in the restaurant to give further acclaim to the singers as they entered.

My childhood was full of such stories, people and the music that was behind them. As I quietly sat and listened to my father and his friends playing quartets, I got to know a great deal of chamber music by heart, and one of my greatest delights was to sit with him at the Society concerts, following his score with him while he pointed out the passages he loved and told me how they should sound. I became so involved in his correspondence about instruments, that I gained a considerable knowledge of the subject. I can never be grateful enough for that heritage. It makes a person strong in himself, gives him a kind of armor against all mishap, something which no circumstances can ever take away.

There was a perfect companionship between my father and myself. He would have preferred that I stuck to music as I grew up, and was not really in favor of a university career for me. But he was as responsible for my love

of philosophy as for my love of music, and when I was 18 I overcame his protests and entered Heidelberg.

Heidelberg in 1910 was a wonderful place for a young and ardent student. The great scholars teaching there inspired a feeling of rapt discipleship, and the romantic surroundings of the old university town encouraged lasting friendships. I was the only woman at the University majoring in philosophy, and at father's insistence concentrated first on the Greek. From the beginning, my family was concerned lest I neglect my violin, and lose my interest in the outside world in my concentration on philosophy and everything concerned with it. At first father simply selected my courses with care, but when I seemed to be growing overstudious, he interrupted my studies and sent me to England.

I adored England from the first. As a paying guest in a family in Harrow, I explored the world. I learned for the first time what it meant to live in a really free country, and my months of contact with unself-conscious Englishmen helped me overcome much of my shyness and quick embarrassment. I visited museums in London, waited in the pit queues of the theaters, saw all the Shakespeare I could, and for the first time in my life saw a ballet. And what a ballet! The Pavlova Season at the Palace Theatre—the season during which Pavlova slapped her partner Mordkin's face when he dropped her during Glazunof's *Bachanale*, the climax, I learned years later, of jealousies because a woman mad about Mordkin had called for him after every number to Pavlova's great irritation. Little did I think as I sat there, thrilled by that new world, that I would be working for the man who was to bring the Russian Ballet to England and be largely responsible for making London ballet conscious.

When I returned to the University, my time was divided between my studies and music. Then came the war. Mother was soon busy in one of the military hospitals, and I worked in an emergency hospital at the huge Heinrich Lanz plant. The ranks of Heidelberg were depleted, and since I could not go often, I confined myself to a private course at the home of my venerable teacher, Wilhelm Windelband, who read Kant's *Prolegomena* and *The Critique of Pure Reason* with his eight students.

During those four war years, cultural and artistic life was kept up in Germany. Those really indispensable for the maintenance of cultural life, of opera, drama and concerts, were exempt from full-time war work. People met frequently for simple pleasures. An opera or a good play seemed even more enjoyable than in normal times. At home we played more chamber

music than ever. Whether the news was good or bad, life was always stimulating.

CHAPTER TWO

After the first year of the war, Bodanzky, the *Hofkapellmeister* of Mannheim, was appointed to the New York Metropolitan Opera. The choice of a successor in the great musical tradition of the town would have been difficult enough without the limitations imposed by the war. But the Theater Commission which was responsible for all questions concerning the Mannheim Theater and orchestra, selected a few likely candidates, and sent a small committee accompanied by Bodanzky to Lübeck to hear one of them. The young conductor was barely 28. He conducted *Fidelio*. Without further hearings, he was unanimously chosen. The Theater Commission had recognized his genius. He was Wilhelm Furtwängler.

1914-18

In September 1915, Furtwängler took up his duties as first conductor of the opera and *Musikalische Akademien* concerts that date back to 1779. His first performance was *Der Freischütz*, conducted in the presence of his predecessor, who sat in the center box with my mother. It was full of promise of what was to come, and his first concert, which included Brahms' First Symphony, gave Mannheimers the satisfactory feeling that in spite of his youth the new man in charge of their musical life was well able to carry on the fame of their old tradition.

For a young man as painfully shy as Furtwängler, it was disconcerting to discover that the Mannheim public looked on its *Hofkapellmeister* as a kind of demi-god; he was common property and everything he did and said was the talk of the day. Fortunately, Oskar Grohé, the intimate friend of lieder composer Hugo Wolf, was a member of the Theater Commission, was sympathetic to the young conductor's position, and was well able to look after him and offer him the protection of a broad back behind which to hide.

One afternoon shortly after the *Freischütz* performance, our bell rang. Mother called down to the maid, "I am not in," but was too late. Furtwängler stood in the hall—a very tall young man in an enormous black hat and a *Loden* cape.

It was not his first visit to our house. As a little boy he had spent his holidays with his grandmother who had lived in Mannheim, and who had been a friend of our family for years. Even then he had begun to compose, and when he was a boy of fifteen, my father and his friends played his first quartet. The parts were hardly readable and Furtwängler, with his head of

golden curls, went from one stand to the other to explain what he meant. Now the youth returned as a man and the old friendship was renewed. My father took him under his wing, and soon he was at home with us, and found a sympathetic hearing for all the problems of his new life.

Furtwängler was tall, slim and fair. The most arresting features of his fine artist's head were the high and noble forehead and the eyes. His were the eyes of a visionary, large, blue and expressive: when he conducted or played the piano, they were usually veiled and half closed, but they were capable of widening and emitting a tremendous vitality when he entered into an argument or a conversation which interested him, and they could grow tender and radiant when he was in a softened and happy mood.

His character was involved. He had a logical and persistent mind, direct and forceful: at the same time, particularly in his youth, he was shy to the point of extreme sensitiveness. Sometimes it seemed that he was only completely at ease with his enormous dog "Lord," which followed him everywhere, even occupying his room at the theater during rehearsals, with the result that nobody else could ever get in.

He was not then, nor did he ever become, an *homme du monde*; but he brought to bear on life not only his musical genius but his other fine mental equipment. He had been carefully brought up by parents both of whom came from scholarly and musical families. From them he inherited, among other things, his love of beauty and his appreciation of art. His mother was a gifted painter, who painted charming portraits of her four children; his father was the well-known archaeologist, Adolf Furtwängler, a great authority on Greek vases and coins, Director of the Munich Glyptothek and Professor at the Munich University, where he was adored almost as much by his students as by his children, of whom Wilhelm was the eldest. During his youth he travelled with his father to Greece and Italy, opening his eyes to the glories of ancient Greece and Rome and the Renaissance, which meant so much to him during his whole life. On tour, his first excursion in any town was to its museum. On our first visit to London we went to look at the Elgin Marbles and the unique collection of Greek vases in the British Museum, which represented for him the world in which he had grown up.

This love of art provided him with one of his favorite pastimes, one in which he often indulged as a relaxation from his strenuous and busy life. Reproductions of famous paintings were spread out on a table and covered up except for some small detail, from which one person who had been sent out of the room was called upon to identify the picture. Furtwängler himself never missed. His knowledge was uncanny.

Furtwängler's father was one of the first German skiing enthusiasts, and he often took his young sons on tours in the Bavarian Alps. Furtwängler attained almost professional skill at the sport, and he still tries to take a winter holiday where he can ski. Almost every sport appealed to him; he loved tennis, sailing and swimming. The family's country house on the beautiful Tegernsee was a paradise for the children. He was a good horseman, but too dramatic a driver when he acquired a car. His passion for passing everything on the road occasionally landed him in serious trouble. Hardly had he obtained his driver's license and a wonderful Daimler-Benz, when he offered to drive Richard Strauss to the Adlon Hotel. As they drove through the Linden after a rehearsal at the State Opera, the two famous musicians were so deep in conversation, they ran straight into a brand-new white car and entirely smashed it. Furtwängler and Strauss were unhurt, and escaped with a shock, but not without considerable trouble.

His love of sport, and the training he received from his father has stood Furtwängler in good stead all his life. By no means a faddist, he is careful of his health, and no day is too busy to interrupt his routine of two walks and an "air bath" before he goes to bed. Because of this, perhaps, he hardly ever has had a cold.

He maintains the same discipline over food. He is practically a vegetarian, never smokes and never drinks. Before a concert his meal is always especially light—a couple of eggs, a little fruit, or some biscuits perhaps, though during the interval of long operas, like *Die Götterdämmerung*, he eats sandwiches, nuts and fruit, and drinks quantities of fruit juice.

This, then, was the young man who came into my mother's hall in his long cape, and around whom my life was to center for so many years: the genius compounded of intellectual directness and an almost excessive shyness, whose timidity made him efface himself in any gathering, but who had so great an attraction for women that, if they did not fall victim to his musical genius, they were fascinated by his personality. It used to be said that there was something of the Parsifal about him, with his limpid blue gaze and his voice that could be so caressing that the most ordinary sentence could sound like a passionate declaration of love.

Yet nobody, not even the most beloved woman, could ever deflect him from his work. His music always came first. When he was going to be married, he wrote to me expressing his anxiety as to whether his future wife, whom he dearly loved, would understand it.

When Furtwängler came to Mannheim in 1915, I was a young student. Little wonder that I was fascinated by his personality, found his music a revelation, and discovered sympathetic understanding in his sincerity and modesty. But I was so impressed by his wide knowledge on all subjects that it took me a long time to bridge the gulf which my respect for him created. Furtwängler himself, always simple and natural, was in no way responsible for adding to my constraint; it was entirely in my own mind.

One day, however, my shyness was overcome. We had met by chance at a party at a Heidelberg professor's house and went home together. It was early summer, and when we came to the ancient bridge near the Neckar facing the castle ruin, a little shriveled old woman sat selling the first cherries of the season. Furtwängler bought a bagful and said, "Now let's see who can spit the stones farthest." So we stood there spitting our stones into the Neckar, and suddenly I was on common ground, and our lifelong friendship was sealed. For the sake of that friendship it was perhaps just as well that his stones went farthest as we leaned on the parapet of the Neckar bridge. I learned afterwards that such competitions were a favorite sport of the Furtwängler family, and that father and sons were all addicts. Among them, Wilhelm considered himself a champion!

Soon we shared many interests. Furtwängler was at home in university circles and often came to Heidelberg while I was there for a walk along the Neckar or on the Königstuhl. Or we spent the evening with one of the professors—the *Geist von Heidelberg*—Ludwig Curtius, the famous archaeologist who had assisted the elder Furtwängler and tutored the younger; Rickert and Jaspers, the philosophers; Max Weber, the famous economist; and Friedrich Gundolf, the young romantic friend of the poet, Stefan George. And when he came to dine with my family, he often came an hour earlier to talk about my studies, about music, and about books in my little sitting-room. There too, he began to tell me about his own work and troubles, and soon I was on the way to becoming a kind of confidential secretary.

In Mannheim, the theater became the center of attraction for me. From the box which my family had occupied since the time of my great-grandparents, I heard all the operas for the first time. I went to Furtwängler's rehearsals whenever possible, and life, already rich, was enhanced by his friendship and our mutual interests.

Yet it was a grave time, and in spite of our full life, the war weighed heavily upon us. My private life was also shadowed; my father had begun to show signs of a serious illness from which he was not to recover. My parents

had been very happily married, and I had been devoted to my father. When he died in July 1918, both mother and I felt that life had stopped, and sought the seclusion of the Black Forest.

Furtwängler was on holiday when my father died. I knew he was my friend, of course, but it seemed to me that his interest focused in my father and I was not at all sure that our friendship would not be greatly limited by his death. But one day he wrote to me. He was back in Mannheim and wanted to discuss various things with me. Could I come? I could. We met in our house—our house which seemed dead and deprived of its real spirit. That evening Furtwängler put me on my feet. His confidence that I would face anything in life bravely inspired me with courage which I had entirely lost. He drew me into a discussion of his own problems, and in sharing them I felt that I was needed. It was a new mainspring of my life.

Soon another problem arose. My father had been the soul of his own concert society; who could take his place? I was recommended to succeed him on the committee but I hesitated. In those days few women served on committees. Again Furtwängler encouraged me. He declared that I was the only possible successor to my father, little guessing how much the knowledge and experience I was to gain in the post would eventually mean to him.

Meanwhile the fateful month of November 1918 had come, and with it the Armistice. The relief was so tremendous that few realized the implications of the peace.

CHAPTER THREE

When Furtwängler came to Mannheim there was no doubt that he was unusually talented, but he himself was the first to realize that he still lacked experience. Yet every performance he gave was so outstanding, it was no wonder that more and more invitations from other towns were extended to him.

1920

Unlike many gifted young conductors, however, he remained aloof from all these tempting offers. He had the self-control to wait, and was determined to continue to work towards the ripening of his own musical experience. However, during the two last years of his Mannheim contract, he found it difficult to adhere to this determination.

The first year after the war, rail travel was so complicated that Willem Mengelberg felt unable to keep up his work with the Frankfurt Museum concerts, which he conducted in addition to his traditional *Concertgebouw* concerts in Amsterdam. Nothing was more logical than that Furtwängler be asked to combine the Frankfurt concerts with his work in Mannheim. However, although he occasionally went there as a guest conductor, he considered that his work in Mannheim excluded him from assuming further permanent responsibilities.

To refuse a similar offer from Vienna was far more difficult. As an entirely unknown conductor he had gone there in December 1918 for a concert with the *Wiener Symphonie Orchester*, at which he performed Brahms' Third Symphony, and had been immediately acclaimed by the Viennese press and public as the greatest and most interesting conductor of the younger generation. From that moment Vienna sought him whenever possible. The first invitation for a cycle of concerts with the *Symphonie Orchester*—the *Tonkünstleryclus*—he accepted in 1919 and annually thereafter. He was fascinated by Vienna. He was thrilled by the understanding of Vienna's musical public; he made friends who had known Bruckner, Brahms, and Mahler; he basked in the atmosphere of tradition and sympathy. With iron self-control, however, he kept to his decision of sticking to the Mannheim work as the necessary basis of preparation for his future activities. He went to Vienna from time to time, but travel made the few visits he permitted himself more and more difficult, and he wrote me resignedly, during an unexpected breakdown on one of these journeys, that he was afraid he would not be able to keep them up.

Meanwhile, his career went its meteoric way. He had given some concerts in Berlin, and, like the Viennese, the Berliners acclaimed him. When Richard Strauss left the Berlin State Opera concerts in 1920 to settle in Vienna, Furtwängler was invited to conduct, as a possible successor. He was unanimously elected by the orchestra, in the interval of the first rehearsal, and was appointed for the coming season (1920-21). Nothing stood in the way. His Mannheim contract expired in June 1920, and the Berlin contract in October.

While Furtwängler was having his triumphant success with the Berlin *Staatskapelle*, I submitted my thesis in philosophy: “Art and Science as Concepts of the Universe.” As was the custom, 1921 the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at Heidelberg knew my subject, but I had never discussed what I was writing with him, and had worked quite on my own. He rejected my thesis as being too independent, and proposed that I re-edit it under his supervision for another year. I was utterly defeated. I felt as if I would never be able to complete my Ph.D., so many obstacles always arose.

However, I took courage. There were many schools of philosophy in Germany, and it was quite possible that one philosopher might welcome what another rejected. I went to Frankfurt. My thesis was accepted, and I got my degree.

The move to Frankfurt had another advantage. Furtwängler had decided to accept the Directorship of the Frankfurt Museum concerts, in addition to the State Opera concerts, and travelled regularly between Berlin, Frankfurt, and Vienna, where he had also agreed to do some conducting. When he came to Frankfurt we always had a great deal to discuss. I shared his general work as much as possible, and in January 1921 he asked me to consider coming to Berlin, the center of Germany’s musical life and, for Furtwängler, the most exciting place of all. I accepted.

That summer my mother and I went to the Engadine for the first time after the Great War. My parents and grandparents had gone there every summer, and had regularly met the same group of friends, for many well-known people went to the Engadine to enjoy the clear air and the wonderful sun. Among them, in my mother’s day and during the time of the Brahms controversy, were Simrock, the famous Brahms publisher, and Hanslick, his great supporter and the enemy of Wagner, made immortal by Wagner as Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger*.

Furtwängler joined us that year. For once he gave himself a holiday of three weeks without work. He fell under the spell of the beautiful landscape. He was a marvellous mountaineer, trained to it from childhood by his father. He loved nature, and soon knew every summit of the area. He liked to climb the mountains without using the better-known paths, and on our many trips together we frequently took our food with us and spent the day on some mountain top. On real climbs through snow and ice, we observed a kind of ritual. We climbed in silence, almost grimly, till we had reached our objective—then we relaxed. Furtwängler threw off his coat and breathed deeply in the crystalline air, and then, sitting in solitude and peace, with the chain of snow-peaked mountains and glaciers facing us, we discussed and planned much of our future work.

We spent many holidays in the Engadine after that, and a few years later, in 1924, he bought his own house there. Situated on a lovely and lonely slope between St. Moritz and Pontresina, the house had every comfort. It had been a painter's chalet, and the studio made a wonderful music room. Later Furtwängler's first wife, with her Scandinavian hospitality, never counted the heads of those who sat down to meals, nor did she care how many slept, tucked away somehow in that house. Furtwängler was usually invisible and "not to be disturbed" while working, but at meals he always sat at the head of his table.

In the autumn of 1921, I went to Berlin. The political situation was desperate, but the city was full of life. Old friends were kind, and I quickly made new ones. I attended many concerts, and, of course, all the *Staatsoper* concerts. They were given on Thursdays and, like the concerts of the Vienna Philharmonic, were purely the concern of the orchestra, which was the Opera Orchestra as well. This series had been in charge of such noted conductors as Muck, then Weingartner from 1891-1908, and finally Richard Strauss from 1908-20. Though there was hardly ever a seat to be had, I was lucky enough to get into one of the boxes above the orchestra where the famous Berlin painter, Max Liebermann, was regularly to be found making sketches of the orchestra and its conductor.

Berlin was exciting. There was a flood of concerts to which everybody came, and there was an enormous competition between the various conductors. Each concert was a new battle for maintaining a reputation. The political depression of the nation was grave, but it is significant, in considering the cultural situation of pre-Hitler Germany, that whatever the material misery, there was a free intellectual and spiritual life.

Looking back on Germany's musical life in those years, it is amazing how much went on in spite of the adverse times. In the spring of 1921 the first *Brahmsfest* after the war was held in Wiesbaden. These Brahms festivals had been founded by the *Deutsche Brahms Gesellschaft* in 1909, and attracted their own special community, a community of real music lovers from all parts of Germany and from abroad. The artists considered it a great privilege to be invited to participate, for these occasions had become a traditional feature of German musical life. I remember at Wiesbaden in 1921 and at Hamburg in 1922 meeting old friends of the *Schumann-Brahms Kreis*, Professor Julius Röntgen, born in 1855, and Fräulein Engelmann, from Holland; Eugenie Schumann, born in 1851, daughter of Robert and Clara, and the nonagenarian Alwin von Beckerath, who had been an intimate friend of Brahms.

The Brahms festivals were not the only music festivals held after the war. There were the famous *Schlesische Musikfeste*, there were the Handel festivals, and there were the festivals of small groups for the International Society for Contemporary Music. Somehow they all managed to get financial support from admirers and from the towns where they were held, and the festival spirit was always such as to make everybody temporarily forget that the outside world existed.

In Berlin I looked after Furtwängler and worked for the Artists' League, a league run on an honorary basis, formed by the musicians themselves for the protection of artists' interests. It gave advice and ran a concert department which took less than the professional agency fee, and gave me much valuable experience.

Furtwängler became more and more popular in Vienna during this time, and in 1921 after a performance of the Brahms Requiem, which he conducted there, he was appointed a director of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* founded in 1812. He traveled a lot, but in those days I did not always accompany him; I sat in Berlin and held the fort.

During that winter, 1921-22, it was definitely necessary to hold the fort. There was a boom in musical life and a first-rate phalanx of conductors—Busch, Furtwängler, Klemperer, Nikisch, Strauss, Bruno Walter, Weingartner, and others. I went to every possible concert and reported daily to Furtwängler when he was absent.

Furtwängler was then director of the Berlin *Staatskapelle*, a magnificent orchestra with a splendid tradition. Yet an Opera House is not always suitable for concert purposes, and although Furtwängler highly appreciated

the orchestra, he was often depressed after a concert because he had been unable to realize his artistic intentions—the acoustics in the Opera House, with the orchestra sitting on the stage, damped the sound of a big heroic symphony. He considered this fact in the choice of his programs but once could not resist including one of the big Bruckner symphonies. The performance left him unsatisfied, and as we walked down the Linden afterwards, he poured out his despair over the impossibility of achieving what he wanted.

While Furtwängler was worrying about the problem of the *Staatskapelle* Concerts, things moved unexpectedly to an exciting climax. On January 9, 1922, Arthur Nikisch conducted a Berlin Philharmonic concert for the last time. He had been permanent conductor of these concerts since 1895, of the Hamburg concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic since 1897, and had been in charge of the Leipzig *Gewandhaus* since 1895 as well. On January 23, Max Fiedler conducted in place of Nikisch, who was ill with influenza. Nikisch was still advertised on the program at the general rehearsal on February 5th, but on February 6th Wilhelm Furtwängler conducted the concert: *In Memoriam Arthur Nikisch*. A great artist had passed away.

The Leipzig *Gewandhaus* was immediately offered to Furtwängler. It was alleged to be Nikisch's last wish. The decision about the Berlin post was not taken immediately. Furtwängler fully realized that this was the opportunity of his life, and that only if, in addition to the *Gewandhaus*, he could obtain the direction of the Berlin Philharmonic concerts with their acoustically perfect hall, could he fully live up to his artistic ideals.

Shortly afterwards, in spite of several competing conductors of rank, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra unanimously voted for Furtwängler, and he became successor to Nikisch in both Leipzig and Berlin. His talent, the instinct of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and a kindly fate, had made his dream come true.

Furtwängler was thirty-six. Within a short time he had attained some of the highest musical positions that Europe had to offer.

In life and in his relation to the world, Furtwängler may have seemed to have had a wavering and mutable attitude—but this is not so where music is concerned; here he knows exactly what he wants. Even in the days when his name on a bill was sufficient to sell out the house at once, Furtwängler was always striving to improve his technique, and was keenly interested in that of other conductors.

In his work Furtwängler was a curious mixture of artistic instinct and intuition, and deliberating intellect. These two main qualities can be traced all through his development, until they achieved a balance in his more mature years. He was always so obsessed by, and intent on, his music that everything else was pushed into the background. Even as conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, he used to rush to the platform for his rehearsal, raising his baton aloft, as if he could hardly wait to begin. I well remember how the famous orchestra resented it at first, and complained to me that he never even said “Good morning.” When I cautiously tried to explain this to him he was completely surprised and full of consternation; and from then on he always remembered to begin his rehearsals with a friendly word.

The incident, trivial in itself, is symbolic of an ever-varying and inexhaustible problem: the relation between conductor and orchestra. From the very beginning Furtwängler had the respect of the orchestras he conducted; there could never be any doubt about his sincere and earnest musicianship; but until the ideal stage of things was reached, until he knew his job not only musically but also psychologically, there were many phases in his relationship to orchestras which are perhaps typical of any conductor’s relation to his orchestra, even if his authority is not supported by world-wide fame.

While Furtwängler was learning he was often handicapped by conflicts between technique and vision. With his relentless self-criticism he was perfectly aware of his shortcomings, and tried to overcome them. During this phase his conducting was restless and unbalanced, and was not easy for the orchestra to follow. One thing, however, was all right from the beginning—the expressive directing movements of his wonderful hands, which seemed to paint the music on an invisible screen or form it out of an unseen piece of clay. But apart from this, he gesticulated in all directions, shook his head constantly, walked about on his rostrum, made faces when something went wrong, stamped, sang, shouted, and even spat (so that a joke came into being that the first desks must be armed with umbrellas). Furtwängler worried deeply when occasional difficulties arose with the players who complained that they could not understand his indications. All his life he has worked on his beat, and has never ceased to try to improve it. I remember him coming off the platform in some European capital one evening during the applause and saying to me that he had “just found out the beat” for a certain passage. Furtwängler’s beat—as orchestras all over the world know—is an absolute nightmare to all players until they get used to it. A member of the London Philharmonic Orchestra once declared that it is “only after the thirteenth preliminary wiggle” that Furtwängler’s baton descends. It has

always been a riddle for the outsider how, with his peculiar beat, he gets results of exactitude as well as of richness in sound.

Furtwängler realized that he had two different things to watch—his own technique and his relationship with the orchestra as an understanding medium and friend. He fully appreciated that there is nothing more delicate and sensitive, more relentless and clear-sighted than an orchestra, and that its handling requires the greatest skill, subtlety, human kindness and an undisputed authority. In the course of time he mastered the approach. His orchestras worshipped him though he often asked the impossible, seldom praised them, hardly ever said a word of thanks; his players got to know that a nod given half in a trance during the performance was a greater acknowledgment from him than any spoken word of praise.

While he is preparing to conduct a work, Furtwängler clearly and distinctly identifies himself with it: he absorbs it, and, deeply concentrating on it, he re-creates it as the composer intended. This he does again and again, even if he has performed the work a thousand times before. Nothing disturbs him while he works, that is, while he is walking up and down the room, his hands beating time and his lips silently singing. He fixes the piece before his spiritual eye with intense concentration. An infinite painstaking is always behind every performance that Furtwängler gives, and even in later years he has never taken advantage of his famous name to save himself trouble. He would never risk skimping the conscientious preparation of any concert, and in this may perhaps be found the clue to his artistic fascination. No unrest of the day ever touches him while he works; nothing on earth can induce him to speed up his working time in order to be finished an hour earlier to be free for something else. His whole organism is attuned to this exact conscientiousness, and never would he allow himself to be forced out of it by some exterior pressure. He needs time to live through a great masterpiece again and again in all tranquillity. Only in this way can he feel himself ready, and sure of himself. When he finally arrives at a rehearsal his main work is already done, and he has only to transmit his intentions to the orchestra. When the concert begins, he seems to leave all earthly things behind: he is conscious neither of audience nor of score. With half-closed eyes he seems to mesmerize the orchestra, and owing to his deep musical feelings he relives the creative process of the composer, while the orchestra hangs on his movements.

If the audience leaves such a concert with a feeling of having lived through an extraordinary experience, it is because it has been made to feel the tension and the thrill of a truly visionary process of re-creation. Only if

his vision of how a work should sound has been realized does Furtwängler relax after the strain of the concert; otherwise, he is nearly demented, and most difficult for those nearest to him, even if the public has acclaimed the performance with fanatical applause.

Even on the piano, Furtwängler had the gift of calling music to life in a monumental yet plastic way. His velvety touch was envied by many professionals, and to hear him play one of the great Beethoven sonatas, the “Moonlight” or the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, was a real experience. Never will I forget the first time he demonstrated to me from beginning to end the true spirit and inner meaning of the Choral Symphony. He knew the whole repertoire of piano and chamber music, and it was through him that I got to know the true inwardness of the late Beethoven quartets which he played magnificently—volcanic and lucid at the same time.

CHAPTER FOUR

Since its foundation in the days of the monarchy, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra^[1] has been a little republican island. It is the child of a spiritual revolution, a revolution in the presentation of musical masterpieces, a revolution connected with a man with whom the history of modern concert life really begins: Hans von Bülow.

1922

In January 1882 Bülow had come to Berlin with his *Meininger Hofkapelle*. He conducted in the *Sing-Akademie* the music of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. First Brahms himself played his Second Piano Concerto under Bülow's direction; then Bülow played the First Concerto with Brahms conducting. Berlin was overwhelmed. They did not recognize "their" Beethoven and Mendelssohn and for the first time realized the greatness of Brahms.

Twelve years after the second Reich had been founded, its young capital had neither a competent symphony orchestra nor an adequate concert hall. Ever since 1868, however, there had existed among the different musical organizations the *Bilse'sche Kapelle*, a collection of excellent musicians, especially of wind and strings, who gave concerts and made little tours under the worthy Benjamin Bilse, a former municipal musician from Liegnitz.

Early in 1882 there was a disagreement between the players and the patriarchal, despotic Bilse, and overnight the orchestra of fifty-four members found that they were left to themselves. Under the leadership of the second horn and a second violin, they constituted their own republic, and drew up their own constitution. From the beginning the orchestra was an independent creation of its own members, who held the shares of their limited company, and appointed the conductor and new players by popular vote. By legal deed they pledged themselves to remain inviolably together. This first constitution was enlarged in 1895, but it has never been greatly changed.

On May 5, 1882, they played their first concert as an independent body, and during that summer their concerts in Berlin and the provinces met with great success but little material profit. During that summer of 1882 this first self-governing orchestra in Germany got its name: The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

In the same year an adequate hall was found for it. The old skating rink, which till then had been devoted to roller-skating, was taken over to be devoted to music. Its name was changed to "*Philharmonie*" and the ugly, but acoustically perfect, hall remained the home of the Berlin Philharmonic till it was destroyed by a bomb.

The orchestra began by giving three or four popular concerts a week in its new hall. Soon the great choirs gave concerts with them, and soloists began to engage them and finally on October 23, 1882, the first of the great Berlin Philharmonic concerts took place. They combined tradition and a progressive outlook, and were enlivened by the cooperation of famous soloists.

Several conductors officiated that first winter, among them Joseph Joachim. From the beginning he was the patron and friend of the orchestra. He sent them his best pupils, and in 1883 he procured some summer engagements for them, the first of which he conducted himself. He contrived their presence at official functions, and conducted six concerts of a series of twelve. When a financial crisis threatened, he got support from the Mendelssohn and Siemens families. It was exactly fifty years before the Berlin Philharmonic could count on a regular subsidy from Berlin and the Reich, and after both had turned a deaf ear to its early needs, it was Joachim who suggested a Society of Friends of the Orchestra to contribute to its maintenance.

The first five years of the orchestra's activities had proved the necessity of its existence, but what it lacked was a leading personality. Hans von Bülow filled the need. On March 4, 1884, Bülow, who had left Meiningen in 1882, had conducted one of the great Berlin Philharmonic concerts. Subsequently he had conducted a series of concerts in Hamburg and Bremen, but had not been satisfied. He came to the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. The first great trainer of a great orchestra in the history of conducting, he was the real founder of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, for it was he who prepared the ground for its tradition.

Bülow was the initiator of the great age of conductors which has lasted for eighty years. Through him the technique and position of a conductor gained their importance and became independent and influential. It was only, in fact, from Bülow's day that the work of a conductor was taken seriously. He is the founder of modern orchestral culture.

The first of the ten Philharmonic concerts planned under Bülow took place on October 21, 1887. By November, the idea of admitting the public to

the final rehearsal was adopted. It was an important innovation, the beginning of a lasting tradition. In the season 1890-91 Bülow conducted the first concert for the newly organized Pension Fund of the orchestra to found another permanent institution, the Pension Fund concert. He conducted in all fifty-one Berlin Philharmonic concerts. At the fiftieth, March 28, 1892, he made a famous speech after a performance of the *Eroica*, dedicating it to Bismarck; the speech and the dedication were intended as a protest of Bismarck's brusque dismissal as the First Chancellor of the Reich by the young Kaiser.

In the winter of 1892-93, Bülow was already so ill that he could conduct only the last Philharmonic concert of the season, at which he made a speech praising the artistry of the orchestra. Hans Richter, Raphael Maszkowski, Felix Mottl, and Hermann Levi had conducted the previous concerts of that winter.

The winter of 1894-95 saw a memorable combination of conductors at the Philharmonic desk: Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler. Strauss conducted the ten Berlin, Mahler the eight Hamburg concerts. But the winter could only be an interregnum, for Strauss, the creative artist, could never submerge himself entirely in the direction of an orchestra. Meanwhile, the right man was found: Arthur Nikisch.

Some people consider it wrong to identify the history of an orchestra with its great conductors. But it seems to me that only in combination with dynamic leadership and a vital personality can the artistry of an orchestra be molded into truly inspired creative performances.

There was no doubt that Arthur Nikisch had that leadership and personality, and the ten Philharmonic concerts under his direction were the highlights of the enormous activity which the orchestra now assumed. He was, in his art, the extreme opposite of Bülow; he gave the orchestra, in addition to Bülow's discipline, what he himself had to give as a conductor—a great elasticity and a most sensitive adaptability. The orchestra was increased to ninety.

Until January 9, 1922—a full twenty-seven years—Nikisch conducted the Berlin Philharmonic concerts without interruption. He must have conducted about three hundred and fifty great concerts in Berlin, concerts which gave him an even greater prestige than the famous *Gewandhaus* concerts, which he conducted over the same period. His programs included a constant succession of new works and great soloists.

On January 9, 1922, Nikisch conducted the Berliners for the last time, and a new epoch began with their new chief, the young and idealistic Wilhelm Furtwängler.

[1] I am indebted to Dr. Alfred Einstein's brochure, *50 Jahre Berliner Philharmonisches Orchester*, for much of the information about the Berlin Philharmonic's history. Though he quotes me as a source, I could not have written what I have without his booklet, which he wrote on the occasion of the Orchestra's fiftieth anniversary in 1932.

CHAPTER FIVE

At Furtwängler's first Philharmonic Concert in October 1922, I sat in a box with Marie von Bülow, the widow of the former conductor of these concerts. It was she, his second wife (his first was Cosima Liszt), who had edited his letters and writings to provide nine valuable volumes of great musical history. She seemed deeply moved on this occasion, and said to me, "Not since Bülow's day has music been so conducted to give me that thrill down the spine."

1922

Furtwängler's appointment as the successor to Arthur Nikisch was also the turning point in my own work. He had given up the State Opera concerts and the direction of the Frankfurt concerts, but he had to move about continuously between Berlin, Leipzig, and Vienna. Each of the musical organizations of those towns had its own management, but the core of Furtwängler's whole work, the arrangement of his year's activity, the coordination of his concerts and programs were worked out with me. The amount of work Furtwängler had to cope with was considerable. Although the war was just over, the Berlin Philharmonic and *Gewandhaus* concerts played an important part in European musical life. There was an endless number of soloists, composers, publishers, music agents, and other visitors from all over the world who had continually to be dealt with. Life was fascinating and full to overflowing. The young successor to Nikisch was, of course, of interest to the international musical world, and so negotiations soon began to develop with concert institutions abroad.

Except for a series of concerts in Stockholm, the first venture of this kind was a visit to the *Concertgebouw* in Amsterdam, an engagement which, in a way, was decisive to my whole career. The Berlin Philharmonic concerts had been founded by Hermann Wolff, the director of the noted concert agency, *Wolff und Sachs*. Wolff had not only been an impresario but also a friend of his artists and had been intimately connected with Hans von Bülow, Anton Rubinstein, and others. After his death his widow, Louise Wolff, carried on the business with her daughters until Hitler's day. Louise Wolff was an exceedingly capable woman and a dynamic personality. She was a most popular figure in Berlin's social life, and was to be found in every salon, political or artistic. She was equally at home with *Reichspräsident* Ebert as with the Hohenzollerns, and every Embassy was open to her. There were innumerable tales of the strings she pulled, and the

people with whom she had her regular telephone conversations early in the morning before she went to her office.

Yet, in spite of all her cleverness, she failed to see in which direction the tide was turning. The firm and the family came first with her, and her consideration of everything solely from the point of view of *Wolff und Sachs* was gradually becoming incompatible with public interests. It was impossible that a private enterprise should pocket seventy-five per cent of the profit of an orchestra like the Berlin Philharmonic which had to count on public support.

1923

Not only the orchestra but also its new conductor had to face this situation of monopoly. The Wolffs of course had had their say in Furtwängler's election as Nikisch's successor, but the orchestra had cast their vote too. Yet, in the beginning, Furtwängler was considered as a kind of private property of the Wolffs and was expected to do all his business through them. The first important outside offer, however, these *Concertgebouw* concerts, came through me, as executive of the Artists' League. Furtwängler expressed a doubt as to whether he would be free to sign the contract through the League. He had no "sole right" contract with the Wolffs but felt that it was taken for granted. I, of course, objected. I had gotten the engagement, I wanted to sign it, and I declared that if things were going to be like that I did not care to work in Berlin at all. Furtwängler, probably secretly amused and possibly wishing to dampen my ambitious ardor, said he was going to think it over, and next morning told me over the telephone that perhaps I was right, but he did not sound wholly convinced. I had thought it over too, and said, "Please leave the matter to me and wait."

Frau Wolff had always been extremely kind to me, and when I telephoned her, she agreed to see me immediately. I remember that she produced some marvellous Russian cherry brandy, an unheard-of luxury in post-war Germany. I sipped a little of the lovely golden-red stuff and then plunged *in medias res*. "I want to ask you something, Frau Wolff," I said, and then proceeded to recite the case without mentioning names. "But there's no question at all about this," she declared, "the person who made the offer must conclude the business." "That's just what I thought," I replied, and told her that it was she, Furtwängler, and myself, who were involved. At first her consternation was evident. But she was a superior woman, remarkable in many ways, and at the moment may have felt that she could not maintain her privileged policy forever and that I represented a young generation and a new era. She put her arm round my shoulders and said, "You are a wonder! I am going to tell Furtwängler about this conversation

myself.” She did, next day. Furtwängler never referred to the incident, but he casually instructed me to sign the *Concertgebouw* contract. Although my heart leapt, I behaved as if it were the most natural thing in the world, and from then until Hitler parted us, almost always acted as Furtwängler’s intermediary. I was dubbed “Louise II.” It was an important step to break this monopoly, and later, the monopoly on the *Philharmonie* hall itself, which was shared by its proprietor Landecker and *Wolff und Sachs*, and excluded the orchestra from direct transactions.

But a powerful new monopoly was in the making—that of Hitler and the Third Reich.

I accompanied Furtwängler on this first tour abroad, and on a subsequent one which I had arranged in Switzerland with the *Gewandhaus* Orchestra.

1924

He was to marry at the end of May. His future wife was Scandinavian and was only to arrive from Copenhagen on the day before the wedding, so I helped him to prepare his home, and even went along to buy the wedding rings. The salesman, naturally assuming that I was the bride, proceeded to try the ring on my hand, to the utter dismay of Furtwängler!

I then left for Mannheim, and Furtwängler was married. Directly after the wedding, he had to attend a Congress of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Musik Verein* at Kassel. A few days later at 3 A.M. my telephone rang. It was Furtwängler, who had arrived in Mannheim from Kassel, and informed me that he was on his way to our house. He had to leave for Italy the next day to conduct there for the first time. I had always gone with him on important journeys, but this trip to Italy was a kind of honeymoon, and I certainly had not anticipated accompanying him. However, he had taken it for granted that I would, so I had to get ready quickly. We left for Stuttgart, where we were joined by his wife.

The visit to Milan proved most interesting, for among other things, I met Arturo Toscanini. Toscanini was then director at *La Scala*, and lived in Italy surrounded by the veneration and love of the Italian people. His operatic performances were famous all over the world, and people from everywhere, especially musicians, flocked to attend them.

My visit to Toscanini was arranged by his right hand and secretary, Anita Colombo, who later on became director of the famous Opera House. While I waited for him in Signorina Colombo’s office at *La Scala* all sorts of people

went in and out, and I—still a greenhorn—noted with envy the respect with which they talked to her.

Quick steps outside, the door opened, Colombo introduced me, “*La signorina, Maestro,*” and the great Italian led me in to the adjoining room. Nobody who has talked to Toscanini can ever forget the extreme intensity of expression in his strikingly handsome face. His brilliant, flashing eyes are full of fire and temperamental intentness, of vitality mixed with a strange obsessed wistfulness. He has an intense manner of speaking and he accompanies his words with quick and decisive gestures. The conversation did not last long, and centered round musical matters. Toscanini seemed interested to hear about the different conductors working in Germany at the time—but he did not discuss Furtwängler.

Toscanini’s memory is famous: since his vision is poor, he conducts and rehearses without a score, relying entirely on his knowledge of the piece. Apparently his memory for other things is just as acute, because when I met him again at Bayreuth during the great season of 1931 when he and Furtwängler both conducted, the first thing he did was to remind me of what must have been to him a trivial incident—my visit to *La Scala* so many years ago.

Toscanini, when not speaking Italian, generally spoke English, hardly ever German. That summer in Bayreuth while rehearsing the orchestra, he used to convey his wishes by gestures rather than by words, and when a passage was not yet as he intended it to be, made hypnotic movements with his hands, accompanied by repeated exclamations of “No! No! No!” The orchestra called him “Toscanono.”

The first concerts of Furtwängler’s in Italy provided the initial meeting of the two conductors. During one of the innumerable rehearsals that Furtwängler, according to the Italian custom, had to conduct, Toscanini, who had been sitting unnoticed at the back, suddenly rushed forward and shook him warmly by the hand. Throughout the entire visit Toscanini and his family were extremely friendly, and the following year, Furtwängler visited *La Scala* to attend some of Toscanini’s own operatic productions.

In the winter of 1924, Furtwängler made his English debut conducting the Royal Philharmonic Society. From his first performance, the English public took him to their hearts, and only Ernest Newman, the dean of British musical criticism, raised a dissenting voice. His unfavorable review in the *Sunday Times* was delivered to me on our way to the train, and knowing how amazingly touchy Furtwängler was about press criticism, I sat on it

throughout most of the journey just to keep peace. After that first success, Furtwängler appeared regularly in England until the gulf between Germany and the rest of the world grew too wide.

Times were difficult as far as finances were concerned, and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra did not know how they were going to get through that summer of 1924. “Let’s try a tour,” said Furtwängler, and we forthwith sent telegrams to several towns in Germany and Switzerland. They all accepted. Everywhere we went the orchestra was asked to repeat its visit, and so began the Berlin Philharmonic tours with Furtwängler.

At the end of June, Furtwängler went to Mannheim. It had become his custom to conclude the season with some concerts there, combined with a visit at my mother’s house. During that time we finished up his remaining correspondence and went over the scores sent to him for approval. Then he proceeded to his house in Switzerland.

I was to go to the Engadine with him that year to help plan for the coming year, as was our habit on our tramps through the mountains. Just as we were leaving for the station I received a letter from Otto Müller, charter member and chairman of the Berlin Philharmonic. In his sprawling hand, he wrote that the orchestra had decided to entrust the management of its tours to my “proven hands”; he hoped I would be willing to accept the task. I was indeed. Not only was this token of confidence a source of tremendous personal pride, but working as I would be with both Furtwängler and the orchestra would permit me to unify my activities as well.

For many years following there was uninterrupted activity. With our unique team we all served the cause with zest. Times were hard but we were free to work as we liked and with whom we liked. In those days orchestras had not started their extensive tours of Europe. Beyond an occasional visit to a neighboring town there was no large-scale traveling at home or abroad. The idea came to me as a sort of inspiration and I sat down and thought it all out. But it was only gradually that I developed my technique for an orchestral tour. It was like the invention of a new battle strategy, and as the years went by I made more and more improvements which added to its smooth running.

I always began work on a tour a year ahead. First I listed towns to be visited. Then the sequence was planned. The first draft of programs—often for thirty to fifty concerts—had to be made by Furtwängler. That was always a complicated task because, although an orchestra on tour has little time for

rehearsing, Furtwängler disliked repeating a work too often; nor could he always play just what he wanted for various cities had various requests, and local taste was always a major consideration. To simplify it, from 1924 on I kept a program book for reference.

Besides the business and musical sides of the tours there were other considerations. The itinerary had to be planned in detail. I was hopeless at looking up trains but Lorenz Höber, a viola player and also one of the executives, was a genius with a timetable. I may have invented and organized the tours, but without Höber I could never have carried them out successfully. For not only did we have to plan railroad transportation for the personnel of the orchestra, but we had to arrange for the transportation of their luggage and instruments as well—seventy-seven cases which required a van all their own. Often it could not be coupled to the express on which we traveled and had to be sent on in advance immediately after the concert. Lists of the contents of the well-designed instrument cases and the huge specially constructed wardrobe trunks full of the numbered dress suits of the players had to be forwarded to the customs with an indication of when we should pass their frontier. Two members of the orchestra were responsible for the luggage, assisted by Franz Jastrau, the attendant, who managed to make friends wherever he went even if he occasionally did not understand the language. It was a strenuous job for it was of vital importance that each player find his clothes with his instruments on arrival.

There were fairly good halls all over the Continent, but the different sizes, and especially the varying acoustics, required different seating arrangements for the orchestra. At first a short “seating rehearsal” was held two hours before each concert. But then one of the players with a special talent for that sort of thing began to make a platform plan for every hall in which we appeared. We kept the diagrams on file and, when the orchestra returned again, the seating could be quickly settled.

At first the billeting of the orchestra in each town was also a complicated problem, but in that, too, experience led to efficiency. Snorers and non-snorers had to be well separated. It was important to get the players quickly settled when they arrived.

But it was not I who did all the organizing. The orchestra members themselves became very ingenious. Often they had to travel for weeks in railway carriages, and so they started to organize a seating plan to which each member had to submit. There were the smokers and the non-smokers, there were the skat players and there was the Rummy Club, there were the readers, and there were the talkers. They were all placed according to their

various interests. Occasionally I was invited by a particular group, a welcome honor on those long and often tiring journeys.

The organization and building up of these tours was for me a wonderful combination of friendship and of work. I knew to what Furtwängler aspired, and I knew the orchestra's ambitions. The relation between the orchestra and their conductor, in whom they had absolute faith, was the basis of my own position with them. From the moment that they had confided to me the management of their tours they gave me their complete confidence. This perfect relationship between Furtwängler, the orchestra, and myself lasted until I had to leave them all and they were forbidden to have any more to do with me—when, under Hitler, I became *persona non grata*.

When I first took over, the orchestra had no offices. The three executive members divided their different duties among themselves, and dealt with them at their respective homes. Otto Müller, the chairman, always carried everything in his wallet, in which he fumbled as soon as a question arose. I had no office either, merely a combination bedroom sitting-room and a typewriter. Eventually I was given a typist on three afternoons a week—the beginning of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra's office.

Step by step the orchestra organization was built up, and one of the first milestones of its road to glory was a special agreement between Furtwängler and the orchestra—they would always give each other the first option on their time. This “marriage” of orchestra and principal conductor was for many years the core of the orchestra's life, and around this they grouped their engagements under other conductors, and with soloists, and their popular concerts.

Meanwhile, Furtwängler had received several invitations to visit America. Tied up between Berlin, Leipzig, and Vienna, he had little time to spare, yet finally it was agreed that he should accept four weeks as a guest conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra at the end of December 1924. We went on a Hamburg-Amerika liner, and nothing was left undone in Furtwängler's honor.

Germany was poor in those days, while the United States was flourishing. The hospitality of the Americans was indescribable. From the moment we landed, when an unknown person packed us into a magnificent car to sweep us away to our hotel, until we left, and could hardly enter our cabins for presents, this first American visit was a unique experience. How interesting it was to hear the magnificent American orchestras—the Boston and Philadelphia Orchestras, as well as the New York Philharmonic; or to sit

in the Golden Horseshoe of the Metropolitan and hear the performances of that famous Opera House.

Furtwängler was conducting exclusively for the New York Philharmonic. His first appearance was one of the great successes which are milestones in an artist's life, and after it there was not a single ticket to be had for his New York concerts. The orchestra took to him, and so did the public. Furtwängler was immediately offered the directorship for the whole season of the following year, but because of his European commitments he could not undertake more than two months' activities in America. Many of the great international artists were in the United States at that time, and we saw them frequently. At the house of Frederick Steinway, the venerated chief of the famous music firm, such a galaxy of musical genius and brilliance used to assemble as I have never seen elsewhere. I remember a dinner where Casals, Furtwängler, Gabilowitsch, Landowska, Kreisler, Rachmaninoff, Stokowsky and other famous people were present. Mr. Steinway's hock was memorable too! Our stay in New York was exciting and strenuous but rushed past us like a dream, and on a quiet and peaceful English boat, where we were treated as "ordinary folk," we slept our way back to Europe.

For the next two years Furtwängler worked intensely hard. There was an annual visit to America, and the Berlin Philharmonic made several successful tours on which I accompanied them.

1927

Then in the winter of 1927 the Berlin Philharmonic went to England for the first time. The orchestra and I had frequently discussed our aspirations and desires, and once I suggested, "Why don't we go to England?" They all laughed at me, and said that I might as well propose a visit to the moon. That was challenge enough, my determination stiffened, and in due course I arranged the tour. We had two concerts in London, and between them went to Manchester. The enthusiasm of the British public was enormous; there was no feeling against the orchestra of their former enemies. Long paragraphs appeared about the wonderful Berlin Philharmonic and great interest was shown in the organization of the tour. For the second London concert Albert Hall was filled to the last seat. I think that except for the Paris success one year later, it was the orchestra's greatest triumph. After that they went to England every year, their English tours becoming more and more extensive, until Hitler at last estranged the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra from its British public.

CHAPTER SIX

It is astonishing to me even now to look back and remember how rich was the musical life in cities like Berlin and Vienna in the years after 1918, and how culture flourished in Germany and Austria. While in France and England the capitals were more or less the principal centers of all cultural and social life, in Germany, towns like Dresden, Leipzig, Munich, Hamburg, Cologne, and Breslau all had their own individual life. The musical field was full of men of outstanding merit, and there was ample opportunity for all of them.

1927

While his activities were actually centered in Berlin and Leipzig, Furtwängler had for many years been a favorite in Vienna. The romantic Viennese worshipped the passionate young conductor, and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra always found a way to arrange an “extraordinary Philharmonic Concert” or “Furtwängler Concert” when he came to conduct his choral concerts with the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*. The first performance with the Vienna Philharmonic in 1922—a Brahms Concert, a memorial on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Brahms’ death—had established a lifelong artistic relationship. In Berlin and Leipzig he was the successor to Arthur Nikisch. Now Vienna, too, claimed him for the post of first conductor of its orchestra, founded in 1842. The Vienna Philharmonic knew that in offering Furtwängler the position, it fulfilled the ardent wish of the Viennese.

Furtwängler could not resist the dream of every conductor on the Continent. The 1927-28 season found him in charge of the Berlin Philharmonic, the Leipzig *Gewandhaus*, and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, besides his other commitments.

In retrospect Furtwängler’s great success in Vienna can only be appreciated in the light of Vienna’s musical life at that period. He had come there in 1919, at a moment when its musical life had reached a new climax. The Vienna Opera, after years under the direction of Gustav Mahler, was now under the joint direction of Richard Strauss and Franz Schalk, and was considered one of the most distinguished Opera Houses in Europe. The Vienna Philharmonic, which was at the same time the Opera Orchestra, gave performances thrilling to any musician. Puccini had been moved to tears when he heard the orchestra play at the first *Tosca* performance in Vienna, November 20, 1907. The new great Strauss operas from *Rosenkavalier* to

Ariadne auf Naxos had been first given there as “festival performances” during that period.

The Vienna Philharmonic, which, since Gustav Mahler’s day had played under the batons of Nikisch, Mottl, Muck, and Schuch, had for the last nineteen years been under the direction of Felix Weingartner. Weingartner had been a pupil of Liszt. When he conducted Brahms’ Second Symphony in the presence of the composer, he had been kissed in enthusiasm by Brahms, and he gave to the Vienna Philharmonic that great “everything” which only a classical conductor of his caliber could give. While he was their permanent chief, they had played under other conductors: Furtwängler, Kleiber, Krauss, Mengelberg, Nikisch, Schalk, Strauss, and Bruno Walter.

No wonder that this orchestra, with its outstanding artistry and unique tradition, enthralled a young conductor like Furtwängler. With enthusiasm he began his first Philharmonic Concert in the autumn of 1927 with the *Freischütz Overture*, and he felt keenly the historic atmosphere of the *Musikvereinsaal* where Brahms and Bruckner had so often attended concerts. This period, during which he occupied, besides his other commitments, two prominent positions in Vienna, was certainly a milestone in Furtwängler’s career, and definitely influenced his musical development.

Furtwängler’s activities in Vienna began another phase in my work with him. Of course the Vienna Philharmonic had its own office and management, but there was a large correspondence with Furtwängler when he was in Berlin. There were countless things to attend to, and a new world opened for me when dealing with the famous orchestra on his behalf.

The Rosé Quartet, a group of prominent members of the orchestra, whom I had known in Mannheim, were a link between me and the other players, and I soon became devoted to the chairman, the oboist Aleseander Wunderer, one of the most “Viennese” and lovable musicians imaginable.

Frequently Furtwängler required me to accompany him to Vienna, and I was always delighted to go. We usually had to leave Berlin the morning after a Philharmonic Concert, on an 8 A.M. train. It was a peculiar old train with one old-fashioned Austrian carriage containing a half coupé, a one-sided compartment of three seats only. Since it was essential for Furtwängler to work undisturbed on these journeys, he always coveted that special compartment, and since by a bureaucratic decision it could not be reserved in advance, I used to get up early to be on the platform when the train pulled in to secure those seats.

Later on Furtwängler always went by plane, but for years we used that 8 o'clock train. The day of such a long journey was always methodically planned. First we had breakfast, then there was "silence." Furtwängler either read a new book or studied his program, taking advantage of the remoteness from the world for concentration. I remember that he read Spengler's *Decline of the West*, which had just been published and stirred intellectual circles, and that he learned Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* on such a journey, while I—though a welcome guest in his compartment—was not allowed to break the spell of silence until he gave the sign. Lunch was always a happy interruption; usually we waited until we had passed the Czech frontier because the Czech diner gave such excellent fare. After lunch we relapsed again into silence until, towards evening, Furtwängler declared himself ready for talk.

The train, due in Vienna at 11 P.M., was often late, but never too late for some enthusiastic friend to be waiting for us on the station in Vienna, and by the time all news had been discussed it was certainly past midnight. Departures from Vienna, on the other hand, were frequently subject to all sorts of surprises. Once we left Vienna for Paris, and I was relieved at last to have Furtwängler to myself for a load of work when, at the last express stop for many hours to come, the door opened, and a radiant-faced Viennese admirer entered, informing Furtwängler that he had decided to travel with him. For a secretary, this kind of enthusiasm is not very welcome, and I was often upset by similar demonstrations by the effusive Viennese whom I otherwise loved dearly. The most trying experience of all, I remember, was having one of the Committee members of the *Gesellschaft* regularly appear when Furtwängler was at breakfast. In Vienna Furtwängler used to breakfast in his hotel sitting-room, and took the opportunity to give me the communications for Berlin and the general instructions for the day. The telephone operator was always instructed to put no calls through; the hall porter was always told that Furtwängler was still asleep. Nevertheless, to our surprise every morning without fail Herr X entered triumphantly with the breakfast tray. What was I to do? I did some diligent detective work to discover how he knew when Furtwängler had his breakfast and found that by some mysterious means he got the information from the floor waiter. Needless to say I managed to get the waiter on my side!

Vienna had a unique magic of its own. The interest of the population in everything connected with their musical and theatrical life seemed incredible to an outsider. The smallest detail of every performance was of the greatest importance, and everything concerned with their Opera House, their stars, and their orchestras was the passion of every Viennese.

For many years Furtwängler went to Vienna for concerts only, but he was always on intimate terms with the *Staatsoper*, and frequently went in during the evening, if he was free, if only for an act or two.

Then Franz Schalk, who since Strauss' resignation in 1924 had been in sole charge of the Vienna State Opera, proposed that Furtwängler be invited as guest conductor. His first opera was *Rheingold*—such an outstanding performance of *Rheingold* that for days it was the sensation of the town. During a rehearsal I paid a visit to Schalk. His face inscrutable, he sat in his princely office. Although he, the bearer of the classical tradition of Hans Richter and Gustav Mahler, had himself invited Furtwängler to conduct at the Vienna Opera, he was obviously jealous of his youthful fame and did not appear at the rehearsals. "How are matters downstairs?" he asked me cautiously. "Don't ask me," I replied. "I don't understand anything about it." (For once in my life I was trying to be diplomatic.) "No more do I," he answered.

But the season 1928-29 was Franz Schalk's last as Director of the Vienna Opera and a successor had to be chosen. The intrigues growing out of such an occasion are indescribable, and the many official and semi-official people involved had the time of their lives. To cut a long story short—the direction of the Vienna State Opera was ultimately offered to Furtwängler. He was in Berlin at the time. Effusive letters arrived from his adherents, urging him to accept the offer and describing the situation, the attitude of the press, the public, the orchestra, the Ministry, the opera personnel, and the singers. Finally he left to negotiate in Vienna. I remained in Berlin, but promised to come on the next train, should he want me. Hardly had he arrived when he telegraphed me to come at once. The executive of the Berlin Philharmonic, terrified that Furtwängler might accept the offer, saw me off. In Vienna I found him in the Imperial Hotel, absolutely inundated with telephone calls, confidential letters, and visitors who had "important things" to discuss with him alone. Nobody who has not been in Vienna during an opera crisis can have the slightest idea what the Viennese can be like. I took over, to his great relief; but I would not say that my protective energy added to my popularity in Vienna.

It may seem hard to understand just why a decision of this kind should be so difficult, but for Furtwängler it was a difficult decision. Berlin had been the center of his activities for so many years, he had had sole control over the magnificent Philharmonic, who were free to travel as much as he wanted them to, and he could conduct in all the Berlin Opera Houses as much as he liked. Vienna, on the other hand, had the unique fascination and

charm that it has for every musician. Furtwängler was already director of the Vienna Philharmonic and was, as well, a director of the *Wiener Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*; the opera performances he had given so far had driven Vienna wild with enthusiasm. Vienna claimed him with equal rights and laid siege to him with all available means.

The official negotiations were in the hands of Herr Schneiderhan, *Generaldirektor der Oesterreichischen Bundestheater*, a skilled, sly diplomat of the old school. Furtwängler was pulled in two directions. He longed to accept the position. Every artist sometimes needs a change, and this was indeed a unique opportunity! Yet he had grave misgivings that the Viennese post would eat up all his energy. In any case, he cautiously decided that I was to accompany him to his first official interview.

Schneiderhan played variations on the whole scale of seduction and temptation. He even tried his best to tempt me. “You will come to our Opera House as Furtwängler’s general secretary, and you will be given the room that formerly belonged to Richard Strauss,” he told me. (All directorial offices were pompous and sumptuous and I loved the “air” of the inside of that famous Opera House.)

There had never been any question of Furtwängler’s giving up the Berlin Philharmonic entirely, but there was no doubt that once he became Opera Director in Vienna, he would have very little time left for Berlin. But Schneiderhan stressed that even I could easily go to Berlin for at least one week every month. More details were discussed, and finally Furtwängler and I left. He was to decide by next morning at nine o’clock.

We spent our evening alone weighing all the pros and cons. Neither of us closed an eye that night, and every two hours Furtwängler came to another decision, each of which he fully justified. Although I make up my mind rather quickly, I appreciated that this was a decision that affected his whole life and understood that he had to consider the matter from all angles. When he finally set out next morning for the conference I had not the slightest idea what Furtwängler was going to say. Schneiderhan, with diplomatic skill, opened the conversation. Furtwängler replied, but with a kind of lethargic apathy—as if he expected that the decision would fall from the sky from some *deus ex machina*. Suddenly Schneiderhan took Furtwängler’s hand, which hung listlessly by his side, and said, “I see that we are *d’accord*, so let us conclude our pact and sign the agreement.” Somehow I sensed that there was something wrong. Furtwängler was so exhausted that he had no strength left at the moment; he was being unfairly coerced. Certainly he was not ready for a decision of any kind. Instinctively I felt that I must protect him.

Necessity gave me strength. I gave Schneiderhan's hands, which were holding Furtwängler's, a sharp slap. Both men dropped their hands. Furtwängler immediately got to his feet and we got away. He would make his decision when he was back in Berlin!

One doesn't take an *Operndirektor* out of Vienna's grasp with impunity. That same evening at a concert, Dr. Dlabac, General Secretary of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, informed me that everybody knew about my unpardonable behavior and, as my friend, he advised me to avoid Vienna for some time to come!

Next morning we left for Berlin. The station master personally conducted Furtwängler to his compartment. Was he not the future opera chief? The ticket controller confidentially addressed him as "Herr Direktor." How tempting is this kind of intimate popularity! Vienna seemed to have got him!

At the moment of departure Furtwängler was, in fact, quite inclined to decide in favor of Vienna. But the farther we moved away, the more the scale tipped, and by the time we arrived in Berlin he knew that only under very special circumstances would he leave his work there—since it was clear that to combine the work in the two cities was out of the question.

Meanwhile the Berliners had not been asleep. All sorts of articles appeared in the papers, and one especially in the *Vossische Zeitung*: "*Geht Furtwängler nach Wien?*" had the effect of a bombshell. The Berlin *Oberbürgermeister* was being attacked, Prussia and the Reich were being attacked—and it was unanimously declared that what Austria could do, Berlin should certainly be able to do too.

This stirred things up with a vengeance—as soon as we got back, they really began to move. I remember taking a most active part in all the maneuvers behind the scenes and having a telephone conversation as early as 7 A.M. with Berlin's Lord Mayor who was horrified by the idea that Berlin might lose Furtwängler during his regime. Meanwhile Schneiderhan, just as horrified at the idea that he might fail, arrived on the night train from Vienna in order to be on the spot.

At last things came to a head.

Furtwängler declared that if the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra were granted the necessary subsidy, promised for so long by the Prussian authorities, the Berlin municipality, and the Reich, and if he was enabled to issue the players contracts necessary to maintain the standard of the

orchestra, he was willing to stay—otherwise he would accept the post in Vienna.

The ultimatum was accepted. Furtwängler remained in Berlin, and went to Vienna only as a guest conductor. The Reich, Prussia, and Berlin undertook to guarantee the orchestra's budget, and the *Reichsrundfunk* pledged itself to engage them for a certain number of broadcasts per annum, thus adding to their solvency. The guarantee required was modest, since the orchestra's income from the Berlin Philharmonic Concerts alone was considerable, yet the feeling of security after nearly fifty years of struggle gave them a renewed zest for their work.

From that time on, the activities of each year were more or less regular. Furtwängler traveled between Berlin and Vienna, he went on tours with the Berlin Philharmonic and conducted some operas as a guest, among them the usual German Opera Season in spring in Paris. At the end of the 1927-28 season he had left the Leipzig *Gewandhaus*. He felt that it needed a man able to devote himself more fully to that particular task than was possible for him with all the growing demands on his time.

The next milestone in the history of the Berlin Philharmonic was their first visit to Paris in the spring of 1928. It ranked with their first London venture as one of the highlights of their whole career.

I had met M. Robert Brussel, the director of the *Association Française de l'Expansion et d'Echange Artistique*, the French cultural propaganda department, when he represented the French Government at the big exposition, "A Summer of Music" at Frankfurt in 1927. We had arranged a visit of the Berlin Philharmonic to Paris for 1928 and soon afterwards he had invited the Orchestra to give their first Paris concert under the auspices of the *Association Française*, which was a department of the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux Arts*.

My trip for preliminary discussions about all the arrangements for the French tour was my first to Paris. That in itself was an event. In addition the warm friendliness of the French, the excitement of preparing such an important concert on entirely new ground, my admiration of the excellent apparatus of the cultural department of the Ministry at the Palais Royal where all our work was done made it a wonderful experience. And I met the German Ambassador, von Hoesch, for the first time. He invited Furtwängler and me to stay at his Embassy while we were in Paris for the concert. Hoesch was an ideal example of what was done by pre-Hitler Germany for an artistic enterprise. He supported us primarily because he was sincerely

interested. Nothing was dictated, there was no “foreign propaganda,” and there were no schemes and intrigues as there were later among the many political groups in Nazi times.

We had naturally wanted this first Paris concert to take place in the *Opéra*, but M. Rouche, its director and patron, was a curious man, and wanted to see what the Berlin Philharmonic was like before he gave us a date. So the concert was given at the *Salle Pleyel*. His caution proved quite unnecessary. The enthusiasm of the French knew no limits, and M. Herriot, then *Ministre de l’Instruction Publique*, who himself had written a book on Beethoven and who loved music, was so enthusiastic that he rushed onto the platform and shook hands with Furtwängler. From that moment on there was never any difficulty when we wanted a date at the *Opéra*.

After this Paris concert I had the worst moment in all my work with Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic—the worst, that is, until the advent of Hitler. Gala concerts in Paris began at 9 in the evening, and finished late. A big reception had been held at the Embassy after the concert. We had had only a few hours’ rest before leaving on the eight o’clock train for Strasbourg en route to Freiburg, where the next concert was to take place. Furtwängler settled down to sleep in his reserved compartment, and I was dozing too, comfortably basking in the glow that follows a great success. We may have been traveling for about half an hour, when a member of the orchestra committee came into the corridor outside our compartment, and with all the signs of despair beckoned to me to come out and speak to him. “What shall we do, *Fräulein Doktor*?” the man exclaimed. “The instrument van is not attached to the train!” The implications were appalling: an instrument van with seventy-seven big cases, required for a concert on the same day, lost and separated from its owners, who have to maneuver it across a frontier where the officials might very well be far less friendly than the Parisians had been. Never had such a thing occurred before. The orchestra, thrilled and intoxicated with their success had, of course, explored Paris night-life after the concert, and our worthy orchestra attendant, Jastrau, had not stayed at home either. He had packed the instruments into the van after the concert and then gone off and enjoyed himself, and, after all, who can blame him!

For an endless half-hour, until we reached the next stop, from which we hoped to telegraph to Paris, we went through agony. At last the train drew into a station. We got out—Furtwängler still blissfully unaware of the impending tragedy—and while we were trying to explain our appalling dilemma to the station master, a train arrived at the next platform. Our van

was there—attached to the wrong train. There are moments in life which one never forgets; that was one of them!

During the first half of 1930 there was quite an unusual accumulation of touring orchestras on the Continent. The focus of interest was the New York Philharmonic which was to tour Europe under its director, Toscanini. All the big continental cities wanted to have the Americans. Since the traditional Berlin Philharmonic tour was taking place about the same time, Anita Colombo, Toscanini's former secretary who was in charge of the American tour, and I had conferred at the Hotel Bristol in Vienna to compare notes and arrange that our concerts should not clash. At the end of the tours the two orchestras met in Berlin.

1930

That same spring, before the tours of the Berlin and New York Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic (to whom I was “graciously lent” by the Berliners to run their tour) went with Furtwängler via Germany to visit England. The visit had been planned for some time for there was always a great Austria-loving public in London.

The tour proved what that famous orchestra and Furtwängler were able to achieve together. Yet he realized that to take on the two Philharmonics permanently would, in the long run, be unfair to both, and after careful consideration, gave up his position as Director of the Vienna Philharmonic shortly after the tour. However, he did continue to appear with them as guest conductor.

The resignation of his prominent position in Vienna marked an important point in Furtwängler's relations with Berlin. More and more Berlin did everything to satisfy and honor the famous artist who was by now in his forties. The Berlin Opera Houses opened their arms to him.

Work went on steadily for the next few years. The 1931 winter tour with the Berlin Philharmonic was especially successful. It included Germany, Belgium, England, and Holland, and a well-known photographer had offered to accompany us.

When we left England—after a happy and successful season—on the Hook of Holland train, the platform seemed unusually crowded. I said to myself, “Funny, this time the orchestra seems to have picked up an unusual number of admirers.” The admirers of the orchestra were sometimes an unmitigated nuisance, especially in Paris, where almost every member used to approach me with the demand that some enigmatic female relation of his

had, without fail, to be got into the concert which had generally been sold out long ago.

In London it had never been quite so bad, and I was astonished to see the crowded platform. But I was soon to be enlightened. Charlie Chaplin was in the same train. Of course our photographer was excited, and at once proposed that Furtwängler and Chaplin be photographed together getting on the boat. I was dispatched to arrange the matter with Chaplin's manager, but when I got to his compartment, he was by no means enthusiastic. Why should Chaplin be photographed with Furtwängler? Who was Furtwängler, after all, in comparison with Chaplin? Did he get four thousand love letters a day? Did he have to employ three secretaries to deal with his fan mail? I felt quite insignificant in face of these overwhelming assets and retreated. On the night boat there was no sign of the great man who had retired to his cabin immediately on coming aboard. However, next morning, at the unearthly hour at which the boat gets in at the Hook, Mr. Chaplin sent a message that he would like to meet Dr. Furtwängler. So the two men met at dawn, and I at first could not believe that the charming, kind-looking man was the Charlie Chaplin we had seen in *The Gold Rush*. The photo was duly taken. Chaplin left for Berlin, and we went on to the Hague.

CHAPTER SEVEN

It was a time of crisis for Germany, and for the world, yet new tasks continued to arise. Siegfried Wagner had died on August 4, 1930, in the middle of the Bayreuth Festival Season. 1930 Toscanini conducted there for the first time that season—*Tristan* and Siegfried Wagner’s new production of the Paris version of *Tannhäuser*—and it was rumored that he asked Siegfried on his death bed for the privilege of conducting *Parsifal* the following season.

After the Great War Bayreuth had had difficult times. Siegfried, assisted by his wife, Winifred, had done his utmost to carry on his father’s legacy. Now the young widow was left alone to bring up her four small children, and to bear the responsibility for the future of the *Festspielhügel*.

Bayreuth for many reasons had always been a center of intrigue and jealousy, but it had also been a place of the highest artistic idealism and endeavor; the greatest artists had always been proud to serve there. After Siegfried Wagner’s death, however, Karl Muck, the last “knight” of Richard Wagner, ended his services at Bayreuth. Toscanini had promised to conduct in the summer of 1931, but there was still a great need for a man with authority and knowledge who could be put in entire charge of the musical arrangements in Siegfried’s place, and who would be a good conductor as well.

In December 1930, to his utter surprise, Furtwängler received a letter from Frau Wagner asking him whether Bayreuth might hope to have his services. It was no easy question for him to decide. Since his Mannheim days Furtwängler had been known as a great Wagner conductor; he had conducted Wagner’s works in many big Opera Houses, but he had not been to Bayreuth, which was, naturally, the dream of every conductor. On the other hand he needed rest badly, and so far had always managed to escape any summer commitments.

He took time to think it over. The offer was kept strictly secret, and finally a meeting in Berlin was arranged with Frau Wagner to discuss the matter fully. To avoid rumors they met at my home.

At first they talked about everything but the main purpose—but finally they got down to brass tacks, and Furtwängler agreed to go to Bayreuth. Frau Wagner actually burst into tears of relief.

For 1931 Furtwängler was to take over *Tristan* which Muck had always conducted, and was to be the Musical Director of the *Bayreuther Festspiele*, with all musical questions subject to his authority.

1931

This was no small addition to his work, and for me it was another new and fascinating task. One of Furtwängler's main duties was the assembling of the *Bayreuther Festspielorchester* which was always chosen out of orchestras from all over Germany. There were special traditions among the players, and the old Bayreuthers knew all about every one of them. Many came year after year and considered it their greatest privilege to spend their summer holiday playing at Bayreuth. Professor Edgar Wollgandt was one of them. Normally the leader of the *Gewandhaus* Orchestra and Nikisch's son-in-law, he could be found year after year at the first desk of the *Festspielhaus*.

The fact that Furtwängler, the great German conductor, had taken charge of Bayreuth resulted in an inundation of applications from orchestra players who wanted to join the *Festspielorchester*, and there was a waiting list for every section. For the first time members of the Berlin Philharmonic applied. They, of course, wanted to play opera under their own conductor. All sorts of young conductors and musicians asked for permission to attend the rehearsals. It fell mainly to me to deal with this correspondence and to report to Frau Wagner about it, in the inviolable tradition of Bayreuth.

During the Easter of 1931 Furtwängler had to go to Bayreuth for preliminary discussions with some of the collaborators and with Frau Wagner. He took me with him, and we spent a few days as guests at Wahnfried, the famous Wagner home. Guests of the Wagner family were in those days usually lodged in the Siegfried House, a low building tucked away in the garden, which had been Siegfried's home while Cosima Wagner was still reigning. Frau Wagner had rearranged it for her guests, and it was the most comfortable place imaginable—there were even English novels in the sitting-room.

In Wahnfried itself, Frau Wagner, in spite of the splendor surrounding her, was the most charming and hospitable hostess. One evening Cosima's daughters came to meet Furtwängler. Countessa Blandine Gravina, her second daughter by Hans von Bülow, lived for the most part in Florence; Frau Isolde Beidler, her third daughter, had died in 1919, and so it was only her eldest daughter, Frau Daniela Thode, and Frau Eva Chamberlain who came to spend the evening and inspect the new Musical Director. Imbued as

they were with a religious devotion to Wagner's and Cosima's heritage, this meeting was of tremendous significance to them.

I remembered Frau Thode from my first Heidelberg term when, as wife of the art historian, Professor Henry Thode, she upheld the Wahnfried etiquette in a style that would have been fitting at Court. Outwardly there was little of her mother in her. She was slight and dark and her features were those of her father, Hans von Bülow. Her deep parti-colored eyes had a fanatical expression, and fanatical she was in many ways. She had had many years of close intimacy with her mother, and so possessed a minute and exact knowledge of Wagner's intentions up to the smallest details of his works; after the death of her brother, Siegfried, she was considered the last living source of the direct Wagner tradition. Never did she refer to him other than as "*der Meister*"; her devotion to his cause and memory was fervent.

Frau Thode was impressive in many ways; never did one forget that one was in the presence of a great lady. Like her mother, Cosima, she had regal manners, and sometimes even seemed to over-emphasize the outward forms of life, which occasionally led her to overrate matters of secondary importance. For instance, though Frau Thode was a great admirer of Furtwängler's Wagner interpretation, she was greatly perturbed by his manner of conducting. The orchestra pit in Bayreuth was covered, and the conductor could not be seen by the audience. Furtwängler, though invisible, was conspicuous in other respects; the stamping with which he unconsciously accompanied his conducting could be heard very distinctly. Shortly after he had begun his first season in Bayreuth, Frau Thode actually suggested the possibility of putting a mat under the feet of the wild man to muffle the noise, as his behavior seemed to her incompatible with the noble tradition of the *Festspielhaus*!

In other ways, however, she was a remarkable woman whose deep and wide knowledge enabled her to write and edit many letters and documents connected with the Wagner family. In 1931 when Toscanini conducted *Parsifal* and *Tannhäuser*, Frau Thode designed the Tannhäuser costumes after the beautiful illustrations of the minnesingers, Wolfram von Eschenbach among others, in the *Manessesche Liederhandschrift*, the famous manuscript of twelfth to fourteenth century love songs in the Heidelberg University Library. Frau Thode also acted as producer, sitting on the stage with her notes throughout the rehearsals, thus serving the cause of Wagner, and of Toscanini, whom she worshipped.

With the advent of Hitler, and the resignation of Toscanini, she retired more and more from the official life in Bayreuth, where she kept, however, a

modest *pied à terre*.

It was in 1938 that I heard of her for the last time. I was shown a letter that she had written to an old and intimate friend of hers, which reveals what she was, at the end of her life, full of dignity and resignation, living in her memories which nobody could take from her and without bitterness.

Her sister, Frau Eva Chamberlain, was born in 1867, the daughter of Cosima von Bülow by Richard Wagner. She was the widow of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, whose book, *The Foundations of the 19th Century*, has had such a fatal influence through Hitler. Frau Chamberlain was tall and stately and imposing; her distinguished face bore the features of both Cosima and Richard Wagner. Her reputation was that of a clever woman but she was rarely communicative, and on that evening when she came to meet Furtwängler, though obviously interested, she remained slightly aloof and condescending. After the death of her husband she continued to live in the old Chamberlain house, next door to Wahnfried—and yet, how far away. The wall over which she could look into her parental home and garden was in a way symbolic—it was an insurmountable wall between herself and the young generation.

Cosima's daughters have actually never bowed to the Nazi régime, which for them meant a new régime at Bayreuth in many respects—not only politically. While their brother Siegfried lived, they had more or less belonged to the reigning generation; now they had to yield to the younger one, which went its own way, and could not always religiously adhere to the letter of the old laws.

It was this deep chasm between the two generations in the Wagner family that I felt acutely on that strange evening; and a strange evening it was, spent in the unique atmosphere of Wahnfried, with the two old ladies, symbols of past splendor and greatness: Winifred, the young, energetic trustee and heir to it all, the mother of the coming generation, and Furtwängler, the fervent Wagner adherent, filled with holy determination to do his best and live up to his new task.

Finally everything was well in hand for the summer. Frau Wagner had offered Furtwängler a romantic and secluded abode, an old farmhouse near a mill. The proprietors, the Feustel family, connected with Wahnfried for many years, were willing to move out for the summer and let Furtwängler have the house with its old-fashioned garden. A horse was put at his disposal—he was an enthusiastic rider then—and this horse was for him one of Bayreuth's greatest attractions.

I was to accompany him to Bayreuth and was put up in a lovely house on the *Festspielhügel* belonging to the former *Festspielhausdirektor*, Herr Schuler. Frau Schuler, an old friend of Cosima's, was my warm friend from the first.

The 1931 spring tour with the Berlin Philharmonic and other engagements had to be limited, as Furtwängler had to be in Bayreuth at the beginning of June.

The introduction of a new conductor at Bayreuth was always a great occasion—but Furtwängler's first appearance there was particularly sensational and most dramatic. He had just begun to appreciate flying, and a young airman with a private plane offered to fly him to Bayreuth. They had engine trouble and had to make a forced landing half-way. The machine turned over—and Furtwängler, always athletic, coolly prepared for the crash by doing a handspring. Only thus did he save his life. Bruised and still half dazed from the shock, he arrived in Bayreuth by car shortly after he was to begin rehearsing at 9 A.M. The beginning of the rehearsals at Bayreuth was almost a state ceremony. The musicians sat in their places full of expectancy, the *musikalische Assistenten*, as all the young coaches and volunteers were called, sat in attendance, thrilled, with their scores in their hands. The Wagner family, especially the older generation, appeared with all the solemn dignity they gave to the cause of the "Meister."

But something happened on this occasion, which had never happened before at Bayreuth: the principal figure, the new Musical Director, was not punctually on the spot. This was a crime, in comparison to which the fact that he had nearly lost his life on his way to Bayreuth was insignificant.

The press, of course, recorded the incident of Furtwängler's entry to Bayreuth at full length. Soon I was accused of arranging press stunts for Furtwängler, to the detriment of others. It was unfair, I was told, and I was advised not to do it again. I pointed out diffidently that the public was, of course, more interested in incidents connected with Furtwängler than with the ordinary run of folk, but it was of no avail. I was in for trouble, and trouble of this kind never ceased for me that summer.

That first season without Siegfried Wagner was difficult for everyone, who missed his friendly, welcoming smile at the *Festspielhügel*. Naturally the new management headed by the young widow had at first to find its way between the necessary innovations and the jealously guarded old tradition.

The first clash of the season was with Lauritz Melchior, the Tristan of Furtwängler's first performance in Bayreuth, who declared that he would

leave immediately and would never return; the management was apparently his source of irritation. He finally consented to fulfill his contract for that summer, but since then the world's greatest Wagnerian tenor has never set foot in Bayreuth.

There was also a Toscanini incident which was reported and distorted all over the world. The *Festspiel Direktion* had arranged a memorial concert for Siegfried Wagner on the anniversary of his death, August 4, 1931. This was a novelty in Bayreuth, concerts had never been held in the *Festspielhaus*. The conductors of that year, Elmendorff, Furtwängler, and Toscanini were to participate. At the general rehearsal in the morning Toscanini furiously broke his baton and stalked off the platform leaving a nonplussed orchestra and audience behind. The maestro, because of the limited time available, had expected to rehearse undisturbed, and was upset to find the house full—the management had granted admittance to relatives of members of the staff, singers, orchestra, and chorus. Toscanini, greatly upset, left the rehearsal, and told Furtwängler, who rushed after him, that he would leave Bayreuth at once and would not conduct the memorial concert in the evening. He made straight for his car and left the *Festspielhügel*.

Furtwängler, as Musical Director, conducted the rehearsal to the end and meanwhile sent me to inform Frau Wagner of Toscanini's intention. She declared, "I don't think that Toscanini will do this to me, he would never desert me on such an occasion." Nonetheless she immediately sent me and her nephew, Gil Gravina, who spoke Italian fluently and often acted as the maestro's interpreter, to Wahnfried, where Toscanini was staying as her guest at the Siegfried House. The servants told me that he had just left for Marienbad with his chauffeur and his adored little dog. All his passionate love for pre-Hitler Bayreuth had not sufficed to alter his decision; he left the widow of Siegfried Wagner on the anniversary of her husband's death. For Toscanini no compromise was ever possible once he had made up his mind. And so, although his personal relations with the Wagner family were not interrupted by this incident, the 1931 season was actually his last on the *Festspielhügel*. For this, however, there were several other reasons yet to come—last but not least, Adolf Hitler.

Furtwängler himself never felt quite at ease during this, his first Bayreuth Season. He had his own definite ideas about how the legacy of Richard Wagner should be upheld, and the difference of opinion reached such a state that he wanted to resign even before his first performance. He wrote a long letter to Frau Wagner—a letter revealing how earnestly and seriously he took all his responsibilities—explaining his ideas, and that he

felt they were incompatible with the way Bayreuth was now conducted. The incident was patched up, but it was the beginning of later conflicts which finally led to his resignation from Bayreuth before the next season, and which he explained in an article published in June 1932 in the *Vossische Zeitung*: “*Um die Zukunft von Bayreuth*” (“The Future of Bayreuth”).

Yet for the international world he became more and more the acknowledged Wagnerian conductor and besides his work in Germany and Austria, he regularly conducted the Wagner Festivals in Paris and Wagner operas at Covent Garden—until this activity, like so many others, was rendered impossible by Hitler.

CHAPTER EIGHT

After Furtwängler had resigned from Bayreuth, Berlin became more and more the center of his life and activity, though he regularly went to Vienna as guest conductor. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra received his closest attention, and was improved more and more in every respect. The international tours, now undertaken twice a year in addition to the smaller tours within Germany itself, had become not only artistic but also financial successes. Although the political tide moved in a heavy ebb and flow, artistic life was strong and independent, and in Berlin, as in Vienna, much of the social life revolved around the Philharmonic concerts and the opera. The concerts were always sold out, and besides the great Philharmonic concerts, many other cycles with prominent conductors—Bruno Walter, for instance—had become a regular institution. Foreign conductors were also invited, and a special cycle was arranged for them.

1932

I took an eager part in all these activities; the day was always too short for all that was to be done. Social life was brilliant, and there was a friendly relationship with many of the diplomats, who regularly came to the concerts. One of the most faithful visitors to the Berlin Philharmonic concerts was the British Ambassador, Sir Horace Rumbold, with his wife and daughters. Little did I realize the night I represented the Berlin Philharmonic at a reception for Sir Thomas Beecham at his British Embassy—before which Furtwängler, Sir Thomas and Sir Horace had been photographed together in the artists' room—how the turn of events were to rearrange our lives.

The orchestra kept me busy enough, but Furtwängler required most of my time. He worked at the oddest hours. All clerical or organizing matters he of course considered of secondary importance, and so fitted them in when it suited him. Often he rang me up late at night to ask me to come to his flat “for a moment,” and it became more of a rule than an exception for me to get out of bed to work with him. Having himself concentrated on music as late as midnight, it never occurred to him that ordinary mortals often go to bed before that hour. I nearly always traveled with the orchestra, and I continued to accompany Furtwängler whenever he traveled or to join him somewhere on his journeys. Our friendship and mutual work for the cause of music had forged a wonderful bond between us. It was a relation built on mutual reliance, strengthened by my belief in him as an artist and by his confidence in me as friend and collaborator.

The year 1932 began with a rush, for we were approaching the culmination of our activities. At the beginning of the year I went to Rome to make arrangements for the Philharmonic spring tour which was to be the first extensive visit to Italy. My visit to Rome was most interesting. When I arrived I was told that Mussolini had expressed the wish to see the woman who was the tour manager of an orchestra. But he was away while I was there, and I had tea with his former secretary and biographer, Margherita Sarfatti, instead.

As soon as my task was completed I had to rush back to Berlin. No sooner had I arrived when I had to dash over to London to straighten out a difficulty that had arisen through the death of our agent, Lionel Powell, just as our English tour was impending.

In those days, concerts of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in England sold out soon after the booking had opened, and the advance booking for the 1932 English tour was excellent as usual. Then Lionel Powell died and his firm went bankrupt. It was said that his death at the height of the winter concert season had upset the finances of the firm, and that, had it happened in spring, no difficulty would have arisen. Be that as it may, at the time of Powell's death all the proceeds were part of the bankrupt estate, and therefore the ready money out of which the expenses of the tour and the salaries of the orchestra were to be paid had vanished. We decided, if possible, not to cancel the tour, for we did not want to disappoint our British public.

I conferred with the lawyer at the German Embassy, who expounded the facts at length without being able to suggest any practical solution. It seemed hopeless. I did not see how we could get our money in the near future, nor did I see any chance of financing our ten concerts (two in London, eight in the provinces). I had just come to the conclusion that there was nothing left to do but to cancel the tour, when I received a message to go and see Sir Thomas Beecham's solicitor. I immediately went. The solicitor spoke briefly and to the point. "I am instructed to inform you that Sir Thomas does not like this situation, and intends to see to the matter." "What do you mean?" I asked. "Sir Thomas does not want the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra to have any trouble in England, therefore he is going to guarantee the tour." "He is what?" I asked. "He is going to back the tour, and I have been instructed to settle the details with you," the solicitor repeated. The few formalities were quickly settled. My request to be allowed to thank Sir Thomas personally (he, after all, had deposited £3000 for us)

was evaded, and towards the evening of the same day on which I had arrived, I took the train back to Berlin.

A fortnight later the tour began, and there was a full house at every concert. With box-office receipts unavailable, the accounts were complicated. The last concert was at the Albert Hall, and in the morning, during the rehearsal, we received the final statement. It showed a balance on the right side, even excluding the original advance receipts, so that we had no need to call on Sir Thomas's generous guarantee. Just as we realized this, Sir Thomas appeared unexpectedly. I went on to the platform and told the orchestra what had happened; how Sir Thomas had come to our rescue and that fortunately all had ended well. The orchestra enthusiastically hailed him.

The financial difficulties of the orchestra were by then almost over. It had become a limited liability company. The orchestra itself, the city of Berlin, Prussia, the Reich, and the *Rundfunk* were represented on the board of seventeen directors. The chairman was Dr. Lange, the First Mayor of Berlin, directly in authority after the Lord Mayor. He devoted himself to the affairs of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with energy and humor, and fought like a lion for its interests against the inevitable intrigues in the meetings of the city councils. During concerts, he liked to sit with the orchestra. He admired Furtwängler, towards whom he had adopted a protective fatherly attitude, gently steering him through the obstacles of bureaucracy.

To me he was the most understanding and kindly chief, always available to smooth away difficulties. And it was he who was largely responsible for the fulfillment of my dream of a real office for the orchestra, organized as I had planned it. I had found a flat near Furtwängler's home and not far from the *Philharmonie*, big enough to house my own private apartment as well as the office. But the whole new arrangement had, of course, to be agreed to by the board of directors. For days before the meeting of the board I was distracted. I was quite sure of my supporters, but committees are unpredictable. Finally—late at night—Dr. Lange rang me up: "Go ahead and arrange your office." How happy I was!

The office was charming. Except for the one room used as the general office, it did not look like a place of business at all. I furnished it with my old furniture and pictures. There was a music room for auditions (later used for our chamber-music evenings as well). A wonderful Bechstein was given to us for that purpose. My own office gradually assumed a delightful atmosphere, filled as it was with my books and my comfortable easy chairs,

in which visitors from all over the world were soon sitting. A young East Prussian maid followed me from my former quarters and looked after me, and after the office as well. She always had lunch ready for anybody who wanted to have a meal in the office. Her cooking was perfect. "Trudchen," as she was called, was most popular with the orchestra, and efficient with even the most illustrious telephone callers when I was out.

It was a full and active life, and when we started to make arrangements for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, it was with the grateful feeling that the years of work and devotion had not been in vain, and that Furtwängler had been able to carry on the tradition started by Bülow and Nikisch.

The celebration consisted of two festival concerts, and was opened by an inaugural assembly at which all the persons of importance in Berlin's public life were present. Diplomatic representatives of all countries sat in the front rows with Berlin's Lord Mayor. Hindenburg sent as his deputy the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior, who made a speech and handed the *Goethe Medaille* to Furtwängler—a new decoration established by the *Reichspräsident* for men of science and art. And at the first concert a new composition of Hindemith's, the *Philharmonisches Konzert*, dedicated to the orchestra and its conductor for the occasion, was played.

The fateful year 1932 went by. We toured Europe. Besides his concerts, Furtwängler conducted opera in Vienna and Paris. On his next birthday we gave a party in our office flat which was eminently suitable for such occasions. Members of the orchestra and famous soloists, dressed as children, performed Haydn's Toy Symphony. Hindemith, who in those days was learning the bassoon, had composed an additional bassoon part and practiced it for weeks ahead to the despair of his wife.

Spirited musical jokes were in those days a favorite entertainment. Hindemith had composed a parody on the Wagner *Fliegende Holländer* overture, which some members of the Philharmonic played, dressed in dirty old-fashioned frock coats, with red handkerchiefs hanging out of their pockets. They were supposed to be village musicians playing the piece for the first time. They missed their cue, and quickly switched over to the safety of a Viennese waltz from which, with great virtuosity, they modulated back to the music expressing the ecstatic reunion of Senta and the Holländer in death.

Arthur Schnabel, who was one of the guests, told me that only a musician could appreciate the full joke and masterly arrangement of this

parody.

It was a perfect, harmonious evening, a gathering of great artists and leading personalities. The orchestra was to leave for England immediately afterwards. Nobody had an inkling of how near was the thunderstorm—but when I recall those present on that evening, I find that hardly one of them has escaped a tragic change of existence. It was January 25, 1933.

PART TWO

Hitler Germany, 1933-1935

CHAPTER NINE

On January 30, 1933, the Third Reich was proclaimed and Adolf Hitler became *Reichskanzler*. While a transformation, the extent of which few people realized at the time, took place in Germany, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra paid its annual visit to England, Holland and Belgium. We had played our last engagement abroad at the Hague on February 22, and were on the train to Bielefeld to give the first concert on German soil since Hitler's coming to power.

1933

One of the diners on the train was reserved for members of the orchestra. There were a few strangers present, but we hardly noticed them. A friend had joined us shortly after crossing the frontier, one of the many German music lovers who managed to arrange their business journeys to fit in with the orchestra's schedule.

Holland at that time was in the throes of a "Mengelberg crisis," for Mengelberg had changed his residence to Switzerland, allegedly to evade the increasingly high taxation in Holland. The orchestra was in high spirits after a successful tour and chattered freely. I joined in the conversation and discussed the question of taxes with Furtwängler, who had owned a house in the Engadine since 1924, and I jokingly suggested that he should follow Mengelberg's example.

No sooner had we arrived at Bielefeld than our music-loving friend came to us in consternation and excitement. One of the strangers in the dining-car had been a high S.S. leader who had sat and listened to every word we spoke. He regarded us as "anti-National" criminals, threatened to order the boycott of the Bielefeld concert, to report us to Berlin, and so on. Since I was the only woman traveling with the orchestra he had assumed that I was Frau Furtwängler, and was aghast to hear the wife of such a prominent man express the views that I had. Actually, the first Frau Furtwängler was Scandinavian and the prototype of Hitler's "Aryan" ideal. Our friend was loath to let suspicion rest on an innocent lady, but at the same time thought it inadvisable to direct the Nazis' attention to Furtwängler's secretary, since—as I was to learn later—I had been regarded with displeasure by the Nazi Party and had been on their black list for some time. He therefore explained that the lady concerned was merely a friend of the orchestra.

Argument waxed hot over this incident and dragged on throughout the afternoon. Finally, the concert took place. The local Nazis apparently did not want to risk interfering with Germany's famous orchestra.

This was our return to Germany—now Hitler's Germany. Our initiation into its new code of ideals had not been long delayed. The Nazis were already swollen with their new importance—their false ideology. What did it mean to them if the Berlin Philharmonic had won honor, success and fame all over the world? What did they know of real culture? They were far too taken up with what was or was not in accord with “national sentiment” to respect the traditions of art and science, let alone those of free speech or free opinion.

After our return this incident had a long sequel, and crystallized finally into one of the customary “denunciations.” Hitler was handed a memorandum accusing Furtwängler, among other things, of depositing abroad the large fees from his foreign engagements, assisted, of course, by his “Jewish” secretary, while the orchestra was left without salary for months at a time. Actually, the exact opposite was true. Often during this unsettled period of political change, Furtwängler did not draw his own fees, in order not to jeopardize the salary of the orchestra. However, that report to Hitler gave us an inkling of things to come.

I remember at that time a constant feeling of vague uneasiness. How could it have been other than vague? How could one foresee what was to come? My work had taken me across the world, but, with many others, I had made the mistake of not watching political events at home. I had never read *Mein Kampf* and had never taken the problem of Hitler seriously. Our activities were not connected with propaganda and politics, their object was music, music and nothing else. What could have been more in the interests of the real Germany than our work in the cause of music? How could one imagine that even matters of art and culture would henceforth be handled in a hypocritical and arbitrary way? Under the cover of national sentiment and the new concepts *tragbar* or *untragbar* (admissible or inadmissible) the lust for power of mediocre minds was given free rein. No achievement was to be recognized unless it originated from the Nazis themselves and was acknowledged by their own propaganda. “Art” and “values” had no objective significance for them, except as means to an end.

Few realized then the ultimate aims of the Nazis. The new laws were not yet in existence, but coming events cast their shadows before. Rumor of “racial” discrimination spread, and it began to be whispered that the Jewish members of the orchestra would soon no longer be *tragbar*.

Furtwängler had many interviews with various people. Yet he never thought for one moment that anybody would seriously interfere with his work or his responsibilities. He was an idealist, convinced that he need only explain things to put everything right. His faith in himself gave him courage to take a stand and to voice his demands again and again to the leaders of the Reich.

Many posts in the new state were in the hands of unqualified and inexperienced people, Party members, quickly rewarded with high positions for their loyalty to Hitler. Knowing their incompetence, one expected, accordingly, to see them disappear again at an early date, and hoped that common sense would take the place of Party frenzy. It was obvious at first, that it was mainly the “small fry” clamoring for power and influence who caused such confusion. One was hopelessly at their mercy, for the so-called “leaders” were generally inaccessible.

Furtwängler was determined not to submit to arbitrary encroachment upon his sphere of work—the sensitive, artistic organization of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. He made no secret of his view, and the Nazi authorities soon heard of it. Perhaps they did not feel sure of themselves on this question, important as it was to foreign opinion. At any rate, for some reason, the respect Furtwängler enjoyed prevented, for the time being, a Nazi-engineered catastrophe overtaking the orchestra.

At that moment, as sometimes happened in those days of upheaval, a new personality suddenly appeared on the scene, an aristocratic landowner, a flying officer with Goering in the Great War and a passionate music lover. Although an early Party member with access to all authorities, he was apparently a man of understanding and of decent character. In the continual unauthorized interferences with individual liberties that now occurred, that type of person—of the Party and yet possessing a cultural background, able to make a stand where ordinary people could not—proved to be a temporary salvation for many institutions. He was introduced to Furtwängler and, by agreement with the authorities, was appointed *Kommissar* to the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Thus the orchestra gained a go-between without whom the growing mistrust of the Nazis would have made the continuation of work impossible.

In the meantime, I had grown more conscious of the strange times we were living in, but was still without the least realization what it might mean for me. I was of Jewish origin and Protestant upbringing. Most of the old, cultured Jewish families who had lived in Germany for centuries had

assimilated themselves to the national life. "The Jewish problem," as Hitler created it, simply did not exist.

From the beginning of the Nazi regime, Furtwängler had declared me to be indispensable to him and his work. Through my efforts the orchestra had in many respects been made independent. Their frequent tours, mostly the result of my initiative, were financially and artistically highly successful, and had become an essential part of the orchestra's life.

One afternoon in March, Lorenz Höber, who had been a member of the Orchestra Committee for many years, the new *Kommissar*, and I were sitting in my office. After a few irrelevant remarks, Höber suddenly flourished a piece of paper.

"I have here," he said, "a letter from Professor Havemann [then head of the Fighting League for German Culture], concerning the orchestra. He writes that the Jewish members of the orchestra and, of course, Dr. Geissmar, are no longer *tragbar* in the New Germany."

At first I did not take him seriously. Höber was always full of fun, and I thought this was one of his usual jokes. Eventually, however, he reluctantly handed me the letter, and when I found his words confirmed I felt as if I had been struck by lightning. . . . I began to understand.

Untragbar, amazing word! Why should I be *untragbar*? I had always served the orchestra and its chief not only with integrity, but with the greatest fervor and passionate devotion. My position was such that the new Nazi legislation so far did not apply to me. But, of course, I could not fathom the depth of cunning to which the Nazis descended in cases beyond their legal grasp.

Professor Havemann, the author of the ominous letter, was a very doubtful character. Long before Hitler came to power he had secretly been a Party member. He was a drunkard, no girl student at the *Hochschule für Musik* where he taught was safe from him, and he was always in debt. His fellow Party members later discarded him and circulated among the authorities a bulky document enumerating all the accusations against him. That, however, was yet to come. For a long time, pompously officiating in Party uniform, he interfered unopposed and did a great deal of harm. Everyone was helpless against the methods of terrorism he applied under cover of Party authority. When anything annoyed him, Havemann was in the habit of catching his victim on the telephone and raving in an uncontrolled torrent of words. I did not know him personally but one day he rang me up. Without any preliminaries he shouted at me, "Dr. Geissmar, I have just seen

the program for the Brahms Festival in Vienna. You can take it from me that this Festival will not take place as planned. Your Jewish influence is indubitably responsible for the choice of soloists.” (They were Huberman, Casals, and Schnabel—the engagement of the latter instead of Backhaus, then the great favorite of Hitler, was particularly galling to the Nazis.) “We shall soon get rid of you, you may be sure,” he roared. Before I could open my mouth he rang off.

The program for the Brahms Centenary Festival to be held in May 1933 had been fixed by the Vienna committee in agreement with Furtwängler and the *Deutsche Brahms Gesellschaft*. As usual, since Furtwängler was chairman of the *Brahms Gesellschaft*, I had assisted in the preparations. Vienna still had a free hand and the power of the Nazis came to an end at Germany’s frontiers. Needless to say, the Brahms Festival took place exactly as planned. Havemann’s threat was without effect for the moment. The question of my dismissal, so categorically demanded by his letter, was temporarily dropped. The personnel of the orchestra also remained unchanged.

Meanwhile, continuous changes and interferences in every institution throughout Germany went on, illegally and arbitrarily. The slogan “The voice of the people” was invoked to justify everything: envy, lust for power, and robbery were rampant under the banner of the glorious “New Germany.” Yet many people, so far not directly involved, did not realize what was at stake, and I remember someone on intimate terms with the Mendelssohn family and a close friend of the late Joseph Joachim saying quite seriously to me, “We are approaching wonderful times.” Wonderful indeed!

March 21st was the official inauguration of the Third Reich. It was a great day for the Nazis, enhanced by a brilliant, clear sky. I went for a walk through the Tiergarten, budding in the early spring, swarming with S.A. men and couples of Hitler-Jugend who for the first time dared openly to display their uniform. I was depressed, but I still had no vision of the fateful course events were to take. On my solitary walk, my thoughts turned to the cause of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra to which Furtwängler and I had devoted so much love, energy, and care. Germany owed an immense debt to Furtwängler. Undisturbed work was a basic requirement for conserving his nervous energy, and I fervently hoped that he would be allowed to remain free from interference.

A gala performance of *Die Meistersinger* at the State Opera, with Furtwängler conducting, had been arranged to celebrate the great day of the nation. A few days before, *Generalintendant* Tietjen, the head of the

Prussian State Theaters, had inquired if Furtwängler would be available, for Hitler had expressed the wish that he conduct. Hindenburg would be present. Attendance was by invitation only. I was given a seat in my usual box. The fact that I went shows how little I realized how matters really stood.

The *Staatsoper* was filled with unfamiliar faces and uniforms. Furtwängler conducted, ill as he was with incipient influenza. During the first interval he was commanded to the presence of the Führer who sat in the middle of the circle. I was only a few yards away, and so was able to see an ecstatic Hitler grasp the hands of Furtwängler who was as pale as death. Before the last act all windows were thrown open, and the sounds of fanatical youth marching in a torchlight procession in honor of their Führer filled the Opera House.

The rest of March 1933 was a hectic period of uncertainty and harassment. Events preceding the first of April 1933 in Germany were reminiscent of the Dark Ages. No atrocities reported in the foreign press could equal in horror those which actually occurred. The Nazis used the outcry abroad as an excuse for tightening the screw at home. To this day I do not know who was the originator of the idea of the unrestricted boycott of the Jews. Like a nightmare, it was suddenly there. If only the world had realized from the very beginning what great gamblers the Nazis were! They seemed to know quite well that many of the protests "by foreign powers" were only nominal, and the rest meant merely condemnation without action.

By the end of March a crisis was approaching. One day without warning, a notice prohibiting Jewish employees from working appeared on the front pages of the newspapers in heavy type. It was not the "Civil Servants' Law," later to be promulgated; in fact, it was no law at all. It caused an enormous panic because neither employers nor employees knew what to make of it. An indescribable insecurity pervaded, and rumors of the impending boycott hung heavily over the people. They were torn by anguish and uncertainty.

There were whispers of American intervention, of continuous government meetings, and then of a "deterioration of the situation" due to (invented) incidents abroad. It was said that the leaders were not in agreement about the boycott, that until the last minute Party officials were in conference with Goering, who was alleged to be against it. Influential voices tried to advise a moderate course. Nobody really knew what would happen; I believe the government itself did not know until the last moment. Finally, on March 31st, it was announced that Goebbels was to speak on the subject on all radio stations at nine o'clock at night. Everybody listened with apprehension to his cunning mixture of sadism, slyness, and empty rhetoric.

After a climax, which led everybody to expect the worst, Goebbels announced that the boycott was to come into force on April 1st, and was to last until six P.M. on the same day. At the same time he uttered a threat—obviously intended for foreign consumption—to resume the boycott in the case of “bad behavior”—presumably of the foreign press.

I had been advised to remove myself on the boycott day, because Furtwängler’s attitude toward the dismissal of the Jewish members of the orchestra and of myself made it appear likely that our office would be an object of the “people’s fury,” staged, of course, by Goebbels. Accordingly, in the early morning of April 1st, I went to the Grunewald, outside Berlin, accompanied by the leader of the orchestra, Goldberg, the first violinist, Back, and the two principal cellists, Schuster and Graudan and their wives. We picnicked there, strolled about, and returned late in the evening.

What had been going on in Berlin in the meantime?

Every artifice of demagogy had been used to whip up public opinion. It seemed unbelievable that such infamy was possible in a civilized age. Old and established Jewish-owned firms were assailed by groups of young Storm Troopers, wild with Party frenzy. The nameplates of physicians and lawyers whose ancestors had long been citizens of Germany were covered with mud-colored placards, notices with “*Jude*,” “*Jüdisches Geschäft*,” or the Star of David were daubed on the walls of houses inhabited by Jews. Jewish-owned shops were guarded by Storm Troopers who prevented the shoppers from entering.

Nothing happened to the Philharmonic office. The Nazi ventriloquist knew exactly when to produce the “voice of the people.” Our day had not yet arrived!

All this organized hooliganism was infinitely upsetting, and almost as upsetting was the sympathy one met. Many people were ashamed and said so. If only they had had the strength of mind to persist!

A few other incidents of these days are still in my mind. The French Ambassador in Berlin, M. François-Poncet, was both fond of music, and exceedingly hospitable, and regularly arranged concerts at the Embassy. Since I sometimes advised on the programs, I was a frequent guest at the Embassy, and on friendly terms with some of the secretaries, and with the First Counsellor, M. Arnal, and his wife, who came from Alsace-Lorraine, and who themselves were charming hosts.

One day M. François-Poncet gave a luncheon party at the French Embassy in honor of Cortot, who was the soloist at a Philharmonic Concert. The day had not yet come when great international artists were to refuse to play in Berlin. The Philharmonic question was in the limelight, and there was wide speculation whether Furtwängler would be able to retain his Jewish musicians and myself as his secretary. At the luncheon, I was placed at the Ambassador's right, with Cortot as my other neighbor. Opposite sat the newly appointed musical critic of the *Völkische Beobachter*, the official Nazi organ. Since Hitler's seizure of power this gentleman had revealed himself as a Party member and was never seen out of his S.A. uniform. Being a good Nazi, he had, of course, ignored me since Hitler's advent, though we constantly met. And now on his first visit to an Embassy he was confronted by me occupying the place of honor at the table.

Though they resented us, the Nazis still had to take people like me into account as long as we were invited to official functions, and compromise when they met us on the neutral ground of an Embassy. At this luncheon, the Ambassador, Cortot and I naturally conversed in French. The Nazi critic displayed an overwhelming charm and tried his best to join our conversation. When we left, he and I parted "the best of friends" and he actually took to greeting me again when nobody else was about!

CHAPTER TEN

That spring, as usual, the Berlin Philharmonic had an extensive foreign tour in prospect, the first during the Nazi régime. It was to take us through several German towns, then to France, and finally to Switzerland, and was to begin on April 22, 1933.

1933

At the outset of the Hitler régime all foreign travel had been banned and a special exit permit had to be secured before the Nazis allowed anyone out of the country. When it was agreed, in principle, that the seven Jewish members would remain in the orchestra, and that I was to retain my post, I assumed that there would be no obstacle to getting my passport validated.

In Berlin the Ministry of the Interior handled such matters. I gave Furtwängler's passport and my own to an "intermediary," one of those indispensable persons recognized by the Nazis but not beyond helping non-Nazis. I asked him to attend to the permits because I knew he was friendly with the Minister's aide de camp, who with his wife was propriety personified. The only thing incompatible with their virtuous attitude was their constant demand for free tickets for the opera, and the Philharmonic concerts. Hitler had allegedly prohibited these requests for complimentary seats by ministerial officials and their friends, but the practice continued worse than ever.

To this authority my man turned. He came back quickly, very embarrassed. "What's the matter?" I asked him. "Any new trouble?" He would not say at first, but finally, with great reluctance, he came out with: "I do not know how to put it, but the Nazis want to know whether you and Furtwängler . . ." He was embarrassed, but I was not. With a good conscience I could reassure the Nazis. My friend disappeared again, and soon returned with the passports validated. My exit permit was granted on his guarantee that I was not the conductor's mistress. The knowledge that work and friendship, and these alone, were the link between Furtwängler and myself frequently upheld me during this humiliating period.

The spirit of unrest brooding over the capital in those days was reflected and even exaggerated in the provinces. Every day reports came in of interference in every sphere of life by the new Party officials. Second-rate people, under some pretext or other, managed to insinuate themselves into every institution, and former chiefs were simply dismissed by the Nazi "cell" which after a long underground existence now came into the open.

What happened in the field of municipal government, banks, universities, and hospitals is common knowledge; absolute chaos reigned in the musical world. The field of music where, even in normal times, competition and exaggerated egotism played a big part, became a network of intrigues.

Germany and Austria had always been alive with musical controversies, but how different the nature of the disputes in the old days! There was the Wagner-Brahms controversy in which even the famous surgeon, Billroth, fulminated against Wagner and strongly supported Brahms. How bitter was the Wagner-Verdi controversy, how passionate the battles about composers like Bruckner, Reger, Mahler, or Strauss. How devotedly did the Bach and Handel Societies work! With how much enthusiasm was chamber music cultivated by amateurs! How really profound and earnest was the interest in music then! But that side of things did not matter to the Nazis. Under cover of the “race-theory,” objective discussion of differences of opinion vanished.

The innumerable concert societies, some, like the Leipzig *Gewandhaus*, with a century-old tradition, suddenly found their work threatened. Their committees generally consisted of highly educated idealists who gave their services to the good cause. Now each committee member was scrutinized as to his ancestry—nothing else mattered.

Concert agencies, too, were menaced unless they chose to forestall the compulsory “*Gleichschaltung*” by voluntarily liquidating themselves!

The authorities deemed it advisable to announce that conditions would be “legalized,” that there was no intention of throttling free competition, and that the free work of concert agencies would be regulated and protected. That, however, was obviously only to gain time. As a matter of fact, the new intermediary controlling bodies resulted in such over-organization that every concert program and every anticipated engagement had to be submitted to the authorities. Free activity was stifled.

The position of artists was naturally also unsettled. The status of those who were in state employment was soon to be defined through the new Civil Servants’ Law. But what would happen to the prominent soloists, the conductors, the chamber music associations, the composers, and foreign artists? Who would be permitted to perform? Who could be engaged? Most artists living in Germany were so deeply rooted that they did not contemplate emigration, they preferred to wait for things to clarify.

Schnabel, for instance, an Austrian and therefore out of reach of the law, stayed on at first; Adolf Busch, the great, exceedingly popular German violinist, immediately cancelled all his engagements in Germany, because

the Fighting League for German Culture had exhaustively scrutinized the ancestry of his second violinist, and had declared *untragbar* his collaborator of many years, Rudolf Serkin, the famous pianist. Lotte Lehmann refused to sing in Germany any more. Bruno Walter had canceled his last Berlin concert, and Richard Strauss had taken his place. Storm Troopers, it was rumored, had threatened to create a disturbance in the *Philharmonie* if Walter conducted. He well knew that the Nazis were capable of manufacturing public opinion, if it suited them, and when a request for protection for his concert was flatly refused, he naturally preferred to cancel it. Subsequent events proved him right. In Leipzig, where he was director of the *Gewandhaus*, nothing happened at first, but shortly after the inauguration of the Third Reich in March 1933 he arrived for his rehearsal one day to find the *Gewandhaus* closed to him—the *Gewandhaus Direktion* had been defeated in their fight against the authorities in Saxony, who were especially ferocious.

Germany, with her deeply rooted, traditional musical life, was suddenly no longer in a position to protect this precious part of her culture. Musical life, like so much else in Nazi Germany, was annexed by the Party, to serve political ends and propaganda, and was rife with nepotism. Music, for its own sake, seemed at an end. In spite of the many great German artists and the big funds allocated to orchestras and opera houses, artistic life had ceased to be untrammelled and spontaneous. Hitler himself admitted in a private conversation that for him art was never “art for art’s sake” but always had to serve a purpose.

Furtwängler watched the developments with consternation and dismay, but he was firmly convinced that it could not last. He was on good terms with the Government; he represented one of their few assets abroad. Although he was criticized by the Nazis for not immediately “aryanizing” his orchestra, he was treated with consideration and respect, and so was confirmed in his feeling of security. He risked opposition, was frank, and was no diplomat. He believed then that it would be easy for him to persuade those in power to mend their ways. He was in a strong position, and had innumerable adherents in the Reich. Many hopes were concentrated in him.

As soon as the interferences with and encroachments on musical institutions began, he received masses of reports and desperate appeals for help. And to everyone who wrote to him about their troubles, he promised the help he thought was his to give. Heads of concert associations arrived, artists begged for interviews and advice. Dismissed opera directors and

broadcasting officials appeared to implore his aid. The files dealing with these cases were a moving document of the early days of Nazi tyranny.

Furtwängler began to submit to the authorities individual cases that he deemed important. His requests were always most civilly received, but were passed from one person to another. Though he spoke to high government officials and was always promised an immediate settlement, the fulfillment of the promises was either cynically ignored or sabotaged by some underling. It did not take long to learn that even the Minister was helpless if the subordinate bodies disagreed. Nevertheless, Furtwängler was untiring in his efforts. He passed day after day in attempts to contact officials and their staffs. All this was nerve racking to a sensitive artist. Once, when a minister who had asked him to telephone at a certain hour was still unavailable at the fourth attempt, Furtwängler angrily banged his fist through a window and hurt his hand.

The distress of everybody affected by these conditions grew, and chaos and disruption became widespread. Furtwängler was tormented. He saw that something had to be done to stem the current. He knew, too, that the whole of intellectual Germany was behind him in his endeavors. For several days he shut himself up and wrote a statement on the neutrality of art and the freedom of achievement, which he issued in the form of an open letter to Dr. Goebbels (April 12, 1933). He took up the case of his Jewish colleagues and urged the right to choose artists with absolute freedom. He declared that the function of art and the artist was to unite and not to sever, and that there was only one ultimate line of demarcation, that between good art and bad. He added that “the contemporary world of music, already weakened by the world depression and the radio, can stand up to no more experiments.”

“When this fight is directed against the real artist, it is against the interests of culture as a whole,” he wrote. “It must, therefore, be said plainly that men like Walter, Klemperer, and Reinhardt must be enabled to have their say in Germany in the future. I say again: Let our fight be against the reckless, disintegrating, shallow, destructive spirit, but not against the real artist, who in his own way, however his art may be appraised, is always creative and thus constructive.

“In this spirit I appeal to you in the name of German art lest things happen that can never be righted.”

The press was already muzzled by Goebbels. Without his consent nothing could be published. It was one of the little Propaganda Minister’s cleverest maneuvers to accept this letter of Furtwängler’s as being of topical

interest. I think that he purposely published it to gain credit for a tolerance which would give him time for future action. Goebbels himself wrote a reply, and published it on the same page as Furtwängler's letter.

On careful reading, that reply proved thoroughly dishonest. Beyond the rash assertion that "politics, too, is an art, and what is more, the highest and most comprehensive art of all" and that, accordingly, those who took part in modern politics felt themselves to be artists—beyond that—he set up the thesis that only art which was rooted in the people could be good. What he really meant by "rooted in the people" he wisely left unsaid. His theories that art had to be responsible, "potent," and militant, were equally senseless.

"Real artists are rare," he continued, "and they have to be encouraged, but," he argued circuitously, "they have to be real artists." He promised that they would be heard in Germany, in the future, too, and that every real artist would have a field of "unhampered activity." It was all nonsense, of course. Goebbels knew all too well that since the valuation of an artist depended on his race there could be no question of "unhampered activity."

In spite of the artificiality of Goebbels' reply, the atmosphere was somewhat eased by the exchange of letters.

The effect of Furtwängler's article was enormous. It was printed in papers all over the world and Furtwängler was inundated by congratulations, telegrams, and letters.

Furtwängler was relieved to have been able to say what he wished; he had given expression to the opinion of the majority, and supported a principle that was of vital necessity both to himself and to the whole German nation. He hoped that things would gradually revert to normal and sound instincts prevail before too much had been destroyed.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Furtwängler's first tour with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra after the ascendance of the Nazi régime illustrated the turn musical life in Germany had taken and the problems it involved.

1933

From the very beginning, Furtwängler in his frequent interviews with the Nazis had pointed out that achievement was the only principle applicable to cultural matters, and had emphatically declared that racial discrimination would paralyze German musical life. Quite apart from the great soloists and conductors, there were first-rate people of Jewish extraction among the orchestra musicians, especially among the string players. Furthermore, a large section of the music-loving public in Germany consisted of Jews, many of whom—lawyers, physicians, scholars and bankers—were amateur performers and frequent supporters of music and musicians.

By the middle of April 1933, at the beginning of our first tour through Hitler Germany, Nazi politics had had a most devastating effect on concert audiences. The Jews did not attend the concerts; they were intimidated and perplexed, and their pride barred them from coming even though the law still conceded them the privilege. The Nazis for the most part did not come; since the orchestra had not been “Aryanized” and did not conform to the “ethics” of the New Germany, they were afraid to endanger their own reputations by attending. All that was left was a thin stratum of those inspired by Furtwängler's courage, and those enthusiasts whom nothing could daunt. But they could not fill the concert halls, and this, the first Philharmonic tour since Hitler's advent, was the first played to half-empty houses in Germany.

I had not accompanied the orchestra on the first part of the journey, but met them in Mannheim en route to Paris. Long before the Hitler régime, a joint concert of the Berlin Philharmonic and the Mannheim Orchestra had been arranged for that spring of 1933. It was the last concert within the regular Mannheim subscription series, and the profits were to be for the benefit of the Mannheim Orchestra.

In the course of his correspondence about the concert, Furtwängler had informed the executive of the Mannheim Orchestra that the Berlin Philharmonic would come with its usual personnel, including the Jewish members. Since the Government had consented to the retention of the Jews in the Orchestra, the provincial authorities had to accept the fact, although

they were then more fanatical than the capital. The Mannheim Orchestra committee wrote, however, that they could not agree that the Jew, Simon Goldberg, the Berlin concertmaster, should be the leader of the joint orchestras. Goldberg had been engaged by Furtwängler when nineteen years of age; he was universally considered one of the best concertmasters in the world. But the Mannheimers demanded that their own leader should occupy Goldberg's place. Furtwängler replied that if the placing of the musicians was not to remain as he had arranged it, or that if any of his artists did not suit them, he would have to cancel the concert.

The Berlin Orchestra duly arrived in Mannheim. Furtwängler stayed with my mother, as he usually did when he visited Mannheim. During the first rehearsal another attempt was made to remove the Berlin concertmaster from his legitimate place, but Furtwängler was adamant. Here, as elsewhere, when the Nazis pretended to be concerned over national sentiment, or disagreements with their *Weltanschauung*, the real issue was petty jealousy and personal ambition. The Mannheim leader was an inferior player; but he was a Nazi, and had immediately donned the swastika. Now he felt his moment had come. What did it matter if his Berlin colleague was a superior artist? That did not count. What did count was political power. Few people in Germany at that time would have dared to resist the Nazis in such an apparently trivial matter. Personal courage such as Furtwängler had displayed since Hitler's advent was rare then, and only the future was to reveal how dearly the Germans would have to pay for this devastating national lack of character.

At that Mannheim concert, Nazi uniforms were to be seen in the front rows for the first time. Civic dignitaries, harmless and honest enough in their past administration, sat there in their brown shirts, decorated with the swastika. The concert was sold out. After the performance a banquet was to take place for both orchestras, with the mayor and officials present; only men were to attend.

After the concert, my mother and I were sitting quietly at dinner when the door opened and Furtwängler, whom we thought was upstairs changing for the banquet, appeared in his traveling clothes. "Good heavens," I said, "what's the matter? You can't go to the banquet like that!" "I'm not going, I shall stay here," he replied, white as a sheet. He was greatly overwrought, and in a state of intense agitation. Only gradually could we find out what had happened: after the performance which, incidentally, had financed their whole series, the executive members of the Mannheim Orchestra had gone to see Furtwängler in the artists' room and had reproached him for his lack

of national sentiment. At this, Furtwängler, without replying, threw his score at their feet and left them. Throughout the whole evening they sent messages and telephoned him, imploring him to attend the banquet, but he was inflexible. He declared that, notwithstanding his honorary membership in the Orchestra conferred upon him at its 150th anniversary in 1929, and the freedom of the city which he held, he would never conduct the Mannheim Orchestra again or return. He backed up his word by an official letter to the Mannheim Orchestra.

I describe this Mannheim incident of 1933 in detail, because it is almost unbelievable that a political upheaval could have such extraordinary repercussions. People whom one would never have suspected of lack of balance seemed to have lost all reason. National sentiment was used as a cover for the basest envy and paltry ambition. Every provincial town was crowded with managing *Kommissars* and other Nazi Party officials. The Mannheim incident was, of course, a matter of tremendous importance to those new dignitaries. Furtwängler, Germany's great conductor, the alleged favorite of the Führer, had proved to be of doubtful allegiance to the Party. He had not only refused to adapt his orchestra to the demands of the New Germany, but had been tactless enough to stay with his Jewish friends in Mannheim! Reports were sent to Berlin, and Mannheim Nazi officials immediately went to Karlsruhe, where a concert of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with Furtwängler was due to take place two days later, to inform the provincial Nazi Government of this scandal. Accordingly, the Government seats were conspicuously empty at the Karlsruhe concert, as they were at Baden-Baden two days later—a symbol of the spirit of the New Germany.

Meanwhile I had gone straight on to Paris from Mannheim. Here, for the first time after many weeks of tension, sleeplessness, humiliation, and despair, I could breathe freely again. With all the energy left to me I concentrated on the preparations for the two concerts at the *Opéra*. A Strasbourg concert preceding the Paris performances was canceled because the management declared that they could give no guarantee of safety to an orchestra from a country where artists were barred from appearance for other than artistic reasons. There was also strong opposition in Paris; nevertheless the concerts were sold out. By then it was known all over the world that Furtwängler could not be considered a Nazi, and that the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra had not been “aryanized,” but there were many people who blamed him for remaining in Germany under the changed conditions. In fact, from the very beginning of the Hitler régime Furtwängler had to defend himself against two attacks: within Germany, against the

Nazis who reproached him for his lack of national sentiment—in the outside world, against those who resented his remaining in Nazi Germany.

Our local agent in Paris received all sorts of threatening letters. There was one group especially, very active and energetic, which informed him that they were planning disturbances at the concerts. They called themselves “The Union for Combating Anti-Semitism.” In vain we explained that actually their activities in our case were rather misplaced; that Jews were still in the orchestra and nothing was changed. We tried to convince them that we were altogether the wrong target for their propaganda; but all arguments proved useless. They declared that although Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra were not practicing anti-Semitism, their Union was dedicated to the principle of opposing any visitor from anti-Semitic Nazi Germany and, therefore, the demonstration would have to take place.

In the end, a rather peculiar deal was made. They agreed to confine themselves to a silent dropping of leaflets, provided they were granted free admission to the concert. That was arranged, and at the beginning of the intermission, in the presence of the whole French Government, and amid the thunderous applause of a capacity house, thousands of their leaflets dropped from the gallery.

The concerts of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in Paris had been gala performances full of splendor and enthusiasm ever since 1928, and were the highlights of our tours. In 1933, with conditions at home so radically changed, we had become ultra-sensitive and especially appreciated everything—at any rate so far as our public and our friends were concerned—that was still as it had been in pre-Hitler times.

During the years of our journeys, we had formed friendships in all the towns we visited, and we were always glad to see those friends again. In Paris we had our own community, in no small measure due to the efforts of the German Ambassador, von Hoesch.

M. Jacques Rouché, the director and patron of the Paris *Opéra*, who then dominated opera and concert activities in France to a great extent, had been devoted to Furtwängler since his first visit to Paris, and he and his family formed a center of friendly support.

Things worked fairly smoothly throughout the French tour, as the successful concerts indicated. Furtwängler’s upright attitude in standing up for his orchestra and his secretary was known to the world. In France, as elsewhere, his letter to Goebbels had been reprinted. A theory gained

currency that he only wrote it in view of the impending foreign tour, but I can vouch for the integrity and profound conviction which urged him to raise his voice.

Deputies appeared in every French town we passed, to honor Furtwängler for his attitude. In the newspaper *Le Marseillais*, a very fine headline entitled “*Une voix*” appeared emphasizing the one humane voice of Furtwängler amidst all the distressful clamor caused by Hitler. The concert in Marseilles was received with terrific applause, and a truly southern demonstration of enthusiasm. The concert in Lyons was almost canceled owing to a threatened boycott by the populace, but after those reassuring events, it took place, and was very successful.

After France, we visited Geneva, Zurich, and Basle. There, for the first time, German refugees were at the concerts. I avoid the word “emigrant” to which Hitler had imparted a sinister flavor.

While the orchestra, with Furtwängler, filled a few more engagements in Germany, I left for Vienna to be present at the final preparations for the Brahms Festival (May 16-21, 1933).

CHAPTER TWELVE

The eighth Brahms Festival coincided with the centenary of his birth. It was announced as: *Johannes Brahms-Fest, Wien, 100 Jahr-Feier, Mai 1933*. The *Deutsche Brahmsgesellschaft* had agreed with the Viennese *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, whose honorary member Brahms had been, that the festival should take place in Vienna, and both societies collaborated in the preparations.

1933

At the Vienna festival the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* had the predominating influence. The soloists had been chosen by mutual agreement. Furtwängler, an honorary member of the *Gesellschaft* was to be the principal conductor. Huberman and Casals, both honorary members, were to play the Double Concerto. Schnabel was to play the B flat major concerto, and he, Huberman, and Hindemith were to take part in the chamber music.

At that time Vienna's artistic life was in full bloom. Many authors and actors had gone there, hoping to begin a new life in that last German-speaking land where there was still some freedom left. Vienna has always been the home of German music, and music was actually flourishing more than ever. All the famous conductors, including Toscanini, were then at home in Vienna.

The Brahms Centenary was one of the last occasions at which the invisible barriers arising between Germans and other people were not yet much in evidence. Visitors from all over the world came to Vienna for it. Once more, great artists from every country were united, later to be inexorably separated by Hitler.

At the opening of the festival, Furtwängler delivered the Brahms oration. Dollfuss, who was to have welcomed the participants on behalf of the Austrian Government, was unable to attend, and Schuschnigg spoke in his stead.

The atmosphere of this last international Brahms Festival was untarnished, and worthy of comparison with the beauty and serenity of musical festivals of pre-Hitler days. For the last time the serene spirit of the wonderful music dominated everything; human contacts were still free and enjoyable.

Furtwängler's time during the Festival Week was fully occupied, yet I remember that in his spare moments we discussed the problems which constantly preoccupied and worried him. He was still the rock on whom many built their faith, but the ways of artists were already beginning to diverge.

The evenings after the concerts were spent in the *Schwemme* of the Hotel Imperial, in the company of the various artists and their friends. We sat there till the early hours, but whatever we talked about we always came back to the same insoluble desperate problem which Hitler had created. In spite of many years of joint work which linked Furtwängler and the great soloists, I felt clearly and hopelessly on those evenings that their roads lay in different directions.

The short fortnight between the end of the Brahms Festival and the beginning of the annual German opera performances in Paris, we spent in Berlin. The days were filled with hectic activities, interviews with Ministers, correspondence with desperate people from all parts of the Reich, and in dealing with the problems that arose in connection with the orchestra and the Berlin State Opera, where Furtwängler at the time was conducting some performances.

It was a blessing to escape this witch's cauldron for a long visit to Paris.

Paris was delightful. Furtwängler's Wagner Festival had become quite a regular feature of the Paris spring season, and attracted people from all over the world. Some of the singers used to return to Europe after the end of the New York Metropolitan Opera season, and Paris and Covent Garden shared the great artists in May and June. Lauritz Melchior was a great favorite in Paris; we used to watch in silent amazement the amount of food he consumed at the Norwegian restaurant, Viking, to which we frequently went after the opera. The singers, among themselves, were like one great family, especially the cast of *Tristan*, at that time including Frieda Leider, Melchior, and Herbert Janssen. Whether the performance took place in Paris, Berlin, Bayreuth, or London, those three were generally engaged together, while Brangäne and Marke were apt to vary. There were two performances of *Tristan* and two of *Walküre*. In the latter Wotan and Sieglinde were sung by Friedrich Schorr and Lotte Lehmann, just back from New York. We all stayed together at the Villa Majestic. The Nazi troubles receded into the background, like a bad dream we wished to forget. The days were full of fun and gaiety, and we were all happy.

Naturally, there were undercurrents arising indirectly from the political situation. The press was not always friendly. Paris was full of hostile elements of chauvinistic origin, and difficulties arose, too, from refugee quarters. However, not all refugees were hostile. Some of them came to see Furtwängler, and many to see me. Yet our relation with our exiled compatriots was becoming more and more strained. Those who had lost everything by leaving Germany found it almost impossible to have anything to do with those who remained. The refugees were torn between the love of their deeply-rooted traditions and life, and the recognition that the new order in their country was incompatible with spiritual liberty. Some of them, deceived by a short political lull, later returned to Germany, only to regret it bitterly. And those who remained in France became a prey later on to the Gestapo, in the vicissitudes through which that country passed.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Even in the early days of Nazidom the falsification of values was already evident. “Right” and “wrong,” “good” and “bad” had lost their meaning.

1933

If only the outside world had taken a firmer attitude from the beginning, things might not have come to such a pass, and the surprisingly few courageous men in Germany who openly disagreed with the Nazis might have been better supported in their effort to stem the tide. Germany was still very dependent on foreign opinion, and everything connected with foreign countries was at first handled gingerly by the Government, not because of timidity, but as part of the whole political maneuver, a tactful camouflage for relentlessness.

Though Furtwängler was desperately disturbed by the course things were taking, he still did not think it irreparable. Furtwängler sometimes returned quite hopeful from his numerous interviews with Goebbels, Hitler, and lesser authorities, in which he tried to explain the fatal consequences of racial and party policies on Germany’s cultural life. He underrated the tenacity and ruthlessness of the Nazis. He did not realize that they only pretended to agree with him to keep him quiet, and that they put him off with empty promises while in fact they did only what they wanted. Because he was treated and listened to with respect, he imagined that he had authority, and continued to adhere to his belief that all could be righted and that musical life would, after all, be able to function free from the “Aryan clause.”

Many prominent musicians had fallen prey to the first “purifying” waves set in motion by the Nazis. No “law” in this connection had yet been passed, but there was hardly a concert institute or opera house that had not given “indefinite leave” to a conductor, director, or manager. Others had simply retired of their own accord. The same thing applied to the universities and all similar institutions. While a great number of people disappeared from public life, others profited by the vacancies. Corruption flourished, and actions against prominent people of Jewish descent sprang up like mushrooms. New “stars,” hitherto allegedly “suppressed” by the Jews, appeared. Soloists, composers, conductors, and teachers, who by pre-Hitler standards had not been considered worthy of public notice, now rose in the glory of their Party membership and demanded their due. One day, for

instance, it was intimated to Furtwängler that the Minister of Propaganda would like to see a certain musical work performed. It was a work that Furtwängler had declined to accept many years before. The composer was one of those nonentities who exist in all aspects of life: now his opus reappeared, dedicated to Goebbels, and the composer revealed himself as a full-fledged member of the Party. In spite of this, however, the work remained banned from Furtwängler's programs.

Gradually the outside world became aware of what was going on, and raised its voice in protest. Prominent artists such as Bodanzky, Gabrilowitsch, Kreisler, and others sent a joint telegram to Hitler supporting their colleagues. Toscanini canceled his participation in the Bayreuth Festival. The fact that Hitler wrote a personal letter to him urging him to revoke his decision offended many Germans, because while Hitler was courting the Italian anti-Fascist, he was expelling many men of worth from Germany.

Personal interest in music and musicians has always been deep and strong in Germany and Austria. It was an essential part of life. No wonder that in all sections of the public there was a growing unrest, much of which surged up to Furtwängler. He still clung to the belief that the upheaval in the musical life of Germany could not go on indefinitely, and felt it to be his sacred mission to use his prominent position to fight for the return to normal conditions. With special care, therefore, he attended to his program for the 1934 season.

Preparations for the Berlin Philharmonic concerts always began a year ahead. Nobody was ever allowed to book the *Philharmonie* before the ten Sundays and Mondays for the Philharmonic general rehearsals and concerts had been fixed. Then invitations were issued to the soloists. The same procedure was followed in 1933. Everybody was fully aware that the choice of the soloists for the Berlin Philharmonic concerts in the first season under the Nazi régime would be a test case. Furtwängler, naturally, always chose his soloists to suit his programs, and was determined to keep these famous concerts free from interference.

In addition, he felt sure that if the great international "non-Aryan" artists played in Berlin, the provinces, like the Leipzig *Gewandhaus* and others, would be supported in their endeavors to uphold the tradition. He was also convinced that once prominent "non-Aryan" artists appeared again, the lesser ones would also have a chance to survive the crisis.

After an understanding and moderate authority closely connected with the Reich Chancellery had agreed to his suggestions, Furtwängler personally wrote his invitations to Casals, Cortot, Josef Hofmann, Huberman, Kreisler, Menuhin, Piatigorsky (former principal cello of the orchestra), Thibaud, and Arthur Schnabel. The replies he received from these great artists were not only highly interesting, but also profoundly moving. Menuhin, then still a minor, immediately refused by cable and his father explained this refusal in a long letter. Kreisler, Piatigorsky, and Thibaud also declined. Casals, a man of heroic character, wrote a letter of great dignity full of strong, personal friendship and understanding for the desperate struggle in which Furtwängler was engaged. But he said that he would not enter Germany until its musical life was normal again. Cortot refused on the spur of the moment, but later changed his mind and accepted.

In his invitations Furtwängler argued that art and politics were separate things, but in their replies, the soloists unanimously stressed the point that in spite of Furtwängler's personal efforts, politics had intruded into German musical life, and all of them—"Aryans" and others—refused to accept privileges solely on account of their prominence. They would not play in Germany as long as equal rights were not accorded to everyone.

They doubted that Furtwängler could win his battle. They were right.

Furtwängler had been particularly insistent in his correspondence with Bronislaw Huberman, whom he had known through many years of mutual work in Berlin and in Vienna. Huberman was extremely popular in Berlin and was one of the few whose recitals could fill the *Philharmonie* several times in a season. However, he flatly refused to return to Germany. Furtwängler wrote him again a detailed, friendly letter asking him to consider their correspondence and exchange of viewpoints as purely private. In his opinion, he added, the mission of art was to bridge all gulfs; he wished Huberman could see his way to help him to make a start toward that end.

Furtwängler had written Huberman in a strong and sincere conviction. Fighting a brave and lonely battle, he fervently hoped that with the help of those who shared his feeling, he might overcome the unnatural measures threatening to strangle Germany's artistic life. In all their measures the Nazis always referred to the "Voice of the People," and he was sure that the people would warmly welcome the artists whom they had applauded for many years. He hoped that the great soloists with whom he was linked by so many unforgettable memories would help him to convince the new régime of what

the people really wanted. What he did not realize was that the new régime did not want to be convinced.

Huberman replied to Furtwängler and simultaneously gave his reply to the press. This reply has a message for the whole civilized world and deserves to be quoted fully. Huberman, like Furtwängler, wrote with passionate conviction:

Vienna,
August 31, 1933

Dear friend,

Permit me first of all to express my admiration for the fearlessness, determination, tenacity, and sense of responsibility with which you have conducted your campaign begun in April for rescuing the concert stage from threatening destruction by racial “purifiers.”

When I place your action—the only one, by the way, that has led to a positive result in the Germany of today—alongside that of Toscanini, Paderewski, and the Busch brothers, all of which sprang from the same feeling of solidarity and concern for the continuation of our culture, I am seized with a feeling of pride that I, too, may call myself a musician.

Precisely these models of a high sense of duty, however, must prevent all our colleagues from accepting any compromise that might endanger the final goal.

Although the Government’s declarations, which owe their origin to you, may represent the maximum of what may presently be attained, yet, unfortunately, I cannot accept them as sufficient for my reparticipation in German concert life. My attitude is based on the following fundamental objective human and ethical considerations:

The Government deems it necessary to emphasise the selective principle of highest achievement as the decisive one for music, as for every other form of art. This underscoring of something that ought to be self-evident would be meaningless if it did not imply a determination to apply the principle of selection on a racial basis—a principle that it is impossible to understand—to all other realms of culture.

Moreover, there is a wide gap between the announcement of the principle of achievement arbitrarily limited to art and its practical application—a gap that simply cannot be bridged. For included in the general concept of the advancement of art are, first and foremost, the institutions of learning and art collections.

As far as the special realm of the furtherance of the art of music is concerned, municipal and State Opera houses are an essential factor; yet no case has come to my attention of the intended reinstatement of those museum directors, orchestra conductors, and music teachers who were dismissed on account of their Jewish origin, their different political views, or even their lack of interest in politics.

In other words, the intention of “re-establishing the principle of achievement in art” by no means embraces art in general, or even the entire field of music. Merely the relatively narrow and special field of the concert or recital is to be restored to the free competition of those “real artists” who are to fill the concert hall.

And as every concert of importance is connected with extensive international publicity, while the research specialist or teacher can only on rare occasions appear before the public with the results of his work, it is quite conceivable that the few foreign or Jewish artists who have been asked to assist at such concerts might be used as arguments that everything is well culturally in Germany.

In reality, German thoroughness would continue to find ever-new definitions for racial purity and apply them to the still immature student of art in the schools, laboratories, and so forth.

I am confident, of course, that you, honoured friend, would regret such a result quite as much as would the majority of German concert-goers.

There is, however, also a human-ethical side to the problem. I should like a definite rendering of music as a sort of artistic projection of the best and most valuable in man.

Can you expect this process of sublimation, which presupposes complete abandonment of one’s self to one’s art, of the musician who feels his human dignity trodden upon and who is officially degraded to the rank of a pariah? Can you expect it of

the musician to whom the guardians of German culture deny, because of his race, the ability to understand “pure German music”?

At the same time they deliberately keep silent, on the one hand, concerning the half-Jewish origin of Richard Wagner, which has now been proved beyond peradventure of doubt, and on the other hand, concerning the historic rôle played by Mendelssohn, Anton Rubinstein, Hermann Levi, Joseph Joachim, and so forth.

You try to convince me by writing, “Someone must make a beginning to break down the wall that keeps us apart.” Yes, if it were only a wall in the concert hall! But the question of more or less than authoritative interpretation of a violin concerto is but one of numerous aspects—and, God knows, not the most important one—behind which the real problem is hidden.

In reality it is not a question of violin concertos nor even merely of the Jews; the issue is the retention of those things that our fathers achieved by blood and sacrifice, of the elementary pre-conditions of our European culture, the freedom of personality and its unconditional self-responsibility unhampered by fetters of caste or race.

Whether these achievements shall again be recognised depends not upon the readiness of the individual who is “the first to break through the wall that separates,” but, as in the past, upon the urge of the conscience of artists collectively, which, once aroused, will crash through sources of resistance with the impulse of a force of nature, breaking them as it would a paper wall.

I cannot close this letter without expressing to you my deep regret at the conditions that have resulted in my being separated for the moment from Germany. I am especially grieved and pained in my relationship as a friend of my German friends and as an interpreter of German music who very much misses the echo awakened in his German hearers. And nothing could make me happier than to observe a change also outside the realm of concert life which would liberate me from the compulsion of conscience, striking at my very heartstrings, to renounce Germany. With warm greetings, Sincerely yours.—BRONISLAW HUBERMAN.

Huberman did not give up the struggle at this point, as is shown in the following letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, published on March 7, 1936, on the Nuremberg legislation and the destruction of intellectual freedom:

SIR,—I shall be glad if you will print the following “open letter” which I have addressed to the German intellectuals:

Since the publication of the ordinances regulating the application of the Nuremberg legislation—this document of barbarism—I have been waiting to hear from you one word of consternation or to observe one act of liberation. Some few of you at least, certainly must have some comment to make upon what has happened, if your avowals of the past are to endure. But I have been waiting in vain. In the face of this silence I must no longer stand mute. It is two and a half years since my exchange of correspondence with Dr. Wilhelm Furtwängler, one of the most representative leaders of spiritual Germany. It will be recalled that Dr. Furtwängler endeavoured to prevent me from publishing my refusal of his invitation to play with his orchestra in Germany. His astonishing argument was that such a publication would close Germany to me for many years, and perhaps for ever. My answer on August 31, 1933, stated among other things:

“. . . In spite of this I would perhaps have hesitated with this publication if the chasm between Germany and the cultural world had not been rendered even more impassable by recent events. Nothing discloses more dreadfully the brutalization of large sections of the German population than the threats which have been published for weeks in the newspapers that German girls will be placed in the pillory if found in the company of Jews at coffee-houses or on excursions, or if they carry on love affairs with them. This kind of baiting could not fail to result in such bestialities of the darkest Middle Ages as described in *The Times*.”

The description referred to was in the London *Times* of August 23, 1933, and told the story of a gentle Aryan girl who in punishment of her alleged commerce with a Jew was dragged in a pillory through the principal streets of Nuremberg amid the howls of the mob. As a consequence she suffered a stroke of insanity and was put in the asylum of Erlangen.

Dr. Furtwängler was profoundly revolted not only at the Nuremberg incidents, which he assured me he and all “real

Germans” condemned as indignantly as I, but also against me because of my reference to the brutalization of large sections of the German population. He felt himself compelled to regard this as a “monstrous generalization which had nothing to do with reality.”

In the meantime two and a half years have passed. Countless people have been thrown into gaols and concentration camps, exiled, killed, and driven to suicide. Catholic and Protestant ministers, Jews, Democrats, Socialists, Communists, army generals became the victims of a like fate. I am not familiar with Dr. Furtwängler’s attitude to these happenings, but he expressed clearly enough his own opinion of all “real Germans” concerning the shamefulness of the so-called race-ravishing pillories; and I have not the slightest doubt of the genuineness of his consternation, and believe firmly that many, perhaps the majority of Germans, share his feelings.

Well then, what have you, the “real Germans,” done to rid conscience and Germany and humanity of this ignominy since these make-believe Germans, born in the Argentine, in Bohemia, in Egypt, and in Latvia, have changed my alleged “monstrous generalization” to legal reality? Where are the German Zolas, Clemenceaus, Painlevés, Picquarts, in this monster Dreyfus case against an entire defenceless minority; where are the Masaryks in this super-dimensional Polna case? Where has the voice of blood, if not the voice of justice and common sense, been raised against the even more inhuman persecution of those born of mixed marriages between Aryans and Jews, and of pure Aryans who have the misfortune to be the spouses of Jews?

Before the whole world I accuse you, German intellectuals, you non-Nazis, as those truly guilty of all these Nazi crimes, all this lamentable breakdown of a great people—a destruction which shames the whole white race. It is not the first time in history that the gutter has reached out for power, but it remained for the German intellectuals to assist the gutter to achieve success. It is a horrifying drama which an astonished world is invited to witness; German spiritual leaders with world citizenship who until but yesterday represented German conscience and German genius, men called to lead their nation by their precept and example, seemed incapable from the beginning of any other reaction to this assault upon the most sacred possessions of mankind than to

coquet, cooperate, and condone. And when, to cap it all, demagogical usurpation and ignorance rob them of their innermost conceptions from their own spiritual workshop, in order thereby to disguise the embodiment of terror, cowardice, immorality, falsification of history in a mantle of freedom, heroism, ethics, German intellectuals reach the pinnacle of their treachery: they bow down and remain silent.

Must, then, the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church in Germany battle alone in their truly heroic struggle for Germany's honour, tradition, and future?

Germany, you people of poets and thinkers, the whole world—not only the world of your enemies, but the world of your friends—waits in amazed anxiety for your word of liberation. Yours, etc.
—BRONISLAW HUBERMAN.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The refusal of the soloists to play for the Berlin Philharmonic concerts was a tragic enough symptom of the position, but worse was to come. The orchestra's organization itself, its freedom of unfettered activity were suddenly endangered, and the orchestra found itself engaged in a desperate fight to preserve its prestige and artistic standards. This struggle which the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra waged for its artistic and material existence was, in essence, the battle between Freedom and Dictatorship.

1933

In March 1933 when the breaking down of the pre-Hitler and the building up of a new world were taking place simultaneously, the orchestra did not know where it stood. However high the receipts might be, it was certain that without the guarantee of a balanced budget the orchestra could not continue to exist, much less keep up its artistic standard.

From the very first days of the Nazi régime there had been a reshuffle in all administrative organizations, and as a result the orchestra found itself in a perilous position. It was suddenly dependent for its financial support upon new men who had come to power and who could withdraw their backing if the orchestra did not toe the line.

At the time of Hitler's seizure of power, the orchestra was a limited liability company. Dr. Lange, the "Aryan," Social Democratic First Mayor of Berlin was the chairman.

Since many people coveted the rank of First Mayor, Dr. Lange was relieved of his post early in March 1933. Had he remained, as a Social Democrat he would hardly have been able to protect the orchestra much longer. The Berlin municipal government, until then rather more "red" than "brown," suddenly seemed to be more Nazi than the Nazis. Those, especially, who managed to stick to the posts they had held in pre-Nazi times could not do enough to denounce their former colleagues and push them out of office.

The orchestra had been built up by selection based on competence. Before being accepted, every single aspirant had to play before Furtwängler and the members of the orchestra. These auditions were held in a critically judicious spirit; often Furtwängler stopped an audition after only a few bars

had been played, and in such a case nothing more could be done for the aspirant.

The Berlin Philharmonic in those early Nazi days was caught in the swirl of all the different undercurrents, political and social, that were seething just under the surface. Moreover, there was undoubtedly a certain amount of jealousy of Furtwängler himself, both on the part of disappointed musicians and other orchestras. Musicians rejected at the Philharmonic auditions were bound to have friends in the Party and used them to make their new power felt. Soon accusations against Furtwängler, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and myself poured in to Ministries and Party offices.

The morale of the orchestra itself was, generally speaking, very high. It was one of the few organizations which did not possess a Nazi "cell." However, orchestral musicians are an odd lot, especially if they meddle in politics, and even the Berlin Philharmonic was entangled in some political incidents. There was, for instance, a wind player—not too intelligent—whose work had lately deteriorated and whose replacement had even been considered. One day, insignificant as he was, he appeared in an S.A. uniform and tried to make trouble. He got short shrift.

Meanwhile the financial problems of the orchestra continued unsolved. All payments on the part of the city of Berlin and Prussia had stopped, although, pending a new arrangement, the former board was still responsible. But as long as the superior authority was undefined, our work suffered from interference both from the members of the late board of the Orchestra Company and from every one of the new Nazi organizations as well.

Though the Philharmonic question was not the concern of Prussia, Goering, the Prime Minister of Prussia, was very anxious to come to an agreement with Furtwängler. He had offered him the directorship of the Berlin State Opera, thereby creating a double position for him. It was well known that Goering had asked Hitler for the privilege of having the State Opera under his sole authority, thus withdrawing it for all time from the grasp of Goebbels, who eventually made himself the master of all theaters in the Reich. Goering took the office of chief of the State Opera very seriously. He attended the performances whenever possible, especially during the first year. And so it came about that during the initial stages of his opera negotiations Furtwängler found that Goering lent him, if not actual help, at least a willing ear for his Philharmonic troubles.

The question of the administration and budget of the orchestra was one part of the problem, its “aryanization” the other. If the Berlin municipal authorities alone had had the right to decide the matter, all those musicians considered *untragbar* as civil servants would have been dismissed on the spot. Indeed, an attempt was made to convene a Town Council meeting for that purpose. Berlin was legally entitled to that, since, owing to the delay, the Board of which it was a member still existed in its old form. Furtwängler, however, anticipating trouble, managed to get the meeting canceled by the higher authority of the Reich and thus again averted disaster. Owing to the unsettled state of affairs no radical interference was yet possible, and Furtwängler was able to protect the orchestra for the time being.

The whole Government had been present at the last Philharmonic Concert of the season 1932-33 before the orchestra had left on tour. Dr. Goebbels came into the artists’ room afterwards and informed Furtwängler that in the future the orchestra would be under his authority. Goebbels could be charming if he wished. Often enough he beguiled Furtwängler and on this occasion, too, he completely hoodwinked him. Furtwängler left for his tour reassured.

During the tour, correspondence on Philharmonic matters decided nothing and when we returned in the middle of June there had been not the least progress towards a settlement. The Ministry of Propaganda was a notorious center of doubtful elements, of craving for power, of subordinate officials’ jealousy and envy of promotion. It was, curiously enough, almost a crime in the totalitarian state to deal directly with the Minister. Furtwängler had been spared dealings with bureaucracy in pre-Hitler times, and so he naturally thought that if he went to Goebbels direct everything could be settled. But he forgot to count on the intricate network of petty officialdom that was all too anxious to frustrate not only him, but, if possible, Goebbels too.

In spite of Goebbels’ promise in early April, not a single payment had been made by the Reich by June 1933. The official in the Ministry of Propaganda who handled the matters, a man of the old régime, explained that Goebbels should never have given a promise regarding the orchestra before securing the necessary funds in his budget. The Prussian Minister of Finance simply stopped the budgeted amount due from Prussia. The *Reichsrundfunk* declared their agreement null and void under the present altered circumstances. Goering, on behalf of Prussia, explained he could do

nothing in the matter since, according to the German Official Gazette, Goebbels on behalf of the Reich was responsible. It was a deadlock.

Tension due to the constant insecurity began to rise in the orchestra, and the view gained ground, fostered by Party people, that unless the Jewish members and myself resigned, the Nazis would always find a pretext for avoiding a satisfactory solution of the problem.

That was certainly contrary to all the agreements with the government, which, so far, had declared the orchestra sacrosanct pending further decisions. However, these “terror methods” used parallel to, and independent of, ministerial promises, produced their results.

It all had its effect on the weaker spirits in the orchestra who one day pronounced Höber, long a member of the executive, dismissed, and expressed their intention of moving the office of the orchestra to another address, thus separating it from my rooms. At that Furtwängler lost his patience—it was still possible then to lose patience with the Nazis. He forced Goebbels, who had persistently evaded him, to grant him a personal interview. Their conversation, at least theoretically, straightened matters out. Goebbels reiterated that he was willing to take over the orchestra provided Furtwängler became its leader in every respect, and the board of seventeen directors renounced all their rights in his favor. Goebbels gave his assurance that he would honor his promise. Accordingly Furtwängler reinstated the *status quo ante*, and issued a circular to the orchestra explaining the situation.

He informed them that all the rights of the board of directors had been invested in him. He alone would be responsible to the government for everything concerning the orchestra, and any attempt on the part of the members to hold meetings or take arbitrary political steps were prohibited. On the whole, the orchestra was entirely on Furtwängler’s side and this instruction was intended only for the very few agitators among the members who had to be held in check to meet the exigencies of the time.

The leadership devised by Goebbels for Furtwängler was not only impossible, it was utterly inconceivable under a Fascist régime. Actually the projected solution was nothing but a hollow farce. Furtwängler had only been reassured by empty words, and everything dragged on as before. Goebbels himself called a meeting of the former board of directors, but on the appointed day he simply disappeared on a holiday without informing anybody concerned, which meant another adjournment for an indefinite time.

Furtwängler was, of course, very troublesome to the authorities; in spite of their admiration for him, officials avoided him as much as possible.

Hitler had, in principle, assured Furtwängler of any support he might need, and a discussion on concert and opera questions had been planned. But, he, too, vanished to Berchtesgaden and we were casually informed that the Führer would not return to Berlin for some time, but would go on to Bayreuth from Berchtesgaden to attend the Festival.

By July 1933 the orchestra was faced with complete bankruptcy. There was only one way to avoid disaster—a personal appeal to Hitler. We decided to send our Party member *Kommissar* to Bayreuth. Since he had known him from the early days of the Party, Hitler received him immediately. He expressed his great admiration for Furtwängler, and was most astonished and annoyed that the position of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, which he believed to have been settled long ago, was still unsolved. He instantly sent for Goebbels, who was also in Bayreuth, and who, in the position of an official who had sabotaged his chief, felt extremely uncomfortable. He squirmed with embarrassment when his Führer was told in his very presence that the orchestra faced financial ruin. Hitler was furious. The scandal of having Germany's famous orchestra declare itself bankrupt must be avoided at all costs. He decreed that the matter have immediate attention, and assured our envoy that the funds would be provided at once. He also sent word to Furtwängler to visit him as soon as possible to talk things over.

Furtwängler's visit to Obersalzberg took place at the beginning of August. He departed from Berlin armed with a huge memorandum concerning the orchestra's problems and reports on individual cases. Though he always prepared his notes most carefully for these political encounters, one of the shortcomings of his sensitive and complex nature was his inability to adapt himself to the crude, primitive mentality peculiar to the Nazis. He was quickly roused to anger, and thus he often failed to achieve all that he might have, had he used different tactics.

That particular meeting was very stormy. During their discussion of general and political matters, Hitler and Furtwängler almost forgot the main subject—the orchestra. He was so perturbed by the interview that he rang me up from Munich immediately afterwards, saying that he now understood what was at the bottom of Hitler's stubborn point of view. It was not the Jewish question alone, but his attitude, inimical to *all* intellectual matters. That telephone conversation—as we soon discovered—was tapped by the Nazis.

Although the encounter with Hitler had occasioned fierce disputes, the future of the orchestra finally seemed assured—Hitler saw to that.

On October 26, 1933, the orchestra was officially taken over by the Reich. The salaries and pensions of the musicians were guaranteed, the ominous “Aryan clause” was not to be applied to the orchestra. The office for the time being was left untouched.

If the orchestra had honestly been permitted to keep its autonomy without new and inexperienced people being allowed to interfere in its affairs, quiet, steady work might have been safeguarded. Further developments, however, proved that such an intention was not compatible with the Third Reich.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Although, later on, a new stratum of society emerged as another disappeared, it took some time (certainly till the beginning or middle of 1934) for the cleavage caused by the Nazi ideology to take full effect. It is true that from the very beginning the encroachment on liberty resulted in immediate and irreparable losses, and was felt in every walk of life—in the universities, in the great hospitals, and in research institutions, as well as in banks and industry. In civic and government administrations, all officials—even if “Aryan”—who were unfortunate enough to displease some Nazi, were pushed out of their jobs. Scholars and professors of world fame were dismissed from the universities. People so affected were cut off from their former life; they withdrew from normal social intercourse and eventually disappeared.

1933

But in spite of all those drastic changes, life on the surface was not yet completely changed.

Social life—as distinct from political—in connection with musical activities, for instance, was not noticeably changed. Almost every night concerts were held in the *Philharmonie*, the *Beethovensaal* and elsewhere. The social events revolving around the great Philharmonic Concerts continued. After the Sunday morning general rehearsals there was usually an official luncheon, and after the Monday evening concerts a reception or a party.

The Berlin State Opera continued to be an interesting center. Apart from the fine performances, it was a meeting ground of many interests, and important matters were often settled during the intermissions. The *Opernhaus unter den Linden*, as it was called, maintained its customary high standards. It satisfied the demands of modern taste and was up-to-date not only with regard to technical stage devices but also in every other respect. It kept up its fine old tradition—there were no new Nazi functionaries working either on the stage or in the administration—it was still mostly run by old and tried officials. Thanks to Goering’s influence, moderation still prevailed!

How intimate and yet ceremonious were the attendants of the boxes! Two of them—outside the boxes of the *Generalintendant*—had held office since the Kaiser’s time and their inimitable dignity was in strange contrast to the scores of S.A. or S.S. guards with which the Nazi Ministers surrounded themselves when visiting the Opera House.

Enthusiastic attention was focused on the events at the State Opera. Richard Strauss, who spent a great deal of time in Berlin at the beginning of the Nazi régime and nursed his relations with all Opera Houses carefully, was on especially good terms with the Berlin State Opera and its management. In March 1933 Strauss was present at the new production of his opera *Elektra* under Furtwängler, then only a guest conductor, and that fall he attended all the rehearsals for the Berlin première of his new opera *Arabella* which Furtwängler also conducted.

Once during a rehearsal he discovered me at the far end of the stalls and called out: "Ah! There is Fräulein Geissmar. Please come out into the corridor!" While we strolled about he asked me what I thought of his new opera and whether I did not agree that the wind instruments were too loud. "Couldn't you tell Furtwängler?" he asked. What a situation! The great Richard Strauss was afraid to advise the conductor about a purely technical matter regarding the interpretation of his own music. He knew how sensitive Furtwängler was, and he wanted to keep him in good temper. After the rehearsal I had lunch with Furtwängler and cautiously mentioned Strauss' comment. Furtwängler was not a little amused that the composer had chosen such a detour to relay his communication.

There were old ties between Strauss and my family. While my father was still alive Strauss regularly called for a game of Skat with him whenever he came to Mannheim. Once when Strauss was dining at our house, my father said to my mother after dinner: "I think you had better go to bed now, dear, because we are going to play cards." Strauss, the notoriously henpecked husband of Pauline, exclaimed in amazement, "How on earth do you manage to ask your wife to leave the room, and what is more, get her to do it?" Yet, despite the old acquaintance with my family, when the German Government had nothing more important to do than scheme how to free Furtwängler of his secretary, Strauss failed to take up the cudgels on my behalf.

Artists from the provinces came to Berlin more frequently than ever in those troubled days. Many came to see Furtwängler, who, by his courage, had assumed almost mythical fame. They often brought news of what was happening underground as well as officially; much of it was distressing and much tragic, and the visits and the correspondence that followed caused me many sleepless nights.

At that time, Furtwängler was conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Director of the Berlin State Opera, vice-president of the *Reichsmusikkammer*, and, from July 1933 on, also a Prussian *Staatsrat*. The

world has often reproached Furtwängler for accepting this title. Actually, the whole Prussian State Council, at least as far as its functions were concerned, was one of the meaningless, pompous displays staged by Goering without any legal significance. It was, so to speak, a private affair of Goering's and hardly met more than twice.

One Sunday morning while he was on a holiday, Furtwängler, the director of Goering's Opera House, received a telegram: "Appoint you herewith Prussian Councillor of State. Hermann Goering." The story goes that Goering, on the point of leaving his office one Saturday, suddenly said, "Quick, let's make Furtwängler a Councillor of State." The nomination occurred at a moment when the struggle for the retention of standards was still at its height and was not considered a lost battle. Furtwängler felt it would be a mistake to refuse this sign of confidence and hoped that through the new appointment he would gain authority to enforce his views more easily. The hope was in vain. Later his position of *Staatsrat* became a source of endless trouble. When he resigned from all his posts including that of Councillor of State, Goering informed him that it was *verboten* to renounce the pompous title of *Staatsrat* and so that doubtful distinction remained attached to him.

In spite of all the growing difficulties there was a fine community spirit among the musicians in Berlin. Perfect comradeship reigned among the section leaders of the orchestra who had formed a chamber music association. They frequently came to my home and played quartets. Occasionally Furtwängler, himself a wonderful chamber music player, joined us and sometimes Hindemith came to delight everybody with his glorious viola tone. I shall never forget the time that we played Brahms' Piano Quintet with Furtwängler at the piano, Goldberg first violin, myself second, Hindemith the viola and Graudan, then first soloist of the orchestra, the cello.

Actually at this period the government's measures reflected little of the "opinion of the people."

Since things had remained unchanged for the time being in the orchestra, Brahms' Double Concerto was put on the programs of one of the weekly popular concerts with the much discussed first violin and first cello, Goldberg and Graudan, as soloists. Hundreds of people had to be turned away; the applause was jubilant. The genuine *vox populi* was quite sound! And since that was the case, the Nazis often had to manufacture "providence" to impose their will. Unfortunately, on one occasion, "providence" and the "voice of the people" by mistake interrupted one of the

Bach concerts given by Edwin Fischer—they had gone to the wrong hall! What they had been supposed to do was to disturb a Jewish singer next door!

Foreign artists had always been among Berlin's regular visitors; the type changed only gradually. The refusals of great international soloists to take part in the Berlin Philharmonic Concerts in 1933—34 were the first indications that international musical life was undergoing a radical change in its relation to Germany. The Nazi régime was more keen on the display of foreigners than any preceding German government, and nothing was left undone to facilitate visits of artists from abroad. Viscount Konoye, brother of the Japanese Premier, arrived in Berlin in 1933 to conduct a concert with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. He was quite a good musician, brought up on German music.

And though Italy was then by no means friendly to the Nazi régime, Italian artists came to Germany in great numbers. Respighi arrived in the early autumn, Casella, Mainardi, Cassadó—more Spanish than Italian—and others.

The atmosphere at foreign embassies, quite understandably, was the last to degenerate. There one sensed little of the sinister spirit that had crept into life.

The Italian Embassy was the liveliest, especially since Cerruti had become its Ambassador. His wife, Donna Elisabetha Cerruti, was indefatigable. Hungarian, well educated, enthusiastic, and free from snobbishness, she worked as ceaselessly for the interests of the Embassy as if she were herself the Ambassador. She was a handsome and stately woman with a finely-poised head. Under the circumstances, the Italian Embassy was the most important one for the Nazis to conciliate, and was in high favor with them.

Whenever an Italian artist came to Berlin, a function was arranged for him at the Embassy. If for some time no Italian name appeared on the program, Signora Cerruti saw to it that it did. Nothing was too much trouble for her; if I was unable to leave my office, she came to discuss her plans with me. She arranged a series of concerts, mainly of Italian works and Italian artists in the great music hall of the Embassy. The concerts, despite their length, were very popular, and the guests used to stay on at that hospitable house till late at night.

There were festivities at the other embassies too—French, British, American and Dutch—but most of them were more restrained than those at

the Italian.

The German Foreign Office still, and for some time to come, embodied the hopes of many and was continually inundated with complaints. At first it concentrated entirely on undoing Nazi blunders, by no means a pleasant task for the disciplined officials. Rumors regarding its position were rife: the Foreign Office and the Army would lead the country in the right direction; the Foreign Office and the great banking concerns would combine efforts. While the old and the new powers were endeavoring to assert themselves against each other, the Nazis pursued their aims unflinching, if recklessly, unhampered by any regard for traditions.

Every aspect of art in need of official support, such as the position of artists in foreign countries, exhibitions abroad, artistic activities in frontier districts, was under the control of Department VII of the Foreign Office. In pre-Hitler times the officials in the art division had always been highly educated and cultured men carefully chosen for their duties. One could hardly imagine that the “New Germany” would dispense with their services.

The Berlin Philharmonic was generally independent of any diplomatic support, but when needed, it came promptly and discreetly from Department VII. For as long as possible they assisted us—until one day they disappeared from the Wilhelmstrasse.

Department VII was considered immensely important by Goebbels, since one of his principal aims was to gain control of all cultural activities within Germany and, as far as they concerned Germans, abroad. It was hardly astonishing under the circumstances that Goebbels by Machiavellian policy managed to transfer the centers of cultural questions to the authority of the Ministry of Propaganda. The old officials were ousted and their duties were taken over by an entirely different set of people, uncouth, inefficient, knowing little or nothing of their subject, full of the bullying assertiveness of the typical Nazi, a sorry contrast to those gentlemen of the old school who were so well versed in the subtle intricacies of the work. From then on the carefully built edifice gradually disintegrated.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The end of 1933 passed in comparative quiet. Many people had fled Germany while others still hesitated. A faint hope still persisted that the excesses of the Nazis might be stemmed; but a shadow hung over everything, and we all felt at the mercy of the uncertain storms of fate.

1933

Just as individuals struggled for positions and power in the New Germany, members of the government bickered among themselves. Many matters depended upon whether at a particular moment Goering, Goebbels, Hess, or Rosenberg was in favor, and had the ear of the Führer. In its relation to foreign politics the Third Reich was far from being consolidated.

In January 1934 the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, with Furtwängler, set out for another tour, embracing Germany, England, Holland, and Belgium. I went direct to London, where I stayed with von Hoesch, now German Ambassador to Britain. Hoesch's attitude was exemplary. A man of integrity, he was bound to resent the policy of the Nazis. However, he never revealed any sign of his true sentiments, but helped wherever he could.

1934

The Philharmonic Orchestra and Furtwängler arrived shortly afterwards. For the first time, feeling in England was divided. Many people declared that it was impossible to attend the Berlin Philharmonic concerts any longer and we were warned of demonstrations. The Queen's Hall was given special police protection and the concert passed off without any trouble, amid the great enthusiasm of the audience. The London as well as provincial concerts were sold out. Sir Thomas Beecham, a staunch friend of the Berlin Philharmonic, wrote an open letter supporting their visit. A photograph of Furtwängler and the music-loving Austrian Minister, Baron Franckenstein, who attended every rehearsal, was published in *The Times* and aroused speculation that Furtwängler would leave Germany to accept the direction of the Vienna State Opera.

On the return journey a concert had been arranged at the Hague. We stayed with the German Minister, Count Zech, a charming survival of the *ancien régime*. Count Zech was deeply affected by the political changes. He was very fond of music, yet, being the German Minister, he could not attend Bruno Walter's concerts, nor even the recitals of his old friend, Adolf Busch. Like so many people he spared no efforts to help Germany, as distinguished

from the Nazi régime, over this period. Holland was hostile. The concert was obviously being boycotted. During our stay at the Hague we received news that although our concerts in Belgium were sold out, the political atmosphere was no better and demonstrations might be expected. Our old friend, the German Minister to Belgium, Count Lerchenfeld, had already been retired by the Nazis and his post was vacant.

We had a rehearsal the afternoon we reached Brussels and to avoid hostile demonstrations between rehearsal and the concert, Furtwängler and the Orchestra were not allowed to leave the hall. Our food was brought in to us. Mounted police surrounded the *Palais des Beaux Arts*. The Belgian Government did all it could to prevent serious incidents. Before the concert began a Belgian general, who for many years had been on the board of the *Société Philharmonique de Bruxelles*, made a short speech from the platform. Then, and then only, Furtwängler appeared and was accorded thunderous applause. The concert was a great success; the atmosphere in the streets, however, was tense.

The Antwerp concert was sold out, but the feeling there was even stronger than in Brussels. There were police cordons, mounted police, demonstrations, and even Red Cross nurses in the hall. A stink-bomb was thrown during the concert. Afterwards Furtwängler had to be escorted through a side exit by twelve policemen.

At the beginning of February 1934 we were back in Berlin. The only pleasant event at that time was the visit of Sir Thomas Beecham. His short stay was like a breath of fresh air to us all. There he sat in the hotel inviting all his old friends to see him without any discrimination whatever, kindness itself to everyone—and totally impervious to the shadows the Nazis were casting over everything.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra had been legally taken over by the Reich on October 26, 1933, but it was only a decree, and carried no practical solution of the administrative problems of the orchestra. Towards the end of the year, the Reich had sent a state investigator to audit our books and go through our whole correspondence. We hardly expected great understanding from such an official, and while we were still abroad hints had reached us that the examination had been anything but unbiased. The investigator's report was unfavorable to the orchestra. When Furtwängler read the bulky, grossly unfair document, he started to compile a counter-report, and attacked mercilessly all the people concerned, stressing the serious consequences of their threatened actions.

1934

Even had the government preferred to proceed carefully in the delicate matter of the Philharmonic, even had they wanted to leave Furtwängler his independence—at least for a while—the petty officials, their own Party, their own bureaucracy dictated to the contrary.

The new orchestra company was a state company, and thus every state authority assumed the right to interfere. Hardly had the Reich taken over, when the Nazis ordered us to find a post for an additional manager in the orchestra office, and for a man who was unemployed at the time. Indeed they did reduce the apparent number of unemployed! It meant infinite complications in an organization which, apart from its work inside Germany, was designed to maintain continuous international contacts, and every member of which had hitherto been an expert in his particular sphere.

However, since the Reich paid the piper, it considered itself entitled to call the tune. After the reorganization by the Nazis, with the additional staff they insisted upon, the actual cost of running the Berlin Philharmonic office proved to be higher even than our previous estimated budgets which had been rejected by the state investigator as too expensive.

Furtwängler wielded a certain power by virtue of his outstanding achievements. But it was of no avail. He was constantly attacked from all sides and difficulties grew. He could not always attain a solution by reaching a Minister's ear. His prominent position, his far-reaching reputation—gained independently of the Nazis—his demands, contrary to all current usage, for maintaining unchanged his artistic organization and staff, all made him

irritating to and disliked by minor officials, and gradually also by the higher ones. His outspoken remarks were discussed and distorted.

The suspension of all normal standards was sinister.

One day, an old friend of Furtwängler's came to see me. Like so many Germans he was always a bit pompous, and on that day he appeared with an extra important air saying he had something to tell me. After many preliminaries he finally advised me to avoid the *Philharmonie* in the future, as my presence was harmful to Furtwängler. Though he knew better than anyone else how Furtwängler relied on me, and how I saved him time and nervous energy, he now had the effrontery to assert that I, who for twenty years had assisted Furtwängler, could suddenly harm him by attending his concerts! Of course I was popular in the *Philharmonie*, which was a thorn in the side of the Nazis. If I walked about during the intermission of a concert, they said that I was too conspicuous. If I remained seated, they complained that people gathered round to talk to me. Now it was hinted that I had better not go at all! At the next Philharmonic Concert, accordingly, I stayed at home. As soon as the concert was over, Furtwängler rang me up to ask if I was ill. "No," I said, "but I have been told my going to the *Philharmonie* is doing you harm." Furtwängler was furious. "Who had the insolence to interfere?" he asked. "Please pay no attention to such nonsense!" "All right," I replied, with a lump in my throat, "just as you say."

Life was growing more and more difficult. The Nazis groped their way forward, and experimented to see how far they could go before meeting with resistance. They used the same procedure in the reorganization of the orchestra. One day it seemed as if Furtwängler, in spite of all promises, would not be able to keep any of his collaborators, let alone myself. He thereupon informed Dr. Funk, Undersecretary of State in Goebbels' Ministry, later Minister of Economics and successor to Schacht, that if the Government had so little understanding of his merits as to allow these interferences to continue he would resign his positions, deeming it impossible to work under such circumstances.

That helped—at least for the moment. After endless negotiations an agreement was reached. The final formalities for the change-over from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Co. Ltd. to the Reich Company had to be effected by April 1, 1934. The whole staff was, for the time being, retained. A business manager, chosen by the Ministry of Propaganda, was added to it as well as the unemployed man.

Our joint office was left untouched. In Furtwängler's agreement a special grant was made for myself and my own secretary. The part of the office dealing with Furtwängler's concerts, foreign tours, and foreign negotiations was formed into a separate *Furtwängler Sekretariat*. A lump sum was allocated to finance it. My name was no longer allowed to appear in transactions with the Reich, nor was I permitted to have anything to do with the newly formed Reich Company, either in financial or other matters. I was not allowed to sign letters except those concerning my own department. I had my own letterhead different from the orchestra's. I moved from my room in the middle of the offices to another at the farthest end. Although from that time I strictly refrained from setting foot in the rest of the office, all members of the orchestra management met me in my room as before to discuss necessary matters.

I accepted this "solution," fully realizing what it implied. Furtwängler had exerted all his energy to keep the situation somewhat in control and he needed support. He was the only one who ceaselessly tried to stem the current; to oppose from within and to carry on took far more courage than outside critics could realize.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The conflicts which dominated our lives played havoc with our nerves. Instead of being able to devote ourselves to our work, we had to cope with new troubles every day and had to live in constant uncertainty about what would happen next.

1934

At the beginning of the spring tour I went ahead to Paris in order to be there a few days before the orchestra arrived. I sighed with relief at the breath of fresh air, for by this time the difference in the atmosphere of Germany and that of foreign countries was noticeable as soon as one crossed the frontier.

Barthou was then French Foreign Minister. I had frequently met him before. A highly cultured man, he owned a magnificent library, loved music, and had written a preface to a book on Hector Berlioz, as well as a book on Wagner, of whom he was an enthusiastic admirer. He was a well-known figure at Bayreuth. Greatly interested in art and artists he had, at a previous meeting, asked me many questions about my professional work and had told me to let him know immediately when I was next in Paris.

When I arrived in Paris, exhausted and depressed, I was longing for an understanding soul, and, although I had many good friends there, it was Barthou whom I most wanted to see. I sent him a *petit bleu* to the Quai d'Orsay. Later during the same morning he rang me up and I immediately went to see him. He sat in his sumptuous room, the small man with a typical French face; his most arresting feature was his eyes, full of vivacity, humor, intelligence, and scintillating with kindness. He received me with great warmth and sympathy and asked me questions about my own present life; and I attempted to describe to him how Furtwängler was fighting to uphold the old tradition. He must have felt how deeply troubled I was, for he asked me, "*Est-ce qu'on vous persécute?*" He avoided saying anything hostile about Germany, just as I would never have openly complained; but in his tactful, subtle question was real understanding of our problems. Barthou said that he had been the first to buy tickets for our concerts, he would attend, and he hoped we would meet again.

Meanwhile I followed my usual routine in Paris. But for the first time the deepening rift between those Germans who had emigrated and those who continued their life in the Reich took active form. Some took exception to my work with Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic and soon after my

arrival an article in the refugee newspaper, *Pariser Tageblatt*, called me a "Hitler-Jewess." I was greatly upset. We fought unending battles at home, only to have to fight adversaries abroad.

Dr. Koester, a non-Nazi and decent man of the old school, had succeeded Hoesch as German Ambassador. When I called on him to pour out my heart to him, he refused to be excited. "First let us have tea," he proposed. He made the tea himself, got some English marmalade out of his cupboard, and then comforted me. "Don't be upset," he said, "you are in good company! Look at the back page of the paper!" I did and there was a fierce attack on the German Ambassador himself. But even such good company made the situation no easier to bear.

The Paris concerts took place as usual. The President of the Republic was present and received Furtwängler during the intermission. We saw the French composers, Milhaud, Honegger, Roussel, our Bayreuth friend, Guy de Pourtalès, and many others.

Barthou's presence at the first concert on the eve of his departure for Poland was a sensation. That journey was the focus of interest, and after I walked through the foyer of *L'Opéra* with him and he had gone backstage to talk to Furtwängler for a while, I was bombarded by questions. Had he said anything about his mission? I shook my head. How could I admit that he had told me he would pass through Berlin without seeing anybody? In spite of everything the concerts ended with great demonstrative applause, inspired solely by the wonderful performance which overcame all political differences. When Barthou said good-bye to me after it, he held both my hands and said, "*Etes-vous heureuse?*"

I saw him only once after that, at the end of May 1934 at a Toscanini concert. On October 13, 1934, he was assassinated in Marseilles.

In the middle of February, when the next spring tour had long been settled, the Italian Ambassador in Berlin, Cerruti, rang me up just after midnight and said he had been urgently requested to invite the Philharmonic and Furtwängler to a tour in Italy in April. I told him that his request came too late. But he was so insistent that I finally promised to do my best, provided that the change of schedule could be arranged, and that after upsetting our plans he would at least arrange an audience for Furtwängler with Mussolini in Rome. I did my work, Cerruti did his. The Italian tour was tacked on to the French. In Paris I got a telegram indicating that *Il Capo del Governo* would expect Furtwängler at five P.M. on the free day between the two concerts in the Palazzo Venezia. The telegram almost cost me my head.

While the orchestra traveled south in stages, I went straight from Paris to Rome. Soon I discovered that—quite contrary to former times—the feeling in Italy towards the Berlin Philharmonic was definitely hostile. Advance booking was bad, everything was complicated, nothing was quite as it had been before. As soon as I arrived I received a message from Count Ciano asking me to call on him at the Palazzo Chigi. I went there straightaway, and after being led through innumerable resplendent anterooms by luxuriously attired footmen, I found myself in the presence of Il Duce’s elegant son-in-law who inquired into my wishes and placed his office at my disposal for anything I might need. He asked if I had time to spare for anything besides the tour, and when I answered in the affirmative, he gave orders that I should be shown how artistic matters were handled in the “Fascio.”

Meanwhile, the orchestra had arrived and a rehearsal took place in the *Augusteo*. Austrian journalists appeared at the rehearsal in great numbers and were most vociferous. Suddenly during the rehearsal the problem arose whether we had better be prepared to play the *Horst Wessel* song in case the *Giovinezza* was requested. While the Nazi journalists sat passively about in the hall, an overzealous Austrian journalist offered to get us the score from the Party—as if he were on the most intimate terms with the Nazis.

All these paradoxical happenings were then still possible in Italy. Italy had not yet become a vassal of Nazi Germany. The Austrians still felt secure under the protection of Il Duce and greatly profited by Italian anti-Nazi feeling. (It was 1934 and not yet 1938!)

We had received no information about any member of the Italian Government attending the first concert, and since Furtwängler disliked playing the *Horst Wessel* song, he simply began by conducting his Haydn symphony. No sooner had the concert started—I was sitting on a drum behind the stage—when a member of the Fascist secret police pounced on me furiously. Members of the government were expected to attend; Furtwängler had to be interrupted to play the *Giovinezza*. The man was raving, a second Toscanini incident was in the making. I knew all too well that when Toscanini had refused a request for the *Giovinezza* in the middle of a concert the Fascists attacked him bodily and he had never conducted in Italy again. Accordingly, I said guardedly, “Dr. Furtwängler has been explicitly informed that the national anthems are not required this evening. Don’t you think the Duce, who is so musical, would disapprove of an interruption in the middle of a Haydn symphony?” The man calmed down and, with the promise that he would see to it that we were notified in time for the second concert, disappeared.

At the first concert the hall was half empty. In the gallery, usually crowded by the clergy, were rows of unoccupied seats—obviously a protest by the Catholic church. Only a few dress-circle boxes were occupied. The artistic success of the concert was complete, but otherwise it was a situation such as the orchestra had never experienced before. I telephoned Count Ciano the next day and asked him point blank, “What is the point of especially inviting our orchestra to appear in Italy at great cost, if the concert is boycotted?” He replied cautiously that Mussolini would attend the second concert. The day after the first concert Furtwängler had an audience with Il Duce who slyly began the conversation with the words, “I am coming to your concert tomorrow.” Next he asked, “What do you think of Adolf Hitler?”

The second concert was sold out. Mussolini and his daughter Edda occupied a box above the platform. Il Duce had the reputation of being a great music lover, and there he sat with his favorite daughter, his energetic, brutal face turned in fascination towards the orchestra. Long before the concert started the hall was filled with secret police who only reluctantly permitted me to go back to the box-office once I had been in the hall.

Furtwängler was given an Italian decoration of the highest order the country could bestow on an artist. German Nazis in Rome, as is often the case of adherents of political movements situated farthest from the storm-center, were extreme: the district leader, greatly disturbed that the Berlin Philharmonic had not been “aryanized,” sent a report on the Italian tour intended to inflame Party headquarters against the orchestra and its conductor, complaining about the “non-Aryan” members of the orchestra. The extraordinary musical success he did not find worth mentioning. The German Ambassador, von Hassell, on the other hand, reported to the German Foreign Office, emphasizing the great success of the tour, particularly in view of the obviously hostile feeling of the Italians towards the Nazis.

While I was unsuspectingly performing my various duties in Rome darker thunderclouds were gathering, in addition to the constant shadow that lay over me. One would have thought that the successful concerts and the great honors bestowed upon Furtwängler would have satisfied authorities at home. At any rate, the German Foreign Office counted the Rome concerts and Mussolini’s attendance there as an asset. Not so the Nazis! While still in Rome, I received a telephone call from Berlin in the middle of the night. I was told to behave as unobtrusively as possible; the rest I was to hear on my return.

The torment of suspense, often worse than the actuality itself, brought about by mysterious telephone calls, veiled hints, and whispered advice was one of the Nazis' most demoralizing methods. I had to wait till I was back in Berlin.

From Rome we went to Florence, where we gave two concerts. The old Contessa Gravina, Cosima's second daughter, lived there, and we spent an afternoon with her. Furtwängler had not returned to Bayreuth after 1931, but Cosima's daughters were always on friendly terms with him. Toscanini, the idol of the older Wagner generation, had also left Bayreuth in 1931, and since the outset of the Nazi régime had refused every engagement in Germany. As far as Bayreuth was concerned, therefore, Furtwängler and Toscanini were in the same position, if for different reasons.

The "old ladies," Contessa Gravina, Frau Thode, and Frau Eva Chamberlain, had a fanatical devotion for Toscanini and followed him whenever possible to Salzburg and to Lucerne.

That afternoon Contessa Gravina spoke of her ardent desire to bring about a reconciliation between Toscanini and Mussolini, to re-establish the great musician in Italy and in its famous opera house. After the Bologna incident, Toscanini never conducted in Italy again, although he continued to live there until 1939. Until his conflict with Toscanini rocked him on his pedestal, Mussolini had been considered a pillar of support for many intellectuals persecuted by the Nazis. He was never able to bridge the gap, and a great Italian was lost to his country.

Who would have thought then that Mussolini would disappear overnight, and that the Italian people would seize the occasion immediately to renew their claim for Toscanini's return; their love and veneration for him were unimpaired by the long years of Mussolini's régime.

Ever since 1924, when they had visited Switzerland for the first time, Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic had had a following there. The Zurich concert, which followed the Florence and Milan concerts, was splendid, and the hall was more than full. Afterwards, the civic authorities gave a reception in honor of Furtwängler and Richard Strauss, who was in Zurich for his opera performances. For some reason on that evening the thought that I no longer belonged to that world was clearer than ever to me. Although I had no inkling that this tour was to be my last with Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic, I returned to Germany with a heavy heart.

Each return to Berlin was more disconcerting than the last, and I re-entered the capital full of apprehension about what was behind the

mysterious message I had received in Rome. I was told that my arranging the Furtwängler-Mussolini meeting merely with the help of the Italian Ambassador and without the knowledge of the German Embassy or the Nazi authorities was a crime of the first magnitude. How proud the Nazi Government would have been, had they arranged the meeting themselves. That their ultimate end had been accomplished did not matter: they had not accomplished it themselves. Goebbels was furious that I had been the one to pull the strings he would have liked to boast of pulling himself and, enraged at his lost opportunity, he reportedly rushed to Hitler and demanded my immediate dismissal.

Hitler had promised Furtwängler that I would remain unmolested—in other words, that I would officially and formally retain my post. What did such a promise mean to Nazis? They had many ways of eliminating an undesirable person. While I was in Italy, I had already been discarded in Berlin, and would have remained so had it not been for Goering's intervention. Tietjen, in his position as head of all the Prussian State Theaters, as usual had heard about the whole affair as soon as it happened. He disapproved of Goebbels' action—especially since he was not entirely disinterested in the outcome and feared its effect on the sensitive Furtwängler who was indispensable to the State Opera. He therefore immediately informed Goering, who was always ready to listen to him, and Goering, most likely delighting to spoil Goebbels' game, went to see Hitler. God knows what he told him, but the Führer is said to have given Dr. Funk, under whose control the Philharmonic affairs were at that period, the order to stop the action against me. Thus, I was given a breathing space—but not for long.

The short time we spent in Germany passed very quickly. There were a number of opera performances, lots of work and lots of trouble. My case was brought up again. Again Furtwängler battled with all the ministers and with Hitler. Once more things were settled for the moment, and without any obstacles I proceeded to Paris where, as usual, the Summer Wagner Festivals (*Meistersinger* and *Tristan*) were to take place under Furtwängler's direction.

German "Aryan" artists were still free to appear in foreign countries. Gradually, however, limitations were imposed. Soon the *Reichsmusikkammer* had to receive notice of and sanction every engagement abroad. By granting exit permits in one case and refusing them in another the Nazis could launch their own people and suppress the work of others. Control of performances abroad soon followed and German opera singers,

entirely dependent on the German stage for engagements, grew shy of commitments abroad at which Jews and other *Untragbare* took part. Many of them were afraid to go to places like Salzburg, where before the *Anschluss* Toscanini and Bruno Walter conducted.

Nazi Germany began to exert pressure on everything within its reach. Italy was the most fruitful ground for these machinations; but wherever possible, in Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland this same influence was exerted. Immediately after the *Anschluss* in 1938, the Italian Government was coerced into canceling agreements with Bruno Walter and Lothar Wallerstein, the former stage director of the Vienna State Opera, now at the Metropolitan, New York, who had been engaged for the *Maggio Musicale* in Florence. Even “Aryan” Charles Ebert, the excellent producer, who had left Germany immediately after Hitler’s advent, and who has done so much to further Glyndebourne, was informed that his services, previously so coveted, were no longer required in Italy.

The Nazi Stage Agency under the authority of the Ministry of Propaganda controlled all foreign engagements within their reach. If this department decided to place a singer on a foreign stage he was compelled to accept part of his fee in foreign exchange and the remainder in German marks, which the Germans themselves supplied. Thus his price in the foreign market was lowered. All opera houses naturally welcomed an easing of their finances, and so Nazi Germany was able to worm its way into many important events on the foreign stage.

Not all foreign institutions, however, were party to this practice of making bargains with the Nazi “art” organizations. Neither the Paris Opera nor Covent Garden agreed to their maneuvers. Sir Thomas Beecham, whose sole object was to find the best singers for his international opera seasons, engaged his cast to suit himself. He had no time for other considerations. If everyone in control of opera had acted likewise, the Nazis could never have pushed their policy so far, and the interests of music would have been safeguarded.

Rarely, if ever, was art for art’s sake the primary consideration of the Nazi cultural policy. Not even then were they capable of disregarding the demands of their *Weltanschauung*. And as they gave their ideas of the world a wider and wider application, the “brown network” of Nazi organizations gradually spread farther and farther like a malignant growth until it covered even the most remote and insignificant activity.

From Paris I went to London on business and went to Covent Garden for the first time. My future chief, Sir Thomas Beecham, the soul of the famous opera house, and a living dynamo, was in the midst of his opera season. He invited me to a rehearsal and took me to luncheon at Boulestin's. He inquired solicitously how we were faring under Nazi rule—but since his questions were a combination of malice and wit, they did not evoke the fundamental despair that had overcome me during the similar conversation with Barthou. Sir Thomas repeated what he had already said to me in Berlin, “If you ever have any trouble with Hitler, come to me.” Perhaps he did not mean it altogether seriously, but how comforting it was! He suggested that Furtwängler conduct several German operas in Covent Garden in the summer of 1935, and so I went home, well loaded with new plans.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

I was back in Berlin on June 11th. Without being able to name it, I sensed something increasingly ominous in the air. By the old standards which highly valued continuity, everything had gone off extremely well; the 1935 engagements of the Berlin Philharmonic and of Furtwängler had been arranged abroad as usual. The Nazis, so far, had not curtailed my activities, and I had been able successfully to complete all negotiations.

1934

On my return, however, I noticed that my successful arrangements were of no interest whatsoever to the Nazis. True, the new business manager of the Berlin Philharmonic installed in our office by the Ministry of Propaganda—allegedly to improve our bookkeeping—said to me, “You must be proud of what you have achieved,” but at the same time he made a determined effort to insinuate himself into the management of our tours and I saw only too clearly where his efforts were leading.

Other dirty work was going on. The Music Department of the *Reichskulturkammer* had great ambitions. It was easy to see that it aimed at becoming the State Concert Agency controlling *all* engagements. By pressure and all sorts of blackmail, they attempted to control the bookings of all soloists.

Contact with German refugees in other countries was by now strictly forbidden in Germany, and innumerable people got into trouble when it was discovered that they had business connections with such people. Yet so corrupt was the Music Department, so cynical in its disregard for its own Nazi regulations, and so little used to any dealings abroad that they made frequent use of emigré concert agents to form foreign connections which they themselves did not possess.

The Nazis constantly clamored that they were able to do things “alone” without the former experts. On the one hand authorities in the *Musikkammer* relentlessly persecuted even minor “non-Aryan” employees and excluded them from musical life in Germany under the guise of national sentiment; on the other they made use of refugee Jews abroad. Despite their claims, they were unable to uphold the old standard of business relations without assistance from outside, especially since Berlin quickly ceased to be the center of the artists’ exchange as it had been in the times of the Weimar Republic, and even before, in Imperial Germany.

I was then perhaps one of the few people left in Germany who had a thorough knowledge of international musical life. I had all the experience and connections which the Nazis lacked. No wonder that I was odious to both the *Reichsmusikkammer* and the emigrés who were endeavoring to represent them abroad. Furtwängler, however, was still the great power. I still represented him everywhere, and dealt with all his concert and opera affairs as before.

About this time Furtwängler received the first request to conduct at the Nuremberg *Parteitag* that was to take place in September under the slogan: *Triumph des Willens* (The triumph of will). The invitation, as usual, carried the intimation that it had been issued “by desire of the Führer.” Furtwängler was on the horns of a dilemma. If he were to conduct on purely political occasions, it would mean the end of his career as a free artist.

The minor Party officials were obviously delighted with the idea of fettering Furtwängler, who was not a Party member, with Party restrictions, and they would have been only too pleased, if Furtwängler’s conducting at the Party rally lost him prestige abroad. That prestige was a thorn in their side anyhow, and they undoubtedly regarded Furtwängler—even if unconsciously—with the instinctive hostility of mediocrity towards genius.

At that time, things were more or less in a state of flux and it was still possible to discuss matters of this sort. Furtwängler, accordingly, found means to convey his attitude to Hitler, who emphatically declared that he had not known about the demand for Furtwängler’s appearance in Nuremberg. He found it advisable at that time to agree and say that he understood that Furtwängler did not want his art to be used for political ends. So Furtwängler did not, after all, conduct at Nuremberg during the Party rally.

That was, however, by no means our only problem. Great interest was focused at that time on Hindemith’s new opera, *Mathis der Maler*. The beautiful, moving text had been written by Hindemith himself and dealt with the life of the great German painter, Matthias Grünewald. Furtwängler had studied the work; he had judged it to be of a very high standard, and had decided to put it on the repertoire of the Berlin State Opera for the coming season. All the larger German opera houses as well as those abroad had applied for the opera after the Berlin world’s première.

Hindemith was the young hope of German music. His book, *Unterweisung im Tonsatz*, hailed by Sir Donald Francis Tovey as the most important contribution to musical theory for over a century, had made a

great impression. A young, unaffected, and gifted man, he was the prototype of the best kind of musician, and never let himself be thrown off his balance. In spite of the attacks made on him by the Nazis he remained the idol of the young musical generation. For many years he had been the mainspring of the great International Festivals for Contemporary Music as well as of many other festivals of modern music on the Continent. Besides being a composer and teacher, he was a wonderful viola player, a recognized soloist and quartet player. It was Hindemith who played in the first performance in England of William Walton's Viola Concerto.

Hitler, however, had a strong antipathy to Hindemith, fostered by his musical adviser and court jester, Hanfstaengl. The only Hindemith opera which he himself had heard was *Neues vom Tage* in which a naked woman is seen on the stage in her bath. This naked woman was Hitler's "King Charles' head"; but as Hindemith was "pure Aryan"—as the Nazis would say—the Nazi code supplied no legal weapon against him.

When Furtwängler compiled his program for the State Opera Season 1934-35, he was suddenly faced by the startling information that *Mathis der Maler* could not be performed before Goering, as "chief" of the Berlin State Opera, had obtained the Führer's consent. Pending Hitler's decision, the performance of the opera in the Reich would be in abeyance.

Furtwängler took a very serious view of this incident, which proved again that in the Nazi Reich artistic authority and expert knowledge meant nothing against the brutal force of dictatorship. For him it was a test case. *He* was the Musical Director of the Berlin State Opera and no one else. Since when did the head of a state interfere with details of a theater repertoire?

Furtwängler's application for the release of the opera was ignored. There was obviously no sufficient reason for its prohibition, so the decision was simply evaded. On that decision a great drama hinged.

Meanwhile the fateful midsummer of 1934 approached. One Saturday—June 30, 1934—on my way to lunch I found the Tiergartenstrasse roped off. Goering's "green police" were around, but no S.A. men. Something was obviously afoot. Rumors were rife. Then the radio was full of gruesome accounts: the whole von Papen family was detained. Papen's secretaries had been shot; General von Schleicher killed. Cerruti told me that a detailed plan for the overthrow of Hitler had been found in the house of Roehm, who had been immediately shot. Thousands of people were involved in the unspeakable horrors. The atmosphere of Berlin was sinister and restless.

The world stood by and watched in inactive protest.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The horrors of June 30th overshadowed the days that followed.

The State Opera closed down at the beginning of July. Furtwängler, exhausted by the turmoil, went to Poland. The Nazis' lust for blood seemed still to be unsatiated and I was actually told that when another purge was due Furtwängler would be a victim.

1934

Furtwängler, although he felt it his duty to remain in Germany, was certainly no Nazi, and never belonged to the Party. He was an outspoken man and never chose his words when his anger was roused. He had a private telephone line to me which was not connected *via* the exchange, and which rang my bell when he lifted the receiver on his desk. We had understood it could not be tapped, but Furtwängler did not care one way or the other. Before going to bed, he used to chat with me over that phone. Sometimes I told him amusing stories to cheer him up, sometimes he talked politics. One of the main threats the Nazis used later on against Furtwängler and myself was the assertion that they had recorded all these conversations. If they really did, their ears must certainly have burned, and it was not surprising that Furtwängler and, of course, I were put on their black list.

I went on a holiday to Switzerland. Everybody was seething with indignation, and full of details of the 30th of June, unknown in Germany. Yet, of what avail? Dollfuss was murdered! Hindenburg died. Hitler became his successor, and the army backed his "election." The Nazis staged a great funeral ceremony at Tannenberg, at which Furtwängler was supposed to conduct the funeral music. He declined.

Despite the rumors rife in the Engadine all that summer, I breathed more freely. Many musicians lived around the lakes. Furtwängler had his house near St. Moritz. Bodanzky came there every year from New York. Bruno Walter and Edwin Fischer were there too. The pianist, Vladimir Horowitz, had taken a house at Sils Maria, and his future wife, Toscanini's daughter Wanda, was his guest, as was Gregor Piatigorsky.

Serafin, the Italian conductor, came to St. Moritz from Rome with Commendatore Passigli, the organizer of the Florence *Maggio Musicale*, for which he was very anxious to have Furtwängler conduct the Kittel Choir in the *St. Matthew Passion*. We spent many hours sitting beside the beautiful Lake of St. Moritz working out the details of this ambitious undertaking.

The Salzburg Festivals which Toscanini conducted for the first time were overshadowed by the events in Austria. Rouché from Paris had taken a large house near Salzburg and had invited me there, but changed his plans after the railway bridge at Vöcklabruck near Salzburg was blown up by the Nazis. One after the other, the Jewish section leaders left the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. While in the Engadine, I had frequent telephone calls from our first cellist, Joseph Schuster, who had decided to go to America, though the parting was hard.

By the time I returned to Berlin at the end of August, the reorganization of the orchestra's office had been completed. I took courage. Bruno Kittel, the director of the Kittel Choir, sat in my office for days on end beside himself with joy at the prospect of the Italian concerts. He told me he was in contact with the Party, with Hess, and others whom he knew well, and he constantly assured me that "everybody" was behind me and that I need take no notice of difficulties made by "petty minds." Later, this excellent musician and collaborator of long standing was one of the first to urge that Furtwängler should part with me. That he should denounce me hurt me deeply and seemed to me a sign of the general decline in morals. When I went to Germany again with Sir Thomas, my old friend Jastrau, the original orchestra attendant, said to me confidentially, "*Lieber Gott!* Herr Kittel! He shouts 'Heil Hitler!'"—even before he has got into the room!"

Meanwhile, the Hindemith case had come to a head. Hindemith, calm and poised, and sunk in his work as a creative artist, remained outside the controversy. For Furtwängler, however, the decision as to whether he was to be allowed to produce Hindemith's opera was not only an artistic matter, but a vote of confidence and prestige. How could he, the director of Germany's leading Opera House, reconcile his sense of responsibility with the docking of authority which the Nazis were imposing upon him? He declared with great firmness that if this question of principle was not cleared up satisfactorily he would draw his own conclusions.

Perhaps it seems astonishing that an acute crisis in official life could arise out of such an incident. But Furtwängler's appointment to the Directorship of the Berlin State Opera was made by the government, and such appointments were rooted deep in the German attitude towards artistic matters. Their official character was intended to confirm and reinforce the unquestioned authority of exactly the right person in his own sphere.

While the decision on the release of the Hindemith opera was pending, Furtwängler had written seriously and at length to Goering. Eventually he replied, advising Furtwängler not to take his responsibility as Director of the

Berlin State Opera too seriously. The responsibility, he wrote, was borne only by the National State and its leaders, and Furtwängler would be wise not to make a *cause célèbre* out of the Hindemith matter, no matter what the decision might be. Shortly afterwards I received a telephone call from Goering's office requesting me in the "simple" style of the Third Reich to inform the *Herr Staatsrat* Furtwängler on behalf of the *Herr Ministerpräsident* that the *Herr Reichskanzler* had prohibited the presentation of the Hindemith opera. A cloak of official pomposity was therefore thrown round the whole affair in true Nazi manner.

At first I did not dare to convey the message to Furtwängler, and when, two days later, I did, he immediately declared that if this decision were not revoked he would resign from the Berlin State Opera.

The atmosphere grew more and more tense. It was most noticeable in the Philharmonic office into which all kinds of news penetrated from the various Ministries. An ill wind blew over Germany. Furtwängler felt it and was most depressed.

Very early one morning, at the beginning of September, my door bell rang. It was a message from Furtwängler. I was to leave Berlin at once and go away to the South of Germany. I was to behave as unobtrusively as possible. On receipt of a prearranged coded message I was to set out for a still more remote hiding-place.

I left immediately without question.

What had happened? I learned afterwards that while all the government officials were out of reach at the Party rally at Nuremberg, Furtwängler had heard that a denunciation against me, requesting my immediate arrest, had been sent to Hitler, Goering, and Goebbels.

It was a Party action without any "legal" basis, but all the more dangerous for this very reason; and what was "legal" in those days anyway?

Havemann, my old enemy, the leader of the *Reichsmusikerschaft*, had informed against me, in these words:

"Dr. Geissmar is sabotaging the building of the National State through her connection with Jews and emigrants abroad, and through her negotiations with foreign countries. It is proposed therefore that she should be taken into protective custody."

He had enclosed a copy of a denunciatory letter from abroad confirming his charge. Written on notepaper with the heading of a foreign firm of concert agents, it did not, however, include their names. Actually, Havemann

was suppressing the fact that the concert agency was run by refugee Germans who were trying to curry favor with the Party. They had spread the story abroad—where people were still badly informed on how these matters were dealt with in Germany—that only the Music Department of the *Reichsmusikkammer* had the right to engage artists for Germany, and since they represented the Music Department outside Germany, all engagements had to be made through their organization.

Furtwängler and I, when questioned abroad, had truthfully declared that such a monopoly did not exist, and that everybody could engage his soloists as he wanted. The refugee agency had immediately reported the statement to their “Nazi partner” on their new notepaper, and this document with the foreign letterhead was sent to the leaders of the Reich. There was no indication that behind the foreign letterhead were the very people whom they themselves had expelled. The denunciation, very cleverly compiled and apparently from a blameless foreign source, could not but have the desired effect.

Not until many years later—when I was already in British service—was I shown the original document. What a perfidious and inglorious fraud!

Furtwängler was extremely upset, but he concealed—for the moment—all the details of the affair from me to spare my feelings. I would have told him the only possible way to deal with it; to disclose the truth immediately, to disclose immediately, in fact, who maintained business connections with Jews abroad: the management of the *Reichsmusikerschaft* itself. Then the fat would have been in the fire. The Ministry of Propaganda could not have afforded such a scandal, involving, as it did, a Department under its authority. Furtwängler did not see the implications. He was a musician, and I avoided, when I could, discussing controversial subjects with him. He was not well enough informed of the intricacies of the whole business to use the only possible weapon—the facts, and I, the victim at that moment, had no idea what was at the bottom of it all.

Furtwängler sent telegrams to Hitler, Goering, and Goebbels at Nuremberg, saying that he had been informed of the demand for my arrest. He declared himself responsible for all accusations against his secretary and requested an interview to clear the matter up.

Even before the interview took place, the incident was smoothed over. The authorities were inclined to hush it up, particularly since evidence against the informer was accumulating from within the Party itself. Once

more it seemed that I was to be reprieved, and Furtwängler soon asked me to return to Berlin. With many forebodings, I did.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The following weeks were actually not too bad. My absence from Berlin, which in summer was half empty, had not been noticed, especially since I habitually traveled so much. Although I felt degraded and humiliated, I was determined not to be influenced by any accusation or defamation coming from the Nazis and continue on my way, whatever the imposed circumstances.

1934

In October, the German Ambassador to London, von Hoesch, came to Berlin. He was human as well as wise, and I sought his advice. For many years he had been interested in my work, and I imagine I was not the only one who now went to him depressed by the new conditions. It was easy to see how acutely he felt the circumstances, and I tried not to exaggerate my difficulties. I asked him point blank, however, whether I ought to give up my post in order to put an end to the exhausting struggle. His answer was an emphatic “No.” Even a German Ambassador did not foresee the future!

During this time there were several fine performances at the Berlin State Opera. Pfitzner conducted his opera *Palestrina* and several concerts. Furtwängler conducted two cycles of a new production of the “Ring,” which Goering, the “chief” of the Opera House, followed with such passionate interest that he rushed on to the stage during a rehearsal of *Walküre* to show Wotan (Bockelmann) how to wield a spear.

Generalintendant Tietjen was in one of the most difficult positions in Berlin. He constantly had to maintain the balance between the clashing political and artistic interests in the Opera House. Furtwängler and Tietjen had begun their joint work with great enthusiasm, but their relations gradually became strained as a result of their different temperaments.

Tietjen had always encouraged me in my troubles with the Nazis and recommended “sticking to the job,” but I was becoming more and more inclined to resign in order to spare Furtwängler and myself further strain. Hoesch’s advice, influenced as it was by his foreign perspective, was inadequate for me in Germany itself, and I sought the aid of a confidential friend of Goering’s who privately presented my problems to him.

Goering—so I was told—replied that I was not to worry, Furtwängler needed me; that decided the issue for the time being. Goering always maintained, “It is for me to decide who is a Jew.”

Events developed with a certain rhythmic ebb and flow. There were times when the storm seemed to rage, then again calm reigned for a while. In 1934 attacks were made not only against those outside the Party, but within the Party itself. Officials rose to power and fell again, and many who had suddenly and surprisingly been installed in high office in March 1933 had already sunk into oblivion. However, the Nazis seldom dropped a person entirely and often those dismissed from one post were sure to reappear in another.

In the Government departments in charge of musical activities everything was in flux. The constant introduction of new laws and regulations led to great confusion within the *Reichsmusikkammer*, whose president, Richard Strauss, was mostly inaccessible at Garmisch. Every new regulation involved piles of letters and applications from those affected by it. The department obviously needed a strong hand to steer its course, a president on the spot who really attended to the work.

The confusion and egotism, the craving for power, rank ignorance, rivalry, and envy, which reigned in the *Reichsmusikkammer* was unbelievable. Strauss discharged his presidential duties in his usual easy going way, and since he was “Jewish connected” in many ways—by his librettists, publisher and daughter-in-law—seemed the last person to be in a position to stem the madness of racial discrimination.

In contrast to the easy going Strauss, Furtwängler took his duties as vice-president of the *Kammer*—as he did every matter which involved principles—very seriously. He usually opposed everything, with the result that the bureaucracy, and even Strauss himself, began to conceal things from him. Furtwängler, for instance, had personally engaged Cortot for the 1934-35 Berlin Philharmonic season. Suddenly Cortot canceled the engagement. He had received an endless detailed questionnaire which inquired, among other things, into the antecedents of all four of his grandparents. If his name, known throughout the world, was not sufficient for Germany, he wrote, he preferred to stay away. Though he was vice-president of the *Reichsmusikkammer*, Furtwängler had not been informed of the regulations requiring such questionnaires from foreign artists, and seething with indignation, he insisted on a meeting with Goebbels. With deceptive charm, Goebbels abolished the forms—but only for those foreign artists who took part in the Berlin Philharmonic Concerts. Nor was Furtwängler advised that the decree was conditional.

The constant, futile underground struggle gradually began to sap Furtwängler’s nervous energy, yet he did not relax his efforts to maintain his

standards and wrote one memorandum after the other to remonstrate the shortcomings in every field. These were usually handed directly to the Minister in question. But sometimes, as they went to file, the papers fell into the hands of the underlings. One of them attacking the corruption in several departments disappeared entirely and all that could be found was the empty file!

The underlings in official positions felt that their jobs were threatened by Furtwängler, and soon he had hardly a friend left in official quarters. Yet he spared no effort to uphold the standards of pure art, inspired by the conviction that it was his mission to fight for what he judged to be right as long as it was in his power to do so.

Though the ban on Hindemith's opera was still in force, his concert music was not officially prohibited. Hindemith had arranged part of his opera, *Mathis der Maler*, as a symphony and Furtwängler had included it in one of the Philharmonic programs without any objection from the authorities. The performance was an unparalleled success and the Philharmonic was wildly enthusiastic. Cabinet Ministers and high Party officials attended the concert as usual. Actually, the serious character of the work did not invite frantic applause, but the public was enthusiastic. Press reports of the new work appeared all over the world, and many concert institutions announced its performance on their programs.

Success nourished by opposition was of doubtful value, even in Nazi Germany. Hindemith had to pay for it by constant attacks in the Nazi press. He was fast becoming hero and martyr. The ban on his opera remained.

Once more Furtwängler felt the necessity to expatiate upon problems which were troubling a great many intellectuals in Germany—problems of which the Hindemith matter was only a facet. So he wrote his famous article, *Der Fall Hindemith* ("The Hindemith Case," November 25, 1934), in which he described the battle that had developed around Paul Hindemith. He showed how unjustified were the political attacks which pronounced Hindemith *untragbar* because he had "Jewish connections" and had recorded music with two refugees. The two "refugees," Furtwängler pointed out, were the former concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Simon Goldberg, who had only recently left to devote himself to a soloist's career, and Professor Emanuel Feuermann, one of the best cellists in Europe, who had, until lately, been teaching at the Berlin *Hochschule für Musik*. Regarding the attacks on Hindemith the artist, the libretto of Strauss' *Salome* might be subject to the same criticism as Hindemith's early works, but that should in no way detract from the recognition of his later endeavors and

development, or diminish the value of his opera, *Mathis der Maler*, and his distinction as a teacher. Furtwängler concluded with the words, "What would happen if vague political denunciations were constantly to be applied to the artist?" He declared that in view of the great poverty in creative musicians all over the world, Germany could ill afford to dispense with Hindemith.

From the moment this article was published in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, events moved like an avalanche.

Furtwängler had discussed the article with the music critic of the paper, and the chief editor had been informed and saw no objection to its publication.

On Sunday, November 25th, the article was printed on the front page. There was a Philharmonic general rehearsal that morning, and people were thronging the streets leading to the *Philharmonie*. The paper was snapped up so fast from the hands of the news boys that a much larger edition had to be printed to meet the great demand. When Furtwängler appeared on the platform, the whole audience rose and demonstrated so wildly, stamping and cheering for about twenty minutes, that it was impossible for him to begin.

Moreover, Furtwängler had to conduct twice that Sunday, a thing he usually avoided. There was to be a *Tristan* performance at the State Opera in the evening. The house was sold out. Goering sat in his box, and Goebbels, too, was present. As soon as Furtwängler appeared in the orchestra pit, the same thing happened. Endless applause, not to be stemmed by anything, filled the theater. An atmosphere of melancholy beauty enhanced the performance and was felt by the whole audience. At the end, the demonstrations were repeated.

Goering realized instantly what all this meant. That same night he telephoned Hitler and told him that Furtwängler was endangering the authority of the State. The public demonstrations were for Furtwängler and therefore—in this case—against the Government. The *Tristan* performance was the last opera which Furtwängler conducted before his resignation; the Philharmonic Concert on the next day, the last in his official capacity.

Meanwhile, Furtwängler's article, "The Hindemith Case," was reprinted all over the world, sometimes abridged, sometimes in full. The party press and the professional press attacked Furtwängler in the crudest manner and even the daily papers printed articles against him.

All attempts to prevent the attacks were of no avail. From that moment, nobody, at any Ministry, was accessible to him. Furtwängler was completely isolated. After calm deliberation he therefore said to himself: "If this State, which controls everything, lets loose such an attack on me and my musical authority, there is nothing left for me but to resign." He saw clearly that he could no longer remain vice-president of the *Reichsmusikkammer*, nor continue as Director of the Berlin State Opera and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

He discussed his decision with many people before taking the final step—with his collaborators, his colleagues from the Opera, the Philharmonic Orchestra, and several people behind the scenes. Intermediaries had interviews with members of the Government. Goebbels, who had not reckoned with Furtwängler's resistance, saw a colossal scandal impending which would implicate his Ministry, and threatened to show Furtwängler who was the stronger. Should Furtwängler dare to carry out his resignation, he, Goebbels, would break him completely. Of course Furtwängler was informed of this. He did not lose his nerve—on the contrary, Goebbels' cynical attitude towards a matter of such fervent conviction finally settled the matter for him.

The musicians professionally connected with him fought desperately to alter his decision. What had all these political questions to do with music? They had been artificially thrust between him and his orchestra, between him and the opera singers with whom he had been connected for so many years, between him and the public which idolized him. They all wanted his art, whatever his political opinions. His public refused to do without him and his orchestra did not want to lose his artistic leadership.

Urgent appeals from the public reached him, and the orchestra besieged him day and night. Finally, he made a last effort: If he were enabled to continue his work purely as an artist, according to his conscience, if he did not have to accept either a politico-musical office or any other political responsibility, he was willing to go on.

The proposal was handed to Goering, who was to submit it to Hitler for final decision.

For a few days nothing happened. On the afternoon of December 4, 1934, Furtwängler rang me from the State Opera House: "I am at this moment drafting the statement on my resignation."

Hitler had rejected the offer. If Furtwängler would not work within the framework of the National State, the Führer would dispense with his art.

That evening, Furtwängler came to see me. He felt a great sense of relief, and for the first time in a long while he was happy.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The next few days passed in a nightmare. Furtwängler's resignation was published by the government on December 5, 1934. That night, Erich Kleiber, first conductor of the Berlin State Opera, rang me up to read his own letter of resignation which he had just placed on Tietjen's desk. He declared that since Hitler had let Furtwängler go for purely political reasons, he would no longer retain his post either.

1934

Great confusion reigned around us. The subscribers to the Philharmonic concerts stormed the office demanding their money back. Subscription tickets to the value of about 180,000 RM (\$70,000.00) were returned the day after Furtwängler's resignation. The Ministry of Propaganda at first decided that the money was not to be refunded, but legal counsel ruled that since the tickets bore Furtwängler's name, the purchasers should be reimbursed.

Meanwhile, Furtwängler's courageous resignation had made a world sensation. Offers from all over the world were showered on him, from the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Vienna State Opera, and others. Alma Mahler, widow of the Vienna State Opera's most famous director, strongly supported that institution's invitation, and telephoned me in Berlin at midnight urging me to persuade Furtwängler to accept it. His flat overflowed with flowers sent from all parts of Germany, with piles of telegrams, and all sorts of letters. The wife of a prominent diplomat sent roses with the message, "Long live liberty!"

Furtwängler wanted neither offers nor flowers. All he wanted was to be left alone and to be away from it all. He telegraphed to English friends, who for many years had invited him to come to Egypt, and proposed to visit them.

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra was desperate, and resolved to exert further effort. Nothing was heard from the State Opera. Clemens Krauss, who had been hanging about in Berlin, was immediately engaged to replace Furtwängler as director of the opera. This, we were informed, was by Hitler's special request.

Furtwängler thought innocently that his resignation would end the controversy. He intended to divide his future activities between Austria and America, and made no secret of his plans. The Nazis, however, had their

ears to the ground, and we soon learned that the German frontier was closed to Furtwängler, Kleiber, and myself.

Kleiber was Austrian, and for him the ban later had to be lifted.

In retrospect, errors of judgment seem incomprehensible. Furtwängler and I obviously should have left Berlin separately immediately after his resignation. That would have avoided undue official attention, and we might have been unmolested. As it was, we both remained in Berlin. I had been “allowed” to wind up Furtwängler’s office unhampered. The sifting of correspondence and files accumulated during twenty years required time and consultation on which I spent much time with Furtwängler in his flat. Instead of listening to friends who advised us to leave Germany as quickly as possible, we took our daily walk in the *Tiergarten*. Of course, we were both constantly shadowed although, at the time, we were fools enough not to realize it. The porter of Furtwängler’s house later told me that he had been ordered to keep his eyes on all visitors.



WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER rehearsing the *Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra*.

On December 6th, the anniversary of the foundation of the *Reichskulturkammer* was celebrated, and Goebbels delivered the oration which was broadcast. He referred to the Furtwängler affair, and shamelessly attacked Hindemith and, indirectly, Furtwängler, without mentioning names. Finally, he read a congratulatory telegram from Richard Strauss, in Holland. By implication Strauss supported Goebbels' policy. Later on, Strauss

disclaimed all knowledge of the telegram. It appeared that his son had sent it on his own responsibility, presumably with the text prescribed by the Ministry of Information.

I listened to the broadcast while sorting papers in my office, seething with indignation. I could no longer bear even to wind up Furtwängler's affairs in an office under the authority of such people. So during the night I took all the documents and papers up to the private flat I shared with my mother on the second floor in the same building as the office, and left a note asking my secretary, who was allowed to work with me until January 1st, to come up in the morning.

Such was my exit from the office of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, until sixteen months later I crossed its threshold again as a manager of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and general secretary to Sir Thomas Beecham!

Meanwhile the Nazis were by no means inactive. Since they had definitely lost Furtwängler, they no longer had any reason to handle me with kid gloves. Their main idea at the time was to prevent Furtwängler at all costs from continuing to use me as a business connection.

All sorts of changes were made in the Philharmonic office. Collaborators of Furtwängler were immediately dismissed. The Italian radio, incidentally, broadcast a full report of the whole matter and of the changes in the Philharmonic management.

The immense public demand for such a great and popular figure as Furtwängler could not, however, be overlooked by the Nazis, and the pressure of public opinion had a sobering effect on the authorities. The public gave them no respite, and started a campaign against the government. Even the Nazis became worried over the affair, although for other reasons. They maintained that, but for me, Furtwängler would have acted differently. I was the cause of the whole trouble!—of the loss of prestige to Germany!—of the despair of the orchestra!

Furtwängler and I gradually became aware of how the wind was blowing, and we decided at last that the time had come to part. He engaged a new secretary who, as a "pure Aryan," could represent him before the official world. For the rest, he assumed that where necessary I would assist him in the background. I agreed to everything that could help this harassed man—my oldest friend, beloved chief of so many years' standing. After all, what else mattered now?

As it happened, Furtwängler had accepted no commitments from December until April other than his engagements at the Berlin State Opera and with the Berlin Philharmonic, which were now canceled. He had to be in Vienna only towards the middle of the following April, so it was possible for him to have a complete rest during the next few months.

The orchestra had asked Furtwängler, as a favor, to conduct the English tour arranged for January 1935, but it was out of the question. The Ministry of Propaganda, in blissful ignorance of the feeling of the musical world, decreed that the tour was to take place in any case; they wanted to prove that it could be carried out without Furtwängler. In this, however, they were mistaken. Our English agent, Mr. Harold Holt, did not seem willing to accept a substitute for the great conductor who was so well known to the English public. Sir Thomas Beecham flatly refused an invitation to conduct the Berlin Orchestra on its English tour in place of Furtwängler. The Nazis, who considered me to blame for everything that happened abroad concerning Furtwängler, immediately declared that Sir Thomas's refusal was due to my influence, and I received a bullying letter from the Nazi business manager of the orchestra, in which he threatened to take steps to protect the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra from my sabotage. How fantastic to suggest that I, of all people, should want to damage the orchestra! I should have realized before that the Nazis would attribute their own mentality to others. I could not leave it at that, however. I therefore went to the Wilhelmstrasse declaring that I would not submit to such calumny, and would ask Sir Eric Phipps, the British Ambassador, to inform Sir Thomas of the accusation. Sir Thomas would surely back me up. This was most awkward for the Foreign Office, and I was given to understand that I had better abstain from my intention. What did my honor matter to them! When, much later, I told the story to Sir Thomas, he asked me in surprise, "Did anybody seriously imagine that I would have taken the place of a colleague under such circumstances?" The tour to England had to be dropped.

There was nothing to prevent Furtwängler from having a real holiday, and so he prepared for his departure to Egypt. To all attempts to reopen negotiations with the authorities he turned a deaf ear. He spent much of his time with me.

Suddenly one afternoon two Nazis appeared in my flat, declaring that if I did not leave Berlin immediately without informing Furtwängler, I would be arrested. This time I had no choice. It was icy cold. A frost after a fog had made the streets almost impassable. But delay was out of the question, and

under cover of night I left in a friend's car for Leipzig. There I caught the express to Munich, where I had relatives and friends.

Furtwängler, of course, was highly indignant at my forced departure, and asked me to return, and so after a week in Munich, spent in a dull stupor, I took the risk and went back to Berlin.

I arrived on December 19th. Furtwängler was to leave for Egypt on the 24th. During the few days left to us we hoped to clear up everything, and on the evening of the 23rd we met to discuss final arrangements. It was late. Suddenly the telephone rang and a high Government official asked Furtwängler to see him immediately. Furtwängler explained that that was impossible—he was leaving for Egypt early the next morning. But the gentleman insisted, and when Furtwängler would not give in, revealed that he had a message from the Führer. Furtwängler had, of course, to go out to see him. Full of apprehension, I said, "I am convinced that they won't let you leave Germany."

For hours I waited in suspense. Late at night Furtwängler returned. I was right. The Führer had asked him to wait "a little" before taking his journey, until the excitement of his resignation had somewhat abated. He thought that it would not be desirable for Furtwängler to be made the object of demonstrations abroad. Furtwängler had consented to the delay, and gained the impression that there would be no objection to his departure about a fortnight later. His passport, contrary to all rumors, had not been detained. Nevertheless, he was not able to leave as he had hoped and expected. It was to be a long time before he was free to move again at will.

I had counted on his departure on December 24th. Until then I was prepared to stand the strain that had now lasted for so many months. Any prolongation would have been utterly unbearable. I begged Furtwängler to leave Berlin, to go away—to the mountains, to the country, anywhere—as long as it were away from Berlin, and away from myself. He understood, and left on Christmas day.

The day after Christmas an official from the Gestapo came and confiscated my passport.

The old battle was at an end. A new battle had begun.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The battle for my passport, an absolute essential for my future life, was to last for almost a year. The Nazis realized, of course, that it was quite unnecessary to arrest me while they retained it. Without it I was paralyzed. They knew, too, that as long as I was not free to travel abroad, I was of no use to Furtwängler.

1935

Furtwängler's departure on Christmas Eve 1934 ended our business relationship and ended a chapter. Automatically, the old life was over. Although I still was not entirely cut off from my friends, my life was altogether abnormal. One day a foreign diplomat's wife suddenly appeared in my flat; she had climbed the back stairs, and told me that she had left her car "round the corner." If anyone noticed that she had visited me, both of us would have had to suffer. It became dangerous for people not entirely independent of the Party to be in touch with me. Many and mysterious are the methods of exerting pressure. An impenetrable barrier was erected around me. For almost twenty years my work had shaped my life, and everything I did had converged on that. After such activity, passivity seemed unbearable. It was like suddenly being an invalid. Between one moment and the next, my old world was closed to me, and I found it painful and difficult to adapt myself to the circumscribed new world in which I was forced to live.

I had decided as far as possible to coach Furtwängler's new secretary in her work. Probably it was foolish; it was, after all, a matter with which I was supposed to have nothing more to do. But my life had been so bound up with Furtwängler and the orchestra, my affections and loyalty so deeply implicated, that I thought at the time that it was my duty to help even under such unusual circumstances.

All the authorities, the Ministry of Propaganda and the *Reichsmusikkammer*, continuously inquired when the "transfer of business" would be completed. They could hardly wait, so anxious were they to dispense with me.

Meanwhile, Furtwängler had, after making several detours, arrived in Bavaria. He had taken a room with a piano in it in a suburb of Munich and had settled there for the moment, just a few yards from the estate of Rudolph Hess. Formerly, Hess and his wife could not do enough for Furtwängler. The fanatical Party leader had even gone so far as to say that he was so devoted

to him that he would stop at absolutely nothing to deliver Germany's great conductor from his "Jewish" secretary! Now, Hess was inaccessible. So were the other members of the Government whom Furtwängler had persistently tried to contact. The fortnight which ostensibly was to elapse before he could travel abroad had passed without any move from them.

Furtwängler was always extremely sensitive, and was, moreover, accustomed to having everything run on oiled wheels. He had devoted himself to his music, and had become accustomed to my looking after everything else. He was also accustomed to all the facilities accorded to famous men. Now he was ignored and slighted. He not only had to cancel his trip to Egypt, but was uncertain whether he would be able to keep his foreign engagements next spring.

He wrote and telephoned the authorities constantly, but without result. The Nazis knew all too well how to handle people! For them nothing was wiser than to ignore Furtwängler; for him nothing more unwise than his constant petitions. He should, of course, have remained completely passive and taken no notice of them. Even if it had meant temporarily not honoring his foreign commitments, he should have left all responsibility to the Nazis. The balance of moral strength would have been on his side, and his would have been the stronger position. But he lacked the necessary nervous stability and thus played into their hands, augmenting their power over him.

It is no wonder that this state of affairs was unbearable for Furtwängler in his isolation. One day I was informed surreptitiously that he wanted to see me, and I traveled to Bavaria stealthily, like a criminal. It had been constantly impressed upon me—in an obvious attempt to intimidate me—that I was being closely shadowed, and so I saw ghosts everywhere. My visit may have been necessary to Furtwängler, but it was painful to us both. Meeting under such circumstances, we both felt, more than ever, the strength of old ties which did not make things any easier for either of us. That first meeting, after the parting of our ways, only increased Furtwängler's depression. I did my utmost to conceal my own feelings. As we walked through the snow-covered woods he said to me, "We are just like two dogs with our tails between their legs." I replied, "It won't be two for long. You will soon be back in harness, but I, never. Anyway, not in Germany." Two days later I returned to Berlin.

Furtwängler had kept his address strictly secret, but since he was well known in Bavaria and did not bother to hide himself, his residence was soon discovered. Gradually members of the Berlin Philharmonic, delegates of the Vienna Philharmonic, the Vienna State Opera, and even of American

orchestras found their way to him. Meanwhile, I continued to train his new secretary, and anxiously awaited the return of my passport.

In February Furtwängler reappeared in Berlin. He could no longer bear the suspense and the isolation, and felt he had to be on the spot. He went to his Potsdam home, the *Fasanerie*, in the Sans-Souci park. We met on the evening of his arrival; but we both realized that with things as they were, with both of us entirely dependent upon the whim of the Nazis, we could not possibly stay in the same town at the same time. Since he was in Potsdam, I had to leave Berlin.

With great sadness I said good-bye, and went to Munich for a second time. Our friends there were at least free from the Berlin “psychosis” and I could speak freely to them. Nevertheless, I did not know how to overcome the emptiness of my life. The constant pressure under which I had lived since 1933 began to take effect. I grew ill, and began to suffer from insomnia. I was completely worn out, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Everything dear to me had been taken from me. Everything I had stood for was threatened and overshadowed. I had no home, no work, no hope. I was at my lowest ebb.

Some days after my arrival in Munich, my mother telephoned me from Berlin in a state of great excitement to say that my passport had been returned. She was usually very careful, but having lived for so many months in this witch’s cauldron, she lost her caution for the moment. She knew what this meant for me, and since the official who had brought it back had asked for me personally, she thought it best to ring me up in his presence to prove that I was within reach. Jubilantly, she told me the good news.

I felt uneasy, for I would have much preferred that she accept the passport silently, without any comment.

I decided not to return to Berlin immediately, but went to the Starnberg Lake to stay with the Lerchenfelds. The count had been the popular Ambassador to Vienna, and later Belgium, where Furtwängler and I had been his guests. A deeply religious man whose faith pervaded his whole life, he was well read, fond of playing chamber music and, with his charming American wife and lovely house full of handsome old furniture, magnificent paintings and rare books, provided a peaceful haven for me in the midst of turmoil.

But I was not allowed to enjoy that serene atmosphere undisturbed. No sooner had I arrived than I received a message from Berlin informing me that my passport had been confiscated again. Its return had been a

“mistake.” Until Furtwängler had been abroad on his own, until the orchestra, too, had traveled to foreign countries without me, until the myth of my indispensability had been destroyed I was not to be set free. Perhaps, too, my successor, afraid of losing her chance of accompanying Furtwängler abroad, suggested to the Gestapo that it was inadvisable to release my passport at this juncture.

More troubles were to come. When I returned to Munich, a letter from the Gestapo that was pure “blackmail” was awaiting me.

March 9, 1935

Dear Fräulein Doctor,

As you have already learned from your mother, I returned your passport to you through one of my agents. We regret that we had to withdraw it again after the lapse of three days because your mother, in the presence of the official, first by telephone, and later in your own home in Berlin, made public the fact that you were again in possession of your passport. The official reported this incident, and thus I was forced to withdraw the document. The happiness evinced by your mother on receipt of your passport gave cause for suspicion that you planned something definite when you had it in your possession.

As a result of this incident you will not be in a position to obtain it without my help. I therefore request you (if you want to receive your passport) to remit the negligible sum of 1200 Reichsmarks, in cash and ordinary notes of 100 Marks, and in such a way that the outside of the letter does not reveal anything of its contents. It is to be addressed to E. Helferich, Berlin-Spandau, *poste restante*, and to be received by Thursday, 14th March, at the latest.

I require this sum as hush-money for various officials who are acquainted with your case.

Should your letter fail to arrive, I regret that I shall not be able to do anything further for you, because I have to report to my chief on the 15th of March at the latest, on the matter of your passport, and your activities in connection with Councillor of State Dr. Furtwängler. If the letter arrives I shall draft my report in such a way that you will receive your passport towards the end of the month.

I further want to inform you that you are under constant surveillance by our secret police, irrespective of whether you are staying in Berlin or Munich. You are also advised to beware of the secretary who occupies your place with Dr. Furtwängler. I have heard much from her that incriminates you.

I would beg you not to inform anybody of this letter since this would result in the retention of your passport. If you will follow my instructions, you will receive your passport.

(signed) RAUCH
(Inspector, the Secret Police)

It seems unbelievable that so crude and blatant a piece of blackmail could go out over the signature of an official of the Nazi Reich, however minor his position. The gentleman evidently thought that I was so helpless, so forsaken, that he could indulge with impunity in this clumsy move in his game of cat-and-mouse.

Of course the letter was sheer bluff; I had nothing to conceal and I realized that the principal thing was not to lose my head.

Many people succumbed to such tactics to attain their purpose, but I was no such easy prey. I immediately went to an attorney who advised the strictest secrecy. He took the ominous letter by hand to Berlin, and he there gave it to a Nazi connection of his who allegedly delivered it to Himmler. I have never understood why the *poste restante* where the money was to be sent was not watched in order to apprehend the culprit, especially since the careful investigation later staged by the Gestapo indicated that the stirring up of the affair was most unwelcome to them.

I remained absolutely passive and hoped that after the revelation of this criminal attempt, the Gestapo would immediately return my passport to hush the matter up. However, nothing happened.

Some months later I was suddenly informed that the Bavarian Police had received instructions to interview me, and one day the fat and honest village constable called on me. I was nervous at the very thought of contact with officialdom, but the peaceful, rural atmosphere of this interview would have inspired confidence even in the most frightened person. It had nothing of Prussian Gestapo methods. On the wooden bench before the little house, under a blooming chestnut tree, sat the rotund and placid representative of village authority. He was an enormous man with a frank, ruddy face. It took me some time to make him understand the circumstances, but when he did,

he was intrigued, and instead of interviewing me, we both, like Sherlock Holmes and Watson, tried to figure the whole thing out.

Later on I was interviewed twice more in Berlin; once by a very decent police official who immediately told me not to worry, they had no charge against me, but hoped I would help them find the blackmailer. Although one letter of his typewriter was faulty, they had not been able to trace the culprit—or so they said. The last interview I had in this connection took place when I first visited Berlin with Sir Thomas Beecham. Needless to say, it was a model of civility and politeness.

That was the last I ever heard of the matter. Whether it was instigated in good faith or as a blind was never cleared up.

But this is jumping far ahead. Let us go back to the beginning of March, 1935. Furtwängler was still waiting in Berlin for an interview with Hitler or Goebbels to define his position. I was still living in exile in the Bavarian mountains. Yet once again Furtwängler suddenly sent word that he urgently wanted to see me. Could I leave that same evening for Potsdam? I left by a train which arrived at dawn and walked alone through the snow-covered Sans-Souci park where Furtwängler's home stood, like a castle in a fairy tale. I looked about anxiously, lest anybody should detect me, worn out and harassed.

Furtwängler had sent for me out of a kind of spiritual claustrophobia. He was, in a way, trapped. He was used to absolute freedom of movement, to being entirely his own master. Now, cut off from his contact with the outer world, with no idea how his problem was to be solved, he was in a bad state of nerves. He had always discussed his troubles with me, and it seemed natural that he should do so now.

Although in 1935 there was no external barrier between Germany and the outside world, and normal people were free to move in and out of the country, in actual fact he and I were anything but free. People from the outside world were aware of the conditions in the Reich, and there were many “men of good will” ready to run risks to help people out of an intolerable situation. That day, Furtwängler and I discussed a proposition which would have involved getting me out of Germany without my passport. It was tempting, for it looked as if the Nazis wanted to keep me prisoner forever—yet how impossible it was. Should I slip out of the country, nobody under German jurisdiction could ever risk getting in touch with me without suffering the severest repercussions. I had to “stick it out.” I

could only leave Germany “legally”—by the tedious and tortuous procedure which was still left open to people like me.

As we discussed the matter from all angles, I felt that there was a world stronger than the Nazi terror which threatened to crush us—a world of principles, a world of faith. We parted in a mood of serenity and harmony: towards evening I stole along in the shadows to the train which was to take me back to Bavaria.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Bavarian countryside was snow-covered. I visited friends of mine who lived in a lonely chalet above the Isar Valley. The beauty of their retreat was indescribable. The log house, backed by a pine forest, had a wide view over the mountains. They did everything for themselves, and radiated an air of calm and freedom. In the evening we went down through the deep snow to the village of Ebenhausen to a very old inn, the *Post*—typically Bavarian—which was also the village butcher’s shop. The peasants sat in the smoke-filled parlor, drinking their beer, and saying just what they pleased. It was the untouched oasis of genuine freedom.

1935

I had gradually come to realize that my affairs would take much longer to settle than I had hoped, so I decided to move to the old inn at Ebenhausen. I was the only lodger and found the refuge and solitude I needed. Hardly anything from the outside world penetrated to me, and day after day I wandered for hours in snow and rain through the woods, always tormented by the same thoughts. At night, I could not sleep. In the evening I listened to the peasants’ gossip and soon their faces became familiar to me, but for weeks on end I spoke to no one.

Even an entirely empty day has to be got through somehow, and so I tried to get something definite to do to fill my time—difficult, since it had to be something which I could do alone. A friend from Munich brought me several zoological essays to type. The days and the sleepless nights seemed interminable, but I had quiet and seclusion. The countryside was peaceful and undisturbed. Often I walked to the nearby *Schaeflarn* monastery and sat there for a quiet hour in the wonderful Bavarian baroque church with its onion-shaped cupola. On Sundays I went to church with the peasants.

In Berlin matters remained stationary. Furtwängler was still not being received, and the uncertainty of his position made him highly impatient. He again wrote to the government, to Hitler. He constantly talked to people, all of whom gave differing advice and then reported and distorted all he had said. It was clear that the Nazis were trying to cow Furtwängler as much as possible. His temperament was such that the longer he was made to wait the easier it would be to control him eventually. They continued to use me as a pawn in their machinations. I had cut myself off from everyone, and lived in retirement among people who knew neither me, nor of the “Furtwängler

case.” But he was systematically harried by false harmful statements attributed to me. Everything he was told was aimed at making him believe that unless he entirely broke our friendship, he could never hope for freedom. The Nazis—among them Heydrich—boasted of the net of false rumors which they spread around the impressionable artist. “The creation of a panic around Furtwängler” they called it. In their way they were quite successful.

Suddenly things began to move; but they took an unexpected turn.

One evening in March we were sitting in the parlor of our inn when, quite unexpectedly, a special announcement was broadcast which began with the words: “Reichs Minister Dr. Goebbels received Staatsrat Dr. Furtwängler today. . . .” Continuing, the broadcast alleged that Furtwängler had declared that he regretted all past misunderstandings, that he had never intended to introduce political considerations into the Hindemith case, and that, naturally, all final decisions on this and every other point must be left with the Führer.

Was this the end of the whole desperate struggle? Of the courageous fight for spiritual freedom? My heart missed a beat. I could not believe it.

The fact that Furtwängler sanctioned this announcement, which was broadcast from all the stations in Germany, was deplored not only in foreign countries: countless Germans, too, were aghast that this man on whom so many had relied—and who, thanks to his achievements, was as independent of the Nazis as only few Germans were—had given in at last.

Much later I learned the true facts. Furtwängler was constantly implored by his friends and by his public not to forsake them. He was in great distress of mind, and discussed with various people what conditions he should make, should he eventually agree to a resumption of his activities in Germany. These conditions and proposals formed the text of various rough drafts which he drew up at the time. Not only his own secretary, but various extra helpers typed these drafts, and one of those preliminary drafts found its way to Goebbel’s desk.

The cunning Minister of Propaganda was thus able to forestall Furtwängler. Instead of granting him the long postponed interview, he sent an official of his Ministry, armed with a statement, complete except for Furtwängler’s signature, to be published immediately after the “reconciliation” he foresaw as the result of the draft.

This statement was such that Furtwängler at first refused to agree to it, but later a compromise was reached. Furtwängler was of the opinion that the final phrasing of the statement contained nothing that did not reflect his views and that it basically agreed with his desire to be free of all political liability. But those not entirely familiar with the whole matter saw in it a complete surrender by Furtwängler, especially since Goebbels, for “reasons of state,” omitted a part of the text agreed upon.

After the result of the interview with Goebbels had been sufficiently publicized by radio and press, and the prestige of the Nazis thus safeguarded, every obstacle to a meeting between Furtwängler and Hitler was removed. In the meantime, the date approached for Furtwängler’s concert in Vienna. If he was to be in time for the *Nicolaikonzert*, he had to leave Berlin not later than April 10th. After several postponements, the interview with Hitler was finally fixed for the very day on which Furtwängler had to leave for Vienna. He could not leave Germany until Hitler removed the ban on his crossing the frontier.

There is no record of the interview—as far as the basis of Furtwängler’s future activity was concerned. He had refused to accept any fixed position. He was willing to conduct some of the Philharmonic concerts, not only in Berlin, but in the provinces and abroad. He was prepared to conduct opera performances in the Reich, with the exception of those at the Berlin State Opera. Bayreuth was not mentioned.

He further agreed to conduct a concert for the benefit of the Winter Relief Fund in Berlin on April 25, 1935, after his return from Vienna. His frantic public welcomed him at this concert with unbounded enthusiasm, and ignored Hitler sitting in the front row of the *Philharmonie* with the whole Government. Hitler must have felt that keenly, but in contrast to his behavior at the ovations before Furtwängler’s resignation, he accepted the situation with good grace. He rose, went to the platform, and shook hands with Furtwängler. This symbolic gesture was, of course, photographed and widely publicized.

April 10, 1935, the day of Furtwängler’s interview with Hitler, was the wedding day of Goering and Emmy Sonnemann, and since Hitler was best man, the meeting with Furtwängler had been arranged for an early hour. When Furtwängler drove to the *Reichskanzlei*, he was delayed by cordons, and when he eventually detoured his way to Wilhelmstrasse, Hitler had already left for the wedding. So Hitler had to be approached again, and a later hour arranged. In the end the two met shortly before the train was due to leave for Vienna. The Anhalter station was informed by the Chancellery

that the train must not leave without Furtwängler. The train waited. Finally, Furtwängler appeared on the platform and got in. He was free. The Vienna papers reported his arrival in heavy type—“unfortunately without his familiar secretary.”

The “familiar” secretary was still waiting for her passport, and was not allowed to go to Berlin, even while Furtwängler was absent.

The German news was dominated by Goering’s wedding.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

On his return from Vienna, and for the first time since his disagreement with the Nazis had been patched up, Furtwängler came to see me. Again we had to meet in the utmost secrecy. Furtwängler was by no means at ease over his “reconciliation” with the Government; he was not sure of the ultimate consequences and had much to reckon with now that he had given in.

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In Vienna he had been criticized for his move, and it was doubtful how his impending opera performances in London and Paris would be received. He was exhausted, and we hardly talked of anything but his own problems. He told me quite frankly that he considered it impossible for me ever to return to Berlin, except to “liquidate” my home. I was aware that he felt keenly that he could not help me in any way.

At the end of a talk that made both of us realize the hopelessness of the situation, he left alone to avoid our being seen together.

I had no choice but to remain in Bavaria for the time being. For weeks there was nothing but snow and rain, and I sat by the side of my tiny stove, in my wretched little room. How I welcomed the sun when it came! The countryside was beautiful in spring, the woods, the mountains, the scent of the meadows towards the evening, the animals, clouds, and sky—all were idyllic. But it was marred by the uncertainty of the future and the humiliating conditions of the present, which weighed heavily upon me.

While my case was unsettled and I was at the mercy of the Nazis, I refrained from any correspondence with people living outside Germany. But my friends abroad rose to the occasion. An old friend of mine, a prominent Dutchman, frequently came to see me, to find out how I was, and I talked things over with him. It was, however, A. van Hoboken, the well-known musicologist and collector, who finally got me out of Germany. He made me an offer to go to America to endeavor to trace new musical autographs for his “Photographic Archives of Musical Scores.” Hoboken had founded these “Archives” and placed them at the disposal of the Vienna National Library in 1927. Housed in the “Albertina,” they consisted of photographic reproductions of manuscript scores of the great musical masters. The “Archives” were designed to enable the student who hitherto could consult manuscripts only where the original happened to be, to find photostats of the music holographs of the whole world collected in one place.

Hoboken intended to increase his “Archives” as much as possible, and some American libraries were interested in founding similar collections.

I reported this offer to the authorities, but still my passport was withheld. Eventually I was advised to make a formal application to the appropriate department. For this purpose it was imperative that I go to Berlin, which until then, I had been told, was not advisable. However, I finally obtained permission to go.

I went to Berlin where I felt intimidated and out of place. Hardly had I set foot in Berlin than the Nazi maneuvers started again. I was warned to keep quiet, to see nobody, and to concentrate on the matter of my passport only. Finally, I was told what to do, and I made a formal application for the return of my passport to accept a position abroad, since I had to give up my work in Germany.

Meeting old friends was exciting and comforting. It gave me courage and strength and helped me to have patience. Thus, although the visit was an emotional strain, I returned to Bavaria refreshed in spirit.

Soon afterwards, Count Lerchenfeld came to see me, and proposed that I should move to the Starnberg Lake near their home for the summer, pending further developments. It was a welcome idea, and one morning in brilliant sunshine I walked over the mountains and took a room in Percha for the middle of June.

Meanwhile, Furtwängler had conducted in London and at the Paris Opera. He had sent word that he would come to see me directly after his last Paris performance.

He duly arrived, and while he was in Munich where he conducted several times, we met frequently for quiet, undisturbed, comforting conversations in a remote place. Sometimes he forgot how things really stood, and even once suggested that I attend his *Tristan* performance at the *Prinzregententheater*. Needless to say, I stayed away.

The Nazis continued to attach an exaggerated importance to Furtwängler’s relations with me; even when Furtwängler was in Munich, Herr Hess anxiously inquired whether I was in the neighborhood.

Soon afterwards I moved into my new home, a charming little Bavarian chalet with geraniums in the window-boxes, which belonged to two highly cultured ladies of the Mendelssohn family. One of them, Fräulein Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, was a direct descendant of Felix Mendelssohn. The other, her cousin, came from the scholarly Dubois-Reymond family.

Although, according to the Nuremberg legislation, neither belonged to the “Jewish race”—one of them had one-eighth, the other, one-fourth Jewish blood—they did not feel at home in Hitler’s Germany, and had retired to the country. Their home was delightful. Furniture belonging to the Mendelssohn family, and old masters on the walls, gave the rooms a special atmosphere. Here I did not have to be silent as with the peasants, and the profound human understanding and sympathy of these fine women was most comforting.

It was a healthy and refreshing life by the lake, and quite different from the old one, which I tried in vain to forget.

Furtwängler had been staying on the Baltic Sea since the middle of June. For weeks I had not heard from him. Then suddenly, he announced a visit for the middle of August. He arrived by plane and stayed for two days, and although he was a free agent, not at the mercy of the Nazis, like myself, he was worried about everything. He was dissatisfied with my successor, who he had found was mishandling his affairs. But she was favored by the Nazis. What was he to do? It was imperative that he find a more suitable person. Here was I, his secretary of so many years standing, ironically living in forced exile while he was worried to death trying to find a suitable successor. We discussed the matter, and tried to find a way out, then Furtwängler left.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

As time went on my personal affairs took a turn for the better. From various sides, influential friends tried to regain my freedom for me. After the Nazis had been persuaded that there would really be no danger of my doing any “harm” to Furtwängler from abroad—one of their pretexts for detaining me—a new inquiry had to be made to find out where the passport actually was. Finally I was informed that if I applied to Gestapo headquarters, enclosing documents to prove that I had an offer for work abroad, there was a chance that it would be released.

1935

Meanwhile, my second successor had started her work with Furtwängler. These changes after twenty years of continuous work with me were most disturbing for him. He had yielded to political pressure, but he had neither time nor inclination to deal continuously with the reorganization of his affairs, which had previously run so smoothly. He therefore declared that if I were not allowed to put things straight for him again, he could not promise to devote the necessary time to his musical duties.

To do this, I had to get the permission of Herr Hans Hinkel of the Prussian “Ministry of Culture” who controlled the “cultural activities of ‘non-Aryans’ in the Reich.” Who was Hinkel? Nobody had ever heard of him. Yet in Nazi Germany people like Furtwängler were often dependent on nonentities such as he. Hinkel issued a pompous permission for me to clear up Furtwängler’s affairs on the condition that it was done during his absence from Berlin. And, if possible, that I remain “invisible!”

I arranged to do the job while in Berlin on the passport affair, and immediately started to work my way through the muddle. It was a fantastic state of affairs. To what had Furtwängler yielded? A crazy phobia on the part of the Nazis had drawn our unique organization into the power of unqualified and inept busybodies. Furtwängler’s great art, naturally, could not be touched, but the strain on his nerves due to all the complications was increased and became more and more noticeable. With great distress I saw how completely he had fallen a victim to the war of nerves. However, I concealed my feelings and concentrated on my job.

Soon my old cronies knew that I was back. Many people came to see me; they grumbled at the régime, and I was well on the way to being drawn into the whirlpool again. That I was determined to avoid, and as soon as I

had taken all necessary steps in connection with my passport and put the new office in working order, I took off for Bavaria again.

On November 2nd I received my passport, only to find that it had already expired! More agony! New applications! But now I had the firm support of the Dutch Legation, and finally I was informed that if I went to my local police station in Berlin, a new passport would be handed to me.

This time it seemed as if they really meant it. I left Bavaria for good and went to Berlin. On November 22, 1935, I received a passport valid for five years. I was free at last! I could think of resuming a normal life.

But my relief was shortlived. The next morning, an official of the Gestapo appeared, and my passport was confiscated again.

Only by great caution could I inform my friends of this new incident, lest I jeopardize their ability to help me.

By a strange coincidence, just at that time, Tietjen and Furtwängler had a conference on opera matters with Goering, who had received Furtwängler with the words, "Well, are you satisfied now? Dr. Geissmar has got her passport again!" "She did have it, but only for twenty-four hours," said Furtwängler.

Goering was furious. He knew nothing of the withdrawal of the passport and swore that he would settle the matter immediately.

After an interminable fortnight, the door bell rang—it was the only too familiar Gestapo agent. Silently he handed me the passport. Two hours later I left Germany.

PART THREE

American Interlude, 1936

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

About the time of my departure the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Furtwängler were due to make a tour in England, for the first time without me. Furtwängler had asked me to get in touch with him as soon as I had arrived abroad, and so I sent him word to London that I was at the Hague.

1936

Early in the morning, two days later, a letter was pushed under my door, addressed in Furtwängler's handwriting. It was the first time for more than a year that he had dared to address a letter to me in his own hand. I opened it eagerly. He wrote that he wanted to see me before I left for America and would break his journey at the Hague for this purpose.

Time was short. There were only twenty-four hours between two concerts—one in London and the other in Dortmund. In order to make the most of the time, I decided to meet him at Flushing where he would arrive with the Orchestra about five P.M.

Under the circumstances, members of the orchestra were decidedly not to be allowed to catch a glimpse of me. So I waited in the train, and managed to send a note to Furtwängler on the boat, saying that I was in the second compartment of the Hague carriage.

The train to Germany drew in beside mine. From behind a curtain, I saw the familiar instrument cases loaded and the well-known faces of the musicians as they climbed into the train.

A porter came along with Furtwängler's luggage. I said, just as I had in the old days, "This way, please." Finally, Furtwängler appeared, rejoiced to see me free at last.

He began to tell me about the tour in England. Things had not been the same, and he was not sure whether it was due to general conditions or to the absence of the old organization. He was worn out, and told me he had decided to limit his conducting. He planned a long vacation during the winter, which he wished to spend in Egypt. At the Hague we left the station separately, lest we be shadowed. We spent the evening in the hospitable home of good friends, and in the cultured atmosphere and the warm sympathy shown to us we completely forgot that Furtwängler was on the way back to Nazi Germany, and that I was on the threshold of an unknown future.

Mengelberg invited me to a concert in Amsterdam soon afterwards, and asked me to come to see him during the interval. It was the first time for a long while that I had attended a concert, and for the first time in many a day I was welcome in the artists' room. Mengelberg was charming and told me to consider myself his guest while in Holland and make use of his office for everything I might need.

Just before Christmas, I went to Paris. It was heartwarming to gather the old threads again. Lucienne Couvreur, the daughter of Rouché, met me at the station. During my difficulties, she had always found ways to write to me, and we hardly slept at all that first night, we had so much to tell each other.

Rouché showed me his correspondence with the new management of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. How clumsily they dealt with the delicate matters which had formerly been handled so carefully! And yet, how often the Nazis got away with it.

By then, however, things were not so simple. Public opinion in France was growing increasingly hostile to Germany and eventually caused the cancellation of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Concerts arranged for April 1936 in Paris.

I saw Herr von Hoesch at the theatre. It was a shock, but exciting too, for so much of the old life had been connected with him. When I told him that as a refugee I felt I no longer had the right to impose on him, he said, "Why not? Aren't we old friends?"

I saw the Cerrutis, too. They had been transferred to Paris, and I had Christmas luncheon at the Italian Embassy.

From Paris I went to London for a week, and there, too, I met old friends.

On January 4, 1936, I left for New York.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

When I went to America in 1936, I was escaping from the country of my birth, where my family had lived for hundreds of years, and where I had deep roots. My homeland was lost to me. I was cut off from all I had cherished and for which I had lived.

1936

But I did not allow myself to linger on the past. As the ship drew near to the new world, I felt a deep gratitude for the chance to start a new life, hard as it might be. And with the fresh sea-wind blowing around me, I felt coming back to me a new energy and the determination to fight my own battle.

The friend who was to meet me when the ship docked sent a telegram to say that she had influenza, and so there I was alone on a strange shore.

I went to my old hotel where I had formerly stayed. Old memories flooded my mind as I went out for a solitary stroll.

That first day, however, was to be the only lonely one. During the night, the telephone rang. It was Joseph Schuster, one of the two solo cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic who had left Germany eighteen months before, and had been in America ever since. He had been to a recital by Schnabel, and had heard that I had arrived in New York. He was staying in the same hotel, and insisted on coming up to see me at once. That ended any prospect of a night's rest, for we found many memories to talk over.

Gradually I saw more and more of my friends, and the prospect of living for some time in New York was comforting.

How strange it seemed to live as a free being, to telephone without fear, to enjoy music again, to go to the opera, to the artists' room as in old times, to read newspapers and periodicals from all over the world, to write letters without restraint, and gradually to emerge from the abnormal and cramped conditions in which I had lived for so long!

It was like convalescence after a long and severe illness, like waking up from a bad dream. It took me a long time to recuperate, and even then no recovery completely removed the nightmare of the past.

Sir Thomas Beecham was in America at the time. I had known and admired him for many years. He had an air of independence which had always appealed to me. His first concert with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in my time was in 1930. The orchestra took to him at once, but the

Berlin press did not quite know how to appraise this strange guest. When Sir Thomas made his entry his shoe came undone, and instead of bowing to the audience he bent down, turned his back to the public, and leisurely tied the lace. In spite of their admiration for his art, the press emphasized the fact that the first thing Sir Thomas had done was to turn his back to the public!

Whenever Sir Thomas came to Berlin we had been delighted with his personality and brilliant, flashing wit. He had remained our staunch friend since 1927, when the Berlin Philharmonic and Furtwängler played in London for the first time, and he had rescued us from financial difficulties on our 1932 tour. Although there is a rumor (possibly inspired by Sir Thomas himself) that he never attends the concerts of others, he nearly always appeared when the Berliners and Furtwängler played in London, and was joyously welcomed by the orchestra. He always had time to spare, not only for Furtwängler, but for me, too; and I remember that it was on account of a luncheon engagement with Sir Thomas that I failed, on one occasion, to accompany Furtwängler and the orchestra to the provinces—a unique incident in the annals of my work with him!

There was a bond of sympathy between Sir Thomas and the Berlin Philharmonic. Sir Thomas always liked to go where he could have good music, and that is why, up to a certain time, he liked going to Berlin. As a musician he was above politics, and kept his musical activities apart from politics as long as possible.

In December 1933 Sir Thomas conducted a Philharmonic Concert in Berlin, and while there he engaged some singers for Covent Garden. Afterwards, when I went to see him off, he said: “If ever you get into hot water here, you must come and work for me at Covent Garden.”

Often, during the long year that I had waited for my passport, I had thought of him as the only person for whom I would like to work, but I had never written to him or told him of my troubles.

Shortly after my arrival in New York, Sir Thomas gave a concert with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. I got in touch with him, and he asked me to see him in the artists’ room. After the concert, I therefore went to the Green Room of Carnegie Hall, already so well known to me, and found Sir Thomas there, still a little flushed from the concert, but as good-humored as ever. “Hallo!” he greeted me, “how are you? I have heard the most romantic stories about you. . . . Are they all true?” Since the room was full of people, I passed over the question, but we made an appointment to meet later.

Two days later I went to see him at the Savoy Plaza. Since that visit, I have seen Sir Thomas in many hotel sitting-rooms and have traveled with him to many places. However the room may be furnished, as soon as Sir Thomas inhabits it, it assumes character; there are music and books all over the place, papers of all sorts everywhere, and even if he is away from England, there will at least be a copy of *The Times*. His traveling chessboard stands somewhere, generally with problems started. There are pencils of all sorts, and his precious pipes which he fills with art and care, and last but not least, his cigars, which have been made specially for him for the last thirty years. He remains faithful to them in spite of the efforts of different makers to beguile him to other creations. Such is the paraphernalia which usually surrounds him. And there he was himself, as he likes to be after his work is done, immaculate in his white silk pajamas and Turkish dressing gown—the picture of elegance, comfort, and detachment.

Soon we were engrossed in conversation. “Now, tell me all about yourself,” he commanded, his twinkling eyes full of humor, but also full of kindness and encouragement.

After I had described my experiences to him, I told him of the work I was doing. He was very interested, and said that an archive of musical holographs on similar lines ought also to be arranged for England. I said that I did not know how my work would develop. Then I went on: “There is only one job in the world I would really like, and that is to work for you. Couldn’t you arrange to try me out in your Covent Garden season next spring?” Sir Thomas thoughtfully stroked his beard. “Why not? You are just the person I want,” he said. “I will return to England in a week or two. I am about to change all the organization of the opera and orchestra and I will write to you in about three weeks’ time.” I left him, very much consoled about life in general. We arranged to meet once more at his last concert in New York on January 20th, and when we did, he proposed that I plan to turn up somehow during the next season at Covent Garden.

Meanwhile, I had gradually made a working plan for beginning my search for the “Archives of Scores.” My main task was to trace autographed manuscripts of great composers in American collections and have them photographed for the Vienna archives. The contents of the archives were restricted on general principles to certain composers, mainly C. P. E. and J. S. Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. It was a most interesting task, because in addition to the many libraries, there were numerous private collections in

America. This work, although not directly connected with active musical life, took me back into my old world, even if it stressed the scholarly side.

I first visited Miss Belle Green, the director of the Morgan Library, whom I had met on earlier visits to America. She had been a student of Furtwängler senior, who had collected a great deal for the elder Morgan.

Miss Green showed me various precious manuscripts, remarking that she had saved her best for the end. It was the score of Beethoven's sonata for piano and violin No. 10 in G major, with his own signature—a holograph which had been thought lost for many years and had never been photographed.

Another most interesting find was the sketch for the last movement of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata," in the possession of Mr. Ernest Hutcheson, the well-known American pianist. Mrs. Hutcheson described the treasure in a note:

"You know, don't you, that the Beethoven manuscript which we have is a sketch for the last movement of the 'Moonlight Sonata.' It was owned by Schumann for a number of years and has been taken out of Schumann's album. It has under it the title written in Schumann's hand."

The music critics knew relatively little about these things. Among many others, I visited the late Lawrence Gilman, for many years critic of the New York Herald Tribune, and the acknowledged Wagner specialist of America. After a long talk about Bayreuth, he told me that he had heard that somewhere in America there was a very valuable Wagner holograph, the text of one of the great operas. I tried to trace it, and by sheer luck, came across the original *Meistersinger* libretto, meticulously written in Wagner's wonderful hand. It was the property of a great American collector and dealer who kept it in his safe and it was priced at a fabulous sum.

This find was much discussed, and when Toscanini heard of it he asked to see it. The research became more and more fascinating. I was given help on every side. There was doubtless much to be found in the United States, and there was great interest in the problem.

A plan for founding similar archives for New York and Washington libraries was under consideration, pending permission to copy the existing Vienna collection and cooperation in photographing further holographs.

Unfortunately Vienna delayed the decision, and the plan had to be shelved for the time being. It was regrettable, for after the *Anschluss* the

Nazis assumed sole control over the National Library where the photographic archive was housed, and that was the end of the project.

Since my departure to America I had had no news from Furtwängler, but in February I received a letter posted in Warsaw, which reached me after a month's journey.

Meanwhile, there was a rumor that Toscanini intended to resign his position with the New York Philharmonic. It was said that he could not be persuaded to stay on, and had named Furtwängler as a suitable successor.

Furtwängler, who had risen to fame with extraordinary ease, had been faced with more difficulties in America during the years of 1924-27 than in any other country. He had been extremely successful there on his first visit, but less so during the subsequent two years. Nevertheless, all musicians well remembered his concerts, and even after so many years people still spoke appreciatively of his performances.

At any rate, in 1936 the board of directors of the New York Philharmonic decided to engage Furtwängler, and sent him a cable to Vienna. Furtwängler was very reluctant to accept.

Since his resignation in 1934, he had had no permanent position—he was only a guest conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic and the Berlin State Opera. Bayreuth, too, where he had agreed to conduct again in the summer of 1936 after an interval of five years, could not be considered permanent. He did not hold any official post in the *Reichsmusikkammer*, but was a member of that organization, as every musician in Germany had to be. Yet in the eyes of the world he remained a representative of German musical life. After long negotiations he at last agreed to accept the position of Director of the New York Philharmonic for a certain period.

On Saturday morning, February 29, 1936, the announcement of the New York engagement was published. It evoked, at first, a favorable response.

Then, however, a strange incident occurred. The news of the engagement was reprinted in the evening papers, but side by side with it in heavy type was an Associated Press report from Berlin announcing that Furtwängler had been reinstated in his former position as chief of the Berlin State Opera.

The directorship of the New York Philharmonic was one of the greatest musical positions in the world, and even if the acceptance of a post at the Berlin State Opera had been true—which it was not—it would have been in extremely bad taste to announce the appointment on the same day as the American nomination. Moreover, the New York engagement had been

offered on the understanding that Furtwängler had no fixed position, and was solely a guest conductor in Germany and elsewhere.

However, an Associated Press report cannot be ignored, and so a justifiable uneasiness arose among part of the public and press. While all this was happening, the unsuspecting Furtwängler was on his way to Egypt. It seemed most unlikely that he would accept any position in Germany at that time, but had he contemplated such a step, he certainly would have informed New York.

An inquiry at the Associated Press headquarters produced the surprising statement that the Berlin report originated from official sources, a fact which greatly complicated matters. Those Americans who had opposed Furtwängler's nomination saw their suspicions confirmed.

The directors of the New York Philharmonic decided to clarify the situation. They had supported their candidate and wished, in the interest of everybody concerned, to avoid any misunderstanding. Cables were exchanged, and Furtwängler's cable categorically denied that he was chief of the Berlin Opera. It said: "I am not chief of Berlin Opera but conduct as guest. My job is only music. WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER." Repeated inquiries at the Associated Press, however, resulted in confirmation of the original Berlin agency report.

Although he had again taken up work as a guest conductor in Germany, Furtwängler was very sensitive to conditions there. His constant and persistent endeavors in interviews with members of the Government and Hitler to improve things, continued to have very little effect. Great homage was paid to him, but it never resulted in the ceding of one iota of Party doctrine.

Since he had contemplated a whole year's vacation for a long time, he had not committed himself to a given number of engagements. Just before he left for Egypt, nothing was left undone in an attempt to tie him down again to a permanent position. When, at this juncture, his New York appointment was suddenly announced, there was great excitement in Germany. While Furtwängler was actually on his way to Egypt and therefore impossible to contact, Goering allegedly proclaimed that Furtwängler was reinstated. It was clear that Goering had made the announcement, because it did not suit his vanity to have Furtwängler refuse a position which he had offered him, while accepting one in New York.

The battle of opinions on the Furtwängler appointment was raging in musical circles when, on March 7, 1936, Hitler marched into the Rhineland.

The atmosphere was almost as tense as if war had broken out. The fight of the New York Philharmonic Society over Furtwängler became hopeless.

Editors in New York received hundreds of letters for and against Furtwängler. The newspapers printed both favorable and hostile comments. The trade unions protested, and it was rumored that he would not be allowed to land. Among others, the *Karl Schurz Gesellschaft* protested, although Furtwängler was an honorary member of its German branch; the German American Bund did the same, as did the Teachers' Union, the American Federation of Musicians, and the American Federation of Labor.

It would have been wrong to persuade Furtwängler "that it would all blow over" as some of his friends insisted it would. He had had too many doubts from the very beginning to warrant such an attitude.

Furtwängler cancelled his engagement in a cable published on March 15, 1936:

"Political controversy disagreeable to me. Am not politician but exponent of German music which belongs to all humanity regardless of politics. I propose postpone my season in the interest of Philharmonic Society until the time public realizes that politics and music are apart. FURTWÄNGLER."

The next thing I heard from him, still from Egypt, was a warning that people in Berlin were spreading the rumor that I was the instigator of the whole conflict, and that I had incited the Jews of New York against him!

I had made many friends in America during former visits, and now I made a number of new acquaintances.

At the time the chief conductor of the Metropolitan Opera House was Bodanzky who, before going to New York in 1915, had been principal conductor at the *Mannheimer Hof-und Nationaltheater* which served as a stepping-stone for so many great conductors. The old friendship established between the Bodanzkys and my parents in his Mannheim days had never ceased, and after my father's death, my mother and I met them almost every summer at the Engadine.

Bodanzky, who had been instrumental in Furtwängler's appointment as his successor in Mannheim (1915-20), was full of interest and friendship for his younger colleague, and during our visits to America we had spent much time in his hospitable home.

Now I was there on my own, and Bodanzky showed deep understanding for my position, but he was relentless on one point—he would not accept any argument in favor of those who had compromised with the Nazi State. Thanks to him, I was at home in the Metropolitan Opera, and I enjoyed it greatly. There I heard *Lohengrin* and the *Ring*, and met many old friends from European opera houses, among others, Lauritz Melchior, who no longer sang in Germany, but was a great favorite with the New York public, and his popular wife Kleinchen. How pleasant it was to see them again in New York! Wherever he happened to be, Melchior allowed nothing to interfere with his accustomed routine. When I went to lunch at their New York home, they had only just got out of bed. The table was laden with Bavarian delicacies, sausages, beer, and boiled beef. The whole family, including Kleinchen's Bavarian parents, appeared in pajamas, and one could hardly believe one was in New York. Shortly after, Melchior had his birthday, and I received an invitation to “spend with them the time from 7 P.M. till 7 A.M.” Their flat had been marvellously decorated for the occasion and there was a big crowd. I met Kirsten Flagstad for the first time.

Another friend whom I met again was Alma Mahler, who had married the author, Franz Werfel, in 1919. His drama *Der Weg der Verheissung* was being performed in New York, produced by Max Reinhardt.

Alma and I had always been friends. When I went to Vienna for the first time with Furtwängler in 1921, I visited her. She is a strange mixture of contrasting elements, and a deep, powerful personality. The first conversation we ever had rolled over me like an ocean tide; she had a profound knowledge of life and in comparison with her I felt as inexperienced as a child. In those early Vienna days we often discussed the problems which arose from living by the side of a great and sensitive artist. She understood everything, with her fine womanly intuition. After the first meeting in Vienna we had always kept in touch. When I was in Vienna I never failed to visit her, and occasionally she came to Berlin with Werfel.

When we met in New York in 1936 I was stranded, and the former world which had connected both of us was closed to me. She still owned her beautiful house in Vienna on the *Hohe Warte*, and was still considered the “Queen” of spiritual and political Vienna. However, her day came too, and she left Vienna finally the night after Hitler's march into Austria.

In New York, in 1936, things had not reached this sorry pass. In the St. Regis Hotel, where Werfel and she were staying, we talked for hours and hours about all that was happening in the world, and the inexorable fate

which had overtaken so many. She tried to give me courage by declaring that all would be well again—but I doubt if she believed it herself.

PART FOUR

Pre-War England, 1936-1939

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Time flew, and on April 4, 1936, I embarked on the *Ile de France* for Europe. There were several friends on board, notably some singers from the Metropolitan Opera who were going to Covent Garden for the season. On April 10th we docked at Plymouth.

1936

It was Good Friday, and in the brilliant sunshine the fields, which I had missed so much in America, shone with the pale glow of primroses.

In London I rang up Sir Thomas. Sir Thomas seldom answers the telephone. If it cannot be switched off, he sits by imperturbably while the bell rings on and on. On the rare occasions when he does take the receiver himself, he emits a terrifying sound in an unrecognizable voice, and the uninitiated caller usually drops the receiver, utterly cowed.

Nothing of the sort, however, happened the day I called. Sir Thomas himself answered, and in his most amiable voice said: "Hello! so you have landed then? How about lunch today?"

Fate had taken a hand in the game. I had not only got in touch with him straightway, but he also happened to be free—a very rare coincidence.

In those days Sir Thomas lived at the Waldorf Hotel because of its proximity to Covent Garden, and it was there that I went to see him on April 18, 1936.

He greeted me warmly and kindly, and I felt his real sympathy and interest. After we had spoken of generalities, he began to question me. I told him of my New York experiences. However, he lost little time on those preliminaries, and soon assumed an autocratic expression.

"Now then," he began. "How do things stand with you? Are you free?"

"I am not quite free," I replied. "But if you want me, I can be."

"Yes, I do," he said. "Let us settle the matter at once."

He rose from the table, went to his writing desk and wrote the following letter:

"Waldorf Hotel,
Aldwych, W.C. 2.,

April 18, 1936.

“Dear Dr. Geissmar,

“I am happy to learn that you are free to accept the offer I have made to you to act as my General Secretary for all my musical affairs.

“These, during the last few years, have assumed such an international character that only someone of your great knowledge and experience of the Continent can fulfil adequately the duties and responsibilities that such a post carries with it. I am, Yours very sincerely.—THOMAS BEECHAM.”

He said, “I have thought this matter over. It is of no use your coming for the season only.” (Even in my wildest dreams I had scarcely dared to hope for more.) “You must come for good, and I am now going to tell you of the plans I have made.”

He then began to explain to me how he thought the opera seasons and the orchestra should be run.

My interest was aroused immediately, now that a real task again lay ahead of me. Sir Thomas was the only conductor of his standard in charge of an opera house as well as of an orchestra. A perfect combination for the work I liked to do.

I told him then about my legal position. When I had left Germany six months before, it had been understood by the Gestapo that I had gone to America on business. But I was only “traveling” for the Viennese “Photographic Archives,” and had not formally emigrated. In any event, I had to reckon with the fact that within a certain time the Gestapo would inquire about my further plans. The time was approaching for me to make my position clear to them.

I therefore arranged with Sir Thomas to transfer my residence from Berlin to London as soon as possible. Before I could do so I had to get a tax clearance and change of residence certificate from Germany. Without them I could not register as a resident in London.

Sir Thomas informed his solicitors to make the necessary application for my labor permit but I decided to keep our new professional relationship secret for the time being, so that the Nazis could not frustrate it by complicating the formalities.

Before I left, he said quite casually, “By the way, Doctor, I never trouble about money, as you may have heard. It doesn’t interest me. How much salary would you like to have?” After all my changing fortunes, I was dizzy and overwhelmed with the turn that things were taking. Money never came first with me either, it was the work that mattered. However, I pulled myself together, and named a salary suitable for this kind of work.

“All right,” said Sir Thomas, and I took my leave.

The next day I went to see his lawyer, who was thoroughly versed in Sir Thomas’s affairs, which, as most people know, are not a little complicated. He viewed with some trepidation my naïve exhilaration, and felt it his duty to enlighten me as to what I had undertaken. When we arrived at the financial question, he informed me that Sir Thomas had doubled the salary that I had suggested. Perhaps I had just the qualifications to fit in with his plans; but he might well have taken advantage of my extremely difficult position.

My own legal adviser arrived in due course from Germany, proud and pleased to have been called to London. Cautiously I began to let him into the secret. We arranged a code for use when he returned to Germany, and we decided that the telegram, “Bruno has departed,” would mean that my papers were safely on their way.

The International Season at Covent Garden was in full swing. Although I still had to keep quiet about my new job, I went to the Opera House every day and was often present at Sir Thomas’s lunch hour. His lunch was sent in from Boulestin’s and was a bright, and often brilliant, interruption in the day’s routine. Enough was always provided for the many interesting people who dropped in.

I also regularly attended all Sir Thomas’s rehearsals, and once found myself in a difficult position when Mr. Charles Moor, stage director of Covent Garden for years, wanted to banish me from the theater, since only those connected with the staff were allowed to be present at rehearsals. I had to offer the excuse that Sir Thomas had asked me to wait for him in the stalls!

It was difficult for me to keep my good news to myself, particularly when Herbert Janssen, the famous baritone of Berlin and Bayreuth, and a Covent Garden regular for seventeen years, said to me when we met in the Opera House: “You know, Geissmar, there is only one place where you should work and that is Covent Garden!”

At these rehearsals, Sir Thomas was a living dynamo. Everything depended on his inexhaustible energy, and it seemed that there was no side of the work which he could safely delegate to anyone else. To spare his voice he used a police whistle which hung round his neck on a black ribbon.

All this free life seemed incredible to me. I felt as though I had emerged from a tomb into the light of day. I had no real duties as yet and only went to the Opera House when Sir Thomas asked me to. I acclimatized myself slowly to the work, and especially to Sir Thomas, to whom I was not only grateful but devoted.

In the meantime he had discussed his future plans with me several times. There was talk of a tour of Germany by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under his direction, and plans for the celebration of the Coronation year with a ten weeks' season at Covent Garden which was to include operas in French and Italian, in addition to the popular German season.

I suggested to Sir Thomas that he collaborate with my old friend M. Rouché, the Director of the Paris *Opéra*, in his plans for opera in French. Sir Thomas's temperament is such that he reacts swiftly to such a suggestion. He loves quick action, which makes working for him simple and easy. He said: "You had better go to Paris at once. You will discuss this matter in general with M. Rouché, and then you will proceed to Switzerland while the Berlin Philharmonic is touring there and meet Dr. Furtwängler. You will ask him to conduct the German Season for me next year and I will give you a letter for him." His eyes twinkled significantly. This was typical of Sir Thomas. He certainly wanted the cooperation of the great Wagner conductor—but how kind of him to create the opportunity for me to meet my old chief and friend.

In the highest spirits I set out for my first continental trip on British affairs. Neither my German Change of Residence Certificate nor my English Labor Permit had arrived before I left, but Sir Thomas's lawyer gave me a letter for the immigration officer saying that I was traveling for the Royal Opera House and that no difficulty was expected with regard to my work in England.

In Paris I stayed again with the Couvreur. The chestnuts were in flower in the Bois, where they lived. It was like old times.

I called on M. Robert Brussel in the *Ministère des Beaux Arts*, with whom I had arranged so many concerts and operatic performances from the German side. I told him I was now working for Covent Garden, and

discussed tentatively the plans for the Coronation Season. Brussel was delighted, and assured me of every support from his Ministry.

In those few days I prepared the ground for much of my future work with Covent Garden. I was infinitely happy to be engaged again in my old activities, and reported daily by letter to Sir Thomas.

Then I left for Zurich. It was a very strange journey for me. Since I had no information that my affairs were settled, I was still dependent on the German authorities, and felt I had to be extremely careful.

In the morning when I stepped out of my sleeper in Basle, I bought a paper. An enormous headline immediately attracted my attention: "Wilhelm Furtwängler goes on leave for a year." What a curious prelude to our meeting!

And a very moving meeting it was. After our first excitement at seeing each other had subsided we decided that it was better for me not to attend his concerts, but otherwise we resolved to make the most of the three days together in Switzerland. Furtwängler had to leave soon for his concert in Lucerne. Friends had put a car at his disposal, and next morning, I waited for him in the car, in order not to be seen by any members of the orchestra.

Furtwängler arrived punctually for our drive, and on a radiant spring morning, under a glowing sun in a cloudless blue sky, we left for Basle. On our way we stopped at a little inn and had our lunch in the garden under an old apple tree in full blossom. In peace and quietness, away from all the nagging horror that had ruined our lives in Nazi Germany, we were able to liquidate the nightmare of the last years and discuss everything on our minds freely. Furtwängler was relieved at the turn my life had taken. My fate had lain heavily upon him and he had always had a great liking and admiration for Sir Thomas.

One day we spent at the Dolder with Furtwängler's two English friends. In the midst of all these personal excitements and emotions, I did not forget the purpose of my journey for a minute. Furtwängler's decision not to conduct for a whole year was certainly a happy solution, but I was resolved not to return to Sir Thomas without having fulfilled my mission, and so I bargained with Furtwängler to finish his "non-conducting period" before the Coronation festivities commenced. Needless to say, the two Englishmen supported me. We all tried to persuade Furtwängler, who exclaimed in dismay, "But who will fix this up with Goering?" One of his greatest difficulties in obtaining the grace of one year's rest had been Goering's

disappointment at his decision; he had hoped to retain him at least as guest conductor at his beloved State Opera House in Berlin.

I reported all these details to Sir Thomas, and also informed him that while in Zurich I had received a cable from my lawyer saying that “Bruno’s departure was imminent.”

The next morning I went back to Paris. There I found a letter from Sir Thomas saying that the London Philharmonic Orchestra was soon to receive an official invitation to tour Germany under his direction.

Furtwängler was expected in Paris the next day for his opera rehearsals, and I was glad to be on the spot to discuss the matter with him. Furtwängler, who for so many years had been fêted with his orchestra in England, greatly welcomed the idea of a return visit. We discussed in detail how it could best be arranged. I stayed one more day for a luncheon which M. Rouché gave for the Polish composer, Karol Szymanowski, whose ballet *Harnasie* had just been given its première, and then left for London.

I could hardly wait to see Sir Thomas to give him all the news. He was immersed in his opera season and extremely busy, but he always had time for me. It was a treat to hear a performance of *Die Götterdämmerung* with the old familiar cast, and to have lunch with Frieda Leider and her husband, and in the meantime hear all the opera gossip.

Sir Thomas told me that he had received the invitation for the tour from von Ribbentrop, who at that time was “Ambassador at Large” of the German Reich. (*Ausserordentlicher und Bevollmächtigter Botschafter des deutschen Reiches!*)

There were a great many points still to be settled in connection with the German tour, and so Sir Thomas said, “I think it will save a lot of time and trouble if, since Furtwängler is still in Paris, you would go back and discuss the final details with him.” In the same week, therefore, I found myself again crossing the Channel.

In Paris, Furtwängler handed me an official letter from *Generalintendant* Tietjen. Tietjen had heard that I was now General Secretary to Sir Thomas, and wanted to ascertain whether he would be seriously disposed to accept an invitation to conduct opera performances in Berlin. Sir Thomas was most independent with regard to keeping engagements and the year before had cancelled a *Tristan* performance at the Berlin State Opera at the last moment so, to avoid possible bad feeling, Tietjen wanted to be sure that an invitation would be well received. Moreover, Tietjen thought it advisable that Sir

Thomas confirm my appointment by letter, before he put the matter to Goering, his chief. I was amused. As *Generalintendant* of the Prussian State Theatres, Tietjen had the protection of Goering, who, although guilty of unspeakable crimes, was all tenderness where his beloved Opera House was concerned. He exercised his power on behalf of his opera wherever he could and relied completely on Tietjen. In asking for an official letter from Sir Thomas confirming my appointment, Tietjen intended to forestall any possible obstructions that might arise from other quarters later to hamper my new work, which, of course, involved dealings with German opera.

While in Paris, besides discussing Anglo-German plans with Furtwängler I also negotiated with M. Rouché, who expressed willingness to cooperate with Covent Garden for French operatic productions. M. Brussel, too, confirmed that such plans would certainly be approved by the French Government. I also discussed the possibility of a visit of Sir Thomas to the Paris *Opéra* and was told, “*Nous ne demandons pas mieux.*” There are times when everything goes according to plan, and when on my return I reported the results of my interviews to Sir Thomas, he declared himself completely satisfied.

In London, a telegram awaited me—“Bruno left today.” Freedom at last! The transfer of my residence to London had been arranged without any difficulty. Incidentally, this cost me over £5000.^[1] Radiantly, I went to Sir Thomas to tell him. He remarked casually, “By the way, your Labor Permit is granted, so you can go ahead.”

The first thing I did was to show him Tietjen’s letter which he read with great amusement. He immediately produced the letterhead which he had had printed. “How do you like that?” he asked; I liked it well enough, and on this paper headed SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, BART.; GENERAL SECRETARY, DR. GEISSMAR; ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, COVENT GARDEN, W.C. 2, he wrote at once to Tietjen.

“May 28, 1936.

“Generalintendant Tietjen,
Staatsoper, Berlin.

“Dear Mr. Tietjen,

“I want to inform you that I have appointed Dr. Berta Geissmar as General Secretary for all my musical affairs.

“I intend to send Dr. Geissmar over to Germany at the end of June to discuss plans with you. Yours sincerely,

In those days, I really had not the faintest idea whether it would ever again be possible for me to go to Germany, but Sir Thomas was not in the least troubled. He regarded my misgivings as a joke, and took it for granted that if he wished to send me to Germany on his business this would be sufficient reason to overcome all obstacles. And so it proved to be.

The season was still at its height, and Sir Thomas was very busy. Not only did he have to conduct almost every evening, but he also had to direct the opera and at the same time prepare for the Coronation season.

For me, of course, everything was entirely new, but Sir Thomas smoothed the way. He invited me to be present in his room as much as possible while he worked, so that I quickly learned how things were done.

On the other hand, he was most generous in letting me work in the way to which I had been accustomed. I arranged his files in my own way, and applied my old and proven system in my work with him. I tried to avoid interrupting him with all the questions pouring in from every side, and typed out everything on a kind of “questionnaire” to which in many cases he could just add “Yes” or “No” or “O.K.”

All his letters were carefully spread out for him on an extra table, in some cases with explanatory notes. But with regard to his correspondence, Sir Thomas was no exception to other great men. He would take up a letter, look at it, turn it round, and put it down again. That was the end of his interest in it, and the rest was left to me. When, however, he considered a matter worth going into, he gave it his most careful attention, and if he dictated a letter himself he was most particular about its minutest detail, and insisted, if necessary, that it be written again and again until he considered it satisfactory.

The correspondence, however, was only a small part of my work with him. Much of it was, of course, the routine duties connected with the office of the director of an opera house and an orchestra. But Covent Garden was a peculiar place, and occasionally, especially in the beginning when I did not know him as intimately as later on, situations arose with which I sometimes did not know how to cope. Sir Thomas rarely gave me any instructions or explanations. Never, for instance, did he help me with so much as a hint about the innumerable new people I had to get to know; I had to appraise everybody myself, while he generally contented himself by saying that somebody was either a “damned idiot,” or something of the sort.

One day when I had again been compelled to act in a certain dilemma without any hint of my chief's wishes, I asked him why he never gave me any directions; how could I ever know whether he was satisfied or displeased? (Other people say so when they are displeased, but Sir Thomas has the unfortunate habit of remaining taciturn.) I had held down a big job before working for him, but I was a foreigner here; Covent Garden had its very special and sacred etiquette, and Sir Thomas, without ever raising his voice, could be the most exacting person imaginable. "Well, you see, Doctor," he explained, with that inimitable self-assurance of his, "if I engage anyone as a personal collaborator, it is, of course, because I trust her, and leave the handling of things entirely to her."

[1] It was the *Reichsfluchtsteuer*—a sum I had to pay to the German Government for being allowed to flee the country of my birth and settle in another! But this was a detail.

CHAPTER THIRTY

In the meantime negotiations for the German tour of the London Philharmonic Orchestra were progressing and Sir Thomas took it for granted that I was to act for him in Germany. But I had learned by experience, and said to him: “I don’t mind running the tour, but I want to be able to move about freely and to be certain that while one German department sanctions arrangements, another will not be planning to arrest me at the frontier and another to confiscate my passport again.” Sir Thomas did not take my concern very seriously, and said, “Don’t worry, there will be no trouble about *that*.”

1936

I was becoming more and more friendly with Sir Thomas, and each day began with a long telephone conversation. One morning he rang me up, discussed all sorts of things, and said finally, “By the way, Doctor, you can go to Germany as often and for as long as you like. It is all settled.” He said this quite casually, just as he might say, “Come to the Opera House at twelve o’clock.”

Later I went to see him. I still felt diffident about the matter, but to him it presented no problem. “Well, you see, Doctor,” he explained, “yesterday, I had a talk with von Ribbentrop. I told him that you were dealing with all my musical affairs and were running the German tour, and I wanted to be sure that there would be no trouble whatever. He told me that you had nothing but friends in Germany, and that they were proud that I had a German secretary. You see,” he concluded airily, “there is no difficulty at all.”

At that moment friendship with England at all cost was the password of Nazi politics, and when Sir Thomas declared that he did not intend to travel without his General Secretary, Ribbentrop had only one aim—to ingratiate himself with the English. I was indeed used to many things, but such a shameless and cynical lie as Ribbentrop’s seemed to me the limit. In Germany Furtwängler was still being reproached for his relationship to me. It was constantly hinted to him that terminating his business connection with me was not considered sufficient—he had not broken off all personal relations. But if it suited Nazi aims, they could subjugate their ostensible principles to sanction something that had been *untragbar* since 1933. A great German musician had not been allowed to retain my services, and yet, before the wishes of a prominent Englishman, they were sycophantic enough to bow down and accept the situation.

All these conflicting elements were upsetting to me, but Sir Thomas's philosophically humorous attitude to everything in life was contagious, and I was surprised and delighted to find myself looking at things from his angle. I was now free to work and live. I was possessed by but one idea, at the moment—to assist him as much as possible.

Of course, I had no relations with the German Embassy, but one day Baron Fries, who had served as private secretary to Hoesch, rang me up. "At last we have got you," he said. "Where are you?" I said, "I am in the Royal Opera House." "But why did you not get in touch with us?" "How could I?" I retorted. He understood, of course, and inquired, "But surely you have no objection to meeting an old friend?" I had not, indeed. Fries had been devoted to Hoesch. How often had we stayed in the Hoesch Embassy under the same roof! Now he was helpful in every way, and told me that Ribbentrop's liaison-officer in all special affairs between England and Germany was due back from Berlin soon. I confided to Fries, "I shall have to get in touch with that man, for we must get the tour on the right footing at once." Ribbentrop had written a pompous letter to Sir Thomas saying that he had initiated matters, and that he had appointed the appropriate people for the work. I was naturally extremely dubious. Sir Thomas had as yet not received any details, but I had heard rumors. I had had a visit from the chairman of the Leipzig *Gewandhaus*, Herr von Hase. What he told me about the preparations for the tour in Germany filled me with apprehension. Things might easily be spoiled before it even started.

Then one day I had a phone call from Ribbentrop's liaison-officer who had just arrived. He asked me to come to the German Embassy to discuss the tour. I replied that I would rather not. I was firmly resolved to do everything possible for Sir Thomas, but I was just as firmly resolved not to set foot in a German Embassy under the Nazi régime. At last we arranged to meet in the Carlton Hotel, and there I went, scared and uncomfortable at the proximity of anything or anyone connected with the Third Reich. Very carefully, over a cocktail, the conversation began, and at first I could hardly trust myself to speak at all. However, there was no need to be afraid of the man. He had rather a free function, had lived mainly abroad, and was a distinguished, sensitive man of the old German nobility.

He told me that the Ambassador had left the whole organization of the tour in his hands, but confessed that he had no experience in such things. Perceiving how little he actually did know, I said, "I will draft a framework for the tour, and when the main points are settled the details will be simple." That seemed to take a load off his mind, and he then told me that the

Ambassador had appointed a representative in Germany for the whole tour. I knew the man. The choice was the worst possible. I was hardly in a position to lay down the law, but I said without hesitation, "This is absolutely impossible. If it were a boxing match he might do, but you simply cannot bring such a person into contact with Beecham. If you do, he will just bolt."

Fortunately I had some authority, in spite of all my political troubles. So I proposed: "The matter is quite simple. I can manage the tour from England, and the office of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra can make the arrangements in Germany. They know exactly what to do, and have run tours with me for many years. If the London Philharmonic Orchestra tour can be arranged in that way, you can be sure that it will go well." He welcomed the solution, but was worried how to dispose of the representative in Germany, who had been recommended by the *Reichsmusikkammer*. But that was not my concern. As I left I said, "You can rely on me; I make but two conditions: I wish to avoid meeting my former secretary, and the Nazi-appointed manager of the Berlin Orchestra. Apart from those, I will forget the past and consider the whole matter only from the angle of my new work."

The liaison-officer returned to Berlin and made the arrangements according to plan. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra were delighted with the idea of running the tour for their English colleagues. They had visited England so many times themselves, that it was a matter of honor, as well as a pleasure, to ensure that the arrangements for the English orchestra were carried out to perfection.

Furtwängler protected the enterprise in every way. He wrote to me in detail about the tour, and at the same time informed me that he had engaged my third successor and hoped that on my visit to Germany I would have time enough to coach her! I reported the contents of the letter to Sir Thomas. With the expression of a pasha he granted me the necessary leave.

Although Sir Thomas had the greatest regard for Furtwängler as an artist, he adopted a paternal attitude towards him and generally addressed him as "my boy."

To some extent Sir Thomas is inscrutable, and no one can be sure of what he is really thinking. All our Nazi calamities and catastrophies seemed to be a permanent source of amusement to him. Nevertheless, when a really serious eventuality cropped up, I could always count on him, and be sure of real understanding and efficient help.

Meanwhile, Sir Thomas had made his arrangements for the summer. He was going to Norway for a month and then on to Bayreuth to hear the performances and engage his cast for the Coronation season. He had given me all necessary instructions, and left London at the end of June while I prepared for my departure to Germany.

Hardly six months had elapsed since I had stealthily left the country of my birth in night and fog, convinced that I should never return. And now I was on my way back, conscious of an independent position, a settled income, and a new existence.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

With mixed feelings I took the train to Berlin. At the German frontier my passport was examined, but no questions were asked. Berlin lay before me bathed in sunshine, and soon I was back in my home, pouring out my tale to my mother.

1936

My mother is a strong and single-minded character, and ever since 1933 she had felt all my difficulties acutely. Although she was as devoted to Furtwängler as to a son, she would have much preferred that we had parted a great deal earlier. She had become used to the fact that I was treated like an outcast. I had not even been permitted to keep my own files. Communication between the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and myself had been forbidden. She knew also that my old servant, who in former times had looked after the office of the orchestra and myself, had been threatened with the loss of her job unless she broke off any connection with me. No wonder, therefore, that she was dumbfounded by the circumstances of my return, and after the first joyous meeting she said to me, “Now tell me, what does this all mean? Are we in a lunatic asylum?” I replied, “Far from it. The explanation is simply that I am Sir Thomas Beecham’s secretary. I have a job to do and I am going to do it.”

Soon the telephone rang. It was the Berlin Philharmonic office inquiring whether the management could come to see me at once.

“There is no reason whatever to call on me,” I replied. “I am here on business, and I will be at your office in half an hour.”

My stipulation that I was not to meet my old secretary nor the Nazi manager was strictly observed.

The chairman of the Management Committee in my time had been dismissed immediately after Furtwängler’s resignation. The next chairman, appointed by the Goebbels Ministry, was a failure. He had supposedly lost a post abroad because he was a Nazi, and had been appointed to this highly responsible position by the Propaganda Ministry as a reward, which was hardly a satisfactory qualification. He too had to be dismissed. The present chairman had been on the *Rundfunk* before the Nazi régime. I had known him a long time, but had not seen him since he was with the Philharmonic.

At the appointed hour I took my heart in my hands, went to my old office, and rang the bell. The odd-job man—“ex-unemployed”—opened the

door. He was in Storm Trooper's uniform and said, "Heil Hitler, Fräulein Doktor, how nice to see you again."

He ushered me into my old room, now occupied by the chairman. How changed and bare it looked! The comfort, ease, and elegance of the old days had gone. As a substitute for vanished beauty, an enormous picture of Hitler greeted me from one of the walls.

Almost before I had had time to take it all in, the chairman and my old collaborator, Höber, came in, grinning with embarrassment, and shook hands heartily with me.

"Well, you have made a marvelous recovery," they said. "We are so delighted about it."

"So am I," I replied, "but now you must tell me all your news."

They did, and then they asked me whom of the former orchestra members I had seen in the outside world. I had seen them all, some in New York and some in London.

Very soon my dear old Trudchen, whose services I had shared with the orchestra, appeared with coffee and my favorite cinnamon cake of the old days. She was absolutely radiant and declared with decision, "I am coming to see you this evening." Strange to say, no one threatened her now that if she were in touch with me she should lose her job.

After our excitement died away we got down to work.

Höber and I, who had in the past arranged innumerable tours, were in our element, and very shortly the whole plan was clear. We began to discuss details, and I said decidedly, "Do see that this great musical occasion is not exploited for purposes of Nazi display, and don't, whatever you do, let any one interfere with the *Bier-Abend* of the two orchestras after the Berlin Concert." He was only too glad to concur.

Two days later I left for Bayreuth. It has always been a peculiar place, the scene of impassioned cross-currents and interests.

When I had last been there in 1931, the old Bayreuth of Cosima and the new of Winifred Wagner clashed; the Bayreuth of which Furtwängler dreamed was different from that of Toscanini, who had collaborated with Siegfried Wagner before his death, and last but not least there was the Bayreuth of Richard Wagner, so different from the Bayreuth of present days.

Only by realizing the existence of the undercurrents resulting from these different points of view can Bayreuth as a whole be understood.

No matter what his views about Bayreuth, no one could escape its atmosphere: the tradition of a great cultural epoch, the spell of the gentle and dreamy landscape around the poetical old baroque town, and—in spite of everything—the *Festspielhügel*.

All my recollections of former days returned on my journey, but it was yet another Bayreuth which awaited me. In spite of the fact that even in Nazi times Bayreuth was protected from interference, it was nevertheless the Bayreuth of Adolf Hitler to which I was on my way on that radiant June morning.

In 1936 nearly all the remaining members of the Wagner family lived in Bayreuth. After the death of her husband, Siegfried, Winifred Wagner was the principal heir and ruler of Bayreuth. She directed the Festival, and was a trustee of the whole Wagner estate for her four children who were at that time minors. Winifred Wagner was British born, but had been brought up in Germany. She had a beautiful face, a clean-cut profile, and could be bewitchingly charming. In spite of her great position, her life was difficult, and I believe that her inaccessibility and occasional brusqueness stemmed from an inner uncertainty rather than from inherent hardness. It was no easy task for this young woman to lead Bayreuth forward to the future, under the very eyes of the past.

The four Wagner children were all very pronounced personalities. They had grown up in utter freedom in that unique atmosphere, and no one had ever tried to discipline them. When I spent the summer of 1931 in Bayreuth with Furtwängler, nobody was safe from their tricks and no one knew what they would do next.

Wieland, the eldest, was then nineteen years old. He had many artistic inclinations, but had not shown any particularly strongly developed talent so far. He was interested in painting, and at the time was planning new settings for *Parsifal*, which he later partially completed. He was a strong young man with unmistakable Wagner features. Hitler had a great affection for him, and it was said that when war broke out in 1939, he forbade him to enlist on account of his sacred Wagner blood!

The next was Friedelinde, generally called “Maus,” who retained the features of her grandfather, even down to the differently-shaped ears, and had the slim, long, aristocratic hands inherited from Liszt through Cosima Wagner. “Maus” was in many ways the image of the great Richard. She was gifted and courageous, but she was not an easy character, and has gone her own way in life.

Verena, the third, was an enchanting being, with a slim, willowy figure and big melancholy eyes. All those who were able to judge always said she was the image of Cosima, and in her looks she certainly took after the Liszt side of the family.

Wolfgang, the youngest, was an exceedingly good-looking boy with Wagner features, but of all the children he took most after his mother. Even then, when still quite small, he showed a pronounced ability for technical matters and was the shadow of the famous technical director of the *Festspielhaus*, Herr Eberhardt, to whom the perfection of the Bayreuth stage was due.

These four children, with their young mother, were the future of Bayreuth; but the past was still alive, demanding loyalty to tradition and almost suspiciously scrutinizing events within *Wahnfried* and the *Festspielhügel*.

This past was personified in the older generation, the aged Blandine, Countess Gravina, the highly cultured Daniela Thode, and Frau Eva Chamberlain, who followed the panorama of events with the keenest interest, and whose very presence in Bayreuth often made things difficult for Frau Winifred.

All these members of the family, then, lived in the Bayreuth to which Adolf Hitler gave his passionate devotion. Ever since his youth Hitler had been a fanatical Wagnerite, and for him it certainly must have been a great experience to meet the young and beautiful daughter-in-law of Richard Wagner at Frau Bechstein's house in Munich. Winifred had felt deeply the conditions in Germany after the last war and was as a result very sympathetic to Hitler's nationalistic ideas. But it was a long time before her husband, Siegfried Wagner, consented to receive Hitler in *Wahnfried*. "Maus" told me that she had never forgotten Hitler's first visit in 1922—how starved he looked, and how poor he was. She remembered perfectly all the controversies about his person, and that her grandmother, Cosima, who was then very infirm and nearly blind, refused to receive him. Long after this first visit, Hitler was still able to come to *Wahnfried* only at night under cover of darkness. Later on he had his own pompous quarters in the former *Siegfried-Haus* in the garden of *Wahnfried*, and for the visitor of that time it seemed that not Richard Wagner but Adolf Hitler was the dominating spirit of Bayreuth.

Hitler gave the famous place every possible protection. Thus Bayreuth—like the State Opera House of Berlin—was exempt from the authority of

Goebbels, upon whom all the other theatres in the Reich depended. The blind confidence of Goering in Tietjen was shared by Frau Winifred. Thus a valuable and intimate collaboration developed between the Berlin State Opera and Bayreuth, Tietjen gradually assuming the same authority on the *Festspielhügel* as in Berlin. Frau Wagner even nominated him guardian of her children in case of her death.

This was the Bayreuth at which I arrived. I stayed at the *Post* as I had done so often previously. The Falstaffian landlord greeted me as an old friend: the *Festspielhaus* had ordered my room—that was sufficient! He asked me at once, “Fräulein Doktor, what would you like to eat? I will cook anything you fancy.” “For me there is only one thing, *Kalbshaxe mit Kartoffelsalat*,” I replied, and so it was. He brought in the biggest knuckle of veal I had ever seen, and in spite of the swastika in his buttonhole, sat down and kept me company. A number of the singers usually came in the evening to the *Post* and had supper or a glass of beer there, and so we all met again.

In the meantime I received a message that Tietjen expected to see me at nine o’clock the next day. So in the morning I strolled up the well-known path to the *Festspielhaus*, where I found Tietjen and Frau Wagner. Tietjen took me for a little walk around the hill, and I told him how much I loved being in England, and how interested I was in my work there.

Then I gave him Sir Thomas’s message, told him his plans for the Coronation Season, and last, but not least, informed him how many German singers Covent Garden would need for the 1937 International Season. Tietjen glanced at me humorously and said: “You seem to expect that the Berlin State Opera House be closed for the English Coronation Season!” But he promised all the support he could, and was very pleased that Sir Thomas was coming to Bayreuth to discuss matters with him personally.

I then sought out Frau Wagner, and conveyed Sir Thomas’s greetings to her. Previously, especially when I had stayed in Bayreuth with Furtwängler, our relationship had been strained. Now I came back to Bayreuth independent of all its undercurrents, and all was well. We discussed details regarding Sir Thomas’s lodgings, and she invited him to share her box for all the performances. The question of lodging was complicated, von Ribbentrop had booked half the available accommodation for the innumerable English people he had invited, who actually failed to arrive at the last moment.

I informed Tietjen that Sir Thomas wished me to accompany him to Bayreuth and then declared, “Under no circumstances, however, will I attend the performances. After having been Furtwängler’s assistant for

twenty years, and then having been forbidden to show my face in Germany any more, I can't be present at a performance now."

"Of course you will," said Tietjen, "and you will also be invited to the luncheon which Frau Wagner is giving for Sir Thomas to meet the Führer. It is all arranged for the free day between the Ring."

I really felt as if I were losing my reason! I certainly had not counted on this last development, and began to get extremely uneasy about the direction events were taking. I was told later that Hitler had decreed that I was to be treated as a member of the British Government. I can hardly believe it even now, nor can I ever verify it. In any case, I was determined to avoid Hitler at all costs, and I counted on Sir Thomas to come to my rescue.

After his rehearsal, Furtwängler appeared at the *Festspielhaus* to call for me in his new car. We drove to the *Feustelmühle* outside Bayreuth, where he had his romantic quarters, had our lunch in the old-fashioned garden, and then took a long walk over the hills. I spent the evening with him in order to meet his new secretary, who had arrived with a dog. I must admit that my zeal for coaching my successors was gradually diminishing. Certain things cannot be instilled into others, among them, love and devotion to a cause. However, the present outlook seemed fair, and I hoped for the best.

All my affairs were now settled and I went off for my three weeks' holiday on the *Starnberger See* while Sir Thomas was in Norway.

Time passed quickly. I had written him several times to the Norway address he had given me. Later I learned that although he gives addresses he seldom collects his mail, and it seems highly probable that my letters are still at the bank address in Oslo which he gave me. Among them was an amusing letter written from the Bayreuth Information Bureau regarding accommodation for Sir Thomas, starting, "Concerning Mr. Beecham, English Furtwängler!"

The first cycle of the Ring began on July 23rd and Sir Thomas was to arrive on the 24th for the *Walküre*. When I arrived in Bayreuth two days before there was already great activity at the station, and the little place, so quietly poetical in normal times, was scarcely recognizable. The town, particularly the way to the *Festspielhügel*, was bedecked with blood-red swastika flags. Everything at Bayreuth was at boiling-point. Furtwängler seemed to be at loggerheads with all sorts of people, and the whole place was seething with gossip.

This time I stayed in my old quarters in Frau Johanna Schuler's lovely home on the *Festspielhügel*. Soon she had told me all the Bayreuth news; Preetorius dashed over to see me in the interval of the *Rheingold* general rehearsal; then Furtwängler called for me, and we went for a drive in the country to discuss many things, including the plans for the Coronation Season.

Early next morning Ribbentrop's liaison man appeared in Bayreuth and came to see me, asking for news of Sir Thomas, who was due to arrive that afternoon. Hardly had he left me when I received a telegram: "Sorry, cannot come. Greetings. THOMAS BEECHAM."

Now what was I to do? I cannot say I felt particularly happy at this moment, and I immediately put a call through to Covent Garden. Although Sir Thomas's telegram had been sent from London, the Opera House had not the slightest idea where he was, nor had anyone else. Later I learned that it is part of the etiquette of Covent Garden that if Sir Thomas does not report to the Opera House no one ever dares to try to locate him.

"All right," I said to myself, "I will go and find him. I will not stay here another single day alone. I will return to London straightway." No sooner said than done. I asked to see Tietjen, which was very difficult on that particular morning as he was rehearsing, and I told him about the telegram. I said to him, "Under no conditions will I remain in Bayreuth alone." He understood, but begged me to see Frau Wagner before I left. Frau Wagner was considerably displeased. "But this is impossible," she said. "The Führer expects Sir Thomas, and wants to sit with him in my box." I replied, "I have not the slightest idea what has happened, but I will return to London at once and see what is happening." Frau Wagner was relieved. In the meantime the liaison man appeared again, very much disturbed that Sir Thomas had canceled his visit. He said excitedly, "I am sure that something has happened. Possibly the Italians are behind all this." It was just like the Nazis to draw general political conclusions from the behavior of one man, or to expect to win good will with individual favors.

In any case, the master of Covent Garden had apparently let everybody in Bayreuth down, and I left at two o'clock in the afternoon in the boiling sun to catch the Hook of Holland boat the same night.

Everything went smoothly on the journey and, greatly relieved, I passed the frontier. As soon as I had reached Holland, I sent a joking telegram to Sir Thomas at his usual address: "Am coming to London to fetch you. Hitler expects you. Greetings. GEISSMAR."

I arrived in London full of fighting spirit. I had only one idea, and that was to find Sir Thomas. Unhampered by considerations of Covent Garden etiquette, I telephoned half London trying to trace him. It is one of Sir Thomas's amusing but not always convenient tricks to disappear in this way. He maintains that it is the only method by which he can secure the solitude he considers necessary, and at the moment he seemed to be experiencing the urge again. Everyone I asked warned me, "For God's sake, don't ring him up," or, "You had better wait until you hear from him." However, I was not at all inclined to wait until I heard, and Fate allowed me to find out where he was. He had taken himself to the Euston Hotel! I telephoned there, as though it were the most normal thing in the world to do. Smith, his indispensable manservant, was helpful and Sir Thomas came to the phone. "Did you get my telegram?" I asked. "Yes, I did," said Sir Thomas. "You had better come straightway and see me." "All right, Sir Thomas," I said, and jumped into a taxi.

In the Euston Hotel, serene and immaculate, sat Sir Thomas in his usual white silk pajamas, Turkish dressing gown and the inevitable cigar, having breakfast.

"Well now, Doctor," he commanded, "tell me all about Bayreuth."

"There is a lot to tell about Bayreuth," I replied. "But the principal point is that they have asked me to bring you back at once, as Hitler expects you to be his guest next Sunday in the Wagner box."

I looked at him doubtfully and continued to describe the situation, but nothing impressed him. He did not care a damn whether Hitler expected him or not.

"Look here, Doctor," he said. "I simply can't go immediately. I have much to do in London just now, and you must understand that when I do go to Bayreuth I shall be very busy. Will you please convey my regrets to Frau Wagner and tell her that I will come later on for *Lohengrin* and the whole of the second cycle, and you will come with me.

"I think," he continued, "that during the second part of the Festival it will be easier to work than during the first round." Not a word about Hitler! His features were sphinxlike. Only his eyes twinkled mischievously, and I had no doubt that he had changed his arrangements to avoid politics altogether, and to go to Bayreuth in the service of art and art alone. I was very relieved.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Sir Thomas intended to remain in London until his journey to Bayreuth. One day he told me that he had decided to give up his room on the ground floor in the Opera House and to take over three adjoining rooms upstairs. I was to have the first room, then came Sir Thomas's large office, and behind it was to be his private room with his music library. Apart from a small iron door to which Sir Thomas held the only key, and which opened directly into the theatre, the inner room was inaccessible except by passing through his office. The normal entrance to the whole suite was through my room, the door of which bore a nameplate inscribed with both our names.

1936

The weeks passed quickly, and after a quick trip to Berlin to work out further details of the London Philharmonic tour with the Berlin Philharmonic office, I left again for Bayreuth.

When I arrived, and formalities and friendly visits were over, I was handed my tickets for the performances—in the first row of “the relations box.” I accepted without further demur. Sir Thomas was to be a permanent guest in the Wagner box and Furtwängler was to sit with him in order to discuss the singers, since Tietjen was conducting the second cycle.

Next morning, at seven o'clock, I went to Nuremberg to meet Sir Thomas, who in spite of a two hours' delay en route stepped fresh and rosy from his sleeper. While we had breakfast he listened to all my Bayreuth gossip, and then we drove on to the residence allocated to him for his visit. It was an octagonal baroque tower outside the town that had belonged to one of the Margraves of Bayreuth, and soon became known as “Sir Thomas's tower.” A most romantic kind of “cavalier's house” with paneling and furniture of the period had been built round the tower. Though the delectable little chateau had been luxuriously renovated, it retained the old baroque style. The tower itself was transformed into an enormous music room with a gallery. All sorts of guest rooms and living rooms had been added. It stood alone on a hill, and was surrounded by an old-fashioned garden with a beautiful old well. Sir Thomas was entirely alone in this place except for the necessary servants. He was pleased with this idyllic spot, and greatly appreciated its romantic beauty. No less did he appreciate his solitude.

The first performance was *Parsifal*. Furtwängler conducted, and the French dramatic soprano, Germaine Lubin, was singing Kundry for the first

time. At first I felt a little awkward, especially as many old friends sat around me to whom my transition from the service of the foremost German conductor to that of England's unique Sir Thomas caused no small sensation. Soon, however, the solemn music held our rapt attention and all else was forgotten.

Sir Thomas spent the first interval with Frau Wagner and Tietjen, while I had been invited by the singers to have coffee in the restaurant. The "singers' table" was always very amusing, and everything would have been all right if one of Goering's sisters had not been sitting opposite me. Goering's sisters played a certain role at that time. They were bourgeois and rather commonplace, especially this one, who was plump and dowdy. They gossiped a lot, and Berlin was always quoting what one or the other had said.

This sister, Frau Riegele, worshipped the tenor, Max Lorenz. She had no objection to his wife (the famous Lotte) who was a Jewess, and was on friendly terms with them both. I had, of course, to be introduced to her, but though I ran into her continually in the intermissions I made a detour to avoid her whenever possible. Later I was told that she had complained, "I do not know what is the matter with *Doktor* Geissmar. I always try to greet her amiably, but she always avoids me." Lotte Lorenz, with her Berlin bluntness, was said to have replied, "You don't seem to know that Dr. Geissmar was deprived of her passport for a whole year. You cannot blame her if she is reticent."

In the second interval Sir Thomas wanted to see Furtwängler. We climbed up to Furtwängler's room and found him resting, very scantily clad because it was extremely hot. The contrast between the two conductors with whom I was so closely associated struck me forcibly: Furtwängler, half-embarrassed because he was having his airbath, and yet pleased to see me and his British confrère: Sir Thomas, elegant as ever, in his beautifully cut light grey suit and silk shirt, the complete man of the world. "How do you like your new secretary?" Furtwängler asked. Sir Thomas gave a generous reply.

After *Parsifal*, I drove with Sir Thomas to his tower. For the whole time that he stayed in Bayreuth, he always went straight home after the performances, and I spent the rest of the evening with him. It was wonderful to return to this peace from the *Festspielhügel*. Generally he played the piano a little and talked about the performance.

Next morning, Sir Thomas and Furtwängler completed their plans for the Coronation Season, peacefully sitting in the latter's garden. It was a formidable task, and Sir Thomas, who has a special talent for this sort of thing, drew up a wonderful chart in his neat handwriting. I assisted, and photographed them at work.

Lohengrin was to be given that afternoon. The first *Lohengrin* produced by Furtwängler, Tietjen, and Preetorius had been performed in the Berlin Municipal Opera House in 1929. When Siegfried Wagner was still alive, Furtwängler was never invited to the *Festspielhügel*, in spite of his incontestable genius as an interpreter of Wagner. Then Siegfried Wagner attended one of those unique Berlin *Lohengrin* performances incognito. He was impressed to the highest degree, and decided at once to bring the production to Bayreuth. He did not live to see it carried out.

There was a system in Bayreuth, by which the *Ring* and *Parsifal* were performed every season, while the other operas took their turn. In 1936, it was *Lohengrin's* turn—Furtwängler conducted the first performances, while Tietjen had the direction in the second half of the festival.

Maria Müller sang Elsa, and Franz Völker was—at least as far as his voice was concerned—an ideal Lohengrin. The perfect ensemble of singers, the Festival Orchestra, the combined choruses of the Berlin State Opera and Bayreuth, and a superb décor made *Lohengrin* a magnificent new production. At the Bayreuth première, Hitler is said to have been moved to tears and went backstage to shake hands with everyone. He was so impressed with the décor that he proposed to present the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, a similar one for the Coronation Season. Edward VIII, upon hearing of the Führer's plan, is said to have declared that he did not mind as long as he did not have to attend the—— Opera. Whereupon the plan was dropped.

Sir Thomas was very popular on the *Festspielhügel*. His poised, detached, yet amiable manner, to which his halo as master of Covent Garden was no slight addition, soon won public enthusiasm.

Hitler and the members of the German government who had been present at the first cycle had departed, but meanwhile innumerable musicians and faithful old Bayreuthers had arrived. Sir Thomas frequently used the intervals to discuss his impressions with Furtwängler, and after each act I met them in front of the Wagner box. The official house photographer of Bayreuth took a picture of the three of us in conversation, which was openly sold as a postcard in spite of the inclusion of such a

notorious “non-Aryan” as myself. And when we sometimes sat at one of the little tables outside the restaurant, people for whom I had ceased to exist during my troubles suddenly began to approach our table.

I had not changed, but the Nazis now found it convenient to disregard their principles. Many people seemed relieved that there was at least one case in which the absurdity of Nazi theories had been quickly demonstrated. But I remained fully conscious of the true state of affairs. It was delightful to meet old friends and to see how little Hitler had actually succeeded in convincing some people, but nothing could acquit them for their passive outward acceptance of Nazism.

Of course, there was plenty to do in Bayreuth. The day was short, and the performances began at four o'clock. Everyone looked forward to the London season, and great curiosity prevailed as to the final cast for the German operas.

Sir Thomas always endeavored to get the best talent for Covent Garden, and although Preetorius, the famous stage designer, knew hardly any English, they got on very well together. To his great delight, Sir Thomas invited him to do a new décor for the *Fliegende Holländer*, and to come over at once to have a look at the Covent Garden stage. Sir Thomas himself was shown all the latest innovations behind the scenes at the *Festspielhaus*, and his knowledge and interest in stage technique were a stimulant to all concerned.

Meanwhile, the *Ring* was going on and Sir Thomas listened to every performance from beginning to end, but afterwards he escaped quickly to his car. We often went for drives in the surrounding country. On one of them he told me how, in the summer of 1899, when he had stayed in Alexanderbad near Bayreuth, the feud between the Wagnerians and the Brahmsites was at its height. This induced him to make his first thorough study of Brahms' compositions.

Finally, our visit came to an end. An *entente-cordiale* had been made between the Berlin State Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, for the Coronation Season. All the singers required for London were to get leave to come if they possibly could. Furtwängler was to conduct two cycles of the *Ring*, with Tietjen as producer. Preetorius was to make a new décor for *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Orphée*. Sir Thomas was to conduct a new production of *Orphée* in Berlin, which was later to be repeated in London. He had made many new friends, and was very satisfied with the result of his Bayreuth visit.

The day after *Die Götterdämmerung*, Sir Thomas went to Paris, while I left for London—and a good sleep.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

In London we had to confirm and record the arrangements made in Bayreuth. The casting of the *Ring* is always a difficult matter, even in normal times. For the Coronation Season, of course, Sir Thomas wanted the very best.

1936

The most critical choices to be made for the *Ring*, *Brunhilde* and *Siegfried*, came first. Lauritz Melchior, who had ceased to sing in Germany, and who was a great favorite with the Londoners, was to sing *Siegfried* in one cycle, Max Lorenz, the Bayreuth and Berlin *Siegfried*, in the other.

For the *Brunhilde*, in spite of their old admiration for Frieda Leider, Londoners wanted the newly-famous Norwegian dramatic soprano, Kirsten Flagstad, for one cycle. This was difficult because of her heavy American bookings. One morning, when Sir Thomas and I were working, it suddenly struck us that we were getting nowhere with the *Brunhilde* problem and were, indeed, in danger of falling between two stools.

Flagstad was then in Vienna, rehearsing for her first appearance in *Tristan* at the Vienna State Opera. Sir Thomas, as usual, decided quickly. "What is the time, exactly?" he asked. It was noon. "Now, look here, Doctor," he declared, "I have had enough of this *Brunhilde* nonsense and I do not intend to waste any more time on it. The boat-train for the Orient Express leaves at three P.M. There is plenty of time for you to get ready. I shall send Smith for your ticket, and in the meantime I will give you a letter for Madame Flagstad, and you will go to Vienna at once and get this thing settled."

I arrived punctually in Vienna the next day, and on my way to the Hotel Imperial, my old headquarters, I passed the Bristol where Flagstad was staying and sent her a message that I had just arrived with the object of seeing her.

Kirsten Flagstad is a tall and beautiful woman, with a fine Scandinavian profile and beautiful brown eyes. Her quiet, unassuming manner gives no hint of her regal stage presence. I arrived to see her just two hours before her first appearance at the Vienna State Opera, so I tried to be brief. I said straightaway, "Sir Thomas wants this matter cleared up, and he wants you. Here are his dates for the *Ring*." Owing to complications arising from her many engagements it was not easy for her to fit the dates in, but she was

most anxious to appear in the Coronation Season and promised to adjust her plans. I cabled Sir Thomas accordingly, and received his imperious telegram, "Stop until matter completed." His instructions are always unequivocal, which makes it very simple to carry them out.

It was the beginning of September. In spite of the desperate situation in Austria, Vienna seemed beautiful and unconcerned. The hotels were full of cosmopolitan visitors, many of whom had remained for a while after the Salzburg Festival. As in former times, I was very much under the spell of this beautiful town. Old friends turned up. I had not dreamed that I should ever set foot in the Vienna State Opera again, but the irresistible charm of this beautiful theatre, so rich in tradition, came over me again when I called on Dr. Kerber, its director.

Vienna was brimming over with musicians, and each had his own adherents. There were Boehm, Furtwängler, Kleiber, Klemperer, Knappertsbusch, Clemens Krauss, Toscanini, Bruno Walter, Weingartner and many others. It was a great time for the sensation-loving Viennese, for whom everything concerning music was of the first importance.

I visited museums and saw for the last time all the treasures in the archives of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*. Sir Thomas was always searching for rarely performed classical music and at that time was especially interested in a concerto for hurdy-gurdies by Haydn, which he wanted to perform. "Please try to find out something about this piece in Vienna," he said to me when I left. "I intend to do it at one of my concerts and to ask Sir Henry Wood and Sir Hugh Allen to play the hurdy-gurdies. It will be very interesting." He said it with such deep seriousness, I had not the slightest idea that he was pulling my leg. I did my best and found the original of the work, composed in 1786 and dedicated to the King of Naples, in the archives of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, whose librarian had it photographed for Sir Thomas.

Meanwhile, my business with Madame Flagstad had been completed, and I had started negotiations for Sir Thomas and the London Philharmonic Orchestra to go to Vienna.

Furtwängler was still at Bayreuth. The festival was over and Bayreuth was empty. The Wagner family were at their country house on Lake Constance, and Furtwängler had decided to stay on until the beginning of September to complete some work in solitude in those beautiful surroundings.

Since he was in constant touch with Covent Garden, he knew that I was in Vienna to contact Madame Flagstad. The telephone operator in the Hotel Imperial who, for many years, had put calls through for Furtwängler to me in Berlin, had greeted me at once when I arrived. In the middle of the night she suddenly rang my room. "Here is Bayreuth coming through, Frau Doktor. I believe it is the Herr Direktor." I have never found out why Furtwängler was invariably called the "Herr Direktor" by the staff of the Hotel Imperial. However, it was he, and he asked me whether I could spend a day with him in Bayreuth on my way back to London. This was easy to arrange, since I had to change to the Ostend train in Nuremberg.

At dawn I reached Nuremberg, where I had to take a local train. When I arrived Bayreuth lay veiled in a light morning haze. How quiet were the places of many memories, how different from the turmoil of the summer! I drove through the sleepy little town, through fields and autumn-tinted woods, and eventually arrived at Furtwängler's romantic abode. The present solitude was better suited to him than the commotion of the *Festspielhaus*. Although he towered above the others there as a personality, he was not skilled as they were in the craft of intrigue. His "reconciliation" with the régime had in no way emasculated his critical faculty, and he regarded the ever growing encroachments on cultural life with great apprehension.

Next morning he had to go to Jena, and I accompanied him on a drive through the country of Goethe and Schiller. From Jena I intended to take a train back to Nuremberg and there catch the Ostend train. Preoccupied as I was with Covent Garden's affairs, I had entirely forgotten that the Nuremberg Party Rally was to begin that week, and when at last I boarded the overcrowded train at Jena, I was pushed into a compartment overflowing with elderly women on their way to the *Parteitag*.

It was with inexpressible relief that I left the train at Nuremberg, but the station was full of Nazi uniforms. Back in the mad house! I decided immediately; I jumped into a local train to Würzburg, and spent the afternoon in its beautiful baroque churches until, late in the evening, I took my train to Ostend, to return eagerly to England.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

Soon afterwards the orchestra left with Sir Thomas for the Norwich Festival, and I was again sent to Berlin.

This was my third trip since June, so I was getting used to it and was no longer nervous. Most of my friends had continuous difficulties with the Nazis, and were relieved to discuss them with somebody from the outside world. Though they had become resigned to present conditions they all declared that it was impossible for such a state of affairs to last, and were convinced that sooner or later this nightmare was bound to come to an end.

1936

The more I took root in my work, the more clearly I saw how comparatively simple my new tasks were. Principally, I realized how much less time was lost in England than in Germany, where everything was discussed interminably—a nerve-racking process. Covent Garden was certainly no smooth sea, but in comparison with the work in Germany, between the Philharmonic and the State Opera, the Nazis and non-Nazis, Goering and Goebbels, Furtwängler and Tietjen, the life with Sir Thomas and Covent Garden was like a pleasure cruise.

Before I left London, a list of the entertainments planned for the London Philharmonic between journeys and concerts had arrived from Germany. Dutifully I had submitted this scheme to Sir Thomas. “Now, look here, Doctor,” Sir Thomas had said politely, but decisively, “I don’t think this will do. If this amusement guide were to be followed, I should have to get the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra to play for me after the second concert of the tour!” So I had the awkward task of explaining to our overzealous hosts that the orchestra’s free time had to be a little less crowded.

Englishmen will always do as they please, and will not suffer too much dictation. I doubt whether the London Philharmonic Orchestra could ever have been persuaded to accept instructions like those imposed on the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra on its first visit to Paris after the last war. That first concert in France in 1928 was considered of paramount importance. The orchestra arrived the day before and had a free day, which meant also a free evening. They were all billeted in the same hotel and were not permitted to go out in the evening so that they might be in their best form for the concert. At a certain hour one of the executives, the principal double bass, Herr Pingel, went to all the doors to make sure that his colleagues were duly in

bed! He remarked from the bottom of his heart, "Here we have order! Here we have discipline!" After the concert, however, the orchestra disappeared from the hotel for the night, and they arrived on the departure platform next morning still in their dress suits!

The days in Berlin were fully occupied with the final preparations for the London Philharmonic Orchestra tour, which was to start in November. The Berlin Philharmonic office had scheduled everything down to the last detail, the towns were fixed, the itinerary arranged, and the hotels booked. I called on Sir Eric Phipps, who had been British Ambassador in Berlin since 1933, to report on the impending visit of the London Philharmonic. I had to see Tietjen about the exact date for the singers' leave from the State Opera and the casts for Sir Thomas's Berlin performances. All the offices of the State Opera had been luxuriously enlarged and extended on the most lavish lines—and were cluttered by an enormous bureaucracy and innumerable officials.

I had telephoned Sir Thomas in London several times, and he had proposed that I have breakfast with him immediately upon my return. This I did with pleasure, and enjoyed reporting the fruit of my labor to so understanding a listener.

Hardly had we finished when Sir Thomas suggested, "You had better come straight to the theatre with me." So off we went. While I had been away the new offices had been completed. They were beautifully furnished with gray fitted carpets and new curtains. In my room was a big desk, with all the necessary equipment, and a large wall cupboard for Sir Thomas's private files. In the next room was his wonderful Chippendale desk, his pianoforte, gramophone, and radio, his lovely old prints of musicians, and his cupboard of reference books. In the third room was a fine old carved oak refectory table, and his music-library of priceless scores covered three walls. There he could work undisturbed, and slip through his little private door directly into the theatre.

From my room one could go out onto the flies and look down on to the stage to see how far the rehearsal had proceeded. It was a practical as well as a comfortable suite of rooms, and Sir Thomas had arranged all the details himself. "How do you like it?" he asked me expectantly, and I could only answer, "It is simply perfect."

It seemed that nothing could now hold up the progress of normal office work, but until everything was settled for the Coronation Season, there were constant dealings with the Continent, and Sir Thomas preferred that they be

arranged personally rather than by interminable correspondence. Hardly had I settled in London than I was sent abroad again. "You see, Doctor," he said, "you are now a kind of Ambassador at Large for Covent Garden. You had better go to Munich and settle the outstanding questions with our friends, and from Munich you will go to Paris and see M. Rouché." On October 6th I found myself crossing the Channel again.

In Munich my principal task was a conference with Preetorius regarding the scenery for *Holländer* and *Orphée*. Since Preetorius knows what he wants and it is very easy to work with him, the conference went smoothly.

In Paris I cleared up many outstanding questions, including details of the French scenery for *Alceste* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The date for the Paris visit of the London Philharmonic Orchestra with Sir Thomas was provisionally arranged for the following March. I saw Ministers, committee ladies, etc., and returned to London as quickly as possible.

The orchestra was about to leave for Sheffield, and Sir Thomas left for Sweden and Norway, spending an evening on his way to Stockholm with Furtwängler and Tietjen in Berlin. Both wrote to me about him in glowing terms. The three of them, it appeared, had very thoroughly enjoyed their evening together, which served as a final conference on the Coronation Season, but not one of them had made any note of their decisions. Matters were the more complicated because Sir Thomas was only available when he happened to telephone from Stockholm or Oslo.

My life in London at this time became a continual round of interest. In his lovely house, full of Gauguins and other treasures, I discussed the Paris concert of the London Philharmonic Orchestra with Monsieur Roland de Margerie, the First Secretary of the French Embassy. We were old friends from Berlin days, and renewed our old cooperation with pleasure. One day he invited me to lunch with Sir Austen and Lady Chamberlain, as Lady Chamberlain was the chairman of the Anglo-French Art and Travel Association, which was highly interested in the Paris visit of Sir Thomas and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Sir Austen, on the other hand, made no secret of the fact that he did not wholly approve of Sir Thomas's visit to Germany with his Orchestra. I explained that Sir Thomas was going purely as an artist. He wanted the British orchestra to show its quality in places renowned for their own old and famous orchestral tradition. In Germany, in spite of the Nazis, an orchestra still mattered.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

At this time London was a center of musical life. Sir Thomas conducted his Beecham Sunday Concerts every week at Covent Garden. The Royal Philharmonic Society gave their concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in Queen's Hall, where the Courtauld-Sargent Concerts were also held. The B.B.C. had their Symphony Concerts at Queen's Hall on Wednesdays. In addition to all this, internationally famous conductors, soloists, and chamber-music players visited London. With genuine catholicity visitors from abroad were welcomed and were free to perform, unhampered by political restrictions.

1936

The Dresden State Opera had taken Covent Garden for a fortnight, and had on their program, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Figaro*, *Rosenkavalier*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Richard Strauss was expected to conduct *Ariadne* as well as a Royal Philharmonic Concert where he was to receive the Gold Medal of the Society.

By the end of October the producers and stage personnel arrived from Dresden. This was fortunate, because the scenery had been badly damaged during the crossing and needed repair. Upstairs in front of my office, in the flies, and in the paint room, the Saxon workers moved about. They were delighted to find someone on the spot able to help them with the language.

In the meantime, Strauss arrived at the Opera House and attended the rehearsals. For a long time, I had had a grudge against him for his attitude during our troubles in Germany, and I intended, if not to avoid him, at least to be in no hurry to run into his arms. However, Jackson, the famous and beloved stage door-keeper at Covent Garden, suddenly telephoned from the stage door. "Doctor," he said, "Doctor Strauss has just asked for you. He has this minute gone on the stage." I went down, therefore, and greeted the famous composer, who assured me how delighted he was that I had ended up at Covent Garden. He wanted to know when Sir Thomas was expected back from Sweden. Sir Thomas had introduced and conducted most of the first performances of Strauss operas in England. He and Strauss had been friends since Sir Thomas had conducted the first English performance of *Elektra* in 1910. He is an excellent interpreter of Strauss' music, and Strauss was well aware of it.

He had heard of our plan for a small Anglo-German opera season at Covent Garden after Christmas 1936, where, among other operas, *Salome*

was to be performed. “Where could we have a quiet chat?” he asked. I proposed that we go up into Sir Thomas’s office. Upstairs, Strauss looked pensively at the nameplate outside the office suite:

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM, BART.
DR. GEISSMAR.

He sat down in Sir Thomas’s comfortable chair and began to talk. He was still very good-looking though he had aged a little; he had the same fine head and guileless Bavarian expression. How was it possible that he, who so highly appreciated the libretti by Hofmannsthal and Stefan Zweig, and continued to cooperate with his emigrated publisher, Otto Fuerstner in London, had accepted the position of President of the *Reichsmusikkammer*, but had risked hardly anything in that capacity? For many reasons it did not seem politic to ask the questions that passed swiftly through my mind. Why had he not used his position to support all of us who were entrenched in the traditional musical culture of Germany? Why had he not protected artists like Furtwängler and Hindemith against the Government? Why had he not protected the principles vital for Germany’s musical life?

But I considered it wiser to remain neutral in regard to these problems. The conversation was taking place in Sir Thomas Beecham’s office. Secondly, and I must admit it, I was as usual entirely bewitched by his fabulous charm. We discussed many topics, among which were casts for his operas, but the dangerous problems were carefully avoided. He expressed the wish to meet Sir Thomas as soon as possible after his return. We parted, apparently friends.

Another visitor to my office was the Dresden stage designer, Professor Fanto. Once he had come to see me, he often found his way up again. I said to myself, “Funny, one can never be sure of anything, but if Fanto is not a Jew, I am a Chinese.” Soon afterward a story was repeated to me in this connection. Strauss spent his free time in London, as everywhere, playing cards. He had his card-playing friends all over the world, and just as in former days he used to send for my father directly after his arrival in Mannheim, he had now summoned his traditional Skat party in London. One day, when playing, they questioned him about Fanto, whereupon Strauss explained, “Well, Fanto, you see—Fanto has been clever, he has simply declared that he was a foundling and does not know anything about his parents. So the Nazis had to leave him where he was.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Meanwhile, the time had arrived for the German tour. Many people disapproved of a concert tour to Hitler Germany, and severely criticized Sir Thomas.

1936

About twenty other German towns besides those we had arranged to visit had asked for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, but as the time was limited and the orchestra had to fulfill engagements in England, it could not accept these invitations.

The programs had been designed with careful consideration. Sir Thomas said to me, "I will not do any Beethoven or Brahms in Germany. That would be carrying coals to Newcastle. But I will give them something else." His healthy self-esteem told him he could afford to do without the usual box-office attractions.

His first suggestion for programs included Mendelssohn's Scottish Symphony. No sooner had von Ribbentrop received the draft than his A.D.C. arrived at my office, somewhat embarrassed. "The programs are excellent," he said, "but do you think you could tactfully suggest to Sir Thomas that it might be advisable to leave out the Mendelssohn?" I informed Sir Thomas, with less tact than frankness, that this work was hardly desirable for the German programs. "Why not?" flashed Sir Thomas—although perfectly aware of the implication—"it was a favorite piece of Queen Victoria's!" However, since he had accepted the invitation to go to Nazi Germany, he decided not to make this point a *casus belli*, and the Mendelssohn Symphony was dropped.

Sir Thomas and the orchestra were to arrive in Berlin on the morning of November 12th, but I had been sent on a week beforehand to deal with the final details.

The Berlin Philharmonic Office had made all the arrangements in the grandest style. Two executives of the Berlin Orchestra were to accompany the London Philharmonic Orchestra on the tour, while von Ribbentrop had appointed a gentleman of his staff to act as A.D.C. to Sir Thomas.

Sir Thomas and the orchestra duly arrived early in the morning. From that moment until we left Germany, I scarcely knew whether to laugh or cry. Everything, including my own position, seemed strange and unreal. At the station there were several deputations, amongst them the Committee of the

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, most of whom I had not seen since my troubles in 1934. When we greeted each other they appeared somewhat embarrassed, and one of them, whom I had known for twenty years at least, stepped forward quickly and whispered in my ear, "It was not us, Fräulein Doktor." It was only possible to whisper, for we were in the company of the "brass hats" from von Ribbentrop's office, from the Foreign Office, from the Reich Chancellery and others who had come to receive Sir Thomas. Press photographers crowded the platform, and there was an enormous commotion.

On such an occasion Sir Thomas was full of inimitable dignity. While he greeted me with a secret twinkle, he received the ovations of the deputations with the condescension of a potentate who has spent his life doing nothing else.

We drove to the Esplanade Hotel, where we enjoyed a comfortable breakfast in peace and privacy before plunging into the vortex of the tour. Sir Thomas had been allotted a princely suite. He and I were the guests of the German government on the whole tour, and all hotels had officially been so informed. In every town the government had put a car at the disposal of Sir Thomas, a car which bore not only the Swastika flag, but also an eagle to indicate its importance.

Sir Thomas spent his first day in all sorts of conferences. He was besieged by the press—the English journalists arrived on the scene too, and looked at the matter from their own angle. Of course, there was much official coming and going, and continuous telephone calls from government quarters were ironically enough put through to me.

On the following morning, the day of the Berlin concert, there was a rehearsal in the *Philharmonie*. The whole of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra was assembled to hear it. I had not set foot in the *Philharmonie* since the fateful Sunday morning, November 25, 1934, when Furtwängler's article on the Hindemith case had appeared just before the concert preceding his resignation. Now that I came in the company of Sir Thomas, all doors were suddenly opened to me again. It was in the *Philharmonie* that I lost my self-possession for the only time on the tour.

Here I was—received because of my great English chief—in the very place in which my presence had been held to be so injurious to Furtwängler! The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra crowded round me affectionately, and it was as though we had never been separated. Jastrau, the orchestra attendant, still grimy from unloading the English instruments, took me in his arms.

“But, Fräulein Doktor, you really must not cry,” he said simply. He was so comical in his dismay that he helped me to recover.

Sir Thomas did not wish to make any other appointments that day. In the afternoon he was to see Hitler. The meeting had been arranged for five o'clock. A message came, however, that the Führer had a conference and would send his car as soon as it was over. No car came. When five o'clock had passed, Sir Thomas said, “Now look here, Doctor, if this wretched car does not turn up soon, I am not going. I have to conduct a concert tonight. After all, I am an artist. What does this man think, I wonder?” He meant exactly what he said. Sir Thomas was rightly proud of his orchestra, and it was going to play in Berlin for the first time. What did he care for Hitler at that moment? I am convinced that had the delay been a little longer, he would have canceled his visit, but finally the car from the Chancellery arrived and off he went. Later on, in initiated circles, the following story was told:

Hitler, after expressing satisfaction that Sir Thomas had come to Germany with his orchestra, is reported to have said, “I should like so much to come to London to participate in the Coronation festivities, but cannot risk putting the English to the inconvenience which my visit might entail.”

“Not at all,” replied Sir Thomas innocently. “There would be no inconvenience. In England we leave everybody to do exactly as he likes.”

Hitler was nonplussed. Soon the story was told everywhere, and it was whispered that never in his life had the Führer been so bewildered as he was by the ready-witted Sir Thomas.

Meanwhile the hour of the concert was approaching, and our English friends had arrived by plane. The *Philharmonie* was sold out and presented a brilliant scene: the *Corps Diplomatique* was present in full force, led by Sir Eric Phipps. Many musicians, representatives of all the civic authorities, and the whole Reich Government, headed by Adolf Hitler, attended. The Government occupied the “*Philharmonie* box.” I had been given the box above, and sat there with all our English friends.

The program of this memorable concert was: Dvořák, Rhapsody No. 3 in A flat major; Haydn, Symphony No. 5 in D major; Berlioz, Overture: Le Carnaval Romain; Handel-Beecham, Ballet Suite: The Gods Go a-Begging; Elgar, Enigma Variations.

The concert went very well, and orchestra as well as conductor had every reason to be satisfied with the success. After the first number, Hitler

applauded, enthusiastically. Sir Thomas, who had entirely forgotten that the concert was to be broadcast, said to his orchestra in an audible voice, "The old bloke seems to like it!" This informal comment was characteristic of Sir Thomas's intimacy with his orchestra, but not only the orchestra heard what he said. It was, in fact, heard wherever the broadcast was received, and an English paper wrote an amusing report about this incident with the headline, "Mysterious voice on the wireless during Sir Thomas Beecham's concert in Berlin."

In the intermission there was much coming and going, and press photos were published all over the Reich next day. To our great astonishment there was one of Sir Thomas in Hitler's box surrounded by Hitler, Goebbels, Neurath, Blomberg and others. This was inexplicable, as Sir Thomas had not left the artists' room during the intermission. Many had gone to see him there, such as the British Ambassador, Furtwängler, and, if I remember rightly, Goebbels, but Sir Thomas had certainly not set foot in Hitler's box. The Nazis, however, had apparently found it necessary for him to be seen surrounded by the German Government, and so photo-montage had been called into action.

The next morning, throughout Germany, the press was full of accounts of the concert. The photo of the *Reichsregierung* was in every paper, while the music critics dealt with the English Orchestra and its conductor in long serious articles. There were feature articles about Sir Thomas and the orchestra, and long descriptions of all the personalities who had attended the concert.

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra treated the occasion as an artistic event only, and so they and Furtwängler had asked their colleagues and their conductor to a *Bier-Abend* in the *Philharmonie*; only musicians were invited. The members of the Berlin and London Orchestras had met frequently in England and were already well acquainted. The sections of the two orchestras quickly linked up with each other, joining in technical conversations about their instruments. It is amazing how quickly the flutes always find the flutes and the cellos the cellos. Soon there was great merriment, and in the early hours Sir Thomas reportedly danced on a table, sang, and told some of his inimitable stories!

Next day we left for the provinces. All the concerts of the tour were entirely sold out. In Dresden there was no incident, and the following day a concert was given in the famous *Gewandhaus* in Leipzig. After the rehearsal there was an informal reception in the *Gewandhaus*. I saw many old friends there: among them Max Brockhaus, the well-known publisher, Herr von

Hase, director of Breitkopf & Haertel, and Dr. Karl Straube, the venerated and famous *Thomas Kirche* cantor. They all attended the concert at which the performance of the second symphony of Sibelius—hardly ever heard before in Leipzig—was a great success.

Outwardly Leipzig had been adapted to the Nazi régime, but at this time its citizens were seething with indignation. Hardly a week before Sir Thomas arrived with the London Philharmonic, the Mendelssohn monument had been spirited away by the Nazis in the middle of the night from its plinth at the entrance of the *Gewandhaus*. No one could trace it. The inhabitants of Leipzig were stunned and shocked. The question of the monument had been discussed before, and Dr. Goerdeler, the mayor, had promised that the statue would remain where it was. But while Dr. Goerdeler was on an official journey to Sweden, his authority became vested in his deputy who was one of the “new people.” So the monument disappeared.

There was an atmosphere of freedom around Sir Thomas, and the people instinctively turned to him. During the intermission he pressed some envelopes into my hand. “You had better keep these, Doctor,” he whispered. The envelopes contained the following two letters which give a vivid picture of what was passing in the hearts of the Leipzig people:

“Leipzig,
November 1936.

“SIR THOMAS BEECHAM,
GEWANDHAUS, LEIPZIG.

“A week ago, at night, the great monument of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, which stood in front of the main entrance of the *Gewandhaus* was pulled down and taken away. Nobody knows where it is, and there was not a word in the press about it.

“In 1835, Mendelssohn, at the age of 26, assumed the direction of the *Gewandhaus* Concerts, a position which he kept until his death. He died at the age of 38 in 1847. His life was an uninterrupted chain of triumphs as composer, virtuoso, conductor, and as a cultured, universally beloved man. He often visited England, and in 1846 the English public accorded him their last festive acclamations.

“The town of Leipzig erected the above-mentioned monument and unveiled it with solemn honors. The third generation, now ruling, destroys it, because Mendelssohn was a Jew.

“The bronze statue of Mendelssohn (more than life-size), with its goddess and two little angels with music-scores, will probably be melted away for guns.

“But his music is immortal, and will continue to be played in all civilized countries with the exception of Germany where it is strictly forbidden.

“Honor to his memory!

“The whole cultural world of Germany thinks and feels as I do and bewails much that is lost. It includes in its daily prayers the cry for help and freedom.—(Unsigned.)”

The envelope addressed to Sir Thomas Beecham, bore the words: “Please do not give this letter to any German, because it might be very dangerous.”

Sir Thomas gave the letter to me, and I have preserved it to this day. The other letter also deserves to be recorded:

[*Without date.*]

“SIR THOMAS BEECHAM,
GEWANDHAUS, LEIPZIG.

“When you conduct tomorrow evening in the *Gewandhaus* you will see in the first row, exactly as in Berlin—the ‘Leader-personalities’ [Führer-Persoenlichkeiten] assiduously applauding. You will be in a better position to judge the real musical culture of these gentlemen when you have been informed of the following fact which, perhaps, nobody else will tell you:

“Some days ago, late at night, the monument of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, the immortal composer and conductor of the *Gewandhaus*, was pulled down and removed.

“May you, dear Sir, be comforted by the fact that the thought of this act of racial hatred brings the blush of shame to the cheeks of millions of music-loving Germans.

“For your wonderful music—my heartfelt thanks.—A
GERMAN.”

These were the serious sides of this tour, of which, however, the Orchestra was little aware. They were immensely fêted in every town. The German orchestral players were especially interested in them. Léon

Goossens, particularly, one of the finest oboe players in the world, created a great sensation. Of course, everybody was in high spirits, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that they could be persuaded to go to bed at all in the night train from Leipzig to Munich.

In Munich the advice to treat the London Philharmonic Orchestra's visit as a purely musical event was unheeded. We arrived very early in the morning. At the station there were deputations for Sir Thomas from the *Gau*, from the *Partei*, and so on. On the platform speeches were made to him, which he listened to with more dignity than pleasure. It was only seven o'clock in the morning, and he wanted to go to his hotel.

The provincial Nazis were not particularly pleased, I am sure, to be forced to receive me with politeness. Sir Thomas has impeccable manners, and lived up to his reputation on the tour. On this occasion he alighted from the train with my fur coat on his arm. The Munich Nazi dignitaries looked forward with pride to driving the famous Englishman to his hotel, but with an inviting gesture Sir Thomas waved me into the car—"Get in please, Doctor." Quite a combination—the Munich Nazis, Sir Thomas, and I starting off together in a car beflagged with a great Swastika!

We arrived at the Hotel *Vier Jahreszeiten* where I had stayed so often for so many years. Herr Walterspiel, the proprietor, came at once to greet Sir Thomas. The old hall-porter said encouragingly to me, as he handed me our mail, "You see, Fräulein Doktor, times change."

The hotel was flying the Union Jack *and* the Nazi flag. Sir Thomas noted this, and mischievously commented, "The Swastika seems to be for you, Doctor!"

We arrived in Munich on a "free" day. There had been all sorts of invitations for Sir Thomas, but he had stipulated that he wished to be free. We had arranged beforehand to go to the Starnberg Lake to visit the Lerchenfelds. The famous car was again at our disposal carrying the ominous flag.

There was great joy when we arrived, and the Count and Countess with their dogs came to meet us as we drove in. Sir Thomas was very much at home, and the little circle had a great deal in common. They all belonged to the same world. Sir Thomas seemed to sense it and as we drove back, said to me, "What will become of Germany if the voice of such people as these is stifled?"

When we arrived at the hotel a sentry complete with sentry-box had been added to the two flags. “Still more honors for us?” inquired Sir Thomas, with malicious humor. This time, however, it was not for us. Goering had arrived.

In the late afternoon we went to see Preetorius. It had long been arranged that he was to show Sir Thomas his treasures of Chinese art. Walleck, then *Direktor-General* of the Bavarian State Theatres, and Frau Winifred Wagner, were there too—the latter having come from Bayreuth especially to attend the concert. When Preetorius showed Sir Thomas and Charles Moor, the Covent Garden stage director, who had joined us, his sketches for the *Fliegende Holländer* performance in Covent Garden, there was a passionate debate about the position of the ship. Preetorius created a sinister effect by setting it with its blood-red sail right in the center of the stage. Since Sir Thomas was very much interested in Preetorius’ scenery, a performance of *Don Giovanni* had been planned for him at the *Residenz Theater*, so ideal for Mozart. The décor was indeed striking and unusual. Frau Wagner, Preetorius, Sir Thomas, and I sat together in a box, but soon A.D.C.s from some high official came to take Sir Thomas to the Town Hall, where many notables had assembled and where everything possible in the way of banquet and entertainment was offered to the orchestra and its chief, including, of course, rivers of beer. It was only with considerable force that the orchestra were persuaded to leave their beds next day.

Munich proved its right to be called the capital of the Nazi Movement, with all the different authorities of Party, Town, State of Bavaria and Gau, each with its own cultural department. Such was their demand for seats that only with great difficulty did I contrive to get any for the English press.

At the Munich concert almost everyone of importance was present. The concert hall was completely filled, and it was a brilliant spectacle. In the center of the front row Hess, the Führer’s deputy, sat in state surrounded by his staff. There were the leaders of the army and of the Bavarian Government, and there were many uniforms of high Nazi officials. The concert was excellent, and great ovations were given the artists.

Sir Thomas had asked me to come straight to the artists’ room after the concert to assist him in his negotiations with the Munich bass, Ludwig Weber, whom he wanted to engage for Covent Garden. However, I found my passage suddenly barred by a double line of black Storm Troopers. “Nobody is allowed to pass here,” they declared pompously, “until the Minister has left the hall.” How ridiculous when the King of England can leave the Covent Garden Opera House and scarcely disturb the policeman on

duty! I said to the S.S., “Please let me pass. I am secretary to Sir Thomas, and he expects me.” Then with the greatest energy I elbowed my way past them. A year before, the sight of the S.S. uniform alone would have been enough to unnerve me.

Sir Thomas would have preferred to have gone back to the hotel that evening, but was told that the deputy of the Führer, who had invited him to his house after the concert, would be “hurt” by a refusal. So he decided to go for a short time, and Frau Wagner accompanied him. The evening took a strange course, for Herr Hess had no better idea for entertaining Sir Thomas than to provide another concert.

Hess tried to ingratiate himself by declaring his admiration for the discipline of the orchestra, a quality he had not expected to find in a group of Englishmen. “Well,” replied Sir Thomas loftily, “we English have our own brand of discipline, but it is not always recognized or comprehended elsewhere; for instead of accepting it from others, we impose it on ourselves.”

At the party Sir Thomas played the piano. When I told him next morning that everybody was full of praise for his amiable humor in entertaining Hess’s guests, he replied: “What could I do, Doctor; I was bored to death—so I played to amuse myself.”

While we traveled next day to Stuttgart, through the romantic part of South Germany which I knew so well, Sir Thomas declared, “I have had enough of all these festivities, and I will attend no more. After all, what is the use of always listening to speeches which are probably all concocted in the same kitchen in Berlin.” Hardly, however, had we arrived, when we were informed that another banquet had been arranged.

In Stuttgart the same comedy went on as before, and when trying to escape, Sir Thomas was told that the *Gauleiter* would be offended if he, the guest of Herr Hess in Munich, refused to accept the hospitality of Württemberg’s Leader in Stuttgart.

Gradually, Sir Thomas began to lose his serenity through the constant pressure of engagements. At last he said to me decisively, “Doctor, please, will you kindly convey to Baron von G. (Ribbentrop’s liaison-officer between Sir Thomas and the various authorities) that this nonsense must stop. I want to conduct my concerts and do nothing else. This is to be the last occasion on which I am dragged into that sort of thing. No artist who has to conduct every night would stand this.” I replied, “I will certainly tell him, but I am sorry that your decision comes just before the concert in

Ludwigshafen, where you would certainly meet the most interesting people of the whole tour.” “Can’t be helped,” said Sir Thomas. “I wish you would get me *The Times*. That is all I want.”

The next concert was to take place in Ludwigshafen in the concert hall of the I.G. Farbenindustrie. Some of the finest scientists in the country worked for it, and the staff was chosen so carefully that mere association with the firm was a distinction in itself. The social institutions of the I.G. were most progressive, and for many years first-class concerts were given there for the Trust and their staffs. The demand was so great that every concert had to be given twice. When the London Philharmonic Orchestra’s tour was first projected, the I.G. Trust of Ludwigshafen was among the first to ask them to give a concert. It proved one of the most interesting of the tour.

Owing to the superiority of the hotel there, we were billeted in Mannheim, the Rhine alone separating the two towns. It was with mixed feelings that I arrived at the Mannheim station. Sir Thomas was received by the usual deputations on the platform. The Mayor of Mannheim, feeling himself at a disadvantage because the ovations for the exalted guest were to be presented by Ludwigshafen, endeavored to share the honors and provide new ones, but the experienced Sir Thomas had now the necessary technique, and resisted his advances with energy.

Sir Thomas and I stayed in the *Mannheimer Hof*. Great was my amusement when Sir Thomas was informed that a singular honor had been bestowed upon him—he had been allotted the “Hitler Suite.” This suite, which was reserved for visits of Hitler, or of members of the government, consisted of several rooms which were equipped and furnished in perfect taste, and had some fine pictures on the walls, beautiful floral arrangements, etc.

In Ludwigshafen a two-hour rehearsal had been arranged. Sir Thomas is very considerate and is not a rehearsing-sadist, but when he demands a rehearsal he really needs it. When he had arranged his program, he had announced that a rehearsal to cover the last three concerts was indispensable, and was not to be put off under any circumstances. Hardly, however, had we arrived at the concert hall of the I.G. Trust, than the Mayor of Ludwigshafen appeared, and, taking the floor, addressed the exasperated Sir Thomas for at least half an hour. Finally the rehearsal began, and Sir Thomas’s irritation was quickly dispelled by his interest in the superb acoustics of the hall, due, he was told by officials of the organization, to a specially constructed wooden screen placed behind the orchestra. Sir

Thomas was so impressed that he ordered a screen of similar construction for Covent Garden. The plans were supplied by the directors of the I.G.

In the course of this conversation one of the technical directors mentioned a new method by which music could be recorded on a film. It was most interesting, and Sir Thomas, always open to new ideas, immediately arranged with the inventor for the experiment to be shown to him after the concert.

Immediately following the concert, which was a sensational success before an enormous audience drawn from Mannheim and Ludwigshafen, Sir Thomas went with the chief engineer to the laboratory, and was soon deeply engrossed. The I.G. had organized a banquet for six hundred persons in his honor that evening. Time went by and he was still in the laboratory. One of the directors, whom I had known since childhood, came and anxiously reminded me, "Six hundred people are waiting for Sir Thomas, Fräulein Doktor." But what could I do?

Sir Thomas had emphatically refused to attend more festivities. I had reminded him that this particular evening with all the famous scientists in attendance would certainly be one of the most interesting experiences of the whole journey, but nothing further had been said about the matter. Baron von G. felt uneasy. "Would it not be advisable," he asked, "for me to accompany Sir Thomas to Mannheim when he changes, so that people need not wait too long?" Now it was my turn to feel uneasy. "Certainly," I replied cautiously, "it would be a good plan, but you had better take your own car. Sir Thomas likes to be alone after a concert." At last Sir Thomas went to his car, supposedly to go to his hotel and change for the banquet. In the car we talked about music only, and I did not skate over the thin ice of the question of his attendance at the banquet. Nor did he.

At the hotel I went with him to his suite. He was in very good spirits and said to me, "Now, Doctor, we will have a very comfortable evening. Just let me change, and ask the waiter to come up here." Of course this prospect was delightful, although rather awkward. Besides six hundred guests at the I.G. Farben banquet, Baron von G. was waiting downstairs, and so were my old Mannheim friends with whom I had promised to spend the evening. Diffidently I remarked, "I suppose you know that the Baron is waiting to take you to the banquet." Sir Thomas, however, replied incisively: "Don't worry about that."

I went downstairs to speak to my friends. Baron von G. saw me and evidently took my presence as a sign that Sir Thomas was soon to appear. I

did not want him to see me going up again, so I crept up the service staircase back to Sir Thomas. He had changed in the meantime and looked as though he had just come out of a bandbox. He sat there peacefully and serenely reading his newspaper, the picture of elegance and unconcern. "Here I am," I said, "but what about the man waiting downstairs?" Sir Thomas took a piece of paper and wrote a few lines. He wrote that with the greatest regret he was not able to attend the dinner that evening as he was overtired by the strain of the last few days, and was afraid that if he were not careful he might be unable to finish the tour. It was a masterpiece of politeness.

"Now then," said Sir Thomas, for whom this episode was definitely shelved, "what are we going to have?" He lost himself in contemplation of the menu and after he had ordered an epicurean feast with champagne, the waiter was at last permitted to give the waiting A.D.C. his message.

The evening with Sir Thomas in the "Hitler Suite" in Mannheim was one of the most amusing I have ever spent, and I told him on that occasion how in April 1933 Furtwängler had also refused to attend a banquet held in his honor in Mannheim and had spent the evening with me—but for more serious reasons, and without champagne and *foie gras*!

The next morning was less amusing. When I came down I was greeted by long faces. The Nazis, steeped as they were in intrigue, always imagined that everyone else was playing some subtle game for his own ends. They never attributed a simple motive to any occurrence: devious themselves, even in a small matters, they imagined that everyone else was full of thoughts of complicated revenge. On that occasion they accused me bitterly of having been the cause of last night's débâcle, seeing in it a sequel to the "Furtwängler affair" of 1933!

In the meantime, Sir Thomas had sent for me. He was smoking his cigar and studying *The Times* with an imperious expression. "Now look here, Doctor," he said, "I have had enough of all this, and I am not going to stand any more. I will not continue the tour by train. Please get me a private car and we will travel very comfortably, and alone." This was his reaction to all the fuss made by the Nazis and the incessant demands on his time. He was pleased with his artistic success, and was full of admiration for the way in which the organization of the tour functioned; everything else he resented with growing irritation. It was useless to debate a decision with him.

We drove on the new *Autobahn* to Frankfurt where the next concert took place in the famous *Museumsaal*. The concert was sold out and the hall was full of old friends.

Before retiring for the night, Sir Thomas proposed that we leave early the next day. "I want to have a look at Frankfurt," he said, "and then we shall have lunch somewhere on the Rhine on our way to Cologne." So we started early and drove to the *Roemer*, to the *Dom*, to the *Goethehaus*, and to the *Schirn* in the old town where the Frankfurt sausages are made. It is a great pleasure to look at things with Sir Thomas. He is neither a dry academician nor a sight-seeing tourist; he observes things precisely and remembers clearly what attracts him. In this sense his outlook and erudition are highly individual, since he has learned mostly from experience and not from books alone. Similarly he preferred, as a young man, to go and hear fine musical performances rather than to acquire his musical knowledge through interminable years in a music college.

He looked at his watch. "I would like to see the Cathedral of Mainz again," he said. "Let us leave for Mainz *now*."

Off we went to Mainz. Sir Thomas astonished me by his exact knowledge of the history of the Cathedral. He knew that there had been two churches of different periods. He showed me where the different periods were to be traced, and looked with loving reverence at the manifold beauty of the architecture. How lovely was this quiet day, how far away from the world, from all the fuss and vulgarity of the Nazis. Here, we were in the midst of that Germany which testified, through her buildings and her beauty, to the nobility of spirit which reigned in former times.

We then drove in the direction of the Rhine, and in a little village we stopped for lunch. There was no one in the dining room of the little inn, which was surrounded by chestnut trees. Sir Thomas studied the wine card with great care. He is a connoisseur of hock, and soon a whole battery of bottles stood before us, all of which he wanted to sample. He was in a happy mood, for he loves anything unusual, and after the last week under the shadow of the Nazi régime, this day of freedom was indescribably pleasant. But soon to our dismay, we discovered that it was late. A light mist began to rise from the Rhine, and we could scarcely expect to reach Cologne, where the last concert was to be held, within the next few hours. We started off at full speed. The spell of the Rhine valley charmed us. Sir Thomas seemed taciturn, and I did not disturb his gravely quiet mood.

At last we arrived in Cologne and drove to the huge *Messehalle* (it holds 10,000 persons) where the orchestra had already assembled.

During the rehearsal I was informed that von Ribbentrop had arrived in order to meet Sir Thomas before he left Germany. That evening a reception

in the Town Hall awaited the conductor and his orchestra. Sir Thomas had had no intention of joining the festivities, but I was told that it would be very much appreciated if he changed his decision.

When, after the concert, we drove over the Rhine bridge, the town of Cologne was flood-lit in honor of the English guests. The cathedral and the old churches gleamed in a strange magic light. It was a wonderful sight! In the hotel, however, the charm was soon dispelled. People surrounded us, and finally Sir Thomas consented to go to the reception for a short while. I went to bed.

Late in the evening somebody knocked at my door. "Doctor," said Sir Thomas's indignant voice, "what do you think? Herr von Ribbentrop was not there at all. He fell asleep and forgot all about it." On this note of absurd anti-climax the much talked of reception had ended!

Sir Thomas then declared, "I have changed my plans. I won't return with the orchestra to England, but we'll go to Paris. Please make all the necessary arrangements, and we will leave in the morning by the Nord Express."

We did, and Baron von G., embarrassed because of the Ribbentrop contretemps, drove us to the station. Sir Thomas, however, was all smiles. Everything was over, and he could afford to relax. And so once again I crossed the frontier of my strangely changed country.

On this last stage of the journey an amusing incident occurred. Besides their agreed fee, it had been arranged with the Germans that members of the orchestra were to receive a certain sum in marks every day as pocket money. Since the orchestra, however, had provided for their private expenses before leaving London by buying "travel marks," the management decided that it was more practical to retain the "pocket money," and every day a sum was therefore handed out to me to keep. This was becoming an increasingly heavy package, and from Munich on I tried hard to place it with a bank to avoid having to carry it about; but with the German currency laws, this was a difficult matter. Anybody taking charge of marks belonging to a non-German resident was liable to the heaviest penalties, while any money put into a bank in the name of a non-German resident was automatically "blocked," and it was only possible to release it by the most complicated manipulations.

I had no choice but to continue to carry this ever-growing bundle about with me, and to change the notes into bigger ones as the amount grew.

As the tour neared its end, I grew increasingly uneasy, and trusted that some miracle would occur to solve the problem. It did not, and there I was, with my marks.

Before leaving Cologne, I had consulted Sir Thomas. “What shall I do,” I wailed. “If I leave the marks here they are lost to us, and to take them out of Germany is forbidden under the heaviest penalty.” He was just packing his attaché case. “Give the damned parcel to me,” he said. “I am fed up with these rotten marks.” Calmly he put them on top of his other papers in his case. “But, Sir Thomas,” I remonstrated, “you really cannot . . . what about the penalty.” With Sir Thomas nothing is impossible; but there are limits. “What are you talking about?” he said quite unperturbed, treating the marks as if they were a pack of cigarettes, “nothing will happen, you’ll see. Leave the marks to me and don’t worry.”

Sir Thomas’s decision to travel via Paris was made late the night before the orchestra’s departure from Germany. The frontier had been instructed about the orchestra, but not that Sir Thomas and I were to travel by another route. “My God,” I thought, “if our luggage is examined, we’re certainly done for.” To avoid any possible risk, I hunted up the Ribbentrop A.D.C. and asked that special instructions be sent the frontier with regard to Sir Thomas in the Nord Express. The Ribbentrop man, still embarrassed that his master had been asleep when he should have been entertaining Sir Thomas, promised to do his best.

So we left and sat comfortably in our reserved first-class compartment, the attaché case between us—open! Most people would at least have hidden their treasure; not Sir Thomas. His self-esteem deemed it out of the question that any customs’ or other official would really dare approach him! On the top of the open case, quite unconcealed, were the marks. There he sat calmly smoking his pipe.

We arrived at Aachen. A very polite customs’ official opened the door. In a cold sweat I mumbled, “This is Sir Thomas Beecham who has just been touring Germany with his orchestra by invitation of the government.” “Oh yes,” said the man, “we have been advised.” A click of the heels, a deep bow, “Heil Hitler,” and out he went. Triumphantly, Sir Thomas looked at me. “You see, Doctor!” he said, knocking the ash from his pipe, with the familiar movement of his expressive hand.

But the story of those marks did not end here. Not at all. Nobody in London would change them. They had to be taken back into Germany and used there. It was Sir Thomas who undertook this. There was a rumor that

he spent them all in an incredibly short time, on a subsidiary German tour not under my management!

The results of the German tour were in every way satisfactory. No one was converted to Nazism, and all players were glad to be back in England. On the other hand, they had been very proud to show their art in places where the musical tradition was so old and famous, a feeling shared by Sir Thomas. His sensitive mind recoiled from the vulgar panoply of the tour, but he felt that it had been an artistic success, and that made him happy. It had been an auspicious time for my work with him.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

As soon as I began working for Sir Thomas and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, I tried to use my old business relations with continental musical centers on their behalf. It was only gradually that I learned how much more difficult it was to achieve this from England. The geographical situation of Great Britain necessitated an expensive journey to reach the Continent, and it was difficult to finance ventures which involved a risk, as such international enterprises were bound to do. There was in England, however, more chance of private patronage than on the Continent, and often on a very generous scale, but it was only a very limited group which was prepared to allocate money for cultural purposes.

1936

During my first visit to Paris in my new job, I had started negotiations with M. Jacques Rouché for a visit of the London Philharmonic Orchestra to Paris. The Paris *Opéra* was only available on Tuesdays or Thursdays. To find a suitable day for Sir Thomas and the London Philharmonic Orchestra between all their booked dates in England was a problem, especially since both the Royal Philharmonic and the Hallé Concerts—both then mainly conducted by Sir Thomas—were taking place on Thursdays. Finally, a date was found for March 1937—but even that did not mean that all technical questions had been settled.

Ever since 1927, when I arranged the first Paris concert after the war for the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, I had worked with the *Association Française d'Expansion et d'Echange Artistique*. The offices were in the Palais Royal, and from its windows one could look into the wonderful old courtyard of the famous building. Scarcely any of the officials or ushers had changed since my first visit. The whole organization seemed incredibly old fashioned; but it had a style of its own, and exceedingly clever work was done in those historic surroundings.

In 1936 I went to the Palais Royal for the first time on English business. The official government department had then been linked with a semi-official society, *Art et Tourisme*, which was privately to assist the official cultural propaganda. This *Société* had a corresponding organization in Great Britain called “Art and Travel,” whose chairman was Lady Austen Chamberlain.

I had scarcely realized how many “committees” on both sides were involved in the plan for the concert of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Sir Thomas in Paris. It seemed to me that too many people had their fingers in this pie, and so I steered unconcernedly through all these “auxiliary” forces, since they could add little to the practical preparations for the concert. Fortunately the French at that time were keen on cultural collaboration with England. Paris was full of life. There were innumerable cliques and interests. Everything was done with elegance and dignity. I met many people I had not previously known, as the circles interested in Anglo-French activities were other than those concerned with Franco-German relations.

One day M. Rouché took me to a performance of Gluck’s *Alceste* at the Paris *Opéra*. The French had a special way of presenting that kind of opera with their ballet, of which they were particularly proud. Rouché broached the question whether *Alceste* might be presented at Covent Garden, and I proposed to submit the plan to Sir Thomas. The dramatic soprano of the Paris *Opéra*, Madame Germaine Lubin, was especially suited for parts like *Alceste*.

At the end of a very busy week I returned to London. There was much work for us to do, and Sir Thomas hardly ever left the Opera House. He ruled over his theatre with an iron hand, and insisted that everything be submitted to him. Since he did not like to be disturbed when he was working, we had prepared a big signboard, “No Admission,” which I hung outside my door with special delight, for thus, undisturbed, we could discuss at length many subjects for which our busy general routine afforded no time. Among other things, I was able to report fully to him my deliberation over the French business, the many committee ladies, and so on.

Sir Thomas is generally in a genial mood, and the best way to get on with him is by using wit. But he can also suddenly switch round to deadly earnest as he did when I discussed the Paris concert. After listening to me in silence for a considerable time, he suddenly cut in, “Now look here, Doctor, this won’t do. The only solution of all this muddle is an official invitation. If I am not invited by the French Government, I will not conduct this wretched concert, and that is that.”

I realized at once that he meant what he said, and that he would throw up the whole Paris project if it could not be arranged as he wished. I was very anxious that the concert take place, and so I replied, “It’s all quite simple. The French want this concert. Let me go back to Paris, and I will settle the

matter within two days.” “All right then,” agreed Sir Thomas, “but please understand, I will have no nonsense.”

Thus it happened that within a few days I left for Paris again.

I went straight to the *Ministère des Beaux Arts* determined to secure the formal government invitation for Sir Thomas. The Ministry agreed at once to my proposals. The French government invited Sir Thomas and the London Philharmonic Orchestra over, and were prepared to pay all expenses. Armed with a letter from the French *Ministre de l'Instruction*, I returned to London. Triumphant I handed Sir Thomas the Minister's personal invitation. “Very good,” he said, and wrote a letter to Lady Chamberlain, the chairman of “Art and Travel,” telling her that he was pleased to inform her that the Paris concert was now settled between himself and the French Government.

Meanwhile, he worked with great intensity on the details of the Coronation Season for which we had already made preliminary approaches to prominent French singers; but since France and Great Britain were on such friendly terms, M. Rouché informed me that the French Government wanted to present some operas as an official contribution to the festivities and proposed to give *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* by Dukas, *Pelléas et Mélisande* by Debussy, and *Alceste* by Gluck. They were particularly keen on presenting *Alceste* in spite of the enormous costs involved in bringing the chorus and ballet to London. They had wanted to present their ballet at Covent Garden for a long time and were all the more eager to do so on this special occasion. All this was discussed during my short visit to Paris at the beginning of December, and when I returned, not only the concert of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in Paris but also the official contribution of the Paris *Opéra* to the Coronation Season had been settled.

1937

When I arrived at Boulogne on my return to London on a dreary foggy evening with a misty rain drizzling down on us, there was a strange atmosphere prevailing in the port. I asked my porter what was the matter, and he told me that they were expecting the British destroyer carrying the former British king into exile. Edward VIII had abdicated.

English public opinion was agitated and individual opinions clashed. But calm was quickly restored. The press behaved with dignity. The new King came to the throne and from that moment everything was at his service.

Life went on, and as far as Covent Garden was concerned, the preparations for the Coronation Season did not suffer in the slightest degree

by the fact that the music would be presented for a different king.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

Ever since I had settled in England I had been looking for a home. I was on the lookout everywhere, especially around the Bloomsbury neighborhood, near Covent Garden, where there were many lovely old houses with beautifully proportioned rooms.

1937

At last my search ended in Red Lion Square, with its stately old houses and a fifteenth-century church. Although the City had almost encroached on the Square, it still retained an old-fashioned dreaminess, especially on Saturday afternoon and Sunday, when there was not a soul to be seen. Among the lovely old trees adorning the Square, was a plane tree many hundred years old, in which a multitude of pigeons nested. In winter the branches were silhouetted against the sky, and in spring it was a delight to watch the young green shoots. It was hard to believe that one was in the heart of London.

I went to live in the eighteenth-century house at No. 36, in which Charles Dickens was supposed to have lived for a short time. I had the two top floors; the rest of the building was used for business purposes only. The previous tenant had redecorated the rooms with a perfect feeling for the period. Lovely old Georgian paneling, painted a mellow ivory, extended up the top staircase and to all the rooms. A small hall led into a large bright room with three windows facing the Square. Long, and low-ceilinged, it made a charming setting for my old furniture, and was acoustically perfect for our evenings of chamber music. Next to it was a smaller room, delightfully raftered. On the top floor was a big studio perfectly proportioned and enhanced by an authentic Tudor chimneypiece. Two doors led to a roof garden from which there was a marvellous London panorama, dominated by St. Paul's.

At the beginning of January, my belongings that I had missed so much arrived from Germany.

Soon Sir Thomas arrived to inspect the flat. He loves old things and greatly admired my furniture, which was mostly Sheraton bought in England by my grandparents. The place appealed to him immensely. "This is really unique," he said, seating himself. Then he proceeded to give me a comprehensive history of Red Lion Square and the famous people who had lived there.

Every morning I took my seven minutes' walk to Covent Garden. Soon I knew every house on the way, and every day I was full of gratitude that "the lines had fallen unto me in pleasant places."

Meanwhile, Sir Thomas had returned from a short visit to the Continent. He had been living at the Waldorf Hotel for a long time, and now finally decided to take a house again. One evening, while we were working at the Opera House, he suddenly said, "Come with me, and see my new home." He had found a house in St. John's Wood which was reputed to be the oldest in the neighborhood. In front it had a little old-fashioned garden protected by a high wall. He had re-engaged Mrs. Olivia Samuelson, his Swedish cook-housekeeper of many years' standing, who cooked marvelously and always officiated dressed in white like a chef. She looked like a dowager-duchess and attended all Sir Thomas's concerts with great interest. Smith, the inevitable, was, of course, on the scene.

Smith was practically as famous as his master. Only a "gentleman" like Sir Thomas could evolve such a factotum as Smith and maintain such an exacting and perfectly balanced relationship for so many years with no hint of friction. Smith was a tall, rosy-faced, blue-eyed Briton. He never fussed or hurried, but moved with quiet dignity about his duties. "Smith!" Sir Thomas called a hundred times a day, and "Yes, Sir Thomas," replied Smith just as often, with an imperturbable face.

Since Sir Thomas never answered the telephone, Smith had to deal with everybody and to know everything. He always assumed an ingenuous lack of information and never showed the slightest ambition to be "in the know." He gave all telephone callers the impression that they were highly welcome, even when Sir Thomas was heard to say in the background, "What on earth does he want? I am not in," and treated them with a mixture of dignity and intimacy, and an unvarying politeness whether he was in sympathy with them or not.

If guests for a meal had to wait for Sir Thomas, Smith made dignified conversation and offered refreshments. At dinner Smith behaved with the same dignity as Sir Thomas himself. He was, however, never familiar, never offered a personal opinion on anything, and in spite of all he must have known and heard was always impenetrable and non-committal. His inborn diplomacy would have graced a cabinet minister.

Smith was a clever mediator between Sir Thomas and the outside world and, last but not least, between him and his personal collaborators. Sir

Thomas was only human, and sometimes in the early morning he was not as serene as usual. One morning when Smith opened the door for me, he put his finger to his lips and crossed his arms to warn me that Sir Thomas was “cross” and I had better be on my guard. On entering Sir Thomas’s room the first thing I did was to tell him this little incident; he could not help laughing, and bad humor was soon dispelled.

In one matter, however, Smith was adamant. He would not be responsible for any scores or other music in the household. The eternal mislaying and retrieving of music filled him with alarm, and he once said to me in heartfelt tones, “All would be well if it were not for this damned music!”

The first time I visited Sir Thomas in his new home we arrived late and there were no servants about. He never says what he intends to do, and his household adapts itself accordingly, whether he comes alone or with guests. On the sideboard there were always several different cold dishes, which he carved with virtuosity. He considers carving a special art, and I have often heard him discussing at length with Smith alternative methods of carving a certain joint. Although Sir Thomas provides an endless variety of drinks for his guests, he generally contents himself with milk.

Whenever I spent an evening with him, we both tacitly avoided the routine questions of our work and were glad to turn to other subjects. If he is in a good mood, there are few persons who are so stimulating. He may play the piano or pick up at random a favorite volume—Milton, Shakespeare, or Beaumont and Fletcher—and read aloud in his admirably modulated voice.

Sir Thomas was to conduct two new productions of *Orphée* and *Il Seraglio* at the Berlin State Opera about this time. As usual, I went on a few days in advance. Sir Thomas arrived in splendid spirits, and was in a holiday mood during the whole of this Berlin visit.

We stayed at the Esplanade and were very well looked after. In an international hotel like that, there was little evidence of what was going on in Nazi Germany, and since I was again protected by the reflected glory of Sir Thomas and the “benevolent” attitude of high quarters, I had no cause for uneasiness.

The Berlin State Opera placed its best resources at the disposal of Sir Thomas. The *Orphée* was an interesting production. The singers were the best available. For the part of Amor they especially engaged Madame Cebotari, who excelled in this rôle, from the Dresden Opera House.

Sir Thomas strode into work within an hour of his arrival, and was passionately interested in the production, the scenery, and the singers, whom he rehearsed most carefully. The days were filled with rehearsals and conferences. Everything else had to be fitted in with those.

Just after I arrived, I was asked to see Baron Holthoff, a kind of master of ceremonies for Goering social arrangements. The Baron informed me that *Ministerpräsident* Goering intended to give a reception for Sir Thomas, and he wished to go through the invitation list with me. "Let us begin with the ladies," he said, placing my name at the top. "What!" I protested, "have you gone mad? How can I go to a reception of Goering's. Please don't be ridiculous!" "I beg your pardon," Baron Holthoff replied. "The *Ministerpräsident* especially inquired whether you would accompany Sir Thomas on his journey to Berlin, and has asked me to tell you that he particularly wished to invite you." "All right," I said resignedly. "Things seem to get more and more crazy; this time I will leave the decision to Sir Thomas." The reception took place after the performance of *Il Seraglio*. Sir Thomas had decided that I was to go without any more fuss. To my boundless relief, however, it took place without our host, who at the last minute had to leave on a diplomatic mission to Poland. There were about fifty people present. Frau Wagner was there, having come specially from Bayreuth with her eldest daughter to attend the performance. She sat at the center table with Sir Thomas and Tietjen. The singers who were soon to go to London were also there and crowded round Sir Thomas. Tietjen lifted his glass to me. "*Prosit, Geissmar*," he said. I was very moved, but embarrassed and ill at ease.

Finally we left, and in a very dubious state of sobriety arrived at our hotel in the early hours!

A very original evening was spent with Preetorius and some of the singers at the old and legendary tavern of *Luther und Wegener* which was the original of the first scene of *Contes d'Hoffmann*. This historical *weinkeller* in old Berlin situated between the Opera and the *Schauspielhaus* had always been a famous meeting place of authors, musicians, and actors, E. T. A. Hoffmann, among others. When the old waiter learned the identity of Sir Thomas, he conducted us to the very table at which E. T. A. Hoffmann regularly sat with his friends, and from which he never rose completely sober. All sorts of old relics and pictures of famous actors who had been habitués of the place were shown to Sir Thomas, who was enraptured by the atmosphere.

All the Berlin performances were a great success. The *Orphée* especially made a deep impression. The State Opera Orchestra loved Sir Thomas, and the singers followed him well. He had been so pleased with the choreography of the *Orcus* scene, that he engaged the prima ballerina, Lizzie Maudrick, who had been responsible for it, to obtain the same effect with the Russian ballet at Covent Garden in the coming summer. Sir Thomas's wide and detailed knowledge of Gluck impressed all who came in contact with him. Nobody had expected to find behind the mask of the elegant man of the world such expert knowledge.

The visit was unclouded in every respect. The atmosphere of the only Opera House of the Reich outside Goebbels' orbit was much less stifled than in the theatres depending on the radical and fanatical Minister of Propaganda. The old Prussian State Opera House attendants officiated with the same dignity as they had done under the Hohenzollerns. The staff at the administration was mostly of the old régime. Wherever possible, the artists had remained unchanged. Tietjen himself was of the old school, Preetorius and all the leading spirits were artists of the first rank, and Goering, who held his protecting hand over this institution, was in this instance not such a "good Nazi" as he had been on June 30, 1934.

Sir Thomas returned to London after his Berlin engagement, while I went on to Dresden on business for Covent Garden. Then I returned to England, and on the Flushing boat I met Preetorius and his two assistants. Sir Thomas had especially taken to Preetorius. Although the latter did not know one word of English they had a very amusing way of understanding each other, and Sir Thomas had invited him to come and get acquainted with the Covent Garden stage before the finishing touches were put to his scenery.

In London we were met by Mr. James Smith, one of the directors of Covent Garden. Jimmie Smith—as he is known by everybody—was a most generous man, and always ready to help if anything was needed. It was he who had at first suggested that Preetorius should be engaged to do the scenery for *Der Fliegende Holländer*, which he presented to the Opera House as a gift for the Coronation Season.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

At this time of the year Covent Garden woke up. Of course the house was in use all the year round for the Beecham Sunday Concerts, shorter Opera Seasons, the Russian Ballet, and so on. But the climax was the International Opera Season in the early summer, especially in the year 1937 in view of the approaching Coronation, when many visitors from all parts of the world were expected. The management of the orchestra, the Covent Garden Estate Company, Sir Thomas Beecham's office, and a small staff of the Covent Garden Opera Company were permanently housed in the Opera House. Some time before the Opera Season the permanent staff was augmented by various collaborators who returned every year.

1937

The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, can look back on a glorious past. A patina of associations seems to cover the fabric—whether it is the bare boards and iron rails of the high, old-fashioned gallery, or the gilt and red plush and cream-painted woodwork, the thin pillars of the boxes, the awkward staircases, the odd, high, glass-roofed bar and foyer, and the red curtain bearing the coat of arms of the reigning King. Then—lights down, baton raised, the great curtain sweeps up, and once again for the hundredth time the tense magic holds everyone in its hands.

Covent Garden was always difficult ground for a singer, because the English public, used to the best, was always particularly exacting as far as singers were concerned. In some parts of Italy and France and in all the larger towns in Germany, the State-supported opera performed all the year round, the public subscribed for the whole year, and thus the repertoire could be planned in advance for the whole period. In contrast, Covent Garden, dependent on private subsidies, had to cram performances within the short space of two months, May and June. During that time, however, the opera was not only a musical event of the highest order, but also a social one. English society appeared in town after a winter in the country. Visitors came from all over the British Empire, and diplomats preferred to take their leave at this period. In normal times, boxes were unobtainable a full year before the season began. For months in advance all restaurants round Covent Garden were booked for the dinner intermissions of the performances of the *Ring*; and after the opera people sat till the early hours of the morning in big hotels like the Savoy, and there met “everybody.”

For all that, the true music lovers were not to be found in the boxes alone. They sat in the lower-priced seats in the upper circle, the amphitheatre, and in the gallery. The night before the performance of a favorite opera, a long queue, equipped with stools and sandwiches, waited to be admitted to the gallery seats the following evening.

It was still a strange experience for me in 1937 to be working in this famous opera house, which functioned so differently from those I had known. My office had been installed in Covent Garden for seven months when preparations for the International Season began. Just as I had had to learn my way about the many annexes, corridors, and wings, I had gradually come to know everyone in the house.

Sir Thomas Beecham directed the fortunes of the Opera House, and undoubtedly it was owing to his persistent efforts, his untiring devotion, his personal sacrifices and superb ability that this opera house in the heart of the British Empire could maintain its high level. It is not easy to realize how difficult the financing of an opera season was. Consider, for example, the enormous rent which had to be paid even before a budget could be planned.

Sir Thomas is regarded as a cynic, and likes to appear as such in the eyes of the world. Actually he is exactly the opposite. He is a passionate idealist, and highly sensitive. Under cover of the biting irony of his famous speeches, in which he exposes unsatisfactory conditions and demands support from the British public in his effort to promote musical life, he has given to the British nation not only a fortune but also his heart's blood.

The Coronation Season, of course, received his closest attention, and he prepared for it with great care. He patiently rehearsed all operas with the orchestra alone. During these rehearsals never a harsh word was heard. When a mistake occurred he exclaimed, "Hey!" The relationship between Sir Thomas and his London Philharmonic Orchestra, which played for his opera seasons, was unique. So much was understood between them that little needed to be said. About what was said, innumerable stories are told.

When more than one mistake was made at a rehearsal, more than "Hey!" was necessary. For instance, at a rehearsal one day, an unfortunate player missed his cue several times. With ominous politeness Sir Thomas put down his baton.

"Mr. So-and-so," he said with the greatest urbanity, "we cannot expect you to follow *all* the time, of course, but perhaps you would kindly keep in touch with us occasionally!"

If Sir Thomas was obliged to be exacting at a rehearsal, he never missed an opportunity to refresh the orchestra with a remark in lighter vein before the close of the session. One day the rehearsal had been long and strenuous; the orchestra and Sir Thomas had worked indefatigably at some great passage of Wagner. At last, Sir Thomas took out his watch.

“My God!” he said, “we have been playing for two solid hours, and we’re playing this bloody tune still!”

Occasionally a contretemps would arise, in the solving of which the orchestra would take a hand. For instance, one of the *répétiteurs* was supposed to play the organ in *Lohengrin*. When his moment came, he was either absent or missed his cue. After this had happened several times, Sir Thomas shouted, “Throw him out.” The *répétiteur* disappeared and was never seen again. Sir Thomas then turned to the orchestra. “Gentlemen,” he said, “what are we going to do now? Can any one of you play the organ?” “Bill can,” replied the orchestra in unison, and amid great acclamations Bill Coleman, normally a trombone player, took his place at the organ.

When the general rehearsals started, things naturally became a little more hectic. One day in particular, at the dress rehearsal of *Die Götterdämmerung* everything went wrong on the stage. The scenery was not ready. The lighting was not correct. The Siegfried had refused to come to the rehearsal on some pretext. Sir Thomas walked about on the stage, roaring like a caged lion. The atmosphere was at white heat. In the pit, the orchestra sensed the tension, and relieved the situation by striking up “The Blue Danube”!

Sir Thomas, ever at one with his orchestra, responded at once, and rushed down to the pit. Taking up his baton he conducted “The Blue Danube” at full Wagnerian strength, tubas included. The stage was nonplussed for the moment. The German prompter, making for his box, was heard to mutter, “In Dresden, this would be absolutely impossible.”

During the preliminary orchestral rehearsals the music, scores, and parts were held in readiness by the elderly librarian, Mr. John Primrose, father of the well-known viola player, William Primrose. Mr. Primrose was a Scot, and one of the few people who could always speak his mind to the rather awe-inspiring Sir Thomas. When Primrose made jokes in his soft Scotch accent, he was irresistible. Sir Thomas had a fund of original names for this old character, who at rehearsals used to sit, silent and attentive, in the background. He was on occasion, either “Mr. Daffodil” or “The Wild Caledonian.” After a particularly good rehearsal one day, Sir Thomas is said

to have commanded Primrose to kneel down, and “knighted” him with his baton. From this time he always liked to be called “Sir John.”

The librarian had his perplexing moments, particularly when receiving requests for the loan of Sir Thomas’s scores, which were especially sought after by conductors. One day he was approached by a lady who wanted to borrow a valuable score. Primrose demurred, but the lady assured him that Sir Thomas “wouldn’t mind.”

When the librarian told Sir Thomas of the request, he said, “Mr. Primrose! You’re not to lend my score to Moses, Tubal Cain, the Queen of Sheba, or God Almighty!”

At this preparatory stage scenery was erected and lighting tested. It seemed natural that all departmental activity should be centralized in Sir Thomas. He had to see to everything: how the dragon in the *Ring* was to appear without arousing laughter, how a lighting problem had to be solved, or the estimate of a new production. As director, of course, he had the last word, but beyond that he had established a natural and undisputed authority over the whole house—an authority coveted in vain by certain other people in the theatre.

Percy Heming was assistant artistic director of that season. He had been connected with Sir Thomas since 1915 when he joined his company, the Beecham Opera Company, at the Shaftesbury Theatre.

Percy was always cheerful, and always ready to give help wherever it was necessary. His experience as singer, actor, and producer, from grand opera to music hall in the provinces, gave him a wide knowledge of “both sides of the curtain.”

He had the special gift of being a “good mixer,” and was equally at home lunching with some of the stars at the Savoy, or at the “Nag’s Head” opposite the stage door of Covent Garden, with the stage hands. Between these two hostelries every problem of the theatre was discussed, and when Percy on the following morning picked up the “Guv’nor” at St. John’s Wood to drive him down to the Opera House, he was full of current details and gossip.

The Stage Director was Charles Moor, a Scotsman who had worked at Covent Garden for twenty years. He had been trained as a musician in Leipzig and Vienna, and had had ten years of experience as a conductor before he took up opera production. Early association with Bayreuth, where he was one of the musical assistants, brought him in close contact with

Cosima Wagner and the great conductors of the early century. His command of languages greatly assisted his work, which took him to all parts of the world, but he always came back to Covent Garden. He knew that old theatre like the palm of his hand, he knew its shortcomings, and was familiar with its gradual innovations. He knew his collaborators thoroughly too. In fact, he had trained many of them for their special duties—artists, chorus, stage hands, electricians, and flymen. He called the stage staff by their Christian names, and they behaved like one large family. Moor was responsible for most of the performances, and nobody could override him; every visiting producer was helplessly at his mercy. He held the secrets of the stage. During the season, he slept in the Opera House on a divan, as he preferred to be always on the spot and to supervise the scene-shifting at night. He appeared where he was least expected, and his flying white overall was not always welcome. There were famous singers who suffered agonies of fear, believing he disliked them. Moor had, of course, his eccentricities. If a singer refused to rehearse because the stage was dusty, or on some similar pretext, he could be really unpleasant; and he held no brief for singers' wives who arrived with scarves for their husbands or to inspire encouragement from the wings. However, Kleinchen Melchior, the wife of the famous tenor, was notorious for her refusal to submit to any stage discipline, and always cunningly frustrated any order of Moor's. In the disputes regarding admission to the stage Moor fought relentlessly, blindly supported by the firemen, who usually refused admission to the wrong people. Moor and I cooperated perfectly. He was very experienced, and both of us, knowing how much Sir Thomas had to get through during a season, tried to assist him as much as possible. Sir Thomas had complete confidence in him, and when Moor wanted an interview he was given immediate audience.

Although the timetable was worked out well in advance, the call sheet was only completed at the last minute. Sometimes an American boat was delayed, a singer's leave was postponed, or an unforeseen rehearsal became necessary. Conductors always wanted a great many rehearsals—the singers, however, especially the famous ones, wanted large fees and few rehearsals. No wonder that sometimes we were at a loss, and gathered round Sir Thomas awaiting a judgment of Solomon. On such occasions he used to sit at his desk in his grey linen coat. "Now, let me see," he would say, adjusting his glasses. "Why not do it in this way?" His solution generally proved to be "the one and only one." Nobody appreciated this quality of his more than Furtwängler who, on one such occasion, said admiringly, "The ease with which Beecham always finds a way out is incredible."

Moor ably assisted Sir Thomas in these manipulations and between them they harmoniously solved the most intricate problems.

I had always maintained that in comparison with opera houses on the Continent, there was very little gossiping in Covent Garden. When, however, rumors spread through the house, they stopped short at Sir Thomas's door. Moor was certainly great at straightening out difficulties before they reached his chief. He often telephoned me at eight A.M. about some imminent mishap which he wanted my cooperation to prevent.

Harold Barrett was stage manager and Moor's right-hand man. He was a real child of the theatre. As a small boy he took the role of the baby in a performance of *Madame Butterfly* with Emmy Destinn and Caruso. He possesses a watch presented to him in 1910 by Destinn which he highly treasures and which is still in working order. He started his work with Sir Thomas when he was the "rabbit" in the Puss in Boots scene of Sir Thomas's production of *The Golden Land of Fairy Tales* at the Aldwych Theatre, in 1912.

Harold was a small dark fellow, a quaint type, who constantly potted about the theatre and kept his people in order. He had manifold duties, among the most difficult of which were the compilation and confirmation of the call sheets. He had to know every person in the house, and where to find everyone day and night. He was charged with maintaining peace in the theatre, and when rumors cropped up he had to be in a position to confirm or deny them with authority. He was indefatigable and always in good spirits. Very proudly he relates that Sir Thomas once said to him, "My boy, you are a pillar of the theatre," which he took as a cue to ask for a raise in salary. He never lost his good humor, and his Cockney dialect was marvelous—if you understood it.

Frank Ballard was stage machinist, and Bill Mitchell his assistant. Ballard was an elderly man and was in charge of the technical side of the stage. It was he who decided the earliest possible moment at which rehearsals could begin after a performance of *Die Götterdämmerung*. He was a conscientious man, and if he was asked whether the stage could be ready at a certain time he invariably replied, "I don't think so," or "I couldn't promise it." Actually nothing was ever impossible for him, and Sir Thomas knew he could rely on him in any of the unexpected situations that are unavoidable in theatrical life.

His assistant Mitchell was a reliable and gifted stagehand who had worked his way up from property man and was an excellent draughtsman.

Nothing was too much trouble for him, even if it kept him up the whole night. The same applied to Jack Croxford, the chief electrician, and his assistant Sidney Cheney, who had grown up in the place. Such enthusiasts were necessary in Covent Garden, and Sir Thomas had a knack of gathering them around him.

In charge of the paint room upstairs were Mr. Lynham and his assistants, who mixed colors in dozens of Woolworth chamber-pots. Mr. Lynham was a true Dickensian figure. He looked rather like an Italian with his dark skin, black eyes, and a mass of black hair. He was always splashed with paint, especially his face, and under his chin where his hand used to rest, there was a many-colored stain. He knew much more about the painting of scenery than the man nominally responsible for it, whose instructions he often ignored. If Lynham thought that he had a better idea for the execution of the scenery than that indicated to him, he quickly got in touch with Moor, and if Moor agreed, Sir Thomas was besieged. “’E knows,” Lynham used to say, “I want to speak to ’im.” Sir Thomas then came to look at the great canvas, Lynham standing next to it, stained from head to toe, but very sure of himself. Sir Thomas took things in at a glance and used to say briefly, “Very good” or “I quite agree.” Whereupon a triumphant Lynham eagerly resumed his work and the head of the department was faced with a *fait accompli* when he returned. Sir Thomas appreciated the veiled tactics of the paint room but diplomatically ignored them.

One season the *Ring* and *Parsifal* were presented in new décors. Some of the *Ring* costumes, especially those of the Valkyries, were, I thought, appalling, while the flower maidens in *Parsifal* seemed more like tumbling autumn leaves than spring flowers. Some of the scenery, too, left much to be desired, though things were gradually improved where it was possible. The end of *Götterdämmerung* was horrible, the *Halle der Gibichungen* crashed in such a way as to resemble a slow-motion film. Considerable argument arose over the rock in the first act of *Rheingold*. Its height prevented the gallery-ites from seeing either the summit or the gold, and Alberich from regaining breath after clambering up to his treasure. He usually attained it with his tongue hanging out, while the rock shook dangerously as he climbed. Sir Thomas had been aware of the deficiency for some time, and suddenly decided at a rehearsal—at which the scenic artist was not present—to have the rock lowered by about one-third. The change was carried out with great enthusiasm. A few days later, as I was crossing the stage with the designer, he caught sight of his rock at the new level and straightaway broke into loud lamentations. “What has happened to my rock?” he cried.

However, since the alteration had been made on Sir Thomas's authority, he was sensible enough to accept the inevitable.

Dignified, poised Miss Newbery was the capable wardrobe supervisor. Once she and I dressed an actress together. In the famous performance of the *Rosenkavalier* on May 4, 1938, when Lotte Lehmann collapsed on the stage, the performance could only continue because Hilde Konetzni was in the audience and agreed to act as a substitute immediately. The public was asked to have a little patience. I went backstage to look after Lotte Lehmann and then went to Konetzni's room. She was, of course, much plumper than Lotte Lehmann, and when I entered her room she was just being "sewn" into her costume; but a large expanse of her back was still uncovered. I happened to be wearing a long black velvet cape over my evening dress and Miss Newbery suggested, "If you would not mind, Doctor, I think your cape will be just the thing." We draped it down Hilde's back, and she walked on to the stage, an imposing Marschallin.

Some singers came regularly every season, and since the dressers remained the same for many years, unwritten laws honored by everyone came into being in the dressing rooms of Covent Garden. Melchior, a great favorite with Londoners, had his special foibles, and it was out of the question for him to have any dresser but his beloved "Bill." Melchior's room was always the scene of all sorts of events. When he was not on, he sat there comfortably, scantily clad, drinking pints of grapefruit juice and expecting his friends to keep him company. Meanwhile Kleinchén, his wife, caught up with her correspondence or took care of her finances with her London banker, who was a great opera enthusiast, and was always in the Opera House when Melchior sang; or she wrote dozens of autographs for her husband, an accomplishment she had mastered to a high degree. The Melchiors' company was always pleasant and peaceful, as long as nothing untoward happened.

This applied also to the professional side of things. It is said that Melchior never remained on board the ship at the beginning of the first act of *Tristan*, but sneaked back to his dressing room after his first scene, to have another pint or two of grapefruit juice, returning just in time for his second scene. The reconstruction of the ship had made it impossible to do this unnoticed by some part of the audience. Melchior demurred, and wanted to wade through the ocean; but when Sir Thomas told him that he wished him to remain aboard, he said, so the story goes, that he could not refuse Sir Thomas's wish, but for his "sacrifice" demanded a bottle of champagne for

every *Tristan* performance. Sir Thomas is reported to have faithfully honored this not strictly legal but otherwise binding agreement.

The Kurwenal to his Tristan, Herbert Janssen, is probably the most moving interpreter of Amfortas in the world. But during the endless intervals between his appearances in *Parsifal* he has to be amused, to relax from the strain of his rôle. It is difficult to reconcile the monumental and tragic Amfortas with the placid Janssen, serenely sitting over his crossword puzzle, cracking jokes with his dresser Horace, who was a genius in producing tea and the innumerable sandwiches Janssen used to have during his intervals, or enjoying a congenial chat, while his wife sat by quietly knitting or reading.

Covent Garden has always been politically neutral. But as events moved on many singers came to us who had left Nazi Germany. On the other hand, there were some who—at home at any rate—were rabid Nazis. And yet they were quick to switch round when they noticed that things in England did not work as in Hitler Germany. All of them wanted to be invited to London for the Season.

After Hitler came to power, Covent Garden was one of the few Opera Houses where old friends of long standing from Berlin and Bayreuth could still meet. Sometimes some skirmishing took place in the men's dressing rooms, quite harmless as a rule, and many memories of old times spent together were revived. There were all shades of political opinions, but only very few visitors were ever really unpleasant. Sir Thomas, although well-informed on everything, never seemed to notice any diversity of opinion. He was only concerned with the voices, not with the political opinions of his singers. Usually all went well. Only on one occasion was there a "diplomatic incident." One of the few really troublesome visitors had been accommodated in the same dressing room as a singer who had emigrated from Germany, and who had formerly sung in the same opera house. This fact created great excitement, and somebody rushed up breathlessly to my office asking me to approach Sir Thomas to get those two separated. I refused, saying, "Sir Thomas is on the stage rehearsing. I would be ashamed to bother him with such a matter. To him all guests in his theater are equal. Political differences exist all over the world without causing such disturbances." I did not mention the affair to Sir Thomas and quiet reigned backstage. It was not the émigré, but the singer domiciled in Germany who had made a nuisance of himself, believing he could use the same methods in London with which he terrorized his opera house at home. It is significant of

the authority Sir Thomas enjoyed, that this dispute could be settled with him in the background and in complete ignorance of it.

The legendary stage door-keeper, Jackson, was one of the most important persons in Covent Garden. He was a gentleman in the true sense of the word. Many were the celebrated artists he saw come and go during his long regime. Everybody spoke to him in their own tongue, although Jackson invariably replied in English. He was in charge of the artists' mail, knew everyone, and remembered every name. Jackson was not only interested in his stage door, but took deep interest in the artistic aspect of the Opera House. Immediately after a performance he made up his mind if it had been good or bad.

Sometimes it fell to Jackson's lot to regulate matters outside the Opera House. The gallery queues attracted all sorts of itinerant musicians and entertainers to Floral Street where they displayed their art to the patient onlookers. Sir Thomas's windows were directly above, and often a hurdy-gurdy or public acclamations grew much too noisy. On those occasions Jackson, with infallible tact, stopped the disturbance without in any way offending the queuers by his interference.

He guarded the House inexorably and was relentless on questions of admission. With unerring instinct he distinguished between friend and foe, and was renowned for his treatment of the yellow press, with its nose for scandal. He is said once to have unceremoniously deposited an over-enthusiastic reporter in the street, after having refused a very considerable sum of money for permission to photograph a fainting prima donna.

Jackson was connected to my room by a direct telephone line, since nobody was allowed up to Sir Thomas's quarters without being announced. He also informed me when Sir Thomas was seen to approach: "Sir Thomas has just come in, Doctor. I believe he is coming up."

Sir Thomas's arrival could be immediately sensed in the whole House. Sometimes, however, he slipped in through a side door and appeared quite unexpectedly. On leaving, too, especially if he suspected that people were lying in wait for him, he preferred to avoid the stage door, and disappeared mysteriously through one of the other exits. He liked to vanish suddenly. At work he used to speak to me through the open door from his room. In the middle of such a conversation, he sometimes vanished through his library, and while I waited respectfully for him to return he had quietly stolen away.

During the Opera season, when no concerts took place, it was my duty to assist Sir Thomas in every way, to receive visitors, to have details of

everything at hand, to keep all important files, to know the artists' movements, their dates of arrival and departure, and to keep the opera programs and rehearsal sheets in readiness. On my wall were pinned programs of Covent Garden and of the important continental Opera Houses, which I had had sent to me so that in an emergency we could know where to get hold of a singer.

Since there was no permanent opera in London, the cast was not easily assembled, nor was a substitute readily found. People naturally demanded international artists at an International Season, and so it was often a hazardous thing to have no understudy for a special part. If a star fell ill, we were at a loss.

Richard Tauber, for instance, had achieved his long-standing ambition and had been engaged at Covent Garden for *Il Seraglio* and *Don Giovanni* in 1938. One evening, just before the first performance of *Elektra*, which Sir Thomas was to conduct, I returned to my office and there found Frau Tauber, an elegant tornado, steaming fury at Sir Thomas. She reported that her husband's vocal chords were inflamed, and declared emphatically that on no account would she permit him to sing the next evening. I considered myself adept at dealing with the turbulent wives of tenors and so was Sir Thomas, but there was no pacifying this one, and Sir Thomas instantly saw that he had to change his plans. On the point of leaving for a very difficult performance, he issued his instructions quickly, "Doctor, either you get me another tenor for tomorrow night's *Il Seraglio* or you will try to get the whole *Rosenkavalier* cast from Berlin for tomorrow night instead of the day after. I can't be bothered with anything now. I have to conduct *Elektra*. After the performance I expect your full report." Then he disappeared. I flew to the telephone and tried to find a tenor. Rosswänge from Berlin was not available, so I called Munich in an attempt to get Patzak. The Munich State Opera informed me that he was free, but that he usually spent this time of the day at Tegernsee. I had to abandon hope of Patzak, for when I rang Tegernsee I was told he was on the lake. When the quest for the tenor proved hopeless, I called the Berlin State Opera to find out about the *Rosenkavalier* cast. The State Opera was very obliging and Frau Lemnitz, the leading soprano, was—thank heaven!—available, so I rang her. One realizes at such moments how dependent one is on the goodwill of singers. She agreed to come and bring the others with her, providing they could get accommodations on the seven A.M. Lufthansa airplane. She would call me back at two A.M.

Sir Thomas then appeared, stimulated by the performance of *Elektra*. He took my report, and immediately offered me a glass of champagne to fortify me. In the middle of the night, Lemnitz rang. Everything was arranged; they had secured seats on the airplane through the goodwill of other passengers who had sacrificed their places for the sake of Covent Garden and would all come together.

Such was life in the Opera House during the season, and Sir Thomas was present almost day and night. Grave and gay went hand in hand, but everybody was heart and soul in the work. For many of the staff their whole professional life was concentrated every year in these few months of work at the Opera House.

Sir Thomas reigned over the whole, inspiring everybody, always energetic, hardly ever ruffled. He always saw the humorous side, but was adamant in serious matters, and everybody knew it. We were a happy working community, full of pride and enthusiasm for our work.

CHAPTER FORTY

By the middle of March I was again on my way to Paris to assist with the final arrangements for the concert of the London Philharmonic Orchestra with Sir Thomas, fixed for March 16th at *l'Opéra*.

1937

I had been familiar with the ritual of gala performances at *l'Opéra Nationale* since 1928 when I had arranged the first visit of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with Furtwängler, but this English gala concert had a different atmosphere from the German concerts. A different stratum of society was interested.

Sir Thomas arrived in Paris, and in place of the pompousness of the Nazis, was greeted with the fine elegance and gracious courtesy of the French; no flags, no speeches! He responded in the same dignified manner with which he had submitted to the loud Nazi demonstrations. An habitu e at the Ritz Hotel, he was treated by the staff, his valet, and his *gar on* with that confidential yet distant intimacy which is a special French quality.

On the evening of the concert, the Paris *Op ra* presented itself in all its splendor. Members of the *Garde R publicaine* with their picturesque uniforms stood on each step of the famous staircase. The whole French Government, headed by President Lebrun, was present, and the house was filled with representatives from all the official Government departments and the *Corps Diplomatique*.

It had not been easy to design the program. At such a concert, which is a political as well as an artistic affair, many points of view have to be considered. The concert opened with "*La Marseillaise*" and "God Save the King." The program was: Haydn, Symphony No. 93 in D major; Elgar, Enigma Variations; Handel-Beecham, Ballet Suite: The Gods Go a-Begging; Delius, Summer-Night on the River; Berners, Fugue in C minor; Berlioz, Overture: Le Carnaval Romain.

Paris lavished frantic applause on the artists. Paris had always enjoyed visits of world-famous orchestras. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra came every year, and so did the *Concertgebouw* Orchestra from Amsterdam. The New York Philharmonic Orchestra and the Vienna Philharmonic had also given concerts in Paris. The London Philharmonic Orchestra was unanimously declared at least equal to these other orchestras of much longer

standing. The wind section created a deserved sensation in the country where the finest wind-players are to be found, and the *bois miraculeux* were mentioned as being both rich and delicate. People admired the fine unobtrusive musicality of the orchestra, the deft way in which everything was played, and the great and natural exactitude. Sir Thomas was understood and acclaimed for his musical sincerity. The subtlety of feeling and of his directions, as well as the naturalness of his interpretation, were greatly admired.

Meanwhile in London the big private houses, Embassies, and government departments all prepared to entertain in the Coronation Season. Guests from all over the world were expected, and brilliant social and artistic gatherings followed each other ceaselessly during Coronation time, and did not lessen until the summer was over.

On April 1st, the Royal Philharmonic Society gave its Coronation Concert under the patronage of the late Duke of Kent. The London Philharmonic Orchestra played, and Sir Thomas conducted.

One of the most hospitable houses in London was Kent House, the home of Sir Saxton and Lady Noble. The house, with its big concert room, was famous for its jade and Chinese art collection, and the opening reception of the French and Chinese Exhibitions had been held there.

It was about this time that I spent a memorable evening at Kent House, and met Princess Marie Louise at dinner with Lady Noble. It was a privilege to meet a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, who was able to tell us of people belonging to the past. She talked about Cosima Wagner and Hans von Bülow; about the Sunday lunches with the old Kaiser Wilhelm; about her aunt, Kaiserin Friedrich. And about Bismarck.

The Princess loved music and Covent Garden, and had her definite views about operas, conductors, and singers. She was a great Wagner enthusiast, and told me that her love for Wagner's music dated from the time when she went to the rehearsals on the *Festspielhügel* with Cosima. She attended the performances of the Covent Garden season whenever she could, and at Wagner operas sat with her sister, Princess Helena Victoria, in the stalls, which they preferred because they found the acoustics there better than in the Royal box. Her true appreciation of music and her great human understanding have warmed the hearts of many of the international artists who came to England.

Meanwhile, the Covent Garden season approached. It was to open with a performance of *Otello* on April 19th. Singers appeared from all over the

world. The Berlin State Opera took their participation in the Season so seriously that in the spring they put on the whole of the *Ring* under Furtwängler's direction with the London cast, as a rehearsal for Covent Garden.

In the last week before the beginning of the Season, the Opera House began to be like a Tower of Babel.

The Covent Garden season was a true London occasion and the glamor and excitement of it extended to all the streets of the district, right down to the Strand, making a strange contrast with the cabbage stalls, stray potatoes, and the smell of vegetables lingering on from the early market. The London police were admirably in control of all approaches, directing the endless stream of cars which drew up in the famous covered way under the portico. They ceremoniously took care of arriving pedestrians, and I had a special friend in the bobby at the corner of Bow Street and Floral Street, who came to know me, and would smilingly hold up even the most pretentious and impatient traffic to let me go through in time to carry out my last minute duties before the curtain rose.

The opening night of the Covent Garden season was a unique social function in the display of dresses and jewels. It was a curious mixture of private elegance and public excitement. The national anthem, played with *élan* and conducted with especial pride by Sir Thomas, rolled its chords round the great Opera House before the overture started, and brought the whole house to its feet before the lights faded out.

At the entrance flashlights exploded on every side, photographing the new arrivals. Not all the visitors came purely on account of the music. For many only the social element mattered; but how others did enjoy the opening performance of *Otello* conducted by Sir Thomas! Afterwards, some of the audience lingered on the steps in conversation, but the richly uniformed porters kept them from impeding traffic with a stern ritual all their own, and announced the awaiting cars in stentorian tones.

The second day all honors were directed to the French official presentation. It was *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* by Dukas, conducted by M. Philippe Gaubert, first conductor of the Paris *Opéra*. M. Rouché and other official French personalities who had come over from Paris were formally received in the foyer. The sinister subject of *Ariane* limited its popular success, but Germaine Lubin as Ariane made one of the deepest impressions of the season. Lubin was a beautiful woman, tall and blonde with blue eyes,

incalculable and capricious, yet charming. Whether she impersonated Isolde, Ariane, or Alceste, she had always a regal dignity, simplicity, and greatness.

The performance of *Alceste* a few days later was the only one which was presented entirely by the French except for the orchestra. Gaubert again conducted; chorus and ballet came from the Paris *Opéra*.

The superb performance of *Alceste* was one of the finest events of the Coronation Season. Lubin as Alceste was unsurpassable; the part seemed to have been written especially for her. The ballet aroused the greatest admiration. The unity of style throughout was remarkably impressive. In those days Paris was unexcelled in staging operas such as *Alceste* and *Castor et Pollux*, and in June 1939 I saw a performance of *Les Troyens* of Berlioz similarly presented in their own characteristic style.

In the first week there was a *Parsifal* performance with Torsten Ralf as Parsifal, Herbert Janssen as Amfortas, Ludwig Weber as Gurnemanz, and the wonderful Kerstin Thorborg as Kundry. As with the rôles of Siegfried and Brunhilde, it was getting more and more difficult to find the ideal Parsifal.

Another of the German performances, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, was scheduled for the end of the season. Preetorius, who was in charge of the décor of that and *Orphée*, was then very busy in Berlin and Bayreuth as well as in London. His scenery was superb, and many people came to attend his scenic rehearsals.

The 29th of April was Sir Thomas's birthday, and I decided to prepare a "birthday table" for him in the continental fashion. At a Viennese confectioner's I ordered a big chocolate cake (a *Sachertorte*) in the form of a heart, which was decorated with enormous white icing initials "T. B." and a huge red candle in the middle. Sir Thomas was astonished, and impressed by the cake, which had the hearty approval of the other Covent Garden folk.

Later some of the singers whom he was then rehearsing joined us for a luncheon in his honor in his own office.

Sir Thomas had originally planned for an International Music Festival at the time of the Coronation Season. The interesting idea of inviting several continental orchestras was shelved in view of the numerous activities on foot. All that remained of this ambitious plan were two concerts of the Berlin Philharmonic under Furtwängler's direction, which had been arranged so that Furtwängler could start the *Ring* rehearsals immediately afterwards.

Sir Thomas did not forget the hospitality shown to him and his orchestra in Germany, and he devoted much care to this visit of the Berliners. He sent me to Victoria Station—probably with conscious irony—to meet Furtwängler and the orchestra, and to receive them in his and Covent Garden's names.

At the first evening Furtwängler conducted Beethoven's Choral Symphony, for which he had brought his soloists from Germany to sing with the English chorus.

A performance of the Ninth has always been a sacred occasion for Furtwängler. While he was conductor in Mannheim, he never allowed the work on his programs until after 1918. In later years Furtwängler performed the Ninth only on special occasions. After he had succeeded Richard Strauss as a conductor of the Berlin State Opera concerts in 1920, the Choral Symphony was always the feature of the last concert of the season. When he became the successor to Nikisch at the Leipzig *Gewandhaus* and the Berlin Philharmonic Concerts, the Ninth Symphony became a tradition of the Pension Fund Concert of both orchestras at the end of the regular cycle and was sold out for months ahead.

While Furtwängler was in charge of the Vienna Philharmonic Concerts, and also later on, the Vienna Orchestra always asked him to conduct their Pension Concert. In Vienna, too, for many years, it was the Choral Symphony which was given on that occasion. These Vienna performances of the Ninth were unforgettable. Prominent singers gave their services, the *Sing-Verein*, the chorus of the venerable *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* sang, and the Vienna Philharmonic played with fervor. The Viennese public, which eagerly awaited this special concert from year to year, listened with that rapt attention which they give to music, while Furtwängler himself, during the days that he devoted himself to this great work, seemed entirely to forget the real world.

This was the first time that he had given the Ninth in London, and a very wonderful performance it was. The sincerity of the slow movement, especially, in its holy simplicity, was deeply moving.

The evening after the second concert was devoted to a banquet given by Sir Thomas and the London Philharmonic Orchestra for the German guests, for which the members of the London Philharmonic Orchestra had been making weekly contributions for many months past. The two orchestras were invited to the Savoy Hotel, where in a special room everything was arranged in characteristic English style. Enormous joints of beef were

wheeled in by white-capped chefs, and wines flowed abundantly. The musicians, sitting at small tables, quickly joined their counterparts, as they always do on such occasions, and renewed their old friendships. There was, at the top table, a combination of guests which—considering Nazi times and principles—could only have been assembled by the independent Sir Thomas. He made one of his spiciest speeches at this dinner. Recounting his experiences on the German tour, on which he had been bored by the uniformity of all the addresses made to him which all stressed the “cultural link between the two countries,” he said:

“I made thirty-nine speeches, as many as there are articles in the Rubric, and all of them were different. On the other hand, our German hosts made thirty-nine speeches too, but all of them identical; which only goes to show the superior organization of the Teutonic mind.”

Friendship and serenity still reigned. Hitler had not yet been able to cast his shadow over all international musical life; but with inevitable tragedy, the gulf between the Germans and the world widened, and was becoming increasingly difficult to bridge.

When the concerts were over, the main rehearsals at Covent Garden were devoted to the *Ring*. Valkyries, Rhine-Maidens, and choruses were rehearsed and scenery was tried out. Many of the singers were, of course, used to Furtwängler, but the whole ensemble had to be rehearsed together. Performances of the *Ring* and their preparation are a strenuous and exhausting task and so Saturday afternoons and Sundays, usually free of rehearsals, had to be sacrificed to go through the principal scenes, especially the *Mannenchöre* of *Die Götterdämmerung*. At the close of the rehearsals, we would gather, talking all through the night about former performances of the *Ring*.

As is his nature, Furtwängler took the rehearsals with the deepest seriousness, and had little time or thought for anything else. Between and after rehearsals, however, we all met a great deal, and one or the other of the singers was always appearing in my office. Sir Thomas was always very kind, and when Furtwängler used to come up and peep through the door, he would call out cheerily, “What can I do for you, my lad?” He greatly liked the serious, sensitive musician, and, with his talent for making people comfortable, he invariably put even the shy and reserved Furtwängler at ease.

About this time the B.B.C. had just begun its television programs. They wished to combine propaganda for television with a compliment to the

famous German conductor, and so they asked whether Furtwängler would be willing to talk with Sir Adrian Boult on one program. After the text of their talk had been finally agreed upon, I accompanied them to the Alexandra Palace where the session was to take place. Furtwängler felt most uncomfortable while Sir Adrian submitted to the proceedings with unconcern and self-assurance. The whole program was endangered when Furtwängler worried so much when told that he had to be “made-up,” that he nearly lost courage for the talk.

The 12th of May was Coronation Day. At the Opera House *Aida* was being performed. At 7.20 P.M. all the Prime Ministers of the Dominions were to broadcast, and a speech by the British Premier was to conclude the program. Finally, at 8 P.M., the King spoke. Between the speeches and the performance, “God Save the King” was broadcast from the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, sung by Eva Turner, the great favorite of the Londoners, accompanied by the London Philharmonic conducted by Sir Thomas. The chorus and principals, numbering some five hundred, and the overflowing house, joined in. The Royal box was decorated with roses.

The day after the Coronation was fixed for the beginning of the *Ring*. Owing to the great demand, there was always a separate *Ring* subscription at Covent Garden, and for many London opera lovers the cycle had always been the chief interest of the season. Furtwängler does not like to conduct this work too often, but his feeling for the heroic is close to the spirit of the great trilogy. He passionately lives the music while conducting, forgetting all else and keeping his audience as breathless as himself.

His wonderful handling of the Orchestra was universally acclaimed, while many of the singers excelled in their parts. In *Rheingold*, Erich Zimmermann as Mime was the sensation of the evening, and in *Walküre* Völker, the Bayreuth Lohengrin, was a wonderful Siegmund, with Frieda Leider as Brunhilde, and Maria Müller as Sieglinde. Max Lorenz was the Siegfried of the first *Ring*, with Bockelmann as Wanderer. In *Die Götterdämmerung* Ludwig Weber, the magnificent Hunding of *Die Walküre*, was a sinister Hagen.

In the second *Ring* Lauritz Melchior, beloved for many years by his Covent Garden public, was the Siegfried, while the sensational feature of the second *Ring* was the first appearance of the new Brunhilde, Kirsten Flagstad. She was a born Wagnerian dramatic soprano, and had everything necessary for a Nibelungen heroine. Her voice mounted to its highest registers without trouble. She was extremely adaptable and collaborated well with Furtwängler who was fascinated by her voice. In the new *Holländer*

she sang Senta but with less success than Brunhilde. In *Tristan*, however, which came on in the last week of the Covent Garden Season, she was simply superb, and the triumphant ease of her fresh and effortless voice put all her colleagues in the shade.

With the second *Ring* Furtwängler's days in London were finished. He had a farewell lunch with Sir Thomas, and the two conductors parted on the best of terms.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

Meanwhile the opera season proceeded, sometimes smoothly, sometimes not. At the end of May came a production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, under the direction of the French conductor, Albert Wolff, from the *Opéra Comique*. It was a French cast with an English *Mélisande*, Lisa Perli, who had just the poetry for the part. The décor came from the *Théâtre des Champs Elysées* in Paris, where I had discovered it, and where Sir Thomas had inspected the *maquettes* put up for him when he was in Paris. However, when the scenery arrived, it had to be entirely overhauled. Among other deficiencies, it proved to be much too dark, probably owing to grime. The designer, a Russian, arrived, and it was necessary to work on the scenery day and night. Once Sir Thomas did not go to bed at all, and did not leave the Opera House until this problem seemed on the way to solution. The performance was a very interesting one, though perhaps caviar to the general. Toscanini, who, to the delight of the Italian singers, occasionally visited Covent Garden, attended the performance. He had a number of concerts with the B.B.C. Orchestra during the Coronation Season. He planned to give *Pelléas* in Salzburg later on.

1937

One fine day Friedelinde Wagner—then seventeen years old—the eldest daughter of Siegfried and Winifred suddenly arrived at Covent Garden. She had been sent to a school near Arundel, and was bored there. Apparently any independent action on her part had been strictly suppressed. During the *Ring*, the Bayreuth cast were, of course, all present, but there had been no sign of Friedelinde. However, the *Holländer* and *Tristan* were still to come—and so was Friedelinde! I had always had sympathy for “Maus,” a girl whose rebellious spirit, quick brain, and natural feeling for music had ever attracted me. When I first went to Bayreuth, she was twelve years old, and one of the most amusing and unmanageable of children.

My surprise at seeing Friedelinde was considerable, since I knew she should have been at school, where, of course, even pupils of seventeen do not usually make independent excursions. “Here I am,” said Maus as she walked into my office at Covent Garden. “Good gracious,” I said, “but what are we going to do with you?” At that moment, Frieda Leider, then the Bayreuth Brunhilde and Isolde and the confidential friend of Frau Wagner and Tietjen, suddenly appeared. “*Um Gottes Willen*, be careful,” she warned. “If they hear in Bayreuth that Maus is in London, there will be trouble. She

must get back to her school at once!” But to return Maus to an unwelcome destination was easier said than done. She definitely knew what she wanted. Not only did she want to hear opera in Covent Garden, but she badly wanted to meet Toscanini, her paternal friend, again. In spite of the latter’s rupture with Bayreuth, a close and charming friendship existed between these two. Maus behaved comparatively unobtrusively at Covent Garden. Sir Thomas gave instructions that she should be well looked after. All publicity was to be avoided, out of consideration for Bayreuth, but there is little discretion in an opera house, and one day I received an S.O.S. from Maus who was sitting in her box and about to be photographed. She was taken to the Royal box, where she met the Princesses Marie Louise and Helena Victoria, who had known her grandmother Cosima so well.

Maus remained in London as long as she wished before returning to her school. Later on, from the autumn of 1938, when she left Germany for good, she made London her headquarters before she went on to America in the spring of 1941.

The *Holländer* and the *Orphée* and the English opera *Don Juan de Mañara* by Eugene Goossens were to be the last new productions of the season. The *Orphée* had been wonderfully staged, and the Russian Ballet danced in it. It was sung in French, with a tenor instead of the usual alto, and Maggie Teyte was Euridice.

It was at that time that I was Sir Thomas’s guest at a farewell dinner in honor of Lionel Tertis, the famous English viola player, connoisseur, and teacher, who intended to retire from concert work on account of his rheumatic arm. It was most interesting to contrast the English festivity with the German counterparts I had known. Somehow in England, everything is more relaxed and natural. Petty jealousies and occasional grumbling are superficial compared to their capacity for team spirit. Thus over a hundred musicians of varying interests gathered at Pagani’s, the favorite restaurant of their profession for fifty years, united by a single thought, to honor the guest of the evening, Lionel Tertis.

Sir Hugh Allen, Sir Thomas Beecham, and Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams were the speakers, and each was brilliant in his own characteristic way. All of them spoke in a manner far less pompous and much more natural than Germans would have done, as did Tertis, who was so overcome that he was hardly able to speak.

Slowly the Covent Garden season came to a close, and towards the end of June other celebrations began to thin out. The last new production of

Covent Garden was the opera of the British composer and conductor, Eugene Goossens, *Don Juan de Mañara*, in which Lawrence Tibbett sang the principal rôle. Goossens himself conducted, and the whole Goossens family assembled for the occasion. They are a great English musical tribe of Flemish origin. The contemporary composer is the third Eugene Goossens. His grandfather, Eugene I, had been a conductor, his father, Eugene II, was conductor of the Carl Rosa Company, and Eugene Goossens III is a composer, and for years has been conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. His brother, Léon, one of the world's finest oboe players, was until the outbreak of the war, first oboe of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Both of his sisters are harpists, the one, Sidonie, with B.B.C., the other, Marie, with the London Philharmonic until she married one of its managers, the late Frederick Laurence. The Goossenses are a devoted family, and it is said that every week Eugene sends a cable to his old parents. The whole family, and a vast number of Goossens' fans, followed the performance with keen interest and satisfaction.

Finally, June 30th arrived, and with it the end of the season. The last performance was *Tristan*, conducted by Sir Thomas, with Walter Widdop, Flagstad, and Thorborg.

At the end of this memorable season there was a great demonstration of enthusiasm and Sir Thomas appeared before the curtain after it had fallen for the last time to respond with a speech:

The season has been longer than usual and has had several distinguished features. The most remarkable thing of all has been the press. Never before in the history of Covent Garden has the press attained so high a state of excellence.

We on our side have not been able to live up to it. We propose to devote the next six months to a careful reading of every word of abuse that has been written in the newspapers. We have become sadder and wiser people, for you know how seriously we take everything that is said about us. We only hope that you do the same, though the vast attendances suggest, I am afraid, that what they say has had no effect on you. [June 30, 1937.]

After this, Covent Garden quickly changed its complexion. The Russian Ballet made its entrance. The stage was always full of flowers sent to the dancers by their admirers. I was absolutely fascinated by these wonderful folk, who for many years had been intimately connected with the Royal

Opera House. They had the exclusive right to perform in the theater and no other ballet company was allowed at Covent Garden without their consent. Only those who have seen these women in their training kit, practising relentlessly, can form any idea of the overwhelming cost of their brief glamorous hour before the public.

Apart from the Covent Garden season and other special musical events, Toscanini conducted during the Coronation summer a series of concerts at the Queen's Hall for B.B.C., with which he had the most cordial relations. Boundless enthusiasm reigned at his concerts; yet the enthusiasm of the moment, great as it was, was no measure of the lasting impression made by such an event.

For a long time the public and press have acknowledged the magic qualities of Toscanini's baton and have accorded him a unique position. Toscanini has always cast a spell, and his genius stimulates a special brand of interest among musicians.

Perhaps it is because he has to conduct independently of the score that Toscanini, the fanatic of musical truth, adheres so conscientiously to accuracy and exactitude. His optical memory of scores—he even conducts all Wagner and Verdi operas by heart—is such that he knows exactly the place of every bar, and every marking on the sheet; it is a kind of phenomenon of memory. Then when he stands before the orchestra, he “hears” acoustically what his memory “knows” visually. He prepares a concert piece like a producer prepares an opera where every detail is fixed beforehand; everything is rehearsed with the orchestra in minute and careful work, to avoid, as far as possible, any risk at the time of the actual performance. Nothing is left to chance. Yet, the performance appears an inspired improvisation of persuasive truthfulness.

Discussions of his London performances dominated musical life and centered on the old problem of the “impeccable execution,” the faithful reproduction of the composer's intentions.

But during the Toscanini concerts, the box-office management of Queen's Hall was beset by other problems than those of music itself. The manager of Queen's Hall, Mr. Charles Taylor, told me his side of things: “Our chief difficulty,” he said, “was the enormous public interest in Toscanini, and it soon became plain to us that we had to find special means to deal with it.” The B.B.C. and the Queen's Hall management soon agreed that it would be unfair to sell the tickets only to those who could afford to sit on the Queen's Hall doorsteps before the box-office opened, and decided to

distribute them by lottery. Orders for seats were accepted by written application only. Over 17,000 letters were received. They were all numbered, and tickets were finally drawn from a drum; the inquiries were dealt with in the order in which the numbers were drawn. "Don't you believe that this story is a blind," Mr. Taylor concluded. "It was all done correctly, and there was no other way for anybody to get into a Toscanini concert."

There was, however, a way to listen to his rehearsals, to which a number of people were admitted on presenting a card with his own signature. I went as often as I could, and again felt that there is nothing more interesting than to listen to the creative work of a great conductor. These rehearsals had a special atmosphere of their own; it was like the gathering of a huge family assembled around the Toscaninis; Signora Toscanini was the center of friendly demonstrations, and had a kind word for everybody.

The last prominent event in the chain of Coronation festivities were two concerts by the Vienna Philharmonic under the direction of Bruno Walter at the end of June. Their first program comprised Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, played by Schnabel, and Bruckner's Eighth Symphony, before a prominent, distinguished audience.

The Vienna Philharmonic had a special etiquette for everything they did, particularly noticeable when they were on a tour. The superb self-assurance of every member of the orchestra and their ostentatious pride in belonging to this famous body of players was quite unique. As a matter of fact, every member of the Vienna Philharmonic felt himself to be a god, and expected to be treated like one, in Vienna, London, or anywhere else.

After the concert, I went out to Soho with some of the players and heard all their news. The ever-fluctuating musical fortunes of Toscanini, Walter, and Furtwängler were the very center of their world, and exclusively occupied the evening.

The Vienna Philharmonic's visit to London ended in one of the most brilliant gatherings to take place during the Coronation Season, a reception at the Austrian Legation. The great music room was filled with royalty, diplomats, great artists and scientists who had come to hear the music. A section of the orchestra played Beethoven's Wind Sextet, Elisabeth Schumann sang, accompanied by Bruno Walter, and finally, the new young leader of the Vienna Orchestra, Odnoposoff, played. His teacher, Professor Carl Flesch, listened, filled with pride and satisfaction. After the concert the whole audience intermingled with ease and informality.

So ended a most interesting and eventful time. Sir Thomas was already busy with his plans for the next opera season of 1938, and with all his concert programs for the winter. In the middle of July I left for the Continent with instructions to visit Bayreuth and Salzburg.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

Irresistibly drawn by memories and the desire to learn how the fine old university town had fared during the Nazi days, I stopped at Heidelberg on the way to Bayreuth. How far-off seemed my old university days!

1937

After completing my studies, I had often stayed at the old place. Heidelberg was not only a university—it was renowned for its concerts, and one of the most impressive festivals given by the German Brahms Society took place there in 1926 under Furtwängler’s direction. He and the Berlin Philharmonic frequently visited the romantic town on their tours, and thus contact with the friends living there had never been lost.

In spite of the indestructible beauty of the place, the atmosphere had changed. The Heidelberg of the past was no more.

I visited Furtwängler’s aged mother, daughter of Brahms’ great friend, the classical scholar Wendt. She sat in the library of her late husband, the famous archaeologist, closely following the life of her son, thus uniting interest in the past and the present—a survival of the intellectual and spiritual Heidelberg!

I visited my old professors, most of whom were living in seclusion. Their brilliant teachings, which had contributed so much to the spirit of Heidelberg, were suffocated by the Nazi philosophy. Heavy at heart, I said farewell and went on my way to Bayreuth.

By this time I had had sufficient contact with German artists in London, and had been to Germany frequently enough on Covent Garden business, to feel less self-conscious than I had in 1936.

Mausi Wagner was at the station to meet me, in an exciting dirndl dress with red heart-shaped buttons. I had looked after her at Covent Garden, and now she took me under her wing in Bayreuth. We immediately went off for a ride and when we turned at the wrong place, were promptly stopped by the police. “Heil Hitler! Your name and address please!” “Wagner, Wahnfried,” said Mausi, and the overawed policeman withdrew. We drove on to the *Eremitage*, the old palace of the Margraves of Bayreuth, where the unhappy Bavarian King Ludwig II had stayed during his last visit to Wagner. Bayreuth with its gently undulating landscape enthralled me again.

In the evening there was a rehearsal of the *Ring*. Frau Wagner invited me to sit with “the family”—hardly according to Bayreuth etiquette. When I had been there as Furtwängler’s secretary, it would have been unthinkable.

The Wagner children and the “aunts,” Contessa Gravina, Frau Daniela Thode, and Frau Eva Chamberlain sat together. This was the last time I saw the old Bayreuth generation—all have since died. The youngsters were in great form. Verena, the second girl, was more fragile and Liszt-like than ever; Wieland, the elder boy, had tried his hand at the new décor for *Parsifal* and was fully absorbed in his work. Little Wolfgang, passionately interested in the technical side of it all, rushed from one part of the theatre to the other. What opportunities those children had!

The next day I resumed my business. Sir Thomas had given me a letter for Tietjen explaining his tentative plans for the 1938 season in regard to German operas. He wanted suggestions for a cast for *Meistersinger*, *Rosenkavalier*, *Lohengrin*, and *Fliegende Holländer*. He was looking particularly for a new Senta. The cast for the *Ring* was as usual dependent on the Siegfried and Brunhilde. He wanted Furtwängler to conduct the *Ring* again, and proposed that Tietjen come as producer.

After the oracles of Bayreuth had given utterance, I sent a detailed report to Sir Thomas. He had refrained from expressing his own opinion or wishes, for actually, he wanted to hear the views of the others. Sir Thomas does not disdain to ask other people’s opinions, and does so perfectly frankly. If the advice proves suitable he makes use of it; if not, he ignores it. He never feels it to be a loss of prestige if he utilizes experiences gained, from other people. “Go and find out from your friends what they think,” he said to me when I left, “that will save me a lot of trouble.” His handwritten reply to my long report from Bayreuth was a characteristic Beecham document.

Although he has very strong views about singers, he shows a great deal of human understanding and skill in handling them. Never, for example, would he let a singer feel during an opera season that he had already decided not to engage him again. Sir Thomas is rumored definitely to dislike opera singers. As far as I have noticed, he is kind, even paternal to them, and remains unruffled whatever their foibles. Yet the rumor is supported by the following story:

During the last act of Massenet’s *Don Quixote* Madame Sadowa, who sang the part of *la belle Dulcinéa*, failed to synchronize the concluding passage accurately with Chaliapin (Don Quixote) and Petrov (Sancho

Panza). After repeated expostulations on the part of Sir Thomas she finally exclaimed:

“I cannot help it, Mr. Chaliapin always dies too soon.”

“Madam, you must be profoundly in error,” said Sir Thomas, “no operatic star has yet died half soon enough for me.”

His reply to my Bayreuth report contained a number of “friendly” comments. But it also contained his own ideas on the casts, some of which did not fit in at all with the views of the *Festspielhügel*. To reconcile the divergent opinions was a difficult, delicate task.

From Bayreuth I went to spend my holidays on the Starnberg Lake, and then, at the request of Sir Thomas, I went to Salzburg. The surroundings and the old episcopal town, were still beautiful but the spirit and atmosphere of Mozart’s birthplace had undergone radical changes.

Many musicians and intellectuals had their homes just outside Salzburg, safely protected from the bustle of the festival for which people from all over the world had gathered. It presented a strange mixture, this Salzburg public. There were the native Austrians and there were Germans who no longer had a home in Germany; there were the international music pilgrims who would not miss their Salzburg visit for anything, and there were the sensation hunters who did not come for the performances only, and who filled the place with their worldly activities.

The festival community itself was divided into many cliques and coteries. The Vienna Philharmonic, with their complicated interests, dominated the battlefield. Then there was the Reinhardt clique, the Walter clique, and last but not least, the Toscanini following, with its enthusiastic music lovers, its Italians, and other Toscanini “fans.”

Immediately after my arrival, I was dragged to the Café Bazar, where members of the Vienna Philharmonic were waiting for me. Again conversations revolved round the customary subjects, the eternal Viennese problems whose aspect changes according to whoever holds the balance of power at the moment, and the temporary political and financial state of affairs.

I discussed Covent Garden business with the director of the *Festspielgemeinde*, Dr. Kerber, who was also the director of the Vienna State Opera, and, of course, attended rehearsals and performances.

The program was rich and varied, and I heard a magnificent performance of Verdi's *Requiem*, conducted by Toscanini, and saw him and his family afterwards. Gluck's *Orphée* under Bruno Walter was wonderful as far as the music was concerned, though the production did not appeal to me nearly as much as the simpler, more impressive Berlin and Covent Garden productions.

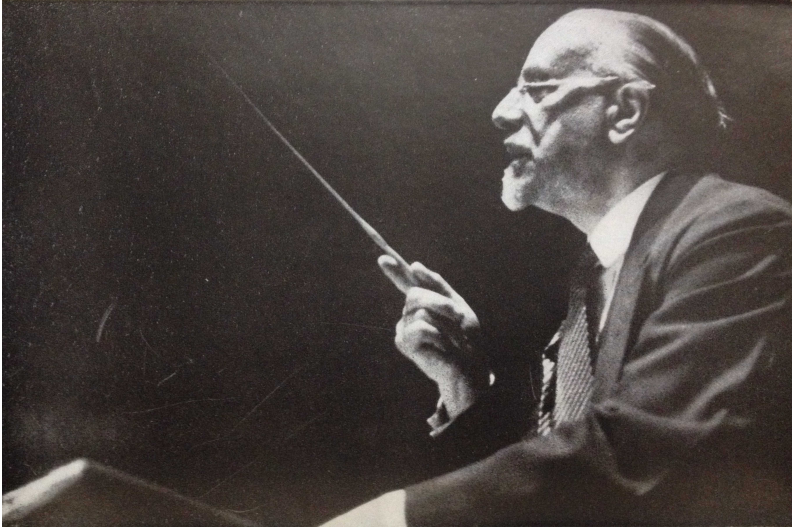
On leaving Austria I almost got into trouble. The Gestapo official on the German side suddenly refused to let me re-enter Germany. Although my passport, valid for five years, gave him no grounds, he began to question me in detail, and wanted to know, among other things, why I was living in London. I tried, however, a method I had never been able to use before because I had always been the weaker party. I was cool and rather rude. "I am staying in London because I have been appointed to Covent Garden." "Why have you been appointed there," the man then wanted to know. "You had better ask Sir Thomas Beecham," I answered. "I am on a business trip to Salzburg and Bayreuth, and you will see from my papers that I am expected in Bayreuth during this week." It worked.

When Sir Thomas returned to London, he spent some days working at the Opera House. His main concern at the time was to secure the London Philharmonic Orchestra financially for the coming year. A schedule was drawn up for the whole year, week by week. All engagements were correctly entered, and then it was calculated how much money was still lacking to ensure the financial solvency of the orchestra. Sir Thomas enjoyed not only the artistic side of his orchestra, he was diligent and meticulous in evolving schemes such as this for a year's activities as well.

I reported the result of my negotiations for the opera season to Sir Thomas at length. Fortunately, he has great human understanding, and so I could tell him quite frankly how I had found things in Bayreuth, as well as in Munich and Salzburg. Sir Thomas wanted an assurance, however, that Furtwängler was again going to conduct the *Ring*, and repeat the beautiful performance of the Coronation Season, which had been so carefully rehearsed. Furtwängler had not yet definitely agreed. He had done so with reservations, and so had Tietjen.

After listening to my report, Sir Thomas simplified matters at once. For him reservations did not exist. "Now, listen, Doctor," he said very decidedly, "what you are trying to convey to me is all very well, but I have to consider only one thing, what London wants, and with all due respect to our friends, I must make my decisions according to London only." "Well," I replied, "you alone can settle things. I am at the end of my wits." He was not, and drew up

a letter for me indicating exactly what I was to say in order to remove the obstacles. This was effective, and the situation was clarified.



Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

While we in London were already preparing for the winter season, on the Continent the summer festivals were still in full swing. The Salzburg Festival of 1937 lasted until September and included widely different elements. The principal figure was Toscanini, who, in spite of the fact that all the other musicians were linked with Austria's musical life by old tradition, was doubtless the greatest attraction of the festival.

1937

After the assassination of Dollfuss on July 25, 1934, and at the time of the consistent underground Nazi activities in Austria, matters in Salzburg went from bad to worse. The receipts were reduced because the influx from Germany was stopped by the closing of the frontier between Bavaria and the *Salzkammergut*, and by the German passport regulations with regard to Austria.

Toscanini was on very friendly terms with the Austrians at the time and conducted frequently in Vienna. He helped to collect funds for the rebuilding of the Salzburg *Festspielhaus*, and was the motive power, as well as the leading figure of the festival. Hardly a room was to be had in the neighborhood of Salzburg, because a public from Paris, London, and New York, and many Italians and other adherents of Toscanini had flocked to the *Salzkammergut*.

For many years Furtwängler had been invited to conduct at Salzburg but he had always declined, preferring a quiet and restful summer. In 1937, however, he had listened to the persistent entreaties of the Vienna Philharmonic, and had consented to conduct Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the end of August. From all accounts this magnificent performance was one of the highlights of the festival.

Toscanini was rumored to have openly disapproved of Furtwängler's invitation to Salzburg. Doubtless there had been some discussion that it would be discreet for a conductor of Bayreuth to avoid Salzburg. As soon as he heard of it, Furtwängler went to discuss the question with Toscanini, who, with his forthright nature, told him his ideas on this delicate matter. In his opinion it was impossible to conduct in both a free and a shackled country, and the artist had to make a choice between the two—in this case between Salzburg and Bayreuth.

For Furtwängler such an ultimatum would normally have presented no problem at all. He, so much in need of quiet and rest in the summer, would actually have been relieved to have “neither Salzburg nor Bayreuth.” Somehow this incident and the exchange of opinion between the two conductors leaked out, and became the topic of the day.

The problem “Salzburg or Bayreuth” was symbolic of the whole European situation. It was to be solved in a manner as unexpected as it was tragic. In March 1938 Hitler marched into Austria.

Musical life in England at that time was flourishing, and developed a more international character than ever before. No political forebodings yet marred plans and their execution.

Sir Thomas Beecham concentrated his interest and energy on English concert and opera life. For the 1937-38 season he had a number of invitations to conduct on the Continent, but he canceled the whole list with one stroke, saying, “I am needed here, not elsewhere.” England benefited greatly by this loyal attitude, which inspired all the musical activities connected with him. Each successive day was filled with work for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, for Covent Garden, the Royal Philharmonic Society, and the provincial societies.

In addition to old, established events, new enterprises developed. A group of young enthusiasts and artists had decided to give a series of Mozart Concerts at the Cambridge Theatre, and elected Sir Thomas, to whom much of the increasing popularity of Mozart in England was due, president. Miss Betty Humby, later Lady Beecham, a keen Mozart player, approached Sir Thomas with her plan for the new Mozart series. It met with his full approval, and he launched the enterprise with a short article in the *Daily Telegraph*, September 4, 1937:

The artistic world generally has for long been of the opinion that Mozart is the greatest musical genius that has yet appeared among us. But beyond the pious acceptance of this belief, it has not begun to adventure. In other words, it is not paying him the more practical compliment of playing or listening to him.

Of course, everyone is acquainted with a limited number of his works, mostly of the latest period—four or five operas and about the same number of symphonies and concertos. These and little else constitute the acquaintance of the bulk of people with the immense output of this unique prodigy.

But very few, I venture to say, outside the small circle of genuine Mozart lovers realize that the catalogue of his achievement runs into nearly seven hundred pieces, of which to my own knowledge, something like two hundred are of striking originality and beauty.

The aim of this new organization, as I understand it, is to make a beginning in the direction of redressing this balance of neglect; and it is because I heartily approve any enterprise of the kind that I have accepted the office of President.

The larger revelation of the transcendent gifts of Mozart is a crying need in our present condition of dubious culture and civilization. His spirit, more than of any other composer, is made of that stuff which can provide the most telling and efficacious antidote to the chaotic thought and action of a blatant age!

If I were a dictator, I should make it compulsory for every member of the population between the ages of four and eighty to listen to Mozart for at least one-quarter of an hour daily for the coming five years.

At this time Herbert Janssen suddenly turned up in London. He was one of Germany's greatest baritones, a "pure Aryan," and a wonderful *lieder*-singer and interpreter of Wagner. For many years a member of the Berlin State Opera and Bayreuth, he was always the first to be asked to sing the parts of Kurwenal, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Amfortas. He had been forced to leave his home within two hours and to escape to England. What was the reason for his flight? The intrigues, denunciations, envy, jealousy of the Third Reich. He had brought his main asset with him, his wonderful voice, but it is one thing to have a background of country and two world-famous Opera Houses, and quite another to have to start life afresh in exile.

When I had come to England as a refugee in 1936, and no one yet knew of my appointment, Janssen had been one of the first to befriend me. Now that I had taken root, I was glad to invite him to stay with me, and to help him to overcome the shock and grief of this upheaval.

Sir Thomas characteristically asked few questions and acted decisively. For seventeen years Janssen had come regularly to sing at the Covent Garden International Seasons. Now Sir Thomas engaged him for a "Beecham Sunday Concert," thus laying the basis for his new financial security.

At the beginning of November I went to Berlin with Sir Thomas, who was to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic and also record the entire *Zauberflöte* with the Berlin Philharmonic and a carefully selected cast, mainly from the Berlin State Opera.

Inquiries made on behalf of Herbert Janssen at that time were either met with vain promises, or with icy politeness and impenetrable faces. Integrity and the sense of right and wrong had vanished entirely.

No sooner had I returned to England than another political exile confronted me—my old friend, Pau Casals, who had come to London to play Tovey's Cello Concerto with the B.B.C. Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult. This small stocky man, with his thick spectacles and his pipe in his mouth, does not look as an artist is expected to look. The moment he begins to play, however, he is transformed. His face softens, and looks almost as though he is in a trance. Never does art become routine for him; it is always invariably the same mysterious inspiration. Nevertheless he was a firm and determined character, and a fervent patriot. He was indomitable and unyielding even in small matters. An iron will lay behind requests made in his soft and mellow voice.

In 1937 he had had to leave his own home. A passionate Catalan, and an ardent democrat, he had been driven out of Spain by Franco's forces, and was now living near the Spanish prison camps for refugees at Perpignan. Our friendship was of long standing, but we had not met since the Brahms Centenary in Vienna in 1933. I went to see him the day he arrived in London.

We talked for hours and hours—of Germany, Spain, himself, and myself. In the end we came round to music, and I said, "So often since we last met I have longed to hear you play Bach's D Minor Suite for, once heard, it can never be forgotten." "*Attendez,*" he said, unpacked his cello, and there in the prosaic hotel room, he began to play. The sublime music of the old *Kapellmeister* of Coethen banished for a while the despair we both felt in face of the tragedies of our countries.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

The London musical calendar for 1938 was complete; there was hardly a day without a musical event.

1938

Mengelberg came to England at the beginning of the year, and rehearsed the *Vorspiel und Liebestod* from *Tristan* for his Royal Philharmonic Society Concert. He treated the Orchestra as if they had never played or heard the music before. The London Philharmonic does not show—at any rate for a long time—what it thinks; but it does think a good deal, and very independent thoughts they are! The relations between the orchestra and Sir Thomas were always easy and cordial. He always treated a rehearsal as a joint undertaking with the orchestra. “Let us do this again,” he would say. “Let us try it this way.” The musicians were entirely unself-conscious with him. Instinctively they accorded him the artistic authority which he did not expressly claim. Thus he obtained the best from them, and they gave it without reserve.

Mengelberg did not respect this tradition. His rehearsal manners were notorious, and his interminable lectures a torture to orchestral musicians. I was on tenterhooks throughout the rehearsal, and was not in the least surprised when a member of the orchestra said to me, “If he goes on like this there will be a hell of a row.”

I had known Mengelberg ever since 1924, when I had met him in New York with Furtwängler. He had been in charge of the New York Philharmonic for many years, and was a great favorite with New Yorkers. Apart from his musical qualities, he was a sociable man, who did not mind sitting up talking the whole night after a concert. He entertained lavishly, and since he traveled on a diplomatic passport, was able to bring along a supply of liquor, which greatly added to the popularity of his festivities in dry America. There were three conductors during the 1927 season of the New York Philharmonic, Mengelberg, Furtwängler and Toscanini, Furtwängler directly following Mengelberg. When we arrived at our first stop on tour with the orchestra, Mr. Salter, the baggage master of the New York Philharmonic, asked me when transferring Furtwängler’s luggage: “And where is the case?” Only gradually did I understand that the “case” meant the crate of liquor which Mengelberg took with him on tour with the orchestra. Furtwängler, who was a teetotaller, could not compete in this respect.

In other respects, however, he could compete with him only too well. New Yorkers, in spite of all their enthusiasm for Mengelberg, who had for many years trained their Philharmonic, took to Furtwängler and afterwards to Toscanini, which ultimately resulted in Mengelberg's eclipse.

Years later, at a banquet in Amsterdam given by the *Concertgebouw* for the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Mengelberg complained bitterly about their lack of gratitude.

I felt that I could ease his situation with the London Philharmonic and went to talk to him in the rehearsal intermission. In the course of this conversation I managed to mention casually that this orchestra had played *Tristan* under Beecham, Furtwängler, and Bruno Walter. I think he understood.

At the end of January Furtwängler arrived in London with the Berlin Philharmonic. Nobody could foresee that this was to be their last visit before the outbreak of the war and that from February onwards sinister political shadows were to fall on life in England. Some of his old friends came to meet Furtwängler after the concert. That particular evening deepened my misgivings about Furtwängler's position. Although I knew that his apparent toleration of the Nazi régime was superimposed on his deep loyalty to all that remained of the old Germany, even this superficial acceptance of a system that was betraying his country grieved me deeply. After he had left for the Continent I wrote to him quoting the following moving passage from Stefan Zweig's new book, *Magellan*:

“The man of creative temperament is guided by other and higher laws than those of nationality. One who has a task to perform, a discovery to make, or a deed to do on behalf of mankind, is not truly a citizen or subject of any country, for his loyalty is given to his work. To one authority alone will he bow, that which the task itself imposes on him, and he will find it permissible to ignore the interest of one state or one epoch, providing he is true to the obligations laid upon him by his destiny and his peculiar talents.”

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

Early in 1938 there were new portents of trouble to come. Hitler had not made his usual traditional speech on January 30th, the anniversary of his becoming German *Reichskanzler*. A reshuffle took place in the army and high government posts. The cautious Foreign Minister, von Neurath, who advised against violent action, was shelved. Ribbentrop was recalled from London to succeed him as Foreign Minister.

1938

The precarious, delicate Austrian internal political situation was being threatened by perturbing influences of German origin. Schuschnigg was inveigled to Berchtesgaden to see Hitler, and was forced to agree to reorganize the Austrian Cabinet by February 15th, and to accept Seyss-Inquart as Minister of the Interior, which not only opened the Cabinet to the Nazis, but secured their control over the police.

How little did the world seem to realize that the desperate struggles which were taking place in Austria were the last agonies of a free nation! Yet, in America, some seem to have had a better prophetic sense, because on February 17th Toscanini had informed the Austrian Government by cable from New York, that in future he would not conduct in Salzburg nor anywhere else in Austria.

On Sunday morning, the 20th of February, two paragraphs appeared in the *Sunday Times*. One reported a telegram which Bruno Walter, then musical director of the Vienna Opera, had sent to Toscanini, urging him not to desert Salzburg, where everything was to remain unchanged. The other announced that Bruno Walter's contract with the Vienna State Opera had been renewed for three years! What a moment to announce this—with the Nazis at the door! So far as the musical world was concerned, the news was reassuring to some; but others saw that Austrian life was fated to pass through the same vicissitudes as that of Germany.

On February 26th I visited the Austrian Minister about some musical matter. He was a passionate Austrian, and for seventeen years had represented the interests of his country at the Court of St. James. Outwardly he was calm. We talked about his beloved Salzburg, also about the Walter and Toscanini question, and I felt how clearly he realized the imminent danger. "How is it possible, your Excellency, that you can be so calm?" I asked. "Crises make for calmness," he replied. It was certainly a crisis—he

knew it. Nevertheless he did not cancel the long-planned reception for the Opera Circle at which Mr. John Christie of Glyndebourne was to speak. It was to be the last reception at the Austrian Legation.

On March 11th, Schuschnigg offered his resignation, and ended his broadcast with the words, "God save Austria." Then the variations of the famous Kaiser Quartet by Haydn, the theme of which formed the beautiful National Anthem of Austria, were played. Then, records of Austrian classical music were broadcast for some time. To the last moment, the Austrian radio was controlled by loyal officials—then suddenly came the *Horst Wessel Lied*. Austrian freedom was dead.

Schuschnigg was arrested within an hour of his broadcast. *Oesterreich* became *Ostmark* and was soon "nazified." What had taken five years in Germany was accomplished there with ruthless determination within a few weeks. Mass arrests, mass shootings, dismissals, "Aryan" legislation, suicides, persecution, despair. Emigration from Austria started at once. Refugees from Nazi Germany, who had already built up a new life in Austria, found it ended with one stroke. Those who had emigrated once, again found themselves on a pilgrimage into the unknown. Many Austrians, not driven by actual necessity, also prepared to leave their country.

Everyone who valued Austria and its traditions was deeply concerned at the changes wrought by the Nazis. German cultural life had been *gleichgeschaltet* by the Nazis in a slow and painful process, but *Gleichschaltung* in Austria was no longer an experiment—it was merely a question of technique.

The *Wiener Staatsoper* was one of the first institutions to feel the change. Bruno Walter, for the second time in a prominent position in a country which was in the grip of Hitler, was fortunately in Holland at the time. Since he was conducting a great deal in France, he went there, and received French citizenship by a special decree, but he did not enjoy his new nationality long. In 1940, he again fled Hitler's advance to a new home and a richer field of activity in America. Since the Nazis could not find him in Vienna, they sealed his flat, and when he became a Frenchman confiscated his belongings and sold them by auction.

The *untragbar* members of the State Opera immediately disappeared from the scene, while others seized the opportunity to push themselves into the foreground. The Vienna Philharmonic—that world-famous orchestra which celebrated its centenary in 1942—succumbed immediately to Nazi

control. Their active chairman, a great admirer of Toscanini and Bruno Walter, vanished immediately and appeared soon afterwards in Canada.

A number of members were pensioned off at once, among them the aged Professor Arnold Rosé, who had been the concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic for fifty-seven years. The patriarch of the orchestra, as he was called in Vienna, was the only honorary member of the Philharmonic from the ranks of the players. He and Professor Friedrich Buxbaum, the renowned and witty principal cellist of the Vienna State Opera, came to London shortly afterwards. A new Rosé Quartet was founded, and deeply moved an audience with their playing of Haydn's Kaiser Quartet.

The *Musikvereinsgebäude* in the *Canovagasse* also fell an immediate prey to the Nazi spirit. Whenever I had accompanied Furtwängler, and traveled for Covent Garden, my first visit in Vienna had always been to see the enthusiastic Secretary of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, Dr. Friedrich Dlabac, a passionate devotee of music generally, and—like so many Viennese—an excellent chamber music player himself. It was the hub of the musical world where everything concerning music was known even before it happened. Here, too, were the archives of the Society, administered by people to whom the work meant everything; their priceless manuscripts, the portraits of musicians, and their letters. Here was the office of the Philharmonic, a shrine testifying to their great tradition, with their *Ehrenwand*—the wall displaying the photos of all the artists who had taken part in their work during their century-long existence. Here was their legendary attendant, Effenberger, himself a great crayon artist. Here lingered the air breathed by Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, and Brahms.

Soon most of those who had worked in the *Musikvereinsgebäude* were denied access to their offices. They were rapidly replaced. Dlabac did not survive the fact that strangers were working havoc in his office sanctuary. Soon afterwards he died of heart failure.

In Germany the Mendelssohn monument had been removed from in front of the Leipzig *Gewandhaus*, the bust of Joseph Joachim from the *Hochschule für Musik* in Berlin, and from the *Beethoven Haus* in Bonn, where the Joachim Quartet contributed unforgettable hours of musical inspiration to the Beethoven Festivals. In Vienna, too, much was sacrificed to the idea that with the removal of symbols the spirit could be destroyed. The portraits of Mahler and Walter, and the fine engraving of Rosé by Schmutzer disappeared from the historic wall of the Philharmonic office. The famous bust of Gustav Mahler by Rodin was removed from the great

foyer of the Vienna State Opera, and the *Gustav Mahlerstrasse* renamed *Meistersingerstrasse*.

Yet for many people there life went on as before. At the opera, many artists, not affected themselves, continued their work, and everything had settled down to the new order when, on Hitler's birthday on April 20, 1938, a gala performance of *Die Meistersinger* took place in the presence of the Führer.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

At that time Covent Garden was inundated with letters from singers, *corrépétiteurs*, and conductors who wanted to leave Vienna. Moving letters arrived even from members of the Vienna Opera chorus and ballet appealing for help. As far as was possible at that late hour we responded; Sir Thomas was always willing to assist in real need and distress, as I knew from my own experience. A number of international artists who could actually have remained in Vienna left as soon as possible. Kerstin Thorborg, for instance, the excellent Norwegian contralto, left on the night of the Nazis' entry, never to return. The incomparable Elisabeth Schumann, whose art was a high light of Viennese musical life, immediately left for London with her family. Lotte Lehmann, who soon after Hitler's advent had ceased to sing in Germany and concentrated on Vienna and Salzburg, was in New York at the time of the *Anschluss* and never went back; instead we welcomed her and many others at Covent Garden that summer. On the day she landed from America, she sang in *Rosenkavalier*, and it was said that her breakdown during the performance was due to the news she received about her family in Vienna.

1938

More than ever was this Opera House a last sanctuary, not only for artists, but in many respects for the public too. Among the audience there were many people for whom their own soil had become dangerous, and who were grateful to find a fragment of their own lost world in the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Anna Mahler, a gifted sculptor, the daughter of Composer Gustav Mahler, came to London as a refugee, and seeing a poster advertising *Zauberflöte* for the night of her arrival, rang me up immediately and came to the Opera House. By a strange coincidence she shared a box with Friedelinde Wagner, who, though in a different position with regard to the Nazis, was quite determined by this time to sever her connection with Germany.

Although the casts were selected as far as possible without regard to the political situation, life at the Opera House reflected the trend of events more than it had formerly.

A number of great artists who had in the old days been too busy at Vienna and Salzburg now came to Covent Garden. There was Richard Tauber, the great favorite of the Viennese, and Erich Kleiber, a wanderer since his voluntary departure from the Berlin State Opera, the day after

Furtwängler's resignation on December 4, 1934. He had taken root again in his native Austria, and had gone from time to time to conduct in South America and other countries. Now he was an exile again. Rose Pauly, the inspired interpreter of *Elektra* and *Salome* came to us too.

The Season started with a performance of *Zauberflöte* conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham.

A first night at Covent Garden still presented the same splendid picture. The German Ambassador, von Dirksen, who had taken a box for the whole season still sat as a matter of course among the representatives of all the countries menaced by Nazi Germany.

The London production of *Zauberflöte* took place under a lucky star. Artists and audience equally enjoyed the immortal music. Tauber sang Tamino. The scenery had come from Berlin. When Sir Thomas decided to do this work, I remembered the performance under Bruno Walter in 1926 at the *Charlottenburger Opernhaus*. The scenery had been painted after the water-colors and engravings of the poetical old décor by Schinkel, which was ideal for the *Zauberflöte*. I made inquiries, and found that it was not being used at present, and possibly therefore available to us. Sir Thomas went to see the *maquettes* at the Berlin *Theatermuseum*, and decided immediately to use the Schinkel décor for his London production.

Schinkel had drawn twenty-six sketches for *Zauberflöte*, the first of which he designed in 1815. On January 18, 1816, a performance of this opera took place at the *Berliner Königlichen Theater*, and it was reviewed in the *Vossische Zeitung* on January 20, 1816. The Schinkel scenery is reproduced in the catalogue of the interesting *Zauberflöte Ausstellung* of 1928 at Salzburg. The original colored copper plates of two of the most beautiful designs—the entrance to Sarastro's Temple, Act I, Scene 5, and Sarastro's Garden on an island, Act II, Scene 7—are in the Music Library of Paul Hirsch, whose great collection of about 25,000 volumes of music and books on music is considered the most important of all privately owned music libraries. It was transferred in 1936 from Frankfurt-on-Main to England, and is now on loan at the University Library, Cambridge. The collection includes amongst other notable sections, a great number of rare theoretical works, over a thousand full-score operas from 1600 to the present, and is especially rich in early printed editions, in Mozart literature and a few original manuscripts by Mozart, the string quintet in D major—Koechel 593 among them.

For connoisseurs, however, the event of the Season was Strauss' *Elektra*. Who could resist this marvellous performance, in which the first-rate cast—Rose Pauly, Kerstin Thorborg, Herbert Janssen, and Hilde Konetzni—cooperated with the magnificent achievement of the orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham.

He was keyed up to an unusual pitch. *Elektra* (Rose Pauly), intoxicated by the vehemence of the conductor, at the most dramatic moment gripped her delicate sister Crysotemis (Hilde Konetzni), so hard that the poor woman burst into tears. The public was in an ecstasy, and Rose Pauly declared that she had never sung *Elektra* under such brilliant leadership.

Many musicians and musical enthusiasts from all over the world were present at this performance. The late Stefan Zweig, intimate friend of Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Toscanini, and many other famous musicians, wrote to Sir Thomas:

May 6, 1938,
49 Hallam Street,
London, W. 1.

Dear Sir Thomas,

Allow me a sincere word of congratulation. I have heard many a performance of *Elektra*, from the very first one. I have heard those of Mahler and Richard Strauss himself (with the unforgettable Bahr Mildenburg) but never in my life have I heard one more perfect than yesterday evening. I shall remain thankful to you forever. Sincerely yours,

STEFAN ZWEIG.

When Richard Strauss heard that Sir Thomas intended to give *Elektra* during the International Season in 1938, he presented him with the first and the last page of the full score, handwritten and bearing a very appreciative dedication. During the air raids of September 1940, Sir Thomas's house suffered a direct hit, and this memento of a lifelong friendship suffered the fate of so many irreplaceable treasures.

The Covent Garden public was very exacting. It demanded its International Opera Season. However, when the season was arranged with great difficulties and financial sacrifices, there were still dissenting voices. Some did not want Italians, and others objected to Germans. It was 1938!

Sir Thomas never mentioned to me that he had been reproached for engaging the normally very popular Furtwängler for the *Ring*. He had invited him solely for artistic reasons—because he wanted to have the famous Wagner expert as conductor for his Season. However, the net profits of the *Ring* fell in 1938 by several hundred pounds.

It had never been the custom of Sir Thomas to discuss things while they were in a state of flux. He always considers matters for himself, makes his decision, and presents it to his entourage as a *fait accompli*. Nor would the hectic life at the Opera House have permitted long deliberations. So far, he had not discussed the European political situation, but one day in June he suddenly broached the subject.

We were sitting in his office at Covent Garden, working, and he began to talk. He told me that opinion in England had changed completely with regard to the Nazis—even in those circles hitherto friendly towards Germany. Diplomatic relations were the only link between the two countries; otherwise there were few friendly feelings left. The inhuman acts perpetrated by the Nazis in Germany and Austria, passively tolerated by the Germans, were too outrageous to a free England.

He told me quite plainly that he would not accept any future invitations to Germany. This was a hint to me to see that no such invitations reached him. He wanted to avoid having to hurt the feelings of his German colleagues, with many of whom he was on friendly terms.

Despite these stormy portents Covent Garden carried on, and artists from all over the world continued to participate in the International Season of 1938, which ended with a performance of *Die Meistersinger* on June 17th, under the direction of Sir Thomas.

Plans for 1939 were made immediately.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

On May 21, 1938, the first Czech crisis occurred. There were rumors of German troop concentrations near the Czech border. England and France declared that they would not tolerate an invasion, and the British Ambassador to Germany made preparations for his departure from Berlin. Hitler was a gambler, but there was yet no necessity to risk everything in one throw of the dice. Thus the danger was temporarily overcome. Yet Germany did not relax its pressure on Czechoslovakia. Inevitably the last democracy on the Continent opened its doors to the Nazis.

1938

On July 9th I went to Germany on holiday and business combined. My personal friends seemed unchanged, and all business transactions went as smoothly as ever.

After a short stay in Berlin I went to Bayreuth for three days and there saw the general rehearsal of *Tristan* with the new Preetorius scenery. Once more I saw all my friends, once more I succumbed to the charm of the *Festspielhügel*. I was not tempted to go to Salzburg, which was being quickly and radically reorganized as if Max Reinhardt, Hofmannsthal, Bruno Walter, and Toscanini had never existed. Of course, it was easy to carry on with the united Austro-German artists, and the Italians were only too eager to take part. Furtwängler, who originally had wanted to refuse, after lengthy negotiations agreed to conduct four *Meistersinger* performances and one concert.

It was another compromise between his original decision and the pressure of the Nazis, all the more regrettable since the performances did not turn out as well as they should have. Bayreuth was not well disposed to the production of Wagner operas in Salzburg. Furtwängler, who had broken with Bayreuth, had consented to go to Salzburg only on condition that he should conduct *Die Meistersinger*. However, he was not able to get a first-class cast. The necessary artists, most of them members of the Berlin State Opera who also sang at Bayreuth, could not obtain the necessary leave. Hitler is alleged to have supported this Bayreuth policy against Salzburg, although for many reasons Salzburg was also a useful tool to him.

On July 24th, the world *première* of Strauss' new opera, *Der Friedenstag*, took place in Munich. On this occasion music lovers,

publishers, and music critics from all over the world assembled in Germany, probably for the last time before the war.

Germany was full of war rumors. At the Starnberg Lake people could not sleep at night because of the trains incessantly rolling towards the Czech frontier. But even then I could not accept the monstrous idea of another war.

On August 22nd I left Germany for the last time.

One afternoon, an English friend of mine suggested that we dine with some friends in Surrey. After about an hour's drive, we arrived at a beautiful English country house.

When we entered the hall, whom did I find among the guests? Dr. "Putzi" Hanfstängl, who after his flight from Germany had settled in a London suburb. Seeing him brought memories of the sinister first months of the Hitler régime flooding back. Hanfstängl had then been Hitler's press chief and had a great influence over the Führer, who listened eagerly to his gossip and his piano playing, and accepted his "musical judgment." He had enlightened Hitler on German musical life as it was, and as it should be and because of him, Hindemith's head had "rolled," and according to my information, my own head, too.

Hanfstängl had used his political power to push his musical friends. One day when a concert had been arranged with a famous pianist as soloist he had called the Berlin Philharmonic office and shouted through the telephone: "You must have Wilhelm Backhaus (then the favorite of the Führer) and no one else!" Without awaiting a reply, he slammed down the receiver. That call had been, so far, my only personal encounter with the famous "Putzi."

Hanfstängl, as a Bavarian, felt particularly called upon to interest himself in Furtwängler's affairs because the latter had grown up in Munich. Thus he was said to have been obsessed by my "case." He had not the slightest idea of the work he felt it his duty to interfere with, nor of the difficulties he was creating for his beloved Furtwängler, when he hinted to Hitler that Furtwängler's reliance on me was rooted not in my work but in my being indispensable to him in other respects. The Führer readily swallowed every word of this myth, so intolerable to his racial obsession.

However, Hanfstängl, who was meeting me personally for the first time, shook hands warmly with me, saying, "Dear Fräulein Doktor, I am so happy that things turned out well for you after all," as if he were my lifelong friend.

“What!” I cried. “How dare you say such a thing! You, who always told Hitler that I had three children by Furtwängler, and who were instrumental in making him treat us as he did!” I was in a great state of excitement, but our hostess kept the situation in hand. She took my arm and said: “You two had better have a talk alone in the other room. Here you are, and here is some sherry.”

Meanwhile, the ominous month of September arrived. It was a golden English autumn. The Russian Ballet started in Covent Garden on September 1st, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra was playing. Sir Thomas, who always declared that September is the finest month of the year, had retired to the country because the orchestra did not need him for the moment.

Nevertheless, he was quite likely to appear at Covent Garden just when he was least expected.

London was sweltering under the autumn heat, and as usual hardly anyone had remained in town. Yet things were not as quiet as they seemed: a restlessness hung over the people. The question was asked on all sides, “How will events develop in Czechoslovakia?”

People were pouring into England from the Continent. Many Czechs foresaw coming events, and some Austrians were still able to get out. Hungarians came, too, and a number of “non-Aryan” Germans who had emigrated to Italy in 1933, and were again homeless as a result of Mussolini’s newly introduced racial law.

On September 8th the Nuremberg Party Rally began; it was called the “*Parteitag Grossdeutschland*.”

On the 12th, the Führer delivered his long awaited speech. He declared that Benes would have to come to terms with the Sudeten Germans. If the differences were not settled “peacefully,” war seemed inevitable.

Rehearsals for the English Covent Garden Season had begun. There were to be three weeks in London, and performances later in the provinces. Amid great difficulties private patrons had provided the funds for this undertaking. The spirit of the rehearsals was lamed by the uncertainty of the situation, which weighed upon everyone.

On September 14th the tension reached a climax. Minutes dragged like hours. The atmosphere was leaden, and nobody knew what was really going on. The chorus was rehearsing in the foyer for a performance which might never take place. In peacetime I had rarely listened to the news, but that afternoon I absent-mindedly was tuning in on Sir Thomas’s radio, when

suddenly a special announcement was made. "Mr. Chamberlain is flying to Berchtesgaden!" What a respite! I rushed to the rehearsal and shouted, "No war for the moment, Chamberlain is going to Berchtesgaden." Everybody stopped, the terrible suspense was over, then the rehearsal enthusiastically continued.

The September drama ran its course. The war of nerves in Czechoslovakia began. The hours magnified the most trivial episode till it became a mysterious and overwhelming threat. Rumor was piled on rumor till the brain reeled and nerves cracked.

Mussolini proclaimed himself on Germany's side. Chamberlain, Halifax, and Bonnet met in London and agreed that all Czech districts with more than a fifty per cent German population should be ceded to Germany. The Czechs refused to accept these conditions. The tension was renewed. Chamberlain flew to Godesberg.

On September 24th, Chamberlain, the symbol of hope for peace, came back from Godesberg without having come to an agreement with Hitler.

The situation grew more tense.

Hitler ordered mobilization of the German army at two A.M. on September 28th. The British fleet was mobilized. War was inevitable. Then on the same day it was suddenly announced that Hitler had invited the French and British Premiers to a conference at Munich.

On September 29th "Munich" was signed.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

Sir Thomas had been absent from Covent Garden during the crisis. He reappeared for the first time at a *Faust* rehearsal at the beginning of October. Not a word of politics or of the nerve-racking past three weeks! On October 10th a short season of 1938 “The Covent Garden English Opera Company” began, presenting: *Faust*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Rigoletto*, *I Pagliacci*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *The Serf* by George Lloyd (first performance) and *Fledermaus*.

Normal life was resumed, but England had suffered a severe shock.

A torrent of orchestral concerts and recitals began. The performances of the Brandenburg Concertos and Orchestral Suites of Bach by Adolph Busch and his Chamber Orchestra were special highlights.

London was overflowing with an international public. Frontiers were still open, and besides many Austrian, Czech, and German refugees, more and more visitors from all parts of the Continent arrived in England.

With their bloodless victory in Czechoslovakia, the Nazis increased their restrictions at home. The passports of “non-Aryans” were confiscated, and in the future would be issued only for the purpose of emigration, in which case the Nazis would be free to seize their property. Every “non-Aryan” was compulsorily named Sarah or Israel, and their emigration passports were to be stamped “J” for *Jude*. Even non-Aryans abroad bearing German passports were ordered to report to the German Consulates, for the addition of the conspicuous first name and the “J” stamp.

Sir Thomas had always been full of understanding in all my troubles with the Nazis, but I usually avoided burdening him with details. This time, however, everything in me revolted at the new indignity, and I was determined to ignore the new measure. I wondered what he would say, and so I put the case before him. “I don’t want my passport stamped with a ‘J,’ and I am not going to be called Sarah. It isn’t my name, and I don’t want it,” I protested excitedly. “But why are you so scared,” Sir Thomas laughed, “Sarah is a very beautiful name, it was my great-grandmother’s.” But, in spite of his jocular reply, Sir Thomas understood. I did not hand in my passport.

Although his duties as president of the Hallé Society took him frequently to the North, the center of Sir Thomas’s activities was naturally London.

Apart from the Beecham Sunday Concerts at Covent Garden, he had organized a number of Saturday Concerts with famous soloists, and selected programs for the season 1938-39 at Queen's Hall.

All the time remaining from these activities was used for making recordings with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

About this period, flawless recordings were made of Chabrier's *España*, Mozart's Haffner Symphony, Rossini's *William Tell* Overture, Bizet's *Carmen* Suite, Sibelius' *En Saga*, Grieg's *Peer Gynt* Suite, and Berlioz's *Damnation de Faust*.

Enthusiasts are always delighted and amused to hear from the final grooves of the disc devoted to the *Danse des Sylphes* from the Berlioz work, the voice of Sir Thomas saying, "Thank you, gentlemen" to the orchestra.

Sir Thomas does not share the common tendency of conductors to hold inequests after their concert performances, but recordings are a different matter. With infinite care the same piece has to be recorded over and over again until it seems good enough for him. The records receive the same careful attention when they arrive, and are all played many times before Sir Thomas consents to their release. Only by such meticulous care is he enabled to combine the exigency of the recording technique with the artist's vision of how music should sound.

After a concert performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* in America he was approached to record it. The engineers said that they were prepared to give Sir Thomas five hours for this. "Five hours, my dear sirs," he replied, "just time for me to start a headache in." If he did record *The Dream*, five months would be nearer the mark, and then he would probably scrap the records and start again.

Sir Thomas had long been recognized as a leading protagonist of Sibelius and felt that it was high time that the public gain a better impression of the magnitude and versatility of Sibelius' achievement by hearing a great number of works in a concentrated space of time. So he planned a festival in honor of the great Finn.

In an introductory article for the festival in the *Daily Telegraph*, Sir Thomas began with a characteristic opening:

I have been asked more than once why I am giving a Sibelius Festival. I remember that nine years ago, when I organized the Delius Festival, the same question was put to me. Of course the

simplest answer in either case is, “Why not?” and as far as I am concerned it would be satisfactorily final.

Sir Thomas had rehearsed the London Philharmonic in more than a dozen works not previously included in their large Sibelius repertoire.

The festival opened with the first concert of the Royal Philharmonic Society’s 1938-39 season, and consisted of six concerts which were to include all seven symphonies, most of Sibelius’ greater works and selected smaller works and songs.

Sibelius, who had been expected to attend, was not well enough to make the long journey, but his daughter, Mrs. Ava-Paloheimo, was present at all the performances. As far as was possible, Sibelius followed the progress of the Festival by radio and later conveyed his thanks and admiration to Sir Thomas by letter and telegram.

At the end of 1938, one of the customary foreign tours of the Berlin Philharmonic under Furtwängler was to take place. Although Furtwängler’s reconciliation with Hitler in April 1935 had seriously dimmed his halo, and lessened the admiration which his earlier heroic resistance had evoked, his great and unique art still had its devoted adherents.

Ever since 1935 life had become more difficult for him outside as well as inside Germany. By November 1938 he was worn out. In spite of all the honors which the Nazis showered upon him, they never quite trusted him. Yet he did not realize that people abroad resented his remaining in Germany and thought that he tolerated Hitler Germany for the sake of personal benefits rather than—as he thought—for the sake of staying on to fight for the freedom of art.

However, with his hypersensitiveness, the change of public opinion in the world had not escaped him. At that time he had strong doubts about the impending visit of the Berlin Philharmonic to England. Events since Munich were certainly taking a course which would soon make compromise impossible. However, it was not simple for him to drop of his own accord the English tour, which for years had been a kind of tradition, especially since the Nazis were frantically opposed to abandoning it. Soon, however, fate facilitated his decision. On November 7, 1938, a Polish Jew, Herman Grynspan, shot the secretary at the German Embassy in Paris, Herr vom Rath. As a “punishment” the Nazis staged a pogrom, and an enormous indemnity was demanded of every “non-Aryan.” Thousands of people were

thrown into concentration camps, from which they were only released on the production of a foreign visa.

A wave of indignation swept the world, and it was not surprising that even those Germans who did not condone these actions were held responsible. After all, the entire German people had passively witnessed these happenings, although a number of them had felt despair and shame. Gradually it was becoming more and more difficult to draw the line between Nazis and other Germans. Furtwängler had to cancel his English visit. But whatever the non-Nazis may have felt, it was too late. Thousands of German “Aryans” and “non-Aryans” endeavored to leave after November 1938.

My mother, seventy at the time, was living in Berlin, still unmolested, but she had been shocked and unnerved by recent events. There was still a number of the older generation of her friends in Germany, and we had thought that it was better for her, at her age, to stay in her country. But after these last events, she wrote to me that she was quite determined to leave Germany, no matter under what conditions she might have to live in the future. I immediately took the necessary steps, fairly easy on the English side, because conditions for immigrants over seventy had been simplified.

The British Chargé d’Affaires, whom I had met when in Berlin with Sir Thomas, was kind enough to advise my mother, and rang her up one day asking her to come to see him at the British Embassy in the Wilhelmstrasse. My mother had to refuse—she was not allowed to set foot in that particular street, nor in Unter den Linden. So he asked her to have a drink with him at his house in Charlottenburg, where he could talk to her, and tell her what to do. The British Consulate, where the visas were issued, was fortunately not in a forbidden street. Nevertheless it took fully nine months before her affairs were settled in Germany. She was able to join me, having to leave practically all her property behind.

The English concert season traditionally finished before Christmas with a performance of Handel’s *Messiah* conducted by Sir Thomas and it did so this year as well.

I went to Paris for Christmas and spent Christmas Eve with Herbert Janssen and his wife. After his exodus from Germany to England, Janssen had been engaged by the Vienna State Opera. The *Anschluss* ended his engagement and after a busy season in London, he had gone to Paris for a few months. He was to return to Covent Garden that summer and then go to Buenos Aires, and later to the Metropolitan Opera. We had a tiny Christmas tree, and the evening, although melancholic, was comforting and sweet.

Furtwängler was in Paris too and conducted two performances of *Siegfried* with German singers at the Paris *Opéra*. He was grave and thoughtful and still clung to the view that it was his duty not to leave his country and his orchestra; but once away from Germany he had a clearer perspective and saw everything more objectively.

After the New Year I went back to London. It was my last meeting with Furtwängler. His Paris performances at Christmas 1938 were to be his last before the war, because the Wagner Festival planned for June 1939, at the Paris *Opéra* under his direction, was canceled by order of the French Government.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

Nineteen thirty-nine had a fateful start. Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax went to Rome. Barcelona fell, and later Madrid. The Continent had forced its traditions farther and farther to the west, and more and more London became the haven of the old world. In January Bruno Walter, then already a French citizen, came to conduct a program including Mahler's First Symphony at Queen's Hall, and was enthusiastically received, especially by his old Viennese followers.

1939

Felix Weingartner also came over and conducted his traditional concerts in England. It was amazing to see how much he still got out of the orchestra. In spite of his seventy-six years he was full of vigor and great charm. Every morning, when other people were still asleep, he went for a walk in Hyde Park. I sometimes accompanied him, and on one of these occasions he described to me a curious state of affairs. Although his "ancestry" was fully satisfactory, he had never been permitted to conduct in Nazi Germany. Shortly after the *Anschluss*, while still receiving his salary as guest conductor for the Vienna Opera and Philharmonic, he was prevented from conducting in Vienna, although his contract had not yet expired. No one gave him a reason, and when he turned to Berlin for an explanation he received the evasive reply that everything was "all right." This went on until one day he thought it advisable to move to Switzerland; his wife was Swiss and he was a Swiss citizen.

After war broke out, Weingartner occasionally wrote to me. I had just received a photo of him, taken in his seventy-ninth year, and had been delighted to see the unchanged, young, and fresh expression of his fine features, when his death was reported on May 7, 1942. With him, the last representative of a generation of great conductors passed away.

The gloom of the political horizon was by no means lightened by Hitler's "peace speech" of January 30th. Sir Thomas, however, was determined to give his International Season. To stir up the British public he wrote one of his peppery articles which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on January 28, 1939:

SEASONABLE THOUGHTS

SHALL NOT COVENT GARDEN STAND WHERE IT DID?

By Sir Thomas Beecham

An eminent personage is of an opinion that the world is growing madder and madder; and there is some ground for it. Each day sees the leaders and prophets of differing political creeds proclaiming more noisily and vehemently the superiority of their own pet superstition over that of any other. . . .

Masses of otherwise sensible people have gone to the extremity of wondering whether in this dread time we ought to be amusing ourselves as usual. I have received letters from men occupying responsible positions in the country who consider that in view of what they term the international situation there should be no opera season next summer at Covent Garden. When I see closed all the theatres, music halls, cinemas, football grounds, and cricket fields in the kingdom by reason of some veritable national emergency, then and then only shall I acknowledge a grain of sense in such an extraordinary suggestion.

For something like two hundred years Covent Garden has been the home of international opera. The renown of this ancient theatre is such that every foreign as well as native artist aspires to appear there some time during his or her career. The superior character of its performances has contributed as much as anything else in our artistic life to establishing London in the pre-eminent position it occupies today in the international world of music.

And yet it is seriously proposed that because we are suffering from a temporary access of jitters and jumps that would bring discredit upon a community of elderly nuns we should discontinue an event that is as regular a feature of our yearly calendar as the Royal Academy, the Military Tattoo, or the Eton and Harrow cricket match.

Even during the really grim days of 1914-1918 London was never without an opera at some time or other of the year. I recall with especial gratification certain performances at Drury Lane which I conducted myself to the sound of German bombs exploding within a few feet of the theatre, to say nothing of our own anti-aircraft guns—when neither performers nor public paid the slightest heed to such distractions, but behaved in every respect as in normal times.

The international situation! What undesirable use is being made of this phrase to divert so many from the enjoyment of their own particular pleasures! And among the objects it is deemed necessary to abandon it is generally something of an exalted kind, artistic or cultural, that is indicated first. Let us therefore, the subject being international, see how many other countries are behaving during this period of stress and uncertainty.

When the King and Queen visited Paris they attended a State performance at the *Opéra*—an institution, incidentally, which runs for ten months in the year. When the Prime Minister went to Rome, he was invited as a matter of course to the Opera, which paid him and his fellow-countrymen the happy compliment of playing *Falstaff*. In New York at this moment there is running an opera season of five months' duration, in which are to be heard all the great artists of the world—German, Italian, French, British, and Scandinavian. Such is the American attitude to music and opera, in spite of a political antipathy to Nazism and Fascism that exceeds even our own.

In Germany it is hardly necessary to inform the reader that in upwards of seventy towns, opera is being given practically all the year round. As for the rest of the world, I have yet to hear that at Stockholm or Prague, at Budapest or Brussels, or any other capital has it even been suggested that the opera houses should be closed.

Only in London is such a proposition capable of utterance. And when it is remembered that our season lasts no more than seven or eight weeks, it will be realised how fantastic it is that such a sacrifice should be offered to the altars of prejudice or poltroonery. What would the rest of the world have to say if we provided such a deplorable exhibition of timidity and narrow-mindedness? Only a few weeks ago German artists were invited to the Paris *Opéra*, and the theatre was crowded to welcome them. Similarly, French and English singers and musicians appear in Germany, and are treated with respect and cordiality. Let us on our part show that in matters of art and culture, and especially in music, which is the common property of the entire world, we can rise above the ephemeral conditions of purely political discord, and maintain our old reputation for national sanity and understanding.

There must, and shall be, a season at Covent Garden, and I shall be surprised if it does not begin as usual on May 1 next, conducted on lines similar to those familiar to the world during the past two centuries.

Unmoved by apprehension, Sir Thomas began his preliminary work, and had just arranged a visit of the German Opera from Prague when politics intervened. With the familiar technique, President Hacha of Czechoslovakia was ordered to Berlin on March 13th. On March 15th Hitler moved into Prague.

Covent Garden changed its plans and canceled the official visit of the Czech Opera, but a number of singers who escaped from Prague found a place among the cast of the International Season during the summer.

While the Continent was a prey to political convulsions, the Royal Opera House was the scene of a friendly demonstration of the first order. In January Sir Thomas had been asked to arrange a gala performance at Covent Garden for the State visit of the French President and Mme. Lebrun to England. The old, dignified Opera House was decorated with the finest French tapestries and furniture to be found in England. A fragment of tapestry woven in honor of the marriage of Charles I and Henrietta Maria of France in 1625 was hung at the entrance of the Royal anteroom, and it greeted the arriving guest of honor with "*Aimez vous, les Uns les Autres,*" words significant for the present occasion.

The Court, the *Corps Diplomatique*, members of English society, and many high dignitaries were assembled in the festive splendor of the Opera House, which has seen so many memorable gala performances in the course of centuries.

As early as March 28th, London musical life again reflected political events. Pau Casals, that great lover of freedom, had offered to give a concert in the Albert Hall "to aid Spanish children," who were suffering unspeakably as a result of the Spanish Civil War. On the day of the concert (March 28th), the Spanish Republic surrendered to Franco. A strangely tense atmosphere pervaded the Albert Hall, but I have never heard Casals play more beautifully.

Shortly afterwards the Anglo-Polish pact against aggression was concluded. Mussolini invaded Albania on Good Friday 1939. Hitler denounced the Anglo-German Naval Agreement and the non-aggression pact with Poland.

Meanwhile, London prepared for the summer. As usual, there was to be a rich and interesting musical program. A huge “London Music Festival” had been arranged to embrace all activities of the different musical organizations, opera houses, ballet, etc., and was to last for five or six weeks.

The Covent Garden Season began on May 2nd with the *Bartered Bride*. It was the last International Season before the war and, perhaps, for a long time to come, and would never have taken place without Sir Thomas’s untiring energy. By great personal sacrifice he undertook this precarious venture, and was its artistic and organizing director. As far as possible, Sir Thomas chose the voices he needed, irrespective of politics. Thus, for the last time before the war, artists from European and American opera houses assembled peacefully in the happy atmosphere of Covent Garden.

The German opera, with the exception of the *Ring* and *Tristan*, which Sir Thomas conducted himself, was entrusted to Weingartner, who with youthful fire devoted himself to his task.

That last Opera Season embodied for me a past epoch. How delightful it was behind the scenes; how we enjoyed the rehearsals with their ups and downs, and how we looked forward to the performances in the evenings! Almost every night, no matter how late it was, we met again at the Savoy where there was hardly a seat to be found, and at every table there were friends. We enjoyed those weeks to the full, living as we were on top of a volcano!

Immediately after the end of the Covent Garden Season I went to Paris for a week. Paris was sunny and warm, and I breathed its air with delight; yet I felt the tension, and the first question put to me when I came to the *Opéra* was, “*Croyez-vous que nous aurons la guerre?*”

For all the “appeasement” of Munich, France was openly anti-German at that time. The usual German opera performances in Paris under Furtwängler had been canceled by order of the French Government.

However, the French dramatic soprano Germaine Lubin continued to sing at Bayreuth. While I was in Paris we spent a quiet evening together. On that evening she told me how much she owed artistically to Bayreuth, and how much she liked being there. She was just returning there, and I noticed, in her case as in that of many others, how remote artists are from politics as long as they are not affected personally.

The main object of my Paris trip was to see a performance of Berlioz's *Les Troyens* for Sir Thomas who wished to present it during the season of 1940. The project was destined not to materialize.

The outstanding feature of the production was the décor with its unforgettable burning wall of Troy. The performance was one of the last events of continental international opera life before the war. Artists from all over the world were present, among them Koussevitzky, and Hindemith and his wife who at that time lived in the Rhône Valley, and Massine with whom they discussed a new ballet afterwards. I went out with Dr. Graf, the former producer of Vienna and Salzburg who later went to the New York Metropolitan Opera, after the performance. He saw the approach of war clearly and inevitably, and was restlessly waiting to go back to America to join his family.

From Paris many went on to the music festival at Lucerne, where Toscanini was the center of attraction. I returned to London.

Meanwhile, Sir Thomas had agreed to accept an invitation to Australia, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra planned to visit the United States and Canada under his direction. I started the preliminary work for this undertaking.

The fact that Sir Thomas was going to leave England for some time did not mean that he was less concerned with the fate of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Only the initiated know what it means to keep an orchestra going from purely private sources and without any subsidy, and Sir Thomas had borne this responsibility for many years. He still carried the burden in the summer of 1939, and thus he agreed to give a concert every Sunday, transmitted by Radio Luxembourg, at the beginning of which he introduced the program.

In August I was at the seaside, and enjoyed a rest and glorious weather, under the blue summer sky, far away from the turmoil of busy London. Meanwhile, the wheels rolled on.

Hitler's cynicism reached a peak with the signing of the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact on August 21st. How many people had been arrested, killed, or expelled for relations with the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Hitler régime! How strongly was the anti-Soviet feeling whipped up in the younger generation in Germany! How it had been hammered into people's minds that Russian meant Jew and Communist—the deadly enemies of Fascism and “a danger to Europe”! Now suddenly, the U.S.S.R. became the

ideal partner! With what cynical impudence the change of front was made palatable to the German people.

Events followed in quick succession. The Danzig problem, artificially puffed up by the Nazis, suddenly dominated the political field.

England, so unprepared for war, began to take precautionary measures. Since an immediate air attack on London might occur, children were being evacuated from the metropolis and its suburbs. The friends with whom I was staying had offered a wing of their great country house for this purpose. Everything was ready for forty evacuéés, aged one to three years, and their nurses. But there was still hope.

Then one day we were told that the children were on their way. By such small incidents do we sometimes record great moments.

PART FIVE

England in War Time, 1939-1945

CHAPTER FIFTY

From the beginning most of us realized that this was not only going to be a war between nations, it was to be a war of ideas, and its issue would mean life or death for those things that many of us had been brought up to cherish and to venerate.

1939

After the period of suspense a clear decision brought relief. But, for me, the old questions arose—where did I belong? Where was I to be allowed to belong? Would I be allowed to continue my work? Would I be allowed to work at all?

Sir Thomas put an end to my apprehensions. He asked me to return to London immediately; there were many things to do, especially in connection with the Opera House.

Naturally the movements of aliens had to be carefully checked, but even in these first turbulent days, it was done in a kind and human way.

Meanwhile it had been decided that Covent Garden could not be used in wartime for its normal purposes. The London Philharmonic Orchestra's office had to be removed from the beloved Opera House and Sir Thomas Beecham's rooms at the top of the building had to be cleared. It was a sad but inevitable exit. I stored Sir Thomas's musical library and papers, and took home only a few indispensable files.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra, however, had to face a far more complex situation than a mere transfer of their office. Not only were many musical engagements canceled, but the company which had hitherto supported the orchestra was unable to carry on, and it was threatened with disbandment.

The orchestra did not wait for state or municipal help. They decided to take their fate in their own hands. With the full approval of Sir Thomas Beecham they appointed a committee of six playing members as directors, including Thomas Russell, a viola player, who was elected Secretary and Business Manager by his colleagues. He performed his function with unusual capability, combining an experience acquired as one of the rank and file with a highly developed faculty for unobtrusively but firmly piloting the ship of the orchestra. The aim of the reconstituted management was to keep this splendid organization alive, and to continue to serve the best traditions of music.

Gradually a few concerts were undertaken in the provinces, and on October 29th, Sir Thomas Beecham directed the orchestra's first London concert in wartime in Queen's Hall.

In view of the war and the situation of the orchestra, Sir Thomas was willing to abandon his intentions to retire temporarily from British musical life, and resume his activities.

The first London concert given by Sir Thomas and the reconstituted London Philharmonic Orchestra had a full house and an enthusiastic audience. After the concert he was congratulated on his decision by a member of the public who asked him what had persuaded him to reappear. "My dear fellow," replied Sir Thomas, "we were given to understand that the country was in a state of emergency, and so I emerged."

During the first winter of war, except for the blackout, our life went on much as usual. Soon the regular Sunday concerts were resumed at Queen's Hall, and the little platform alcove behind the curtain saw many old friends who, although dispersed all over the country in different war work, tried to snatch an hour of music on Sundays.

The little ship of the London Philharmonic Orchestra steered bravely through the waves, yet in spite of all their enthusiasm, it was inevitable that they seek some sort of financial backing. The orchestra had decided to issue a printed appeal in the program of their Beecham Sunday Concert on January 14th, and Sir Thomas declared himself willing to support this appeal by a speech.

1940

After the intermission he mounted the platform and said:

"I have been asked by the committee of the orchestra, which is now a self-governing body, to say a few words of explanation to you respecting the printed document to be found in your programs.

"It is with great pleasure that I do this, but I think I shall speak more eloquently if I do not look at it, for although its meaning is sufficiently clear, it does not say one-quarter enough. As you see, it is an appeal to the public to support this orchestra in a certain way.

"You, of course, are the élite of London musical society. Don't feel too encouraged—it is not much to be proud of. But if there is in this metropolis a modicum of interest in the art of music—and

there is very little—I think most of it is centered within these walls this afternoon.

“I do not know if many of you are aware how this orchestra has been carried on since its foundation; anyway, it is my pleasing duty today to instruct you. In every country in the world but this, musical institutions are of a permanent character. There are, of course, permanent institutions here, but they are hardly in my sense of the word musical. Do not think that I have any particular one in mind at this moment.

“There are colleges and academies, but I am speaking of grown-up institutions, not homes of education, and of these we have none supported by the state, the municipality, or by private patronage on any scale worth considering. There is nothing here corresponding to that which we see in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and—ahem!—Berlin or Vienna, and so on.

“How are these kept going? By the state, the municipality, or the private patron who provide large sums of money, because they think it worth while to maintain their existence for the instruction as well as the edification of the public. There, it is realized that the public should have the opportunity of hearing the best music at moderate prices. So you can in this town; but if you pay very moderate prices as you have done today, it hardly remunerates the orchestra, and the conductor not at all.

“This is the only country in the world where musicians are not expected to live like ordinary people. It is a tradition here that composers and most instrumentalists have always starved, and as we are a sentimental people we think that this tradition should be upheld.

“Now I would like you to know that this war is pressing very hard upon most artistic organizations. I am not referring to individuals, and I should like to make it clear that it is not in the single members of this orchestra that I am primarily interested, except naturally in a personal way, for they are all very good fellows.

“What I am concerned about is the orchestra as a cooperative body, which has achieved an almost unique position in the world through having played together almost daily for many years past. This condition of unbroken association is peculiar to this orchestra

and to it alone, for not one of its great rivals in the cities I have mentioned has found it possible to play together all the year round, even with a handsome subsidy. And they have not been allowed to play in theatres, music halls, cafés, or even in the street; they have performed nothing but the finest music, be it in the concert hall or the opera house. And how has this been possible? Until a few months ago by the devotion of a few individuals and by them alone. But the decline of prosperity, the deterioration of the international position, and finally the outbreak of war, have put an end to this source of supply. Today, the orchestra is without one powerful friend or any means of support except that which the public which has listened to it for the past seven years may now choose to give it.

“Let us compare its position with that of other great orchestras which are kept together in spite of the hazards of war or even peace. In New York, for seven months’ work a year, which is the term of its contract, the orchestra costs its guarantors an annual sum of not less than £20,000, that is to say, the amount representing the difference between cost of maintenance and the public receipts at concerts. The same conditions prevail in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and the other great American cities; and even in countries of the second rank and in Continental towns no larger than an English city of a moderate size, orchestras as well as opera houses enjoy some measure of endowment and security of tenure.

“Ever since its foundation the orchestra has been giving concerts all over the country, concerts which have the highest instructional value, but which necessarily have been uncommercial and unremunerative. You will understand that to continue this important branch of its work will be impossible if the orchestra be forced to rely upon its own resources. It would be a thousand pities, especially at a moment like this when the available circle of high-class entertainment has contracted woefully, if this crusading side of its activities had to be abandoned, and it is for this cause more than for any other that the present appeal is being made. You here are the faithful. Some of you may know someone who has a little money left. I do not—nor am I ingenious at evading Income Tax, or other inequitable claims made upon me by the State. For what you and they then can give, both I and the Orchestra will be deeply grateful.”

In view of the public's spontaneous and generous response the orchestra felt that they owed their friends a more gracious form of acknowledgment than a mere formal receipt for donations, and thus the first number of the *London Philharmonic Post*, a bi-monthly bulletin, informing the public of the activities and progress of the orchestra, was issued on March 1, 1940. Copies of the first and second numbers are already rare, and sought by collectors. In two years the magazine, edited by Thomas Russell, could boast a list of some five thousand subscribers, and 12,500 copies of each issue were disposed of with the greatest ease, a circulation far larger than that of any other musical paper in the country. The educational value of the *Philharmonic Post* was beyond doubt, and the paper served as a useful link between the orchestra and its public.

At the beginning of 1940 much interest was aroused by the Finnish war. The wife of the Finnish Minister, Mme. de Gripenberg, was indefatigable in her activities. She travelled, lectured, collected money, and asked Sir Thomas to conduct a concert in aid of the Finland Fund.

Sir Thomas, ever the ardent admirer of Sibelius, acceded, and on April 4th, three weeks after the Finno-Soviet armistice, conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra at Queen's Hall in an all-Sibelius program. The house was full.

This concert was important: it was the last given by Sir Thomas Beecham before his departure to Australia. The London Philharmonic Orchestra gave him a farewell dinner at Pagani's. Shortly afterwards, Sir Thomas left England. He parted from me with a hearty handshake. Although he had arranged that I was to join him in the autumn in America, I had a prophetic conviction that many things were to happen before we should meet again.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

On April 9th I received a letter from Oslo. It was from Furtwängler. He said he was touring Norway and Sweden, and would be pleased to hear from me at Copenhagen where he was due to arrive on April 9th. The letter had taken two weeks to arrive and it was too late for a written reply. As I stepped out of my house to inquire whether a telegram to Denmark was permitted, I saw big posters everywhere: “DENMARK AND NORWAY INVADED.” That was my reply.

1940

Another phase of the war had begun.

So far the general public in England was in the position of an onlooker, and musical life was able to struggle along. A concert for the Polish Relief Fund took place on April 25th. All sorts of summer concerts were planned to be held in the Queen’s Hall, and an Anglo-French Festival with the cooperation of prominent French artists was fixed for June and July by the Association of British Musicians, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Hardly had the shock of the Scandinavian invasion worn off than on May 10th, Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg were overrun. On May 11th, Chamberlain resigned and Winston Churchill, the “man of destiny,” became Prime Minister.

On May 17th the Germans entered Brussels; on May 26th, Calais and Boulogne; on May 28th Leopold of Belgium surrendered with his army. On May 29th the defense of Dunkirk began. On June 4th the Germans entered Dunkirk.

On that day Churchill delivered a speech to the nation. There was something in the voice of the man bearing that burden of crucial responsibility which told us that a supreme moment had been reached. His words were a clarion call to mankind:

“We shall go on to the end; we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans; we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air; we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be; we shall fight on the beaches; we shall fight in the landing-grounds; we shall fight in the fields and the streets; we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender! . . .”

On June 10th Italy entered the war. On June 14th Paris fell, and the Swastika fluttered from the Eiffel Tower. The German Army swept on and on; on June 17th Marshal Pétain sued for peace, and the Franco-German armistice was signed on June 22nd.

The Anglo-French Music Festival collapsed with the fall of France.

England suddenly became a last citadel of free men. What was to be her fate? Many people trapped again or anew, arrived from the Continent, from France, Denmark, and Holland, from Norway and Belgium. Governments were set up and national offices were opened. Great Britain, the land of splendid isolation, suddenly became the most cosmopolitan place imaginable.

Under the circumstances, it was more than likely that Hitler would immediately start his much-prophesied invasion of Great Britain. There was no time to lose. Every precaution had to be taken, among them the almost wholesale internment of all male “enemy aliens,” even many notable enemies of the Nazis. There was a persistent rumor that women would soon share the same fate.

About that time I was invited to dinner at the house of an M.P. along with several officials from the Home Office. In a discussion of the internment question, I was interrogated about several of the Germans. Then one of the men said, “You don’t mean to say that you Germans here are not thrilled by the German victory in France? My country right or wrong, you know?” I tried to explain that the present Germany was not our country. It had expelled us, it did not want us. How could he imagine that we could hail a victory of the Nazis who had betrayed the Germany we had loved, destroyed our life, and robbed us of our homeland? He simply could not comprehend.

That night I could not sleep. I thought about the orchestra. Sir Thomas’s absence had only strengthened my link with it. I had shared the heroic struggle with its members and had gone daily to their office. Now all the old problems were dragged up again, and I suddenly felt that I might do harm to the orchestra by being seen too much in their company. I therefore went to the Philharmonic office next morning to have it out. The Directors were just holding a meeting, and I burst in upon them, “Tell me frankly,” I asked. “Do you prefer that I avoid coming here for the time being? After all, I am an enemy alien, and it might harm you.” “Are you crazy?” They were not just being polite; I felt immediately they meant what they said. They were just as straight in their attitude to me as they were to themselves. Had it been

possible to increase my admiration and attachment to this splendid body of men, this occasion would have sufficed to do so.

It is no wonder that with the Western Continent overrun, and the Channel Ports in Nazi hands, not only musical life but the whole life of the British Isles existed only from one day to the next. There were hardly any concerts, and as the orchestra had no capital they soon found themselves high and dry. One morning Felix Aprahamian, Thomas Russell's enthusiastic assistant, telephoned to me and said, "Doctor Geissmar, if no one comes to our help, we shall have to sell the office furniture." How dreadful that sounded! I fully realized what it meant. Such moments occur in the history of most orchestras. The very structure of orchestral life—this interweaving of artistic and commercial venture—is doomed to precariousness if not wisely supported. The Vienna Philharmonic had adjusted their difficulties, the Berlin Philharmonic had become a Reichs Orchestra, but what was to be done for this indomitable band of men? They were determined to hold together, to carry on in the spirit in which they had been founded. They had played through splendid Covent Garden seasons; for the Royal Philharmonic and Royal Choral Societies; they had given the London public their traditional Sunday concerts; they had visited the provinces; they had been pioneers of British orchestral playing on the Continent. They bore the name of London, the capital of the British Empire. They could not ring up London's Lord Mayor as I had once rung the *Oberbürgermeister* of Berlin, who, in spite of all difficulties, had come immediately to our aid with a check. Nor could they appeal to any other authority. Friends? Yes, they had many—they had a large, though anonymous following; but there was a war on, and who would be willing or able to throw money into music at that moment?

I wrote to Mr. James Smith, one of the supporters and directors of Covent Garden seasons, and at the same time on the Board of the Royal Philharmonic Society. He had often helped generously, and I felt sure that even if he could not assist at the moment with money, he might give practical advice. He was serving in the Army, and was stationed at Chatham as a sergeant. A few days after I had written he rang me up. "I am in a call box," he said. "I have just had your letter. Of course the London Philharmonic Orchestra must be saved. I do not know how much I have in my bank account just now, but what there is, they shall have. I haven't much use for money myself in my present life." That same week the orchestra received a check for £1,000 from him. That gave them a start, and they were able to bridge their difficulties. Soon afterwards they gave a concert at Queen's Hall, which they called a "Musical Manifesto," where J. B.

Priestley made an appeal. The first result was a check £1,000 sent by an anonymous Scottish donor to Mr. Priestley, and other gifts, small and large, poured in freely from all sections of the public. Privates and schoolchildren sent their half-crowns, and richer men sent their share.

The orchestra continued to give a few concerts, and then accepted the offer of Jack Hylton to tour England, playing a kind of weekly “Prom” in many provincial towns. The London County Council, too, invited the Mayors and corporations of all boroughs in Greater London to a concert by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the Central Hall, Westminster, a gesture of sympathy with the orchestra in its moment of crisis which was greatly appreciated by them.

By such support, and by the *esprit de corps* of the players, who had decided to keep together even without regular pay, the London Philharmonic Orchestra was able to survive England’s darkest hour in the war.

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

On June 25th at one A.M. I was awakened by a most peculiar sound, wailing and persistent. It was London's first air raid warning. My old house, 36 Red Lion Square, was considered unsafe, and I dressed quickly, and rushed my mother across the Square to the nearest shelter. It was pitch dark. The night air was filled with the sound of shuffling feet, people hurrying out of their shaky houses in all the little side streets, and the droning of a plane overhead. It was a strange night, later on to be followed by many alike, crammed together with a crowd of people and waiting for the "all clear" which by autumn sounded only in the early morning hours.

1940

That night of June 24th was the precursor of the blitz on London. At that stage, however, we had nothing more than occasional reconnaissances to contend with.

While the London Philharmonic Orchestra was touring England under the auspices of Jack Hylton, the London Symphony Orchestra played for the Proms, so called because the audience stood or walked about the hall. The B.B.C. Orchestra, which in recent years had been the Prom Orchestra, was not available that year, and instead the London Symphony Orchestra was chosen to play for Sir Henry Wood, the venerated Prom Conductor, whose forty-sixth season this was.

With the increasing raids, however, sirens and other unmusical sounds were frequently heard during these concerts which were held at Queen's Hall and were intended to continue until the end of September. In spite of the threatening blitz, the Proms—this peculiar feature of English musical life—were as much in demand as ever and people besieged the doorstep of Queen's Hall as early as five P.M. fearing that raids later in the evening would prevent them from getting to the hall. With the lengthening nights the alerts came earlier and earlier, and generally were heard in the middle of the concert; but the audience remained, the music went on and the public returned just as keen on their concert the following day. The police requested everybody to stay put during alerts and frequently people—an average of 1500—who had arrived at the Hall by five in the afternoon were still there at dawn. Of course they were hungry, and Mr. West who was in charge of the refreshments at Queen's Hall, soon switched over to a new form of catering business, and supplied hundreds of gallons of coffee and

sandwiches. They were tired, too. The prolonged raids and the suspension of train service during them, made it impossible to combine a Prom Concert with a night's sleep. But the Queen's Hall management was ingenious in this emergency too. People slept on the Prom floor, they slept in the comfortable seats upstairs, while the space under the circle was especially coveted by the cautious. When the "all clear" had sounded the sleepers were, however, jostled out of the way with gruff humor by the attendants.

It was certainly an amazing and unique experience. Queen's Hall, the place of so many famous memories, had certainly never witnessed such scenes. The evening of August 26th was especially vivid. The concert, which had been conducted by Sir Henry Wood, was over, and a heavy raid was still in progress. The police requested everybody to stay where they were. The well known resourcefulness and wit of English musicians truly rose to the situation, and soon the orchestra and members of the audience with hitherto undiscovered talent took over the task of amusing the public.

Sir Henry had disappeared. But who was this tall smiling figure in evening-dress standing at the side of the platform? It was Sir Adrian Boult, come from conducting a concert of his own. The orchestra began amusingly to reverse the principle of Haydn's Farewell Symphony, and arrived late, one by one. For the opening bars, a *tutti* passage, only a trombone and a clarinet played the fitful notes allotted to them in the harmony. Then Sir Adrian Boult strolled up to the percussion desk and added embellishments with cymbals and triangle, till finally a real, if slightly unorthodox, *tutti* was achieved for the closing chord.

Again the orchestra assembled. Ceremoniously the librarian distributed the parts for the *Figaro* Overture. Who was going to conduct? A hush spread through the hall, while Sir Henry Wood peeped from behind the platform curtain to see what was going to happen. It was then pompously announced that "a famous British conductor now in Australia" was going to conduct the Overture to *Figaro*. The audience was amazed to see the living image of Sir Thomas Beecham, complete with well-trimmed beard, walk with the famous *maestoso* gait to the rostrum, and go through the ritual of—in the words of the *Star*—"the sundry familiar and well-beloved wrist-flicks, hisses, and the stressful stamps of the first conductor of Mozart in the world." The impersonator began by throwing away the score and disdainfully ordering the conductor's desk to be removed. Any uncertainty was dispelled when the audience was addressed before the performance, and reference was made to another orchestra "apparently up to some high jinks elsewhere with Mr. Hylton" and also to broadcasting. *And* the conductor found it necessary to

shout “Shut up!” in the middle. The stretched-out arms and the baton, down-pointed in the familiar way for the *Figaro* opening, began to evoke something astonishingly like the world-famous Beecham interpretation! As the impersonator reached the wings after the performance, Sir Henry, who recognized him as one of his own violins, said with kindly surprise, “I did not know you were a conductor.” Still loftily in the part, “Sir Thomas” replied, “Ah, yes, Sir Henry, and I understand you, too, conduct sometimes!”

Then a member of the audience made a speech suggesting that everybody would agree that they were getting much more than their original money’s worth, and that they ought to contribute to the Musicians’ Pension Fund. Thereupon Sir Adrian was given a large wastepaper basket to take round the hall.

The raid sessions at Queen’s Hall quickly became publicized and added to the attraction of the Proms. One woman actually asked the box-office attendant if he thought there would be a raid on the night for which she was buying her ticket. When he told her he really didn’t know, she informed him that she was only going to come if he thought there would be a raid.

However, the increasing seriousness of the blitz made the continuation of concerts in London inadvisable, and on September 7th, the memorable Prom season of 1940 came to an end.

But not all musical blitz stories were so humorous as those of the Prom’s all-night sessions. One morning when I arrived at the London Philharmonic office I found everyone there bewildered. “We do not know,” said Felix, “whether we can count on the orchestra leaving for Glasgow with all the first violins. We have just had a telephone message from somebody living near Wynn Reeves to say that his house had a direct hit last night. It is just a rubble heap, and the rescue workers have not yet found anyone in the debris.” At Euston Station, however, Wynn Reeves turned up. Fortunately he and his wife had spent that particular night with friends. Such strange coincidences happened frequently, and made us realize that we were in the hands of fate.

Meanwhile the London Philharmonic Orchestra had more or less recovered financially. New plans brought fresh courage. We were grateful to our friends, and decided to give a “thanksgiving” party at my house. We invited Mr. J. B. Priestley and other friends of the orchestra and, of course, the inevitable Felix. We had a cold supper of sausages, potato salad, pretzels and beer, and soon were engrossed in great debates.

It was a lovely evening. As we stood on the roof garden with its wonderful view of St. Paul's, we saw strange colored lights, gleaming far away in the direction of the Thames estuary. With the growing darkness, the sirens sounded. The lights we had seen were the first flares over the East End. We spent the night listening to Priestley in his rôle of raconteur. The raid did not stop until early dawn. The noise was often so loud that we could not hear each other speak. When morning came and the "all clear" sounded, the sky in the direction of St. Paul's was blood-red—London's docks were burning.

With the night warnings of June we thought air raids were coming, with the nuisance raids of August we felt they had arrived, but only now, without clearly realizing what we were in for, we had come to that hardly believable experience—the blitz on London.

The continuous bombing of the center of the town made it inadvisable to stay on in Red Lion Square in a rickety house, and so I arranged for my mother to live in Hampstead while I myself, on the point of joining Sir Thomas in America, continued to spend my nights in public shelters. Holborn, the City, and the East End were increasingly raided. Great gaps stared where houses had stood the previous day. Streets were torn open. Buildings were roped off because they might crash, and tops of houses were burned out by the thousands of incendiaries.

One morning when I came to my house, after a ten hours' raid (on September 14th), a sorry sight lay before my eyes. Water was pouring down the sides of the house, and the square was full of rubble, glass, and splinters. The top of the house had been burnt out. I had again lost my home, built up after such trials, and with all that was left of my old family possessions. It was a shock, especially when I saw the remnants of my library scattered between charred timbers. But I quickly pulled myself together; I honestly felt that no personal sacrifice was big enough if it contributed one iota to the battle for the freedom of the world.

That conviction sustained me through the next few hours, but gradually I began to feel a sharp reaction. I left the scene of destruction and rushed to the London Philharmonic office, where I found Russell and Felix. Into their sympathetic ears I poured out my tale. Felix came back with me to Red Lion Square so that I did not have to go alone.

That day created another link between myself and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, as strong as those which had been forged by the bright days of the past.

The blitz continued. While the days were an uninterrupted chain of warnings, followed by “all clears,” the raiders came over, and explosions of guns and bombs mingled the long nights through.

I was waiting for my boat for New York when I received a cable from Sir Thomas telling me that he had extended his stay in Australia and I was not to leave until I received further word. I therefore decided to move to the house where my mother had gone, until I saw how things were going to develop.

My new address, 25 Lyncroft Gardens, Hampstead, was in a quiet little street off Finchley Road, where all the houses looked alike. Dignified, charming Mrs. Edith Biggs, the owner, her Sealyham, Bunty, and her housekeeper of thirty-four years, Annie Purcell, were the other inhabitants of our house. Annie Purcell was a direct descendant of the great composer; and had the same deep-set beautiful eyes which appear in the Kneller portrait of the composer in the National Portrait Gallery.

It was a time of fifty-two nights of uninterrupted raids. Though no one really dared undress at this stage of things, one eventually got accustomed to the pandemonium. Lyncroft Gardens gradually assumed its blitz routine. When we were hit by an incendiary, the neighbors assembled before our door and helped put it out, and when they were in trouble, we went to their aid. But after the raids seemed to have become a constant institution, Mrs. Biggs declared “she couldn’t be bothered” with the blitz. Every evening at seven P.M., alarm or not, Annie appeared in her white cap and apron, dinner was served, the table shone with glass and silver, and flowers were never missing.

One evening a bomb screamed over our heads. “What a whizzy!” said Annie placidly. An enormous bang followed. Our little house swayed and cracks appeared in the walls. Involuntarily I crouched. “Don’t you worry,” said Mrs. Biggs. “It’s over.”

Finally at the end of November 1940, the blitz began to die down. Even Londoners had a night or two without alarms, and life began to be reorganized. The Sunday Concerts in the Queen’s Hall were resumed with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under various conductors. The other musical institutions also resumed their activities and to the old ventures new ones were added. Myra Hess organized concerts at the National Gallery which created a special public and were always filled to capacity by many well known people otherwise engulfed in war activity who managed to attend them daily. When I once told Myra Hess how wonderful I thought her

achievement was, she replied, "I was just lucky." It was more than that. With her exquisite programs, she had given a new public what it needed, and this public did not leave her even when the blitz compelled her to move the concerts to the basement of the museum.

More and more enterprises of all kinds were started, and the theatres began to be sold out night after night.

There was a growing demand for orchestral music all through the country, and the few conductors available, who were partly occupied by permanent jobs, had their hands full to meet all the demands made on their time and services. The number of concerts those men conducted per year in the war time music boom was absolutely astounding. Dr. Malcolm Sargent, for instance, told me that in the Season of 1942 he averaged more than one Symphony Concert a day.

After the London Philharmonic Orchestra had played under Hylton's auspices, it began to expand touring and other activities on its own, and played in a hundred places never visited by an orchestra before, bringing music to the people's very doors.

In addition to the British-born conductors holding the fort, there was a newcomer—Richard Tauber! Tauber had been for many years a frequent visitor to England, and had acquired British citizenship shortly after the outbreak of war on his return from South Africa.

Even when he was travelling round the world as an opera star, *lieder* singer, or with one of his own or Lehar's musical comedies, Tauber had always had a passion for conducting. From childhood on he acquired a thorough knowledge of the concert and opera repertoire from his father, for many years the Director of the *Stadttheater* at Chemnitz.

When one day he approached the London Philharmonic Orchestra proposing to conduct them in a concert for their benefit in which he would sing as well, there was great astonishment, and I must confess, serious doubts. Yet the concert proved a real success. Tauber was at once acknowledged to know his job, and this was the beginning of a musical friendship between the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the star tenor-conductor. They had admired Tauber since their Covent Garden days, from which they remembered him as the only opera singer who succeeded in browbeating Sir Thomas, not by operatic temperament, but by sheer musicianship.

They remembered with amusement one stormy rehearsal when Sir Thomas was conducting Smetana's *Bartered Bride* with a company recruited mostly from Prague, which included Tauber. At that time, Sir Thomas had his own views about that particular score, and was laying down the law to the baffled opera stars. Things were not going too well. Sir Thomas's temper was rising, and so were the singers', when Tauber came forward and, speaking on behalf of his colleagues, leaned over the orchestral pit and said apologetically, "Please, Sir Thomas, you must be more patient with us. We have sung this opera incorrectly for the past twenty-five years, and you cannot expect us to adapt ourselves to the correct way immediately." Sir Thomas, who always responds to wit and directness, saw the point at once!

Tauber's first provincial tour with the London Philharmonic Orchestra was a riotous success in more ways than one; his Viennese humor, and his "Tauber cocktails" were most popular.

But there was a serious side to this activity. It is hard to realize the difficulties attendant on the provincial tours of the London Philharmonic Orchestra early in the war. Some of the most successful concerts were those when everything was most difficult, as at Burnley in January 1940, when the small hall had been sold out on an obsolete seating plan, and Dr. Sargent's car was held up in a snowdrift on the moors. On that occasion, at five minutes' notice, Thomas Matthews, the leader of the orchestra, conducted a program which included the first English performance of Aaron Copland's *Outdoor Overture*.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

Nineteen forty-one brought the Nazification of the Balkans and Greece, the loss of Crete, the war in Africa and the Middle East. But it was the invasion of Russia on June 22nd, and the Japanese attack on Hawaii, the Philippines, Malaya, and Hong Kong in December that were the fateful events of that year.

1941

In the beginning of 1941 concert life had been resumed. There were still occasional air raids, and air-raid wardens, rescue squads, firemen, demolition workers, and the bombed people themselves, still had to be fed. All sorts of organization had presented mobile canteens working under the control of the Defence Services, and more and more of them were needed. Friends of the London Philharmonic Orchestra decided to provide a mobile canteen, bearing the name of the orchestra, and formally presented it to the Mayor of St. Marylebone in front of Queen's Hall in the presence of Sir Henry Wood and the entire London Philharmonic Orchestra. On weekdays, the canteen went through bombs and air raids to feed rescue workers. But on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, if there was no emergency, it was in action in front of Queen's Hall decorated with posters advertising the concerts of the London Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestras, and serving tea and biscuits to the concert goers. During the interval crowds gathered round it; popular Covent Garden singers distributed tea or washed cups and surprisingly large profits were collected for the Lord Mayor of London's Air Raid Distress fund. Thus the London Philharmonic Orchestra contributed to the Lord Mayor's activities, rather than the Lord Mayor to those of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

The lull in London did not last long; the air attacks soon began again with renewed fury. We were in again for some serious weeks. On Saturday, May 10th, hundreds of planes raided the town; the Chamber of the House of Commons, its Press Gallery, Strangers' and Ladies' Gallery were demolished. The heart of the British Empire's Government was hit. Westminster Abbey was seriously damaged and London's musical life received the severest blow which could befall it—Queen's Hall was destroyed.

Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* had been given by the Royal Choral Society and the London Philharmonic Orchestra on the afternoon of Saturday, May 10th. Since there was to be a rehearsal next morning for the Sunday

afternoon concert, nearly all the instruments had been left in the hall. When the orchestra arrived on the Sunday morning Queen's Hall was gone. It was completely gutted. Clouds of white smoke poured from the ruin; hoses were winding in and out of the empty window frames and water was streaming everywhere. The charred remains of valuable instruments were being salvaged, a sad task in which the orchestra joined. Double basses were being handed out in pieces and there were many instruments which could not be rescued at all.

When I arrived at the scene of destruction I found Mr. Charles Taylor, who had been manager of the Hall for many years. We shook hands, and though deeply moved, like a true Britisher he did not reveal what this sight must have meant to him personally. He just said, "It looks a bit untidy, doesn't it?" Mr. Alfred Matthews was also there—the head of the box-office, who had worked at Queen's Hall for thirty-five years. He was speechless. How often had I to appeal to him to get some friends into the sold-out Berlin Philharmonic Concerts! How hard we had to fight with him to get some extra chairs into the legendary corner behind the platform curtain, where world-famous artists often used to sit instead of going into the hall! Beloved corner, from which I saw the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra pass on to the platform, when I was still a guest in Great Britain, and from which later on I received the nods and the "Hallo, Doctor" from the London Philharmonic Orchestra players after a successful concert! Beloved corner, through which Sir Thomas passed before stepping on the rostrum, giving me a last twinkle of the eye, and from where, on his return I beamed at him and he responded in silent understanding after the elation of a good performance!

But there was no time for meditation. It was eleven o'clock in the morning. There was no hall and barely any instruments. The orchestra held council and decided that they did not want to fail their public. The concert had to take place as announced.

By three o'clock in the afternoon the concert had been transferred to a substitute hall, and instruments had been borrowed at a moment's notice. The public, having no idea that Queen's Hall was no more, were arriving for the concert. We had to extemporize a box-office, and the staff went in and out of the ruins with handfuls of tickets and change under umbrellas, while water, hot enough to make tea, was pouring through the ceiling. A makeshift box-office was soon established on the pavement, and did a roaring trade transferring the tickets for the emergency hall. Soon not a seat was left. People were standing out to the pavements, and hundreds were turned away

after a cup of tea from the London Philharmonic Orchestra's canteen which had been on duty for the Fire Brigade at Queen's Hall since early dawn. Later on the canteen followed the Orchestra to the Duke's Hall of the Royal Academy of Music where this memorable concert took place.

The day passed with the elation which arises from a grave situation. The next morning, however, the grim reality had to be faced. During the week, the orchestra continuously played in the provinces and in blitzed areas, but Saturdays and Sundays were devoted to the London concerts which, owing to the growing demand for music, had been booked at Queen's Hall throughout the summer. There was no doubt that those concerts had to be carried through, even though the orchestra had lost its hall. Eventually all musical activities, including that year's Proms, in which the London Philharmonic Orchestra took part for the first time, were transferred to the Albert Hall.

Yet the most urgent need of the moment was the question of the instruments. The B.B.C. had informed the public of the orchestra's difficulties. From the moment of that appeal there was no peace. There was a continuous procession from every quarter. People queued up to the orchestra's office laden with violins and violas. Cellos were deposited outside the doors. The orchestra had meanwhile left with borrowed instruments for provincial concerts arranged long before, and wherever they appeared, people turned up with instruments! During their absence the three office telephones rang incessantly with people offering instruments, and a special person had to be engaged to deal with these calls alone. In every mail hundreds of letters about instruments arrived.

From a purely human point of view it was a great privilege to read those letters. A wave of warm and spontaneous feeling poured out of them: a feeling of real sympathy and ready help which came from all sections of the public. Dignified letters arrived offering valuable old instruments, some of which were precious heirlooms. An old man wrote from a Yorkshire Village; he had no instrument to give, but he loved to mend them, and had unlimited time and patience for it. Could we accept his help? A bus-driver came all the way from Kent clasping a brown paper parcel under his arm. "It is a fiddle," he said. "I cannot bear to think that owing to the loss of his instrument, a player should be out of work. I know what that means."

Provincial orchestras joined the general public with moving generosity. We filed about 3000 letters. We had about 1000 instruments, and with the consent of the owners were even able to supply the needs of others.

During the same night in which Queen's Hall was destroyed, 36 Red Lion Square was hit for the third time. The house had long since been uninhabitable, but the residue of my furniture and other possessions had been stored in the basement. A direct hit from a high explosive razed the house and the adjoining building to the ground. Nothing remained but rubble.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

The resistance of the Soviets drew the *Luftwaffe* to the east and London greatly welcomed the respite—the end of the blitz.

1942

More and more the city accepted the idea of a long war. Life in London became increasingly interesting. The various Governments and groups in exile, who, at least for a time, resided in England, established their own political, social and cultural life. Concerts and lectures were given; meetings were held. The organization of the orchestra, in the meantime, achieved sufficient stability to participate in some of these events.

Through my work in the International Women's Service Group, I met M. and Mme. Toni Mayer. M. Mayer was the financial advisor of the Free French, and an ardent chamber music player, which induced me to suggest, "Couldn't we do something for French music?" Quickly we agreed. The Philharmonic Orchestra office undertook the arrangements for a number of French concerts under the auspices of the French National Committee in London. The first two evenings were devoted to music of Ravel and Debussy, and aroused such enthusiasm that other concerts were immediately arranged. Later a number of concerts featuring old and contemporary French ecclesiastical music were presented in various churches. Thus even during the occupation we heard about thirty concerts of selected French programs. They were the groundwork. Shortly after the liberation of Paris French soloists and conductors arrived, and a lively Franco-British exchange ensued.

In addition the Philharmonic Orchestra, upon the suggestion of the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R., organized a number of interesting concerts of Russian music, which featured the English premiere of Khachaturian's Piano Concerto, Shostakowitsch's Fifth Symphony and other works. And they celebrated the centennial of Grieg's birthday with a concert in Albert Hall.

In October 1942, the London Philharmonic celebrated its tenth anniversary. Ten years! What a brief existence compared to that of other orchestras. And yet, with what a courageous fight those ten years had been filled. A fight for recognition, a fight for their artistic existence, and even a fight for the bare necessities of life. The Vienna Orchestra was an opera orchestra as well; the Berlin Philharmonic had a state subsidy, but to

compensate for the lack of the material advantages of other orchestras, the London Philharmonic had the *esprit de corps* of its members. The feeling for their achievements was general, and on their tenth anniversary they received congratulations from the entire world.

In 1943 the tide of the war turned. The Germans were defeated at Stalingrad. The Allies had landed in Africa and Sicily. Mussolini was overthrown.

1943-1944

At this time, England had to rely on herself in artistic matters, but the demand for music and theater increased steadily and the London Philharmonic was more than occupied. During the winter of 1943-44, they gave their own Sunday concerts at the Adelphi Theater, and for the first time could choose their own program policies.

The demand for modern music could only modestly be satisfied under existing war conditions. But the music firm of Boosey and Hawkes managed to arrange a series of concerts of contemporary works, which from a modest beginning grew into a firmly established feature of London musical life. In four winters these concerts offered nearly 200 modern chamber music and orchestral works, among them 80 premieres.

And so England came to the fifth year of the war. The fronts seemed far away. Then suddenly there was another burst of sharp air attacks. But London hardly took notice. Theaters and concerts were packed and people and soldiers from all over the world crowded into the city. As the eastern front advanced ever closer to Germany, London enjoyed a period of outward quiet.

1944

At that time, the London Philharmonic Orchestra acquired its own home at 53 Welbeck Street. It was a beautiful modern building with large, light rooms, and a spacious kitchen where we had the inevitable afternoon tea. The increased number of concerts had necessitated enlarging the staff. Most of the people who worked in the office were young and enthusiastic and admirably combined idealism and realism. All of them were passionately devoted to the cause of the orchestra. Thomas Russell, who had steered the orchestra through the hazards of the war, was still at the helm.

There were increasing rumors of an impending invasion, and the orchestra wisely had limited its activities to London and the immediate vicinity, in anticipation of a sudden suspension of all train service. But for the time being everything remained unchanged.

Finally on June 6th the announcement came. The Allied invasion of the Continent for which we had all been waiting so long became a fact. The month of June was full of suspense. We could hardly tear ourselves away from the radio, and followed events at the front with elation. London was full of troops and officers. There were no air raids.

Then, during the night of June 15th, hardly two weeks after the invasion, London was suddenly awakened by an alarm, gunfire and loud explosions. At the same time there was a buzzing sound in the air, as if a whole fleet of planes were over London. Some of them swished so low, that it seemed they would tear off the roof any minute. It was different than usual; it was uncanny. And it didn't stop. There was no "all clear." It went on all through the night, and all the following days. Again London had become a city without sleep.

The orchestra had uncomfortable days too. It had always been a principle of those courageous men, whatever the circumstances, not to cancel a concert as long as the public was willing to come. Thus they played quietly on during those uneasy days. Occasionally, however, when during a rehearsal they heard an approaching bomb, a *fortissimo* would quickly fade into a *pianissimo* until after the drum beat of the explosion told them that the danger was past for the moment. All in all they got through with a whole skin. Once the whole orchestra was almost the victim of a bomb that landed next to the concert hall, but they mourned the loss of only one member.

Except for the daily laconic radio comment that the South of England had been further attacked with damage and casualties, the robot bombs little affected daily life. And so a great day approached for the music lovers of London—the opening of the fiftieth Henry Wood Promenade season, which this year was again to be conducted by Sir Henry himself. On March 3, 1944, Sir Henry, the venerated dean of English music circles, had celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday. England honored him in every way possible. He was given an album of written greetings from musicians all over the world, a unique collection of musical autographs of these turbulent times.

The B.B.C. Orchestra and the London Philharmonic were engaged for the Promenade season. There was a rehearsal at Albert Hall on the morning of June 10, 1944, the opening day of the Promenade season. After the intermission Sir Henry was relieved by Basil Cameron. Perspiring, he wrapped his white silk scarf around his neck, headed for my seat, and sat down. "Today is a big day, Sir Henry. We are all very proud that we can share it with you," I said.

Every evening thereafter he stood on the podium, elegant as ever with the inevitable white carnation in his buttonhole, while the buzz-bomb bombardment continued unabated. Every evening the house was sold out. Neither the customary audience, nor the numerous members of the armed forces who were present seemed aware that a crowded Albert Hall would make an excellent target. The authorities, however, did realize it, and one day announced that the "Proms of 1944" were to be discontinued, since Albert Hall was to be closed until further notice. That was Friday, June 29th.

Soon thereafter we heard that Sir Henry was ill with a severe cold. He was not to see the close of his fiftieth season. Albert Hall reopened September 30th but Sir Henry died on August 19th—a rich life in the service of music had come to an end.

Meantime, the fronts pushed on. On July 20th, there was an attempt on Hitler's life. In August, France was liberated, and the Allies entered Paris. England tensely followed the advance up the Channel Coast from which the buzz bombing originated. Finally the hour of liberation seemed near for London too. Sometimes for days no bombs came over, and that phase of the war, if not completely past, seemed almost over. On September 17th, the first relaxation of the blackout was announced.

But we had rejoiced too early. The V-2 bombardment began. They outmoded the technique of advance warning, for by the time their double explosion was heard, the danger was past. Destructive as they were, they were at least easier on the nerves, and certainly could not throw the Londoners off balance at that point.

The London Philharmonic, too, continued with their work. The music life of England, which had depended so long on the British musicians' willingness to sacrifice, was soon to be enriched by visits of artists from America and France. Menuhin was first to appear from America and he was deliriously welcomed by the public. His great art had matured and though still so young his outlook was balanced and sympathetic. He was of an unlimited generosity. He went to and fro between the two continents, devoting all his concerts to charity. A great number of French soloists and conductors were scheduled for the winter concerts.

But still another visitor of special significance to British music life, and particularly to the London Philharmonic, was expected—Sir Thomas Beecham. We had expected him long ago, but he had been delayed by his obligations in America and transportation difficulties. He had constantly remained in close contact with us and had arranged to conduct a series of

concerts with the Philharmonic in London and the provinces for the fall of 1944. In addition he was going to make recordings. He had planned to arrive the end of August. Several weeks of extensive rehearsals were to precede the concerts.

The end of August—no Sir Thomas. The beginning of September—not a word. Finally he let us know in a roundabout way, since censorship regulations made direct communications impossible, that we could count on his arrival the end of September. What had happened? Sir Thomas, who had impatiently awaited a transport promised for a certain day, had gotten tired of waiting and had taken the first departing ship, a Dutch freighter. It had met with all sorts of misfortunes of weather and war. Shortly after its departure, a storm had forced it back to port; several torpedoes and enemy planes forced it to change its course. Under those circumstances, Sir Thomas was hardly allowed on deck, and spent the time composing a long ballad in the style of a medieval epic, describing the adventures of the brave ship.

Finally we received word that he was in “British waters.” Thomas Russell jumped on the next train to Liverpool to welcome the long absent chief when he had landed. When they arrived in London, Sir Thomas drove direct from the station to the office on Welbeck Street.

1944-1945

The day after his arrival, the first rehearsal was held in the new town hall of suburban Wembley, since Albert Hall was still closed. The orchestra was already waiting at their desks when Sir Thomas entered the concert hall. Whatever their emotions at being reunited with their artistic leader to whom they had granted more authority than to any other conductor, no matter how famous, they gave no sign. They were all obviously a little nervous, and it was hard to tell who was more apprehensive of this moment of reunion—Sir Thomas or the orchestra. Nor did Sir Thomas show how moved he was. He mounted the podium and lifted his baton. The long interruption in their united artistic endeavors was forgotten.

The orchestra played with abandon and Sir Thomas conducted with zest. During Berlioz’s *Roman Carnival*, the showpiece of the orchestra under his direction, he punctured the back of his left hand with his baton, and there was nothing to do but drive him to the nearest hospital to have the broken tip removed. Two hours later, he returned triumphantly holding a glass containing the relic in his unbandaged hand. He was still a trifle pale, but the rehearsal continued, although in a somewhat subdued tempo.

Months of gratifying work followed, inspired by this unique, dynamic personality. When the concerts in London and the provinces began, the orchestra enjoyed “record weeks,” and more than often Sir Thomas was spirited away to his car by a police escort to protect him from the enthusiastic crowds that gathered at the stage door.

In spite of the victorious outlook, the patience of the English people had to face yet one more test. The advance in Holland came to a stop. The tempo of the Russian advance at the eastern borders of Germany slowed down. In the west the Germans mounted a strong counteroffensive at Christmas 1944. They could retard the Allied advance, but they could not stop it.

At the beginning of 1945 the picture changed. All fronts advanced. The impending end of the war was beyond doubt and seemed to depend only on the degree of resistance of the German people.

How often I was grateful to live in a free country in those days. How many things, for many years no longer known in Germany, were taken for granted here. How often during the shattering events of the past twelve years in which a blooming country was pushed irresistibly toward ruin, have I asked myself again and again: How was it possible that the German nation with its magnificent gifts could entrust itself to such leadership? How could it permit itself to be deprived of everything that was fine and noble in life?

1945

Tighter and tighter the ring closed around the German defenders. Berlin was encircled. The end was only a question of hours.

On the evening of May 1st, I was listening to the radio. Suddenly a voice, apparently from Germany, requested listeners to stand by for an important proclamation for the German people. I waited. There was a fanfare of trumpets, then music from *Die Götterdämmerung*. The request to stand by was repeated. Then followed the long Adagio from Bruckner's Ninth Symphony. Endlessly the minutes dragged by. Finally—finally Admiral Doenitz, for a few days the Führer of the defeated Reich, announced that Adolf Hitler was dead.

How short the span of twelve years in the frame of world history, and still how endless it seemed to us who lived through it. Now that hard time is past. Stunned, we look into the future.

EPILOGUE

With the end of the war, I am once more engaged in extensive foreign negotiations for the London Philharmonic, and feel indeed that the world has opened up again. In England, an exchange of artists and orchestras has already begun on a small scale with France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries. Visiting artists have started to come from the United States on an increasing scale. The public wanted music during the war; that it wants it more than ever now is undeniable.

The present state of Europe is such that it is too early to write anything about the outlook of music on the Continent. But the few hints that have filtered through indicate that there, too, the people are desperately yearning to carry on their musical tradition. The orchestras are performing under difficult conditions, but they are performing. The Vienna Philharmonic is making plans to tour Switzerland, France and England. The Berlin Philharmonic, reorganized shortly after the occupation, is holding regular concerts in the *Deutsche Opernhaus* in Charlottenburg. The Berlin State Opera House was burnt out, restored, and burnt out again, but in spite of it all, a full repertoire is being presented at the nearby *Admiralspalast*. One American soldier reported a performance of Mozart's *Magic Flute* so perfect that the audience was able to forget completely the depressing ruins that lay just outside the door. Soldiers in the vicinity of Salzburg enjoyed a modest festival in the old tradition; plans for a festival on a larger scale are fairly advanced. Though Bayreuth was bombed, the *Festspielhaus* is untouched.

Sir Thomas Beecham is in America at the time of this writing. Furtwängler is in Switzerland, still the center of a raging controversy. Toscanini has returned to La Scala after eight years in exile.

Much has disappeared in the tragedy of Europe. Opera houses and concert halls have been demolished, artists have scattered, artistic leadership is missing. At the moment, there is but a will to regain part of the old tradition. How much of it will rise again, in what form and how it will be achieved are questions that can be answered only in the slow development of time.

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Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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