

Richard Strauss's *Friedenstag*:
A Political Statement of Peace in Nazi Germany

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Montevallo, 2004
Master of Music, Louisiana State University, 2006

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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After the conclusion of World War II, Richard Strauss's activities and compositions came under intense scrutiny as scholars tried to understand his position with respect to the National Socialist regime. Their conclusions varied, some describing Strauss as a Nazi sympathizer, some as a victim of Nazism, with others concluding that Strauss was neither a sympathizer nor a victim, merely politically naïve. Among the latter was Strauss's friend and biographer, Willi Schuh, who ardently defended the composer's activities during the Nazi period. While Schuh asserted that Strauss's music had no direct political ties to the "Third Reich", Strauss's 1938 opera, *Friedenstag*, demonstrates that he was, in fact, politically aware and capable of composing a work replete with conscious political overtones.

The correspondence between Strauss and his Jewish librettist, Stefan Zweig, shows that Strauss deliberately chose to compose *Friedenstag* in the face of his disillusionment with the Nazi government. Although initially hailed as the first Nazi opera, elements of *Friedenstag*'s political message resist appropriation by Hitler's regime. While addressing the pro-Nazi implications through a close study of the libretto

and score, this thesis will argue that *Friedenstag* was composed as a tribute to peace and a response to the increasingly hostile political climate.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vi
Acknowledgments	vii
Dedication	viii
Preface	1
Chapter I: Strauss and the National Socialists: The Road to <i>Friedenstag</i>	3
Chapter II: <i>Friedenstag</i> 's Libretto: A Question of Authorship	27
Chapter III: Contemporaneous Interpretations of <i>Friedenstag</i> 's Ambiguous Score	40
Chapter IV: Reinterpreting <i>Friedenstag</i> after the War: a Hermeneutic Quandary	65
Bibliography	75
Appendix One: Stefan Zweig's initial <i>Friedenstag</i> sketch sent to Richard Strauss on August 21, 1934	79
Appendix Two: Stefan Zweig's extended <i>Friedenstag</i> sketch sent to Joseph Gregor on July 3, 1935	81
Appendix Three: Stefan Zweig's July 26, 1935 comments on Joseph Gregor's first draft of <i>Friedenstag</i>	90
Appendix Four: Concise Chart of the Similarities and Differences between the Historical Thirty Years' War and <i>Friedenstag</i> 's Libretto	92

List of Figures

Figure 1: <i>Pflicht</i> Theme in timpani, pg. 11.....	46
Figure 2: Quotations of “Ein’ feste Burg” in the horns and bassoons, pg. 26.	48
Figure 3: Caption: "Sucked dry." From <i>Der Stürmer</i> , February 1930.....	50
Figure 4: Plagal cadence closing the Commandant’s speech, pg. 63.....	52
Figure 5: Strong cadence before Maria’s entrance, pg. 94.....	54
Figure 6: Excerpt from the duet between the Commandant and Maria, pg. 142-144.....	56
Figure 7: <i>Pflicht</i> theme heard as the Commandant searches for the enemy, pg. 166.....	57
Figure 8: Excerpt from the Holsteiner’s speech, pg. 203.....	60

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Dedication

*For my family,
two down and one to go.*

Preface

Friedenstag or “Peace Day” is a one-act opera by Richard Strauss that was conceived, written and performed during Germany’s infamous “Third Reich.”¹ The political implications of the work have been the subject of controversy since its premiere in 1938. Following the end of the Second World War, information surrounding Strauss’s involvement with the Nazi government began to surface, causing many of the musical works composed during the time period to be re-interpreted as vehicles of Nazi propaganda. *Friedenstag* was especially regarded with suspicion because it was initially praised and promoted by the National Socialists. However, in recent years, documents have been uncovered that shed new light on the circumstances surrounding the inception and creation of the opera. This thesis aims to examine these documents with the ultimate goal of uncovering the political message of *Friedenstag* and the true intentions of its creators.

The first chapter will address *Friedenstag*’s political overtones, which owe much to Strauss’s initial involvement with the “Third Reich” after his enthusiastic acceptance of *Reichsmusikkammer* president. Strauss’s early receptivity towards the National Socialists and their artistic endeavors was short-lived as his own status fell from honoured government appointee to *persona non grata*, primarily owing to his collaborations with Stephan Zweig, his Jewish librettist. The correspondence between Strauss and Zweig clearly shows that Strauss deliberately chose to compose *Friedenstag*

¹ The term “Third Reich” will be enclosed in quotation marks because it was a concept developed by the Nazis implying continuity with the First and Second Reichs.

as his next opera project as a result of his disillusionment with the Nazi government.

This correspondence also reveals the origins of the discord between not only Strauss and Zweig but also between the composer and the Nazi regime, and explains Strauss's rationale for choosing what he referred to as the "serious subject" of *Friedenstag*.

Although Joseph Gregor is the opera's credited librettist, the story has its origins in an idea from Stefan Zweig who also actively assisted Gregor during the writing process. The question regarding the libretto's authorship will be explored in the second chapter using information gleaned from Strauss's correspondences with Zweig as well as Gregor, in addition to a survey of current research on the subject. Uncovering the opera's librettist will assist in discovering the work's actual purpose. The third chapter will present a close study of the music and libretto of *Friedenstag* in an effort to illustrate both the pacifist and National Socialist interpretations of the opera while the final chapter will focus on modern assessments of the work. Subsequent to *Friedenstag's* premiere it was conveniently labeled the first Nazi opera by Hitler's regime. However, this thesis will counter the pro-Nazi arguments, ultimately revealing *Friedenstag's* pacifist message.

Chapter I

Strauss and the National Socialists: The Road to *Friedenstag*

On July 24, 1938, at the height of National Socialism, Richard Strauss's twelfth opera, *Friedenstag*, received its Munich premiere. Two years earlier, Adolf Hitler had not only begun the re-armament of Germany but had also resumed control over the Rhineland and was actively seeking allies in preparation for war. March 1938 brought the Austrian *Anschluss*, and in September, United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt appealed directly to Hitler for peace. However, Hitler's next action was the occupation of the Sudetenland in October, and November's *Kristallnacht* signaled increasing violence within Germany.² During this tumultuous time, it is notable that an opera entitled "Peace day," with its pacifist overtones, would receive any performance at all within Germany.

The controversy surrounding Richard Strauss and his involvement with the "Third Reich" has been a topic of debate since the end of the Second World War. Most discussion has centered around Strauss's ideological stance as well as the political ramifications of his works written between 1933 and 1945. One such work was *Friedenstag*, chosen at a time when his amicable relationship with the government was deteriorating. After the National Socialist Party gained power, Strauss was eager to participate in the new Reich. However, soon after becoming president of the

² "Adolf Hitler," Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9106283>.

Reichsmusikkammer (Reich Music Chamber or RMK),³ he started to become disillusioned with the routine duties of the office. Strauss was also simultaneously collaborating with Stefan Zweig, an internationally celebrated Austrian-Jewish writer, which resulted in his eleventh opera, *Die schweigsame Frau*. Strauss's initial involvement with the National Socialist government as well as his subsequent removal as RMK President likely influenced his decision to compose *Friedenstag*.

When *Friedenstag* premiered it was hailed as the first opera that accurately embodied the ideals and characteristics of National Socialism.⁴ In recent years, most scholars, such as Pamela Potter, have found that the opera represented a pacifist reaction to the time, while others, such as George Marek, have questioned its artistic merit. The opera has, in fact, been the subject of multiple interpretations for its political implications. The following discussion will argue that Strauss deliberately chose *Friedenstag*, disregarding all other available operatic projects, demonstrating that he was politically aware and capable of composing a work replete with conscious political undertones. This chapter will also explore Strauss's political motivations in choosing to compose the 1938 opera, ultimately calling into question Willi Schuh's claim that Strauss was "apolitical" in his artistic endeavors during the "Third Reich."

As scholars attempt to either defend or condemn Strauss's overt, albeit ambiguous relationship with the National Socialist government several general questions arise: "Was

³ Headed and by Joseph Goebbels in 1933, the Reich Culture Chamber (*Reichskulturkammer*) was responsible for the regulation of musical matters. Membership was compulsory as any musician not deemed politically and racially reliable was refused and therefore unable to work in Germany.

⁴ Alan Jefferson, *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Dawlish: David and Charles (Holdings) Limited, 1973), 206.

Strauss naïve and apolitical, or was he an opportunist interested only in having his works performed? Was he acting for the good of German music and musicians as president of the RMK and an advocate for copyright protection? Was he anti-Semitic, or was he worried for the safety of his Jewish family members, or was he both?”⁵ In a 1992 article, Pamela Potter presents a survey of major scholarship on Strauss from 1949 to the late 1980s. Her research reveals a “glaring lack of historical perspective,” as scholars have placed convenient labels characterizing his behavior as well as handing down verdicts on his moral conduct.⁶ Potter concludes her article by challenging the next generation of Strauss scholars to “view Strauss in a broader social context and look at him not for what he might or should have been but for what he unquestionably was: musician, composer, international celebrity, German, late romanticist, advocate for copyright protection, and senior citizen.”⁷ Heeding Potter’s challenge, the aforementioned questions will be discussed within a political and biographical context.

When Adolf Hitler's obviously anti-Semitic government came to power in the 1930's many prominent artists and scholars chose to leave Germany rather than remain and show solidarity with the new Reich. Unlike many of his colleagues, Strauss chose not only to remain in Germany but also to accept the highly publicized position of Reichsmusikkammer president. Following 1945, there was much speculation among scholars as to why Strauss would have so enthusiastically aligned himself with the National Socialists. Commentators are divided as to whether Strauss was politically naive, a Nazi sympathizer, or if he was simply working for the good of German music

⁵ Pamela M. Potter, “Strauss and the National Socialists,” in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and his Work*, Bryan Gilliam, ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 107-108.

⁶ Ibid, 94.

⁷ Ibid,109.

and musicians. However, there are several factors that could have contributed to Strauss's initial receptivity toward the Third Reich.

As a German reared during the last third of the nineteenth century, Richard Strauss (1864-1949) was influenced by an atmosphere of aggressive anti-Semitism. Anti-Jewish propaganda was disseminated throughout Germany, representing Jews as responsible for all of society's ills. The anti-Semitic movement was rooted in racial rather than religious distinctions. For example, in the fall of 1880 the "Anti-Semites Petition" was circulated, asking the German government to "free" Germany from Jews who were described as "foreigners" trying to "master" and "destroy" the German people.⁸ The petition had two hundred twenty-five thousand signatures when it was presented to Chancellor Bismarck in April 1881.⁹ Jewish writer Berthold Auerbach (1812-1882) reflected on the success of the anti-Semitic movement, writing that "the fire's caught and will go on burning. It's to the point where you have to be grateful to almost every single person who declares himself free of prejudice."¹⁰

As a member of the cultured German upper middle class, the young Strauss was not immune from the prejudices that pervaded his environment. His father, Franz Strauss, was the principal horn player at the Court Opera in Munich. The elder Strauss worked under the Jewish Kapellmeister Hermann Levi whom he loathed, often referring to him with anti-Semitic epithets.¹¹ At the age of twenty-one, Richard Strauss was hired as assistant conductor to Hans von Bülow in Meiningen, a man described by Michael

⁸ David A. Altshuler and Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *Hitler's War Against the Jews* (New Jersey: Behrman House, Inc., 1978), 31.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Amos Elon, *The Pity of it All: A History of the Jews in Germany, 1743-1933* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), 219.

¹¹ Michael H. Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 243.

Kater as an “unreconstructed Wagnerian” and a “dyed-in-the-wool anti-Semite.”¹²

Another important influence on the young composer was Cosima Wagner, whose notoriously anti-Jewish views contributed to the atmosphere of anti-Semitism that surrounded Strauss. Cosima and Strauss kept in touch intermittently beginning in 1889, when the young composer worked as a répétiteur at Bayreuth.¹³ In their correspondence, which lasted until 1906, Strauss, ever eager to please, made many anti-Semitic remarks to the Bayreuth matriarch, usually condemning all Jewish artists as talentless and emotionless. On November 3, 1891, he commented about the Jewish influence on music being performed outside of Bayreuth:

Oh, dearest ma’am, it is horrible, infinitely sad in our Germany; if it were not for Bayreuth, I would now be “God knows what,” but not at all an artist. For as an artist, ultimately one wishes to communicate one’s self to someone; but to expect any interest in a serious artistic project from this gang of so-called Germans is simply foolish. Yes, the Jews have gotten us into quite a fix! ... So poor “Parsifal” is nevermore to be released from the Jewish torture chamber? Why must this poor work atone for Levi’s “merits?”¹⁴

In this passage, Strauss indicated that no one could expect any serious artistic endeavor from Jews. Hermann Levi, as a conductor of *Parsifal* from 1882-1894 and already known to Strauss from his father as the subject of anti-Semitism, was an easy target. For Strauss, Levi’s conducting served as the perfect example of the “Jewish torture chamber.”

One famous example of what could be interpreted as an illustration of Strauss’s tendency to engage in Anti-Semitic rhetoric occurred in 1932, when it seemed likely that the National Socialists would become the ruling party in Germany. The Jewish conductor

¹² Ibid, 244.

¹³ Michael Kennedy, “Strauss, Richard,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 18, Stanley Sadie, ed. (London: McMillian Publishers Limited, 1980), 219-220.

¹⁴ Franz Trenner, ed., *Cosima Wagner – Richard Strauss: Ein Briefwechsel* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1978), 108. Translation by Harald M. Krebs and Patricia J. Moss.

Otto Klemperer, in a book containing reminiscences about various musicians, mentions a conversation concerning politics with the Strausses at their Garmisch home. Strauss asked what might happen if all Jewish conductors were to leave Germany, to which Klemperer replied that it probably would not paralyze the music scene. Hereupon Pauline Strauss told Klemperer to see her “if they want to harm you.” Strauss countered with a smile: “That would be just the right moment to stick up for a Jew!”¹⁵ Some scholars attribute Strauss’s comment to his political naïveté which could very well be true. Nevertheless, the comment could also demonstrate that the anti-Semitic atmosphere of his childhood and youth clouded his everyday interactions with Jewish people. In his book, Klemperer concluded that Strauss’s comment was so naïve that one could not interpret it as “evil.” However, by including this *particular* memory of Strauss in a book published almost thirty years later, Klemperer demonstrated that he was affected by Strauss’s thoroughly tactless, if not outright anti-Semitic, comment. According to Peter Heyworth, Klemperer was appalled when Strauss failed to inquire after his well-being at the Salzburg Festival in 1933.¹⁶ Later that same year, Klemperer emigrated to the United States after his dismissal as conductor of the Kroll Opera in Berlin. He was appointed Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and in this capacity he boycotted Strauss’s works until 1936, when the precarious economic condition of the orchestra forced him to abandon his stance.¹⁷ As he aged, Strauss’s anti-Semitic outbursts became fewer, his professional collaborations with Jews intensified, and he also had a

¹⁵ Otto Klemperer, *Meine Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler und andere autobiographische Skizzen* (Freiburg and Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1960), 39-40. Translation by Patricia J. Moss.

¹⁶ Peter Heyworth, *Otto Klemperer: His Life and Times*, vol. 2, 1933-1973 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 15. As related to the author by Mr. Eric Simon.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-22, 77.

Jewish daughter-in-law. However, despite his amicable relationships with Jews, Strauss remained profoundly influenced by the anti-Semitism of his youth.

Another reason for Strauss's initial enthusiasm towards Hitler's regime lay in his desire to protect the intellectual property of German musicians. As an advocate for copyright protection and musicians' rights in general, Strauss had tried unsuccessfully in the previous government to gain protection for composers and their compositions. During the Weimar Republic, the plight of musicians and scholars was not considered a priority in governmental affairs. Pamela Potter comments that "Berlin in the Weimar years shows us a struggling musical culture subjected to economic vicissitudes and anti-elitist governing factions."¹⁸ Much of the organization of musical life was left to the caprice of private enterprises and local bureaucrats. The central government assumed almost no accountability for protecting musical institutions; the Reich Ministry of the Interior was the only branch of government to take any responsibility for protecting musical institutions. Although the Reich Ministry of the Interior delegated funds to different musical enterprises, the support it provided was minimal. The lack of adequate central government support resulted in an absence of consistency between the states with regard to job qualifications, causing many professionals to compete with amateurs for jobs at lower fees.¹⁹ Strauss was no friend of the Weimar democracy. Michael Kater asserts that he, in fact, "believed that a dictatorial regime could finally implement the changes toward a neocorporatism that would benefit the German musical profession, and

¹⁸ Pamela M. Potter, "Musical Life in Berlin from Weimar to Hitler," in *Music and Nazism*, Michael H. Kater and Albrecht Riethmuller, eds. (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2003), 91.

¹⁹ Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 9-10.

in particular composers, on behalf of which he had been toiling since the beginning of the century.”²⁰

After Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, the new Reich wasted no time re-establishing the financial and social positions of musicians lost during the Weimar Republic by immediately creating the RMK as protection for music institutions and professionals. Applegate and Potter propose that, “the overall aim of Nazi cultural policy was to enlist the cooperation of cultural professionals by allaying their fears about threats to their existence and giving in to a number of their demands for financial and professional security, all the time reassuring them that control over such matters would remain in the hands of the cultural professionals themselves.”²¹ As Germany’s outstanding living composer, Strauss was named the RMK’s first president. His opening address at the first convention of the chamber on February 13, 1934 provides insight into his enthusiasm toward the new Reich:

The RMK – the dream and goal of all German musicians for decades – was created November 15, 1933, thus constituting a most important step in the direction of the reconstruction of our total German musical life. At this point I feel compelled to thank Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler and Reich minister Dr. Goebbels in the name of the entire musical profession of Germany for the creation of the RKKG [*Reichskulturkammergesetz* (Reich Culture Chamber Law)].

After elaborating on the “illustrious history of German music,” the “commitment to recreate unity between music and the German people which had been marred in the

²⁰ Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 18.

²¹ Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, “Germans as the ‘People of Music’,” in *Music and German National Identity*, Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, eds. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 24-25.

recent past,” “musical taste,” and “the poor economic situation of German music,”

Strauss concluded that

Adolf Hitler’s seizure of power has not only resulted in a transformation of the political situation in Germany, but also of its culture, and since the National Socialist government has called to life the RMK it is evident that the new Germany is not willing to allow artistic life to remain in isolation, but that new ways and means will be explored for the revival of our musical culture.²²

Besides his opening address, Strauss made other positive gestures toward Hitler and the “Third Reich.” For example, in December 1933, he composed the Lied *Das Bächlein*, which was dedicated to Goebbels in acknowledgement of his appointment as RMK president. The concluding line of the Lied, “He who has called me from the stone, will, I think, be my Führer!,”²³ is emphasized with a three fold ornamented repetition of the text, my Führer. This repetition has been interpreted by Pamela Potter and Norman Del Mar as an indirect reference to Hitler; other scholars, such as Michael Kater and Gerhard Splitt, have gone so far as to interpret it as homage to the German leader, representing Strauss’s solidarity with Nazi ideology.²⁴ Considering the time period, the dedication, and the text, it is difficult to interpret the use of the Lied as coincidental. While in Munich in March 1934, Strauss again praised Hitler publicly, crediting him with having united Germany.²⁵ These few examples of Strauss’s speeches can be interpreted as a demonstration of his willing, enthusiastic participation during the early years of the

²² Joseph Wulf, *Musik im Dritten Reich: eine Dokumentation* (Gütersloh: Sigbert Mohn Verlag, 1963), 180-181. Translated in Michael Meyer, *The Politics of Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 101.

²³ Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, vol. 3 (London: Barrie and Jenkins, LTD., 1972), 395-397. The text is by an anonymous poet: “Der mich gerufen aus dem Stein, Der, denk’ ich, wird mein Führer sein!”

²⁴ Potter, “Strauss and the National Socialists,” 104-105.

²⁵ Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era*, 238.

“Third Reich.” However, his initial excitement toward the new government would soon wane.

Strauss accepted the presidency of the RMK with three goals that he wished to implement: to extend the period of copyright for serious music compositions for both the composer and their heirs; to increase the profit share of serious composers as opposed to light-music or operetta composers; and to institute the highest level of training and performance in order to upgrade musical culture throughout Germany.²⁶ Strauss was relatively successful at achieving these goals in his Presidency. By the end of 1934, he had extended the copyright period for composers from thirty to fifty years, although he had been hoping for an extension of seventy years.²⁷ Under Strauss’s leadership the RMK also helped define a professional code by establishing musical competency tests in order to weed out amateurs and frauds.²⁸ With regard to an increase of profit shares for serious composers nothing was accomplished due to the lack of criteria for defining what constituted a serious composer.²⁹ Despite his few achievements, Strauss’s role as President was almost always on shaky ground. Strauss preferred to remain in Garmisch, relegating the everyday affairs of his office to two groups of Berlin subordinates. The first group consisted of hand-picked pre-regime men whom Strauss thought he could trust. In the second were representatives of the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Culture Chamber or RKK), chosen by Goebbels or Hans Hinkel, manager of the RKK.³⁰ An immediate consequence of Strauss’s absentee presidency was insufficient and disorganized leadership within the upper ranks of the Berlin RMK, which led to

²⁶ Meyer, *The Politics of Music*, 101.

²⁷ Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era*, 229.

²⁸ Kater, *The Twisted Muse*, 19.

²⁹ Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era*, 230.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 232.

corruption, confusion, and infighting.³¹ In his absence, many of Strauss's subordinates vied for his position, finding problems with Strauss's orders or even ignoring them altogether. To further complicate issues, Strauss avoided the chaos of the Berlin meetings, finding them tedious and nonsensical.³²

On October 4, 1934 Strauss wrote his trusted colleague Dr. Julius Kopsch concerning his feelings toward the chamber and its meetings saying that "... nothing is accomplished in these meetings. I hear that the Aryan law is to be sharpened and that *Carmen* will be forbidden. I have no wish to participate in such embarrassing blunders... Time is too precious for me to participate further in such amateurish mischief."³³ In mid-November 1934 Strauss seriously contemplated resigning his position, but refrained, as his personal goal of copyright reform had not yet materialized. In addition, the chamber's vice president, Wilhelm Furtwängler,³⁴ was experiencing his own problems with the Reich; therefore, any resignation by Strauss could have been misconstrued as solidarity with the conductor. Even as Strauss was developing negative feelings toward the chamber, his immediate superior, Joseph Goebbels, was also becoming displeased with the arrangement. Goebbels, as well as other high ranking Nazi officials, found fault with Strauss's absenteeism as well as with his tendency to ignore or outright oppose laws attempting to censor Jewish musicians and their works.³⁵ Even though the honeymoon

³¹ Kater, *The Twisted Muse*, 18.

³² Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era*, 220-235.

³³ George Richard Marek, *Richard Strauss: The Life of a Non-Hero* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 276-277.

³⁴ As conductor and Vice-President of the Reichsmusikkammer, Furtwängler was attacked by the Nazis for defending the composer Paul Hindemith and for opposing the ouster of Jewish members of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. He was eventually forced to resign his position in the *Reichsmusikkammer*. (Max Knight, ed., *A Confidential Matter: The Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, 1931-1935*, f.n., 65).

³⁵ Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era*, 234-235.

period was essentially over, neither Goebbels nor Strauss made any effort to end his presidency. The proverbial straw that broke the camel's back came in 1935 with the premiere of *Die schweigsame Frau*, the libretto of which was written by the Jewish Stefan Zweig.

Strauss began working with Zweig in 1931 after the sudden death of his first librettist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, two years earlier. In 1932, after a short exchange of ideas, Strauss agreed to a libretto by Zweig based on the Elizabethan comedy *Epicoene*, or *The Silent Woman* by Ben Jonson. The early correspondence between Strauss and Zweig indicates that the two men held a mutual respect for one another. Zweig was honoured to work with Germany's greatest living musician, while Strauss felt fortunate to have found a worthy replacement for Hofmannsthal. After reading the first draft, Strauss expressed his satisfaction in a letter to Zweig, written on June 24, 1932: "it is enchanting – a born comic opera – a comedy equal to the best of its kind – more suitable for music than even *Figaro* and the *Barber of Seville*."³⁶ On January 24, 1933, after receiving the finished libretto, Strauss exclaimed, "Yes that I have found you, you beloved child, that makes me joyful every day that is granted to me."³⁷ Their work was very much a collaborative process with Strauss going so far as to seek Zweig's opinion on artistic choices. One such incident occurred in December 1932, when Strauss was deciding whether to include spoken dialogue or *recitativo secco*. Zweig opined that although prose dialogue was "the most natural form," music should not be completely eliminated

³⁶ Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, *A Confidential Matter: The Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, 1931-1935*, Translated by Max Knight (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 10-11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 28. "Ja dass ich dich gefunden, du liebes Kind, das freut mich alle Tage, die mir bescheiden sind." The words are from Richard Strauss's Lied, "Ich trage meine Minne," poem by Karl Henckell, opus 32, number 1.

from the dialogue. The music “should be sprinkled over from time to time with an ironic, illustrative spark...”³⁸ Unfortunately, the political climate in Germany was rapidly changing, ultimately causing the untimely termination of an otherwise amicable collaboration.

On January 20, 1933, when Hitler was named Chancellor of Germany, neither Zweig nor Strauss acknowledged the event. Their correspondence continued as before, with discussions of their individual artistic endeavors as well as their joint effort on *Die schweigsame Frau*. Even before the completion of *Die schweigsame Frau*, Strauss began asking Zweig for ideas on another libretto. Initially eager to continue the collaboration, Zweig’s early enthusiasm was short lived. On April 3, 1933, Zweig wrote to Strauss concerning a misrepresentation in the press:

A few days ago I experienced a special and incredible trouble: Goebbels in a radio talk quoted an infamous passage from the writer Arnold Zweig without using the first name. Now I am having great difficulties getting a timely correction printed. You can imagine how you would welcome it if someone attributed not only the *Fledermaus* to you but also a little sex murder committed by another composer who has the same name as you.³⁹

Arnold Zweig (no relation to Stefan) was an anti-war activist who, after World War I, was an active socialist Zionist in Germany. When the National Socialist party gained power in 1933, he was one of the many Jews who immediately went into voluntary exile. Goebbels was attempting to confuse the identities of the two men in an effort to politicize the name Zweig. In the same April 3 letter, Zweig also mentioned that his work was disturbed during “these upsetting times.” Possible events disrupting Zweig’s work may have been the burning of the Berlin Reichstag in February, the election of Hitler as

³⁸ Ibid, 23-25.

³⁹ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 33.

dictator of Germany on March 23, and the April 1 nationwide boycott of Jewish-owned businesses.⁴⁰ In Strauss's April 4 reply he acknowledged Zweig's problem concerning his name, writing:

I have forwarded your desire for "a timely correction," with ample information from me, to my friend Hugo Rasch,⁴¹ music editor of the Berlin edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter*. I am sure he will do everything he can with the highest chief, Rosenberg, to ensure that justice be done to you.⁴²

Strauss also responded to Zweig's comment on the "upsetting times," writing that he was busy at work, even after the "outbreak of the Great War."⁴³ Max Knight, editor and translator of the letters, attributes Strauss's "Great War" comment to the boycott of Jewish businesses. Strauss concluded his letter by writing that he was "in the midst of Act II" of *Die schweigsame Frau* and that the draft of Act I had been "copied in final form."⁴⁴ Despite being dated only one day apart, the two letters had very different tones. Zweig seemed quite concerned over the political climate while Strauss was unperturbed, continuing his work as usual.

In May 1933, Hitler imposed a prohibitive tax of one thousand marks for crossing the border between Germany and Austria, his purpose being to destabilize Austria's economy. Therefore, Zweig terminated any further travel to Germany. He referred to the "closed border" first on May 28 and then again in his letter of August 10, 1934, when he explained his reasoning for no longer traveling to Germany:

⁴⁰ "Adolf Hitler," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9106283>.

⁴¹ According to Michael Kater, Hugo Rasch was a "rock-solid Nazi and minor composer who later became Richard Strauss's Reichsmusikkammer factotum in Berlin." Kater, *Twisted Muse*, 155.

⁴² Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 33.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

I don't want to go to Germany at this time. I am not afraid – except of silly gossip. Perhaps it would be said that I was surrendering to those in power, that I had traveled to Germany to achieve God knows what. It could trigger one of those disgusting newspaper speculations that neither of us wants for reasons of integrity and also in the interest of our work. Nowadays it is being 'noted' and commented on if an Austrian writer travels to Germany, and I want to feed the journalists' imagination as little as possible.⁴⁵

As a result of the tax, German artists traveling to Austria risked cancellation of their German contracts.⁴⁶ Consequently, Austrian artists traveling to Germany were being “noted” as showing support for the new German government. Just as Zweig did not want his name to be misrepresented by Goebbels, he also did not want his actions misinterpreted by the press.

After his April 3, 1933 letter, when he originally indicated trouble with the new Reich, almost all of Zweig's letters contain some remark concerning the German government. His correspondence conveyed his frustration and inability to work under the current administration. On September 3, Zweig even went so far as to comment that he was considering re-location, “to work and seal [himself] off entirely from the contemporary situation.”⁴⁷ Strauss, on the other hand, made no mention of the National Socialist Party or any current affairs. His letters included discussions of upcoming artistic projects, ideas for further collaborations with Zweig, and the progress of *Die schweigsame Frau*. He did, however, allude to his appointment as Reichsmusikkammer president on January 21, 1934, commenting that the appointment produced “a lot of extra work.”⁴⁸ Despite this “extra work” Strauss was able to complete one hundred and forty

⁴⁵ Ibid, 50.

⁴⁶ Heyworth, *Otto Klemperer*, 15.

⁴⁷ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 37-38.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 38.

pages of the *Die schweigsame Frau* score in two and a half months. He also wrote a half-hearted excuse as to why he accepted the position in the first place, “I believe I should not refuse this task because the goodwill of the new German government in promoting music and theatre can really produce a lot of good; and I have, in fact, been able to accomplish some fruitful things and prevent some misfortune.”⁴⁹ Strauss then immediately changed the subject, writing at length concerning his *Arabella* and its reception as compared to *Rosenkavalier*. Strauss’s extremely casual mention of his official Reich position and his weak excuse for accepting it almost reads as an insincere apology. Zweig may have felt the same because in subsequent letters he made no mention of Strauss’s presidency.

The tone of Zweig’s letters began to change in 1934. On July 21 of that year, he nonchalantly related to Strauss that he would suggest further opera ideas “even if [he] were not to work on them [himself].”⁵⁰ The letters imply that Zweig was becoming very nervous about his involvement with *Die schweigsame Frau*. On July 26, 1935, he wrote to Strauss that, while in London, he was questioned by several reporters concerning problems surrounding the premiere of the opera. Strauss assured Zweig that there had been no issues, writing on September 21, 1934 that Hitler had approved performances of the opera. In contrast to Zweig, Strauss continued to write in a casual tone, discussing future projects and adamantly refusing to consider another librettist. However, Strauss’s letters reveal a change of tone several months later, when on February 5, 1935, he

⁴⁹ Ibid, 38-39.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 48.

“requested” that Zweig withdraw from the International Music Club in the interest of *Die schweigsame Frau*.⁵¹

As previously mentioned, by 1935 Strauss was not enjoying the favorable position within the government that he had in 1933 and the early part of 1934. The possibility exists that he was starting to feel some negative pressure concerning his collaboration with a Jew, not to mention his own resistant attitude toward prohibitive laws against Jewish artists. In the February 18, 1935 reply, Zweig refused to withdraw from the music club, explaining that whereas his membership had no political implications, his exit would be perceived as political. He also suggested postponing the premiere of *Schweigsame*, “in order to avoid any connection with the events in the musical world⁵² and allow time for a strictly artistic evaluation.”⁵³ Strauss wrote that postponing the opera was impossible, as both Hitler and Goebbels had officially approved it and the Dresden Semperoper had made its announcements for June-July, 1935.

Despite the fact that both men were experiencing problems with the government, Strauss continued to request additional libretti from Zweig. Nevertheless, from August 24, 1934 onward, he acknowledged that anything Zweig provided must be kept secret. As much as Strauss persistently asked Zweig for more libretti, Zweig in turn refused further collaboration. He did, however, write that he would be willing to assist whomever Strauss chose as his replacement. Zweig first promoted the poet Lernert Holena as his replacement, a suggestion which Strauss hastily rejected. Zweig then

⁵¹ Ibid, 64.

⁵² Zweig was probably referring to the controversy surrounding Wilhelm Furtwängler.

⁵³ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 64-65.

proposed his intimate friend and colleague Joseph Gregor,⁵⁴ a notable theater expert, whom Strauss grudgingly accepted. As of April 20, 1935, Zweig and Strauss were discussing three new operatic projects: *Celestina*, *Friedenstag*, and de Casti's *Prima la musica, poi le parole*, which would later become *Capriccio*. Strauss also mentioned that another project, *Semiramis*, had captured his interest. At this point he was not overly interested in *Friedenstag* because it did not express feelings that kindled emotional music. Approximately one year earlier, when Zweig had initially mentioned the idea, Strauss had suggested adding a love affair to the plot. However, Zweig was unyielding in his vision of an opera that represented the toil and utter despair of war and the relief of reconciliation, to which Strauss replied on October 10, 1934:

The motives of despair, heroism, weakness, hatred, and reconciliation, and so on do not, I'm afraid, inspire enough music in me that truly goes to the heart. To be sure, my suggestions were operatic, but where does the kitsch end and the opera begin? Of course, I must not try to persuade you but I do have the feeling that the plot is a little too straight; it lacks contrast, the erotic element, figures expressing weakness, indecision. Perhaps you can reconsider and think of something better, less kitsch, which meets my doubts and wishes.⁵⁵

From that time until April 20, 1935, there was no further mention of *Friedenstag*.

Following Strauss's April 20 letter, Zweig and Gregor met in Zurich to discuss Zweig's three proposals as well as *Semiramis*. Gregor created a draft of *Semiramis* that was vehemently rejected by Strauss, leading him again to request that Zweig be his only librettist. Zweig's June 15 reply has been lost but Strauss's infamous June 17 letter indicates that Zweig may have definitively refused to work with Strauss, citing his Reichsmusikkammer presidency and general association with the National Socialist

⁵⁴ The working relationship between Zweig, Gregor, and Strauss will be discussed in Chapter two.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 61.

government as reasons for ending their professional relationship. The most disturbing remarks made by Strauss in his June 17 letter are as follows:

Your letter of the 15th is driving me to distraction! This Jewish obstinacy! Enough to make an anti-Semite of a man! This pride of race, this feeling of solidarity!...Who told you that I have exposed myself politically? Because I ape the president of the Reichsmusikkammer? That I do only for good purposes and to prevent greater disasters!...So be a good boy, forget Moses and the other apostles for a few weeks, and work on *your* two one-act plays.⁵⁶

Unbeknownst to Strauss, Zweig never received this letter because it was intercepted by the Gestapo and later used as the official reason for Strauss's removal as RMK president.

Strauss, in his letter following June 17, less forcefully reiterated his points:

If you just could see and hear *how* good our work is, you would drop all race worries and political misgivings with which you, incomprehensible to me, unnecessarily weigh down your artist's mind, and you would write as much as possible for me and not have anything written by others. ... The whole Dresden ensemble is slated to give a guest performance [in London].⁵⁷ Dr. Goebbels, who will be here with his wife on Monday, will give a government subsidy for this. As you see, the nasty "Third Reich" has its good aspects, too.⁵⁸

After June 15, Zweig's communication with Strauss is no longer extant. However, Strauss's letters to Zweig continued until December 1935, after which time all correspondence went through Gregor.

For their part, the Nazis were anxiously attempting to discover some way to legally prevent the premiere of *Die schweigsame Frau*, or at the very least suppress the fact that the libretto was written by a Jew. In his 1942 autobiography, Zweig recounts his experiences with the National Socialist government in a passage which is worth

⁵⁶ Ibid, 99-100.

⁵⁷ The guest performance did not take place because of the suppression of the opera.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 101.

presenting in full because it aptly describes the atmosphere surrounding the premiere of *Die schweigsame Frau* and the government's frantic pursuit to find a legal means of ending the production:

It was easy enough for [the Nazis] to forbid a word that annoyed them, or even to burn and destroy all the books whose authors they did not like. In one particular case, however, they could not touch me without at the same time hurting a man whom they needed more than anyone else in this critical moment for their prestige before the world, the greatest, the most famous living composer of the German nation, Richard Strauss, together with whom I had just finished an opera... I knew that I caused the new guardians of German culture more difficulties by complete passivity than by doing anything else. For the National Socialist Chamber of Writers and the propaganda ministry were just looking for a welcome reason or pretext to be able to cloak an injunction against their greatest composer in an unquestionable manner. So, for instance, the libretto was demanded by every imaginable office and person in the secret hope of finding a pretext. How convenient would it have been, had 'The Silent Woman' contained a situation something like the one in the 'Rosenkavalier,' where a young man emerges from the bedroom of a married woman! Then they could have pretended the protection of German morals. But to their disappointment my book held nothing immoral.

Zweig then describes how all his earlier writings were "combed through" by the Gestapo. Nothing was found as he had never said a "detrimental word about Germany" or any other country and he had never been politically active. Zweig concludes his narrative with the final decision concerning the premiere of *Die Schweigsame Frau*:

However they manoeuvred, the decision immutably fell back into their hands: should they, in sight of the whole world, deny to the senior master of the National Socialist music, in whose hands they themselves had placed the banner, the right to have his opera performed, or – oh, day of national shame – should the name of Stefan Zweig [appear on a] German theatre program? How I secretly enjoyed their great worry and painful headache; I sensed that, even without my doing anything or just because of my doing nothing for and nothing against it, my musical comedy would inevitably develop into a caterwauling of party politics. Of all these authorities none dared to take the full responsibility for saying yes or no, thus nothing

remained but to leave the matter to the personal decision of the master of Germany and master of the party, Adolf Hitler. Finally Richard Strauss was summoned before the all-powerful, and Hitler in person told him that he would permit the performance as an exception, although it was an offense against all laws of the new Germany; a decision which probably was given just as unwillingly and dishonestly as the signing of the treaty with Stalin and Molotov.⁵⁹

As the premiere of *Die schweigsame Frau* loomed closer, Strauss too became more nervous. While in Dresden, he heard that Zweig had assigned all of his royalties to the Jewish Emergency Fund. On June 13, 1935, he wrote to Zweig that he had heard and denied “the rumor.”⁶⁰ There was no response to Strauss on the matter but Zweig had in fact given his commission to the Fund. The last attempt on the part of the Nazis to suppress Zweig’s participation came just two days before the June 24, 1935 premiere. Strauss demanded to see the program and was shocked to see Zweig’s name omitted. He immediately threatened to leave Dresden in the morning if Zweig’s name was not included on the program. In the end, Zweig’s name was placed on the program. Unfortunately, soon thereafter, the man responsible for the decision was terminated from his position at the Dresden Opera.⁶¹ Following the interception of Strauss’s June 17 letter, the Nazis had all the evidence they needed to put an end to Strauss’s political career as well as the entire *Die schweigsame Frau* affair. On July 6, 1935, Strauss was visited by one of Goebbels’s secretaries, who demanded that he resign as president of the Reichsmusikkammer for reasons of ill health. Strauss was shown a copy of his June 17

⁵⁹ Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday, An Autobiography* (New York: The Viking Press, 1943), 368-377.

⁶⁰ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 99.

⁶¹ Forward by Edward E. Lowinsky, found in Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, xx-xxi.

letter with the offensive passages marked in red ink. After only a handful of performances, *Die schweigsame Frau* was removed from the stage.⁶²

As a composer, Strauss was dissatisfied with the Weimar government's lack of interest in art and culture. Strauss's tolerance for and casual usage of anti-Jewish rhetoric, his disappointment with the German government after World War I, and the promises towards the advancement of the arts made by the Nazis all led to him becoming receptive to the "Third Reich." His receptivity is evidenced by his enthusiastic speeches given after accepting the position of RMK president as well as his other aforementioned positive gestures towards Hitler and the new Reich. However, this initial enthusiasm was short-lived as Strauss went from honoured government employee to *persona non grata*. Even though Strauss's absenteeism and general disagreement toward Jewish policies played a role in his dismissal, the one solid piece of evidence leading to his forced resignation was his intercepted letter; the principal reason being that Stefan Zweig was Jewish.⁶³

In a memorandum found in Strauss's private notebooks, written shortly after his resignation, Strauss revealed his surprise at learning that he "as president of the Reich Music Chamber was under direct state police surveillance" and that, as Germany's

⁶² The general consensus is that there were between two and four performances of *Die schweigsame Frau* before it was removed from the stage. Unfortunately the Dresden opera house as well as the records held within were destroyed in 1945.

⁶³ Albrecht Riethmüller, "Stefan Zweig and the Fall of the Reich Music Chamber President, Richard Strauss," in *Music and Nazism: Art under Tyranny, 1933-1945*, edited by Michael H. Kater and Albrecht Riethmüller (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2003), 284.

leading composer, he “was not considered above criticism.”⁶⁴ Strauss even admitted that he should have kept away, “. . . from the beginning, from the National Socialist movement.”⁶⁵ However, despite Strauss’s evident disappointment with the Reich after his dismissal, the pinnacle of his disillusionment came on June 29, 1935, when he wrote to Zweig:

As I think over the experiences of the past few weeks I conclude that now, after *Arabella* and *Die schweigsame Frau*, only a serious subject would be appropriate. . . . I need now an entirely different subject matter to remain creative. The more I think about [*Friedenstag*] the more I like the theme, and so I ask you urgently to work it out for me soonest.⁶⁶

The specific “experiences” that Strauss mentions may never be known, nevertheless, it may be assumed that these experiences started around the beginning of June through the premiere of *Die schweigsame Frau*. Strauss’s subsequent dismissal from the Reichsmusikkammer was simply the coup de grâce.

In a 1945 article, Willi Schuh makes the claim that Strauss “wrote nothing which had any direct connection with the circumstances through which he passed.”⁶⁷ When *Friedenstag* was originally proposed to Strauss in 1934 he immediately rejected the idea as not “inspiring enough music in [him] that truly goes to the heart.”⁶⁸ The opera was again mentioned in April in a brief reference to all of Zweig’s proposals, although Strauss was clearly more interested in *Semiramis*. Strauss’s definitive choice to compose *Friedenstag* was announced in his June 29 letter. Considering the events leading to the premier of *Die schweigsame Frau* as well as Strauss’s overall involvement with the

⁶⁴ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 118.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁶⁶ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 103.

⁶⁷ Schuh, “Strauss during the War Years,” 8.

⁶⁸ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 61.

“Third Reich,” the choice to compose *Friedenstag* can be viewed as grounded in the “circumstances through which he passed,” ultimately becoming a politically motivated opera.

Chapter II

Friedenstag's Libretto: A Question of Authorship

In recent decades, authorship of the *Friedenstag* libretto has been a much discussed topic. The debate has centered around the degree of influence Stephan Zweig might have had on the libretto despite its being credited to Joseph Gregor. William Mann, in his 1964 critical study of Strauss's operas, attributed much of the libretto to Zweig. In 1989, Kenneth Birkin published a detailed study of the correspondence between both Zweig and Gregor, as well as Gregor and Strauss. Birkin's aim was to highlight Gregor's contribution to the *Friedenstag* collaboration, demonstrating that Gregor did author much more of the text than was previously believed. The topic of authorship arose again in 1995, in a published correspondence between Bryan Gilliam and Kenneth Birkin. The problem centered around the precise interpretation of the word "text" and who, Zweig or Gregor, was "largely responsible" for it.⁶⁹ While admitting that Gilliam's use of the word may imply the general ideological scope of the opera rather than its actual words, Birkin thought Gilliam's usage was misleading. He maintained that, although Zweig shared some responsibility for the work, Gregor alone was author of the text and should be credited as such.⁷⁰ This chapter will examine all available evidence with the goal of elucidating the question of authorship as well as understanding the original intention of its creator.

⁶⁹ Bryan Gilliam and Kenneth Birkin, "The Authorship of the Text of Strauss's 'Friedenstag'," *Music & Letters*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (Feb., 1995): 142-143.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 143.

The action of the opera takes place in the citadel of a besieged town on October 24, 1648. Soldiers are performing their regular duties when an Italian messenger from Piedmont arrives with a letter from the Emperor. The Piedmontese sings a song from his homeland that describes peace, a concept the soldiers cannot comprehend as they have only known war for the previous thirty years. In the midst of their conversation the starving, desperate townspeople forcibly gain entrance into the citadel. The Bürgermeister, mayor of the besieged town, begs the Commandant to end their suffering by surrendering. Citing his duty to hold the citadel at all costs, the Commandant refuses to consider the townspeople's request. After the townspeople disperse, the Commandant reveals to the soldiers his plan to blow up the citadel rather than surrendering to the besieging army, killing himself and those troops who choose to remain. As the men gather supplies to carry out the Commandant's orders, his wife Maria enters and reminisces of an earlier time when there was no war. Just as the citadel is ready to be destroyed, bells ring throughout the town and the enemy approaches brandishing white flags. The Commandant initially refuses to embrace the Holsteiner, commander of the besieging army. The two men quarrel and eventually take up arms until Maria steps between them. She is able to calm her husband, leading to the embrace of the two Commanders and the long anticipated arrival of peace. The opera concludes with Maria leading the townspeople in a jubilant hymn to peace.

Friedenstag's genesis can be traced to the end of January 1934, when Stefan Zweig suggested to Strauss that his next opera should reflect the current atmosphere by

maintaining “close ties to the German mind in some form.”⁷¹ Strauss responded on February 2, 1934, mentioning to Zweig the idea of a “one-act festival play” based on an event in German history.⁷² Between February and August, several historical events were discussed intermittently, all of which revolved around a scenario that would feature a larger conflict culminating in peace. On August 21, Zweig sent Strauss a short sketch of the opera, setting the dramatic action of the story in 1648, the last year of the Thirty Years’ War, a conflict that consumed not only Germany but also most of the other countries of Europe.⁷³ “1648” served as the provisional title of *Friedenstag* whose first sketch also reflected the ultimate goal of illustrating a larger conflict concluding in a paean to peace. Zweig’s sketch, found in appendix one, centers around a besieged fortress filled with desolate soldiers and townspeople. The Commandant of the fortress is duty-bound never to surrender, deciding instead to destroy the fortress rather than submit to the enemy, ultimately choosing to die for his honour. While the soldiers are preparing to demolish the fortress, there is a powerful scene between the Commandant and his wife. During the course of the scene she commits herself to remain and die with her husband. At the final hour, there is a sudden cannon shot and all believe that the final battle has arrived. However, as the enemy approaches, bells begin to ring and suddenly news of peace arrives. As in the opera, the sketch concludes with a joyous hymn celebrating the declaration of peace.

⁷¹ Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, *A Confidential Matter: The Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, 1931-1935*, translated by Max Knight (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 41.

⁷² *Ibid*, 42. For a complete discussion of the historical events that may have been the inspiration for *Friedenstag*, please see Kenneth Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne: An Interpretive Study of the Literary and Dramatic Sources of Two Operas by Richard Strauss* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 96-99.

⁷³ See appendix one.

Penning a short positive response to the sketch on August 24, Strauss later expanded his commentary on September 21. He wished to include an adulterous love affair between the wife of the Commandant and a lieutenant, with the Commandant committing suicide as the town rejoices at the prospect of peace. Zweig clearly feared that the composer's proposed additions to the original sketch would have completely changed the focus of the opera from an indictment of the horrors of war to a substandard love story. In a response dated October 3, Zweig expressed his displeasure, stating, "I have thought about your plan carefully. But I find the tie-in between the heroic element and the love episode a bit too operatic in the unfortunate sense of the word."⁷⁴ Zweig reiterated what he considered to be the main points of the drama in his original sketch: the woman's decision to sacrifice herself for her husband, the ringing of the bells announcing peace, old hatred dissolving into mutual respect, and the hymn to peace at the end of the opera. Strauss replied, as mentioned in the previous chapter, that the themes developed in Zweig's sketch, "despair, heroism, weakness, hatred, and reconciliation," did not inspire music in him.⁷⁵ He then asked Zweig if he could create a different sketch which would address his concerns. Zweig, unwilling to make a compromise, never responded to Strauss's request. The opera was not mentioned again in their correspondence until April 20, 1935, at which time Strauss became desperate to retain Zweig as his librettist.

As indicated in the previous chapter, during the latter part of April 1935, Zweig repeatedly attempted to persuade Strauss to consider working with another librettist. All

⁷⁴ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 59.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 61.

possible replacements were rejected by Strauss until April 26, when Zweig suggested his friend and colleague, Joseph Gregor. Concerning Gregor, Zweig wrote to Strauss:

Now Joseph Gregor is one of my closest friends and I could plan and work out each scene in the minutest detail with him. It goes without saying that I would never mention to anyone that I had counseled such an old and trusted friend in his work. He is, as a person, irreproachable, even by the strictest standards of our times, and thus, I believe, he could be the best collaborator for you. You would also know that bound to you in respect and to him in friendship, I would truly and devotedly participate in his work.⁷⁶

Gregor was also an appropriate choice because, as far as the Nazis were concerned, he was politically as well as racially unassailable. Additionally, Zweig, as a close friend, would be able to continue contact with him, thereby remaining a part of the collaborative process. Strauss instantly grasped the motivations for Zweig's recommendation, writing on April 29, that "if you think you can work with that splendid man Gregor, I am of course in full agreement."⁷⁷ Zweig immediately contacted Gregor, informing him of Strauss's willingness to collaborate with him as well as the operatic projects currently under discussion – *Prima la musica e poi le parole (Capriccio)*, *Friedenstag*, *Celestina*, and *Semiramis*. At the time, *Semiramis* was foremost in Strauss's mind, as the idea had previously been discussed with Hofmannsthal as early as 1906. Following the advice of Zweig, Gregor submitted a sketch of *Semiramis* to both Zweig and Strauss on May 12.

⁷⁶ Richard Strauss, *Briefwechsel mit Stefan Zweig*, Willi Schuh, ed. (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1957), 118-119. "Nun ist Joseph Gregor einer meiner nächsten Freunde und könnte ich mit ihm Plan und Ausführung von Szene zu Szene auf das genaueste besprochen und würde mich selbstverständlich niemals rühmen, ihn als einen alten und vertrauten Freund, bei seiner Arbeit beraten zu haben, Er ist auch als Person nach den strengsten Auslegungen der Zeit unanfechtbar, und ich glaube, dass in dieser Form er Ihnen der beste Mitarbeiter sein könnte und Sie zugleich wussten, dass ich, als Sie durch Verehrung, an ihn durch Freundschaft verbunden, wirklich hingebungsvoll an seiner Arbeit teilnehmen könnte." Translated in Kenneth Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne: An Interpretive Study of the Literary and Dramatic Sources of Two Operas by Richard Strauss* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 67-68.

⁷⁷ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 84.

Strauss immediately rejected the sketch and decided not to collaborate with Gregor, writing to Zweig on May 17, “once and for all, please stop urging new poets upon me.”⁷⁸ However, Zweig disregarded the composer’s request, knowing that given the political climate, he would never be able to work directly with Strauss again.

For his part, Gregor was extremely disappointed by the complete rejection of his *Semiramis* sketch. As a result of the disastrous sketch, Gregor took on a lesser role in the collaborative process. He now requested that Zweig advise him on the next course of action, demonstrating that he understood his position as intermediary between the two men. In a letter to Zweig written on May 27, Gregor explained his role in the collaboration, “I will from now on only show Strauss material that I have already talked over with you beforehand and which has your express approval...I regard myself, in this whole matter, simply as the executor of your will.”⁷⁹ Zweig urged Gregor to arrange a meeting with Strauss, reminding him in a letter written on July 3 of the composer’s affinity towards *Friedenstag*. Zweig’s letter also included a current outline of his ideas for the opera.⁸⁰ In the first sketch sent to Strauss in 1934, Zweig had only introduced the composer to a quick summary of his idea. With the second draft, located in the second appendix, Zweig was not only attempting to familiarize Gregor with his idea but also to clearly illustrate the drama, passion, and overall significance of the final proclamation of peace. Unlike the earlier plan, this one was amplified in a way that defined the characters more clearly and included short passages of dialogue as well as a summary of the focal

⁷⁸ Ibid, 92.

⁷⁹ Stefan Zweig and Joseph Gregor, *Correspondence 1921-1938*, Kenneth Birkin, ed. (Dunedin: University of Otago, 1991), 219. Translated in Kenneth Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne: An Interpretive Study of the Literary and Dramatic Sources of Two Operas by Richard Strauss* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 72.

⁸⁰ See appendix two.

points of the action. There are two main differences between the two proposals: the role of the Commandant's wife and the scope of the hymn to peace. In the first sketch the Commandant's wife appeared only in a single scene, in which she realizes and accepts the sacrifice her husband is about to make. In contrast, the second sketch expanded her role by also incorporating her into the final few scenes, where she is given dialogue on the subject of peace.

With respect to the parameters of the final proclamation of peace, since the focus of the first sketch revolved around the idea of "international" peace, in which nations take on responsibility for each other, the scene between the Commandant and the Holsteiner, commander of the besieging army, is shortened in order to conclude the opera with an expression of the larger idea of world peace.⁸¹ In the second sketch, Zweig switched the focus back to the reconciliation of the two commanders, limiting the hymn of peace to the inhabitants of the fortress and the enemy forces. To further assist Gregor, Zweig even detailed "those moments which he recognized to be of exceptional dramatic import, and which would be sure to have a lively musical significance for the composer."⁸² The important meeting between Gregor and Strauss took place on July 7, 1935, in Berchtesgaden, where *Friedenstag* was definitively chosen as Strauss's next operatic project.

Following the Berchtesgaden meeting, Gregor was to visit the composer's Garmisch villa on July 30, in order to collaborate on the newly decided project. Before his visit, Gregor had already begun working on the first section of the opera. A copy was sent to both Zweig and Strauss on July 21. Zweig responded immediately on July 26, first

⁸¹ Strauss and Zweig, *A Confidential Matter*, 53-54.

⁸² Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 130.

praising Gregor for devising the opening Piedmontese scene and then addressing certain problems such as the overall disposition of the Commandant and the role of the townspeople.⁸³ Within his letter, found in appendix three, Zweig clearly illustrated the most important aspects of the opening scene – the desperation of the townspeople and the establishment of the Commandant as stern and militaristic. Using Zweig’s notes and under the watchful eye of the composer, Gregor was able to finish the first draft of the libretto by the end of the summer.

By the beginning of September 1935, a complete draft of *Friedenstag* was presented for inspection to both Strauss and Zweig. According to Kenneth Birkin, “these drafts, many of which have survived, were closely scrutinized by the composer who took an active part both in shaping the dialogue and in structuring the scenes. He took pains to condense Gregor’s script – particularly the early scenes.... His suggestions follow Zweig’s comments of July the 26th very closely,⁸⁴ testifying to the still potent influence of the ‘sleeping’ partner in the collaboration.”⁸⁵ Both men found fault with Gregor’s “over-poetising,” reminding him that he was writing for the theater now, not just the printed page. Strauss made several cuts, additions and re-orderings to the draft,⁸⁶ his main objection “concerned what he described as the stilted and academic style of the dialogue.”⁸⁷ In addition to making major revisions of his own, Strauss also continued to request that all material be verified by Zweig.⁸⁸ On September 3, after perusing the draft, Zweig responded with the following comments:

⁸³ See appendix three.

⁸⁴ See appendix three.

⁸⁵ Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 130.

⁸⁶ For examples of Strauss’s revisions please see Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 137.

⁸⁷ Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 137.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 117.

In particular I would like to suggest that you make cuts in the first part; and then in the scene between the two men before they sink into each others arms – the woman and the Bürgermeister must, I think, interrupt. The Commandant should at first, mortified, try to persuade the Holsteiner not to accept peace and demand that they should rather turn to their weapons. Now, from each side – on the one hand from the woman, and on the other from the Bürgermeister, reconciliation must be effected – they should hold back so that four voices, instead of two, are raised in the strongest dramatic contrast, heightening the tension of the scene. Finally, both men cast away their weapons and then for the first time, as they already stand close to one another, this miracle of change takes place.⁸⁹

Zweig's comments were mainly concerned with the final scenes of the opera, which Strauss also found to be unsuitable.

After the summer of 1935, three more drafts of *Friedenstag* were written, each with the final scene as the point of contention. On November 10, the composer wrote a letter to Gregor specifically outlining what he wanted for the final scene:

The ending must, however, be completely otherwise from the point at which the two commanders embrace. At this moment the silence must be absolute, then, from outside, the Peace Hymn of the people gradually commences – purely a song of praise, with no remembrance of war. Here, Maria's voice must predominate over those of the two commanders, and over all present – during this passage, the tower slowly sinks out of sight. As this is accomplished and as the people outside become visible a concentrated intensification of expression is effected, continuing right to the end: ever more lyrical. This is the only solution.⁹⁰

After sending Strauss the second draft on October 15, Gregor also sent a copy of the draft to Zweig in the hopes that he could assist with the final scene. Gregor informed Strauss on November 8 that,

⁸⁹ Stefan Zweig and Joseph Gregor, *Correspondence*, 252. Translated in Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 141-142.

⁹⁰ Richard Strauss, *Briefwechsel mit Joseph Gregor*, Roland Tenschert, ed (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1955), 36. Translated in Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 143-144.

After I had written to you I sent *Friedenstag* in its last working to our friend Z,⁹¹ with the request that he would improve one or other of the scenes according to his own taste. Our friend has therefore re-written the meeting scene of the two commanders and finds the rest satisfactory and no longer in need of alteration. This re-working, Z. has I believe, dear respected Herr Doktor, sent to you enclosed in a letter dated October the 23rd.⁹²

Strauss had indeed received Zweig's version of the meeting of the two commanders, writing to Zweig on October 31 that he appreciated his contribution but he had not yet decided which version, Gregor's or Zweig's, to use in the final draft. In the end, the final scene relied on input from all three men.

The main difference between Zweig's sketch and the final version was the role of Maria. In Zweig's version, the principal characters were the Commandant and the Holsteiner, with the Commandant finally agreeing to reconciliation after the Holsteiner's emotional speech for peace. Maria was not featured at all; she is merely a part of the crowd with the Bürgermeister. Zweig placed the climax of the work with the scene between the two commanders whereas Strauss places it afterward. In a letter to Gregor, Strauss explained his vision for the finale:

...of course I have received both workings, but I can't so far decide which of them I shall finally settle upon. The specific and definitive ending which I would like still eludes me. I say to you what I have already written to Z, that everything, from the embrace of the two commanders up to the commencement of the hymn of peace from outside – to which those on the stage (the soldiers of both sides) add their voices – must rise in an unbroken and ever increasing climax with no more talk of war and wretchedness, right up to the triumphant ending.⁹³

⁹¹ Zweig is referred to as "Z" in correspondence as a precautionary measure, in case of Nazi interception.

⁹² Strauss, *Briefwechsel mit Joseph Gregor*, 39-40. Translated in Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 144.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 20. Translation, 146.

For Strauss, the climax of the opera had to come from the jubilant final chorus which affirms the arrival of peace. Owing to Strauss's predilection for the female voice, the role of Maria also had to be elevated to a principal character in the final scenes. With a dramatic intervention, she prevents further conflict between the Commandant and the Holsteiner which leads to the long awaited embrace between the two former enemies. Maria "possesses the 'magic stone' which by spiritual alchemy will resolve the tensions of the drama, thereby transmuting the base metals of strife, fear and suspicion, into the golden 'mean' of peace."⁹⁴ Gregor sent the final draft of the opera to Strauss on December 7, 1935. Even though Strauss did not chose to use Zweig's complete sketch for the finale, Zweig's influence remains apparent. In fact, certain phrases from Zweig's sketch survive verbatim in the final draft and the overall tense atmosphere between the two enemies which finally resolves into reconciliation remains intact from Zweig's sketch.

In the previous chapter, Strauss's intentions for choosing to give priority to the *Friedenstag* project were discussed. However, when Zweig originally presented the idea on August 21, 1934, his motivations differed significantly from those of the composer. Whereas Strauss was essentially reacting to the government's actions surrounding the production of *Die schweigsame Frau*, Zweig was reacting to the government's repudiation of his long-standing belief in pacifism. Earlier that same year, Hitler's power in Germany was irreversibly established after President Paul von Hindenburg's death on August 2 ended any restraining influence which the previous regime might have exerted. The National Socialists' power in Austria was also gaining momentum, especially after the July assassination of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss at the hands of Nazi

⁹⁴ Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 115.

conspirators. In February, even before the assassination, signs of political unrest and chaos were everywhere, including armed uprisings in various provincial towns. As a result of the violence, private homes in Salzburg, including Zweig's, were searched for unauthorized weapons. This intrusion into his private world caused Zweig to opt for exile and he immediately began packing for London. On his last night in Salzburg he wrote to a friend,

The days in Vienna are growing terrible; it is the victory of the fascist idea, and this will lead tomorrow to that of the National-Socialists. For us, to whom violence in any direction seems mad, the air is heavy in such times, and often I have a terrible premonition that all this represents only the preliminary skirmishing of a war a thousand times more frightful.⁹⁵

Zweig's first order of business upon reaching London was to write to the Salzburg authorities that he had given up his residence there.⁹⁶ Set against an atmosphere of racial hatred, armed conflict, and political unrest, Zweig regarded *Friedenstag* as "a proclamation of peace as the greatest and most glorious goal realizable by mankind."⁹⁷ For this reason, Zweig's sketches for *Friedenstag* could be seen as a cry of resistance to the National Socialist regime.

Scholars agree that the original concept of *Friedenstag* owed its existence to Stefan Zweig. In the midst of the spread of National Socialism, the opera stood as Zweig's final proclamation of brotherhood and peace. In his original idea for the opera, the characters were used for their symbolic power. When Zweig first wrote to Strauss of

⁹⁵ Donald A. Prater, *European of Yesterday: a Biography of Stefan Zweig* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 224.

⁹⁶ Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday, An Autobiography* (New York: The Viking Press, 1943), 389.

⁹⁷ Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 94-95.

his plan in August 1934, he explained that he “would leave everything in anonymity, no names to be provided, neither for the town nor for the commander. They should all remain ideas – symbols rather than individual characters.”⁹⁸ For the most part Zweig’s request was honoured except for the character of Maria, whose role owes much to Strauss’s penchant for strong female characters. When Joseph Gregor was brought in to replace Zweig as Strauss’s librettist, the partnership began on shaky ground. Strauss was reluctant to alter the status quo, even as Zweig became adamant never to work directly with the composer again. Gregor, as one of Zweig’s closest friends, was fully aware of Zweig’s plans for the opera. After it was officially accepted by the composer, Gregor had no plans to change or divert attention from the basic shape or dramatic substance of Zweig’s original idea. Gregor realized, in this project, that his function was that of an intermediary between Zweig and Strauss. His own role was “essentially limited to shaping the poetic content of the work. Ideologically speaking, Zweig’s objectives were never abandoned – the completed work remaining faithful, in essence, to his initial plans.”⁹⁹ Strauss, too, had a hand in shaping the text of the work. Through many revisions and edits, he also contributed to the poetic content. Unlike his collaboration with Zweig on *Die schweigsame Frau*, Strauss made his own corrections of Gregor’s drafts, never forging in this project the true collaborative relationship he enjoyed with Zweig. Ultimately, the final draft of *Friedenstag*’s libretto was the culmination of the work of all three men – Zweig, Gregor and Strauss – and in its finished form Zweig’s intentions were realized, particularly through the final climatic hymn to peace.

⁹⁸ Richard Strauss, *Briefwechsel mit Stefan Zweig*, Willi Schuh, ed. (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1957), 76. Translated in Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 106.

⁹⁹ Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne*, 95.

Chapter III

Contemporaneous Interpretations of *Friedenstag's* Ambiguous Score

Although the world premiere of *Friedenstag* was on July 24, 1938, its full score was completed much earlier on January 24, 1936. Originally, the intention was to perform *Friedenstag* and *Daphne*, Strauss and Gregor's next opera, together at a joint premiere in Dresden. *Daphne*, however, became a longer and more complicated project than Strauss initially anticipated, therefore the premiere of *Friedenstag* was entrusted to the conductor Clemens Krauss at the opening of the Munich summer festival. Months before *Friedenstag's* world premiere, Stefan Zweig had relocated to England in self-imposed exile while both Strauss and Joseph Gregor were occupied with their next operatic collaboration. In the absence of commentary from the collaborators on the opera or its message, prior to or after its debut, a plethora of conflicting interpretations soon arose. The Nazi party was quick to declare it, "the first opera born from the ethos of the National Socialist spirit."¹⁰⁰ The principal characters of the Commandant and his wife were initially praised as the ideal model for Nazi men and women. After attending a performance of the opera in Vienna in 1939, Hitler was reportedly particularly impressed by the speeches of the Commandant, an unsurprising fact given his call for unquestioning devotion to the sovereign.¹⁰¹ In an effort to ally themselves with a government on the brink of war, many German commentators downplayed the obvious pacifist message of

¹⁰⁰ Alan Jefferson, *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Great Britain: David and Charles (Holdings) Limited, 1973), 206.

¹⁰¹ Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*. (London: Macmillan Press, 1994), 188.

the opera, emphasizing rather the martial values embodied in the figure of the Commandant.¹⁰² However, news sources from outside of Germany held a different opinion. Richard Capell, music critic of *The London Morning Post and Daily Telegraph*, wrote in 1938 that, “though the time of the story is back in the seventeenth century, there are notes struck which cannot but chime in with present-day preoccupations.”¹⁰³ Another correspondent writing for *The Times* in 1938 observed that, “the opera is, in fact, a protest against the futility of war...for a religious or ideological cause, and ends with a great hymn in praise of peace...amid so many signs of warlike preparation it is good to hear so influential an appeal to sanity.”¹⁰⁴ Failing to acknowledge the pacifistic message noted by foreign journalists and music critics, the Nazi government authorized over ninety performances of the opera before quietly removing it from the German stage in the latter part of 1939. This chapter will present a close study of *Friedenstag*'s libretto supported by examples from the score in an effort to evaluate the validity of both the Nazi and the pacifist interpretations it received.

In 1934, Heinrich Bessler, a prominent musicologist in the “Third Reich,” illustrated the role of aesthetics in music during the Nazi regime. Music had to become more than a simple aesthetic to the state; it must be elevated in order to serve the country in a political way. In his essay entitled, “Schiller und die musikalische Klassik,” Bessler wrote, “today the quest for a unison between state and culture has a different basis and perspective. There is no space for aesthetics - or, to put it in another way: if there are

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Review of *Friedenstag*, *The New York Times*, New York, 24 July 1938.

¹⁰⁴ Review of *Friedenstag*, *The Times*, London, 25 July 1938.

aesthetics, they have to be grounded in power politics.”¹⁰⁵ Contemporary operas which claimed to express a political message shared several of the same characteristics such as leadership, power, racial superiority, heroism, and sacrifice for one’s country. Favored subjects were German historical events where National courage is demonstrated.¹⁰⁶ By 1937, Joseph Goebbels “had effectively banned open criticism of artistic works, requesting notices in journals to comment only on the information and content of the piece rather than offering an assessment of its aesthetic quality.”¹⁰⁷ Without knowledge of Stefan Zweig’s involvement in the creation of the opera as well as his aim to convey an overall message of peace, the opera was easily, albeit wrongly, co-opted by the Nazi regime. Though the final pacifist message of the opera is clear, the following discussion attempts a hypothetical reading of the libretto which includes interpretations based on historical fact and the cultural milieu of Nazi Germany.

Even without specifying the name or whereabouts of the besieged town, by specifying at the onset of the opera that the action takes place on October 24, 1648, Strauss could be sure that German audiences would have associated this date with the Peace of Westphalia, or the signing of two treaties which ended the Thirty Years’ War. The German public would have also been well aware of the fact that the Thirty Years’ War was one of the most destructive and momentous wars in European history and the first to involve most of the Continent in one way or another, with the principal battle ground being in what is now modern Germany. Millions lost their lives and millions more were displaced; when the war ended there was nothing left to do but pick up the

¹⁰⁵ Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and their Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 45-48.

¹⁰⁶ Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*, 187.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 188.

pieces and start over. The main issues fueling the conflict were religious liberty between Catholics and Protestants and political power between the ruling dynasties.¹⁰⁸ Following Zweig's initial plan to leave people and places anonymous, the score of *Friedenstag* does not provide any more detail on the location or nationality of the besieged town but it does name the Commander of the besieging army – the Holsteiner. Within the libretto the Commandant refers to the Holsteiner as a foreign enemy and a heretic from the North, where Holstein is located. During the Thirty Years' War Holstein was ruled by Christian IV, King of Denmark and Norway. In 1625 King Christian “saw an opportunity to gain valuable territory in Germany to balance his earlier loss of Baltic provinces to Sweden.”¹⁰⁹ Under the guise of “defending the Protestant cause”, the King's aim was to extend his influence in Northern Germany while protecting Danish interests and to prevent the Swedish king from playing a role in European politics.¹¹⁰ He began his military invasion against the Catholic League in Germany led by Count Jean Tilly, the Bavarian commander in chief. Tilly was later joined by the famous Albrecht von Wallenstein who was authorized by Emperor Ferdinand II to assist in conquering the Danish king and his forces. By the end of the conflict Tilly and Wallenstein occupied both Northern Germany as well as the entire Danish mainland, forcing Christian to accept the Treaty of Lübeck in 1629 which essentially ended Denmark's reign as a European power.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Tryntje Helfferich, *The Thirty Years War: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009), General Introduction, ix-xxi passim.

¹⁰⁹ “History of Europe,” Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9082402>.

¹¹⁰ “History of Europe” and “Christian IV,” Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9082402>

¹¹¹ Ibid.

There are both similarities and differences between *Friedenstag's* libretto and the historical Thirty Years' War. The libretto's identifying remarks for the Holsteiner – heretic, foreigner, and an enemy from the North – do correspond to characteristics of King Christian IV, especially since he was the also the Duke of Holstein. Even though Christian's motivations to enter the war were more political than religious, he still fought with the Northern Protestant German States and the role of his family's legacy was being a leading member of the Lutheran Church.¹¹² The role of the Commandant could be filled by either Tilly or Wallenstein who were under the command of the Catholic League and the Catholic Emperor, Ferdinand II. However, assuming that the Holsteiner is a representation of King Christian IV the time difference between the libretto and the King's involvement in the war is significant. Christian entered the war in 1625 and only lasted for four years before signing a Treaty that ended his part of the conflict. *Friedenstag* begins and ends much later, with the signing of the Treaty of Münster in 1648. According to the libretto the soldiers have been fighting for the entire duration of the Thirty Years' war. This is evidenced by a soldier's comment that they have not known peace for thirty years.¹¹³ Another significant difference between the libretto and the historical Thirty Years' War is that in the libretto the Holsteiner invades the Commandant's Citadel and is successful in his campaign. Historically, the Holsteiner loses bitterly against Tilly and Wallenstein and he is forced to promise to never again intervene in the Emperor's territories. Since the original idea for the opera was to simply portray a large conflict resolving into peace and the historical Thirty Year's War does not directly correspond to the action of the piece, the most accurate information that can be

¹¹² "Christian IV," Encyclopædia Britannica Online.

¹¹³ Schütze – "He du, was ist das: Friede? Dreißig Jahr will man es wissen!"

presumed is that the Commandant is Catholic while the Holsteiner represents the Protestant enemy.¹¹⁴

The opera begins in D minor, with a short musical prelude “tracing a pattern of falling tritones separated by rising tones spanning a descending octave.”¹¹⁵ The harsh and unpleasing chromaticism which dissolves into a march tempo creates a stern, militaristic atmosphere. The curtain opens to a Fortress filled with war-weary soldiers and officers overcome by an overwhelming sense of hopelessness and desperate fatigue. Slowly making his rounds, a Sergeant (Wachtmeister) encounters a Private (Schütze) who has squeezed himself into a small corner in an effort to peer outside the fortress. The Sergeant questions the Private on what he has observed and in reply, the Private summarizes what he has seen: burning farms, desolation, fleeing townspeople numb with misery, and a total lack of nourishment.¹¹⁶ His summary concludes with a question, “How will it end?, to which the Sergeant quickly responds:

Auf Seine Gnaden acht, den Herrn und
Kommandanten! In voller Rüstung blieb er heut
die ganze Nacht an seinem Tisch. Die Kerzen
sind längst herabgebrannt, ich sah's auf meiner
Runde. Und regungslos blickt er auf Karte und
Papier. Tu deine Pflicht wie er – so endet das.

Watch the Commandant. He sat at his
table all night fully armed. The candles
burnt out long ago, I saw it on my
round. And he sits motionless, staring
at the map and his papers. Do your duty
as he does his – that's how it will end.¹¹⁷

The Sergeant's speech introduces the audience to the character of the Commandant. He is described as completely dedicated to his duty, a fastidiousness which is musically represented by the timpani's march-like rhythmic figure (Fig. 1).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ For a more concise treatment of the similarities and differences between the historical Thirty Years' War and *Friedenstag's* libretto, please see appendix four.

¹¹⁵ William Mann, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Study of the Opera*. (London: Cassell and Company, LTD, 1964), 306.

¹¹⁶ Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, vol.3 (London: Barrie and Jenkins, LTD., 1972), 63.

¹¹⁷ This translation and all subsequent translations by Mary Whittall from the liner notes of *Friedenstag* (Compact Disc) ©2001, Deutsche Grammophon GmbH, Hamburg.

Pflicht Theme

Tu dei-ne Pflicht wie er -

Figure 1: Pflicht Theme in timpani, pg. 11. *Der Friedenstag*, Op. 81 by Richard Strauss and Josef Gregor © Copyright 1938 by Richard Strauss. U.S. Copyright Renewed. Sole agents for the world except Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the Former Territories of the U.S.S.R (excluding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania): Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd., A Boosey & Hawkes Company. Reprinted by Permission.

Although this rhythmic figure, always played on the timpani, is first heard in the short musical prelude, it is only in the Sergeant's speech that it becomes associated with the Commandant and his sense of duty to the Emperor. For this reason it will henceforth be referred to as the *Pflicht* (duty) theme. This martial theme, symbolic of war, is always played on D, and thereby helps to affirm this key as the tonal center associated with the character of the Commandant. Just as Hitler demanded unquestioning loyalty from the German people so does the Emperor from the Commandant who is more than willing to oblige, making him the quintessential example of the perfect Nazi soldier.

Following the conversation of the Sergeant and the Private, the tension is broken by an Italian messenger from Piedmont who has traveled through the enemy camp to deliver a message from the Emperor to the Commandant. In the Piedmontese scene, devised by Gregor in the first drafts of the libretto, the tenor messenger sings an authentic children's folksong that Gregor heard while fighting in the South Tyrol during the first

¹¹⁸ This score excerpt as well as other score excerpts taken from Richard Strauss, *Friedenstag* (Study Score) (New York: Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers LTD), 1996.

World War.¹¹⁹ With the entrance of the Piedmontese, the mood of the opera changes drastically. Instead of the gloomy key of D minor, the music brightens to G major, the Italian's sunny song contrasting with the desperate reality of the fortress. The Piedmontese sings in Italian and is given a more lyrical melody which stands out considerably from the disjunct, chromatic speech-like singing of the soldiers. He sings about his home and the peace that reigns there, inspiring a palpable sense of confusion in the soldiers, many of whom had never experienced peaceful times because they enlisted in a war which had lasted their entire lifetime. The Italian's song represents the first sign of pacifism within the opera. Through the lyrical quality of the song and the use of a major key, the messenger is able to divert the attention of both the soldiers and the audience, as the men ponder the prospect of peace. Eventually, the soldiers dismiss the song of the Piedmontese, bringing the key back to D minor as they speak of the enemy, coming military operations, and finally, a sardonic comparison of the difference between gun and Bible:¹²⁰

Der Hinz schwört auf die Bibel,
 der Kunz schwört aufs Gewehr,
 die haben sich verloren
 und finden sich nicht mehr.
 Hat nur aufs Wort geschworen –
 wir aber auf die Ehr!
 So schlagen wir ihn nieder,
 als wenn's der Teufel wär.

Now Tom swore by the Bible
 and Dick swore by his gun,
 and so they went to blazes,
 like many a mother's son.
 But we swore by our honour
 Their oaths are only words;
 and so our blows are stronger:
 Old Nick could do no worse.

According to the soldiers, their blows are stronger because they are fighting for their honour, whereas the yet unnamed enemy of the Citadel fights only for religious convictions. To further accentuate the spiritual element of the soldiers' speech, quotations of Martin Luther's Protestant hymn, "Ein' feste Burg" ("A Mighty Fortress is

¹¹⁹ Joseph Gregor, *Richard Strauss: Der Meister der Oper* (Munich: Piper, 1939), 247.

¹²⁰ Mann, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Study*, 307.

Our God”), are played first in the third horn and then again in the first and second bassoons (fig.2). The hymn has often been used “to exemplify the struggle of the different Protestant sects against Catholic oppression,” connecting the opera with not only the religious conflict at the heart of the Thirty Years’ War but also, by vague reference, to *Freidenstag*’s anonymous enemy.¹²¹

The musical score for "Ein feste Burg" is presented in three systems. The first system features the III. Horn (F) and the Chorus. The horn part begins with a rest followed by a melodic phrase starting on G4, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and accents. The chorus part, in bass clef, begins with a rest and then enters with the lyrics "Der Hinz schwört auf die Bi - bel, der Kunz". The second system features the I. II. Fag. and the Chorus. The bassoon part begins with a rest and then enters with a melodic phrase starting on G3, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and accents, and a second ending marked "a 2". The chorus part continues with the lyrics "schwört aufs Ge - wehr, die ha - ben sich ver - lo - ren".

Figure 2: Quotations of “Ein’ feste Burg” in the horns and bassoons, pg. 26 *Der Friedenstag*, Op. 81 by Richard Strauss and Josef Gregor© Copyright 1938 by Richard Strauss. U.S. Copyright Renewed. Sole agents for the world except Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the Former Territories of the U.S.S.R (excluding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania): Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd., A Boosey & Hawkes Company. Reprinted by Permission.

The soldiers’ speech is suddenly interrupted by desperate cries of hunger from the townspeople who are making their way up to the Citadel to beg the Commandant to surrender the Fortress. Startlingly, the Soldiers’ refer to the approaching crowd as “rats” and as the “enemy within”:

¹²¹ Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary*, 65.

Ich sehe ein paar graue Ratten wimmeln.	There's a few gray rats swarming.
Zweitausand, dreitausand stürmen das Festungstor! Her von der Stadt!	Two thousand, three thousand, storming the gate! From the town!
Der Feind?	The enemy?
Ärger. Der Feind im Land. An die Gewehre!	Trouble. The enemy within. Arm yourselves!
Wer schießt auf Ratten!	Who wastes powder on rats?

To an audience in Nazi Germany, these words could have been instantly recognizable as the kinds of imagery which Nazi propagandists reserved for Jews. National Socialists “held the Jews to be a parasitic people, seeking to destroy from within the peoples of ‘the greatest value’.”¹²² From 1923 to 1945 images of Jews depicted as rodents and pests could be seen on a regular basis in Julius Streicher’s newspaper, *Der Stürmer*. Common images were of Jews likened to spiders, flies, rats and pigs (Fig. 3).¹²³ These images as well as other propaganda were regularly disseminated to German citizens, especially after 1933. The use of this language within the opera connected the audience to the current racial struggle of 1938, which was directed against the Jew.

The scene then depicts the townspeople continuing their march to the gates of the Citadel, with highly chromatic, ghostly cries of hunger. When they reach the gate they are met by the baritone Commandant whose first appearance places the key firmly in D minor. He is described as a handsome, stern man of about fifty.

¹²² Hans-Christian Täubrich, ed, *Fascination and Terror: Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds Nuremberg* (Nürnberg: Druckhaus Nürnberg, 2006), 72.

¹²³ Image and Permission to reproduce from Randall Bytwerk, *The German Propaganda Archive*, www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturm28.htm. “The caricature suggests the Jews are sucking the economic life from Gentiles. It is one of numerous *Stürmer* cartoons comparing Jews to inhuman and unpleasant creatures.” (*Der Stürmer*, February 1930)



Die Ausgefangenen

Figure 3: Caption: "Sucked dry." From *Der Stürmer*, February 1930

His address to the crowd is unyielding, as he announces that by order of the Emperor there will be no surrender. The Bürgermeister, mayor of the town, further implores the Commandant in a weary tenor voice:

Vergebt mir, Herr, wenn ich es wage: Bin nur ein Bauer, kaum des Lesens kundig – allein – verzeiht – wen wollt Ihr denn besiegen? – Ich hab den Feind gesehen, sind Menschen so wie wir, sie leiden Not, draußen in ihren Gräben, genau wie wir – Wenn sie getreten, ächzen sie wie wir, und wenn sie beten, flehn auch sie zu Gott.

Forgive me, sir, if I speak out of turn: I'm but a peasant, I can scarcely read – but – pardon me – whom do you hope to defeat? I've seen the enemy, they're men like us, they're suffering out there in their trenches, just as we are. When they are hit they groan like us – and when they pray, they pray like us to God.

Norman Del Mar writes that this speech, “deliberately oversimplified, is the first expression of the opera’s main purpose, its crusade against the tragic futility of war.”¹²⁴ Unmoved by the crowd’s pleas, the Commandant remains resolute, even going so far as to threaten the townspeople with violence if they persist in their endeavor to convince

¹²⁴ Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary*, 66.

him to surrender the Fortress. A dejected Soldier from the front unexpectedly appears, announcing to the Commandant that there remains no more ammunition. The Soldier then requests the gunpowder kept in the cellar of the Fortress. Reacting to this new development, the crowd continues to cry out for bread forming a D minor chord on top of an Ab minor one. Here, Strauss's use of polytonality creates a menacing tritone relationship. The townspeople feel that the Commandant cannot protect them and that death is certain. In the midst of the seemingly hopeless situation, the *Pflicht* theme is heard, signalling that the Commandant's sense of duty will prevail. The Soldier falls to his knees exclaiming that the men at the front face imminent death, since they are defenseless against any attack. Several other soldiers also fall to their knees in support of their comrades at the front. Though visibly shaken, the Commandant remains steadfast, pulling from his breast the letter from the Emperor which was delivered earlier by the Piedmontese.

Schweige! Hier in meiner Hand, sieh,
den Brief des Kaisers: Er ist mein Herr,
wie deiner, wie aller! Sein herrlicher
Wille fand den Weg zu mir.

Silence! Here in my hand, look, the
Emperor's letter: my sovereign,
yours and all of yours! His imperial
will reaches us here.

In this moment the key changes from D minor to D-flat major as the Commandant reveals the letter. In this brief moment he displays the first signs of reverence and respect, musically represented by a plagal cadence on the word "Kaiser" (Fig. 4). The plagal cadence's association with a hymn's final "Amen" further illustrates the Commandant's zealous fealty to the Emperor. The music returns to the key of D minor for the reading of the aforementioned letter which commands the Commandant to hold the town at all costs for the sake of his honour. After reading the letter aloud, the

Commandant orders the townspeople to leave and await a sign at noon the following day.

Temporarily satisfied, the crowd departs.

Kommandant

Schwei-ge! Hier in mei-ner Hand, sieh, der Brief des Kai - sers:

Er ist mein Herr, wie deiner, wie aHer! Sein herr-li-cher Wil - le fand den Weg zu mir:

Figure 4: Plagal cadence closing the Commandant's speech, pg. 63. *Der Friedenstag*, Op. 81 by Richard Strauss and Josef Gregor © Copyright 1938 by Richard Strauss. U.S. Copyright Renewed. Sole agents for the world except Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the Former Territories of the U.S.S.R (excluding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania): Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd., A Boosey & Hawkes Company. Reprinted by Permission.

With the crowd dispersed, the Commandant reveals to his soldiers his intention to destroy the Citadel, killing himself and those soldiers who choose to remain with him. As he reveals his plan the *Pflicht* theme is heard, again in reference to the Commandant's unflinching devotion to fulfill his duty. Thus far, the Commandant has been depicted as militant, obstinate, and loyal to his Emperor. As Pamela Potter has noted, "in effect he

represents the ideal Nazi – steadfast in his boundless loyalty to his Führer, intolerant of cowardice, enamored of heroic feats, nonhumanistic, and, as will be seen, rigid and mistrusting...it is because of his presence that the opera was acceptable to the Nazis.”¹²⁵

The soldiers are given a choice to either remain and die in the Citadel or to take their leave immediately. Following some shorter scenes of various soldiers making their decision, the Commandant makes a final inspirational speech to his remaining men:

Geht, geht alle! Du kühner Junge,
dir danke ich dies letzte Wunder –
den Brief, von dem die Kraft
mir durchs Blut strömt,
wo jeder Buchstab Feuerzeichen
mir ward für meinen Tod. Antwort
wird diesem Brief, gewaltige
Antwort, Herr und Kaiser!

Go, go all of you! You, brave lad,
I thank you for this last miracle,
this letter from which new strength
flows through my veins.
Each penstroke is a flame,
signaling my death.
I shall send an answer – a mighty
answer – my lord and Emperor!

In this speech the Commandant thanks the Piedmontese for delivering the letter that has filled him with the fortitude to carry out the task of dying for the Emperor and his honour. On the final word (Kaiser) the full orchestra immediately begins a massive build-up to a cadence in D-flat major (Fig. 5). This cadence is particularly important because it is the first unmistakably strong cadence in the opera which again emphasizes the Commandant’s unyielding commitment to the Emperor. During the course of this cadence the soldiers stand in awe until, when the cadence is finished, the Commandant yells for action. While the soldiers and the Commandant disappear to carry out the new orders, the *Pflicht* theme is played in the strings, trombones, tuba and timpani on D-flat in diminution. As the stage clears, the music gives way to a new tonal center which marks the entrance of the Commandant’s wife, Maria.

¹²⁵ Pamela M Potter, “Strauss’s “Friedenstag”: A Pacifist Attempt at Political Resistance,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (Summer, 1983): 417. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/742179>

Kommandant

Kai - ser!

f *cresc.*

ff

Figure 5: Strong cadence before Maria’s entrance, pg. 94. *Der Friedenstag*, Op. 81 by Richard Strauss and Josef Gregor © Copyright 1938 by Richard Strauss. U.S. Copyright Renewed. Sole agents for the world except Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the Former Territories of the U.S.S.R (excluding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania): Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd., A Boosey & Hawkes Company. Reprinted by Permission.

As the sole female character in the opera, Maria fulfills the soprano role typical of Strauss’s style. The Commandant’s wife, who is described as being much younger than her husband, enters a deserted Fortress, and wonders where everyone has gone. She is the only person besides the Commandant to receive her own key, that of E major as opposed to his somber D-flat. Maria sings an aria about life in the Citadel since her wedding day, the last day she saw her husband smile. She realizes that she has not married a man, but war itself. Following this proclamation is “a passage intensified by a continuous pattern of quintuplet runs” as she gathers strength from the rising sun, a new

sense of hope envelops her.¹²⁶ Maria's aria ends with a plea for the war's end and the return of her husband as he was when they were wed. The Commandant reappears and is shocked to see that his wife still remains in the Citadel. She senses something is amiss and begs her husband to tell her why the Fortress is empty. He resists at first but finally relents. After he finishes relaying his deadly plan, the Commandant tells his wife to flee from the "foreigners" who will soon attack. A duet ensues full of double entendres as the lines of Maria and the Commandant contradict each other:

Maria

War, dreadful reaper, War, are you
not sated with all your victims? Must
you yet borrow the Cloak of honour to
kill the man who is everything to me?
Hear me, War, I too have been a warrior!
I made war on you yourself for the sake
of my love! I curse you, War! Hear me,
War! Mine is the last and everlasting
Victory, the sun has called me by its light!
Beloved, I follow the call of the light,
Beloved, I come to die with you.

The Commandant

War, noble ideal, War, wherever your
mighty head is raised obedience
overpowers every baser life itself
becomes the price of feeling and honour!
Hear me, War! I was only ever a soldier!
Loyalty is all I ever knew, my guide
through life, loyalty to my sovereign!
I bless you, War! Loyalty has called
me by its light!
Beloved, we follow the everlasting call,
Beloved, I come to die with you.

While the Commandant praises the glory of war, Maria laments over its horrors, even if, ultimately, she makes the decision to remain in the Fortress and share her husband's fate.

The conflicting text is also represented musically. Though the voices are in imitation of each other, the orchestra demonstrates the meaning of the text by combining the

Commandant's march figure with Maria's quintuplet runs (Fig. 6).¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Potter, "Strauss's "Friedenstag"," 418.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

Maria
Hör es, Krieg: Auch ich - war Sol -

Komm.
Hör es, Krieg:

Maria
f

Maria
dat! Dich selbst hab ich be - kriegt um

Komm.
Ich war nur Sol - dat! Nur Treu - e ken - ne

Komm.
fp *cresc.* *f*

Maria
mei - ner Lie - be wil - len!

Komm.
ich, wei - send ü - bers Le - ben,

Komm.
dim. *p*

Figure 6: Excerpt from the duet between the Commandant and Maria, pg. 142-144. *Der Friedenstag*, Op. 81 by Richard Strauss and Josef Gregor© Copyright 1938 by Richard Strauss. U.S. Copyright Renewed. Sole agents for the world except Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the Former Territories of the U.S.S.R (excluding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania): Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd., A Boosey & Hawkes Company. Reprinted by Permission.

Although Maria's text portrays her as a proponent of peace, she also fits the Nazi ideal of a devoted German wife. She is both benevolent and consoling, yet she submits to her husband's "higher duties" becoming firm in her decision to face death.¹²⁸ The scene ends with the two lovers locked in a tight emotional embrace.

Suddenly a series of cannon shots are heard in the distance. The soldiers begin to emerge from the interior of the Citadel as the Commandant calls them to their posts. Accompanied by the *Pflicht* theme, the Commandant, believing that the long awaited attack has finally arrived, rejoices for the opportunity to make the ultimate sacrifice in battle. As the entire Citadel is tensely awaiting the attack, the sound of distant bells reaches them. Maria is the first to recognize the bells as a sign of peace and gradually the other soldiers also understand the symbol. However, the Commandant doggedly continues to search for a sign of attack, his movements closely followed by the *Pflicht* theme (Fig. 7).

Pflicht Theme

Pauken

Kommandant

f
(hart hinein)

Der Feind, der Feind! Wo steht sein An-griff?
(the enemy, the enemy!) (Where does he attack from?)

Figure 7: Pflicht theme heard as the Commandant searches for the enemy, pg. 166. *Der Friedenstag*, Op. 81 by Richard Strauss and Josef Gregor © Copyright 1938 by Richard Strauss. U.S. Copyright Renewed. Sole agents for the world except Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the Former Territories of the U.S.S.R (excluding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania): Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd., A Boosey & Hawkes Company. Reprinted by Permission.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Finally, the enemy troops are spotted walking toward the Citadel as if on parade, carrying white flags with streamers, their guns decked with flowers. Fearing a trick, the Commandant orders the gate to be closed, but it is too late; the townspeople have already begun to embrace the enemy. Though faced with the prospect of peace, the Commandant rigidly holds fast to his duty:

Ich hab geschworen: kein feindlicher
Fuß betritt diese Stadt! Und müßt ich
selber dem Feinde stehn, ein einziger
Mann! Niemals Frieden!

I swore an oath: no enemy should
set foot in this town! Though I
myself must face the enemy alone
In the field! Never peace!

The Bürgermeister returns to the Citadel to confirm what everyone except the Commandant has already realized: a treaty has been signed and peace has come at last. Believing that the bells ringing from tower to tower is the sign promised by the Commandant on the previous day, he rejoices at the arrival of peace. Following the words of the Bürgermeister, there is a short musical interlude which allows the Holsteiner, commander of the enemy army, to approach the Commandant. The Holsteiner's advance is accompanied by a militaristic march intermingled with short quotations of "Ein' feste Burg", the aforementioned hymn that earlier had vague reference to the anonymous enemy. Here, in its second appearance, the Protestant hymn is now unmistakably tied to the Holsteiner and his army as they make their way to the entrance of the Citadel.

The Holsteiner is described as being much younger than the Commandant and his army is better maintained and equipped. He addresses the Commandant politely, praising him for successfully holding and sustaining the Citadel for thirty years. He extends his hand in friendship but the Commandant refuses to accept. Instead the Commandant chooses to insult the Holsteiner, calling him a "heretic" and forever barring his entrance

into the Citadel. The use of the word “heretic” holds a significant meaning within the context of this opera. The Holsteiner and his army, as heretics, represent those who oppose the established ideology. Like Martin Luther’s hymn, the word heretic serves a dual function: first as a historical reference to Protestantism and second, within this opera, as a reference to those who stand against the Emperor, challenging his authority. The Holsteiner’s reply supports the secondary reference and summarizes the antiquated mantra of the Commandant:

Du böser Schirmer uralter Macht,
mit leeren Befehlen, mit
knöchernen Worten, hohl und
gespenstisch und schattengleich
hältst du den Geist, das göttliche
Wort, die Kraft der Jugend nieder
im Land!

O wicked defender of age-old
power, with empty commands,
the dry bones of words, hollow
and spectral, and like a shadow
you oppress the spirit, the word
of God, the vigor of youth in this
realm!

Within the Holsteiner’s speech, the Commandant is described as the “defender of age-old power” because he follows the Emperor whose “empty commands” require unquestioning loyalty. By consistently refusing to accept peace, the Commandant “oppresses the spirit, the word of God, [and] the vigor of youth.” For the 1938 German audience, the Holsteiner, as both a representation of the foreign enemy and a heretic, could be equated to the outside world resisting Nazi rule. His speech is accompanied by a third quotation of “Ein’ feste Burg” in the bassoons, further emphasizing the religious connotations of the Holsteiner’s words (Fig. 8).

At the end of the speech, the Commandant draws his sword while the Holsteiner reaches for his own weapon. In this tense moment Maria throws herself between the two men with her face turned toward her husband. She asks him to look beyond his duty to a force which is greater than both words and the Emperor himself. She asks him to see that peace has come at last.

Holsteiner

Fag.

f

Ein feste burg das gött - li - che Wort, die Kraft der Ju - gend nie - der im Land!

Figure 8: Excerpt from the Holsteiner’s speech, pg. 203. *Der Friedenstag*, Op. 81 by Richard Strauss and Josef Gregor © Copyright 1938 by Richard Strauss. U.S. Copyright Renewed. Sole agents for the world except Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the Former Territories of the U.S.S.R (excluding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania): Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd., A Boosey & Hawkes Company. Reprinted by Permission.

As Kenneth Birkin notes, “It is [Maria’s] perception and womanly intuition which cuts through the hatred and distrust of the commanders and makes the ultimate reconciliation possible.”¹²⁹ The Commandant stares at her for a long time and finally throws down his sword. The two sworn enemies embrace each other with deep emotion. During their embrace the other soldiers and townspeople enter the stage. The two commanders have a final duet, putting a definitive end to their enmity:

Warum Kämpften wir Jahre um Jahre? War es des Kaisers uralte Macht? Des neuen Glaubens kräftiger Wille? War es nur Haß, der uns geschieden? Glocken, Glocken, lauchtende Stimmen – aber mehr noch der jubelnden Menschen glückselige Stimmen!

Why did we fight, year after year? Was it the Emperor’s time-honoured rule? Was it the new faith’s urgent will? Was it blind hatred that kept us apart? The bells, the bells, radiant voices – but even louder jubilant mankind singing of joy!

While the two men question the reasons behind the war, the last quotation of “Ein’ feste Burg” is heard in the instrument that was previously associated with the *Pflicht* theme, the timpani. The timpani is now free to be used for the hymn because, with the reconciliation of the two commanders, “duty” no longer propels the motivations of the character, releasing the timpani from enunciating the *Pflicht* theme. Additionally, Martin

¹²⁹ Kenneth Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne: An Interpretive Study of the Literary and Dramatic Sources of Two Operas by Richard Strauss* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 115.

Luther's hymn is no longer relevant since there is no enemy to fight, religious or foreign. The opera concludes with a glorious C major chorus consisting of the entire ensemble, musically affirming that peace now reigns as the new sovereign of the land.

In 1938, there was no way to connect Zweig to the opera as Gregor was the only credited librettist. This was an intentional omission by the collaborators because any mention of the Jewish librettist's involvement would have certainly caused the opera to be immediately censored by the German government, as evidenced with *Die Schweigsame Frau*. Additionally, the relatively simple appropriation of the opera to reflect the ideals of Nazism would not have been possible had Hitler's government known that the original idea came from Zweig and that its purpose was to promote peace. Therefore, when the opera premiered, there were only two interpretations attached to the piece. The first was the interpretation presented by the National Socialist government, one most relevant to German audiences. The second was the pacifist interpretation, one that has endured and gained momentum since the end of the Second World War.

The Nazis, eager to assimilate anything created by the world-renowned composer, quickly branded the opera as the embodiment of National Socialist principles. The allusion to the Thirty Year's War and the use of "Ein' feste Burg" throughout the piece "gave German audiences a familiar reference while fortifying the work with 'evidence' of its having emerged from the German conscience."¹³⁰ For Nazi audiences the character of

¹³⁰ Potter, "Strauss's "Friedenstag", 420.

the Commandant was also very crucial to the appeal of the work. According to Pamela Potter, “his musical representation was pompous and militaristic, alluding to the spirit of the Nazi party songs, and his dramatic representation brought out the qualities of war lust, stubbornness, loyalty, foolhardy heroism, and other such characteristics of the Nazi prototype for a military fanatic.”¹³¹ The soldiers are also ideal Nazis, as they willingly follow the Commandant’s orders even to the point of sacrificing their lives for his sense of duty, musically represented by the militaristic *Pflicht* theme. Furthermore, their commentary concerning the townspeople as “rats” and the “enemy within” and the Commandant’s own disrespectful and violent response to their presence in the Fortress might well have been understood as an allusion and natural response to Jewish people, as depicted by Nazi propagandists. The Commandant’s wife, although undeniably opposed to the continuation of the war, still submits to her husband’s duty and chooses death alongside her spouse. The ideal German woman would also forgo any personal feelings in order to support the ideals of the National Socialist state. Additionally, although the Emperor is not an actual character in the opera, his presence as the supreme leader commands the respect and blind obedience of the Commandant and his soldiers. This Emperor exemplifies, for the German audience, the role of the Führer. Even the Holsteiner, as representative of a “foreign heretic enemy,” held meaning for the Nazis. One of the goals of the government was to expand the German empire, creating “Lebensraum” (living space) for German citizens. Anyone or anything that went against the doctrine of National Socialism was considered an enemy of the state and destined for removal and extermination. Additionally, *Friedenstag* may have inadvertently assisted in furthering Hitler’s plan to increase Germany’s “Lebensraum.” In 1938, Hitler was

¹³¹ Ibid.

making aggressive territorial demands on the Sudetenland. The rest of Europe was reluctant to go to war, and managed to convince themselves that by conceding the Sudetenland to Hitler, they would succeed in appeasing him. At the time there was a growing consensus in Europe that Hitler, once a few of his demands were met, would retreat into peaceful coexistence. The peaceful message of *Friedenstag* may have played a part in persuading foreign powers of the false notion that Hitler also wanted to avoid combat. These reasons may well account for the fact that the opera was permitted over ninety performances during a time when Germany was preparing for war.

As quoted earlier in the chapter, the foreign press immediately observed the message of peace contained within the opera. The three collaborators cleverly inserted elements of pacifism throughout the work. The first element is Gregor's Piedmontese, drawing the soldiers attention with his song describing peace in his homeland. Even though the soldiers are quick to dismiss the Piedmontese and his song, they are immediately confronted with the despairing townspeople who call for the surrender of the Citadel. Their haunting cries for food are temporarily halted by the first appearance of the Commandant, but even he cannot temper the impact of the Bürgermeister's speech. In his speech, the Bürgermeister tries unsuccessfully to appeal to the Commandant's sense of humanity by portraying the enemy as men suffering the same fate of hunger, pain and despair as the Commandant's army. True to the principles of National Socialism the Commandant rigidly upholds his duty to the Emperor. However, it is in the final scenes of the opera, when the Commandant embraces the Holsteiner, his sworn enemy, that the pacifist theme is irrefutable. With this sudden about-face followed by the jubilant hymn to peace, there is no question that the goal of the opera is to illustrate the

futility of war and the meritorious appeal of brotherhood and peace. Even the Nazis ultimately acknowledged the pacifist message by quietly removing the opera from the German stage when it was evident that the country would engage in war.

Chapter IV

Reinterpreting *Friedenstag* after the War: a Hermeneutic Quandary

On April 30, 1945, the “Third Reich” suffered a complete military defeat when the Reichstag or Parliament building in Berlin was captured. Almost immediately after the end of the Second World War in September 1945, the United States military began the process of denazification in Germany.¹³² Anyone who would have been perceived as an important cultural figure, who had been prominent within the government, or who seemed to have advanced professionally in any way during the Nazi period, was blacklisted. According to David Monod, “Strauss was therefore on the mandatory removal list because the denazification officers believed he symbolized a malign culture.”¹³³ Although Strauss’s denazification trial began in early 1947, because of health concerns the eighty-three year old composer awaited the trial results in Switzerland, where he was allowed to travel and remain after United States troops entered his hometown of Garmisch in 1945. During the course of the trial, many rumors concerning Strauss and his past began to circulate. In Germany as well as abroad, there was much discussion about his Nazi record, and in Switzerland it was impossible to have any of his works performed. German tabloids speculated about whether, after the formal trial, he

¹³² "World War II," Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9106283>.

¹³³ David Monod, *Settling Scores: German Music, Denazification, and the Americans, 1945-1953* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 45.

would be found guilty of Nazi activism.¹³⁴ Finally, on June 7, 1948, “Strauss was formally vindicated as ‘not incriminated’ by the applicable criteria of Nazi political involvement.”¹³⁵ Nevertheless, Strauss’s acquittal has not discouraged past nor present scholars from providing their own opinions concerning the composer and his works composed during the “Third Reich.”

Friedenstag is one such work that has been subjected to many differing interpretations; some of those immediately following its premiere were discussed in the previous chapter. After the war, the opera was seen in a historical perspective that stretched beyond the “Third Reich” period, and went as far back as Giacomo Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots*, which also uses Martin Luther’s hymn, “Ein’ feste Burg,” within its score. Just as Meyerbeer employed “Ein’ feste Burg” as a sonic marker of the Huguenots’ religious identity throughout his 1836 opera, Strauss applied the hymn to mark the Holsteiner and his men as members of the Protestant enemy. Although, as David McKee notes, Strauss’s usage of the chorale is “hardly the musical crutch that props up Meyerbeer through much of *Les Huguenots*.”¹³⁶ The Jewish composer Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944), also utilized Martin Luther’s hymn in his opera entitled *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (The Emperor of Atlantis), albeit in a completely different context. Ullmann, a pupil of Schönberg, was an inmate at the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt (Terezín) when he wrote the opera in 1943. The plot centers around the Emperor Overall, who declares universal war, and Death, who refuses to be conscripted into the Emperor’s plan. With death gone, the Emperor begins to receive unnerving

¹³⁴ Michael H. Kater, *Composers of the Nazi Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 260. For a more in-depth discussion of Strauss’s denazification trial, please see pages 259-263.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 261.

¹³⁶ David McKee, “Friedenstag” (Review), *The Opera Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Autumn 2003): 823.

reports from the battlefield of mortally wounded soldiers who are unable to die. As chaos ensues, Death returns with a solution for Overall: he will resume his duties only if the Emperor becomes his first victim. Unwillingly, Overall agrees and the suffering soldiers find release in death once more. Before the intended premiere of Ullmann's opera in 1944, a group of Nazi authorities banned the work and dubbed it anti-Nazi because Emperor Overall so closely resembled Adolf Hitler.

Though *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* was labeled anti-Nazi and *Friedenstag* pro-Nazi, the two operas share similarities, the most obvious being their respective employment of "Ein' feste Burg." Within Ullmann's piece, after Emperor Overall is led away by Death, the hymn is heard in the final chorus: "Come, Death and stay in our hearts. Teach us to respect and honour the pain and afflictions of our brethren."¹³⁷ Ullmann mockingly distorts the hymn with chromaticism and fully diminished chords, creating a parody of the distinctly German hymn held so dear by the National Socialists. As the music ridicules, the text represents the main objective of the opera, the price of man's inhumanity and a powerful indictment of the horrors of war. In comparison, Strauss inserts the hymn to musically identify the Holsteiner, enemy of the opera, which can also be understood as an insult to the government. Additionally, *Friedenstag's* pacifist message echoes the sentiment expressed in Ullmann's work.

Another example of musical intertextuality can be found in *Friedenstag's* chorale finale which has been linked to Beethoven's *Fidelio* both in musical style and overall sentiment. As Bryan Gilliam notes, the C major finale of Strauss's opera was a "conscious

¹³⁷ Viktor Ullmann, *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, libretto translated by Peter Kein (Mainz: Polygram Records, 1994).

allusion to the C major choral finale of Beethoven's *Fidelio*.¹³⁸ Just as Beethoven's chorus celebrates brotherhood and the "liberation of humanity" from past tyranny, *Friedenstag's* concluding chorus consciously conveys an analogous sentiment.¹³⁹ Perhaps because of their respective message of duty, social cohesiveness, and fraternity both Strauss's and Beethoven's operas were deliberately co-opted by the National Socialist regime. Specifically, within *Fidelio*, the character of Leonora was said by Nazi music scholar Max Strub to represent "an ideal model of womanhood," an interpretation which could also be applied to the character of Maria in *Friedenstag*.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, *Fidelio* was used to legitimize the more assertive aspects of Nazi Foreign policy. In 1938, the opera was performed in Burg Monschau, near Eupen and Malmèdy – towns requisitioned from Germany by the Versailles Treaty. Present at the performance was a reviewer for the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* who compared audience members from the Eupen-Malmèdy region to the opera's prisoners. According to the reviewer, those who had crossed the border to see the opera were captives whose homeland (Germany) had been stolen. However, just as the prisoners are freed in the opera, so shall the people of the border states be released from their bondage.¹⁴¹ At the war's end, *Fidelio's* humanist message stood victorious as many of Germany's opera houses re-opened with the opera, in an effort to symbolize a complete break with the past. Paul Robinson writes that Beethoven's "opera was the ultimate anti-Nazi gesture, not just because it celebrated

¹³⁸ Bryan Gilliam, " "Friede im Innern": Strauss's Public and Private Worlds in the Mid 1930s," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Autumn, 2004), 587.

¹³⁹ Paul Robinson, "Introduction," found in *Cambridge Opera Handbooks: Ludwig van Beethoven, "Fidelio,"* Paul Robinson, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4-5.

¹⁴⁰ Max Strub, "Geleitsätze zum Beethovenfest der Hitlerjugend," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 7 (July 1938): 732.

¹⁴¹ David B. Dennis, *Beethoven in German Politics 1870-1989* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 164-165.

human freedom but because its profound spirituality embodied all that was noblest in Germany's heritage. More than any other artifact, it refuted the equation of German culture with Nazism."¹⁴² It is not inconceivable that in the future, *Friedenstag's* pacifistic and implicitly anti-Nazi interpretation will prevail, lifting the veil of obscurity, leading to a triumphant return to the contemporary opera stage.

As more documents such as correspondences are discovered and published, the opera has received an increasing amount of positive critical attention over the span of more than half a century. However, there are still some scholars who dismiss the composition outright on political as well as dramatic and musical grounds, while others choose simply to disregard all of Strauss's work from the Nazi period. George Marek, author of *Richard Strauss: The Life of a Non-Hero*, wrote a biting criticism of both Strauss's work and life in general from 1933-1945, as well as *Friedenstag* in particular. After briefly summarizing the action of the piece, Marek comments that:

It is a hopeless piece of work. Its sentiments are elementary, its people representational shadows, the music uninspired, the central scene between the husband and wife forced. The only exciting moment in the opera is the moment when the bells begin to peal – and that moment is more exciting dramatically than musically. Strauss's imagination could not be fructified by a subject that dealt with war and peace. The battlefield was not his terrain.¹⁴³

Marek was correct when he commented that "Strauss's imagination" could not be stimulated by the work's subject matter, the composer having readily admitted to having struggled with the composition of the score. As we saw in Chapter One, when Zweig originally introduced the story in 1934, Strauss initially commented that he found it "a

¹⁴² Paul Robinson, "An Interpretative History," found in *Cambridge Opera Handbooks: Ludwig van Beethoven, "Fidelio,"* Paul Robinson, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 158-159.

¹⁴³ George Richard Marek, *Richard Strauss: The Life of a Non-Hero* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 292.

little too plain” and that it “lacked inner conflict.”¹⁴⁴ Even after choosing *Friedenstag* as his next operatic project, Strauss continued to struggle with its composition, writing to Zweig in 1935:

For several weeks I have been busy composing, but I have not found the music that I expect of myself. The whole subject is, after all, a bit too commonplace – soldiers, war, famine, medieval heroism, dying together – it isn’t quite my dish, with the best of good will.¹⁴⁵

Strauss’s lack of artistic inspiration is in itself evidence that the opera was motivated by political considerations. Following the premiere of *Die schweigsame Frau* in 1935, it was the political message of *Friedenstag* rather than its artistic possibilities that drove Strauss to not only choose the project but persevere through its completion.

Marek’s other comments suggest that he considers the very elements that lend originality and force to the work to be in themselves shortcomings, thus reflecting his misunderstanding of the opera’s purpose. As a plea for peace and brotherhood in the face of the futility of armed conflict, symbolized in the reconciliation of the two commanders and the final proclamation of peace, the anonymity of its characters and setting – Marek’s “representative shadows” – reinforce the universality and timelessness of its message. Despite the vague characterizations of roles and setting, the music succeeds in giving sharp focus to the story, deftly portraying beautiful moments of transcendence as well as haunting evocations of suffering and desperation. Marek’s comment that the paramount scene between the Commandant and his wife seemed forced would be correct were it not for her aria which provides the couple with an affecting subplot, allowing the audience a

¹⁴⁴ Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, *A Confidential Matter: The Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, 1931-1935*, translated by Max Knight (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 58.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 104.

glimpse into their marriage amidst the conflict. Maria's aria, the longest single scene in the opera, expresses her love and devotion to her husband even though she does not support the continued war he wages nor his unyielding dedication to the Emperor. By the time the Commandant reappears, it is easy to believe the emotions expressed in the couple's conflicted duet. As for the sounding of the bells, which for Marek constitute the most thrilling aspect of the piece, they are exciting when they ring, but they are fleeting and do not provide any sense of resolution. More properly dramatic, in the sense of being both suspenseful and riveting, is Maria's intervening attempt to separate the two commanders as they take up arms against each other. In her short arioso, spanning just over a minute in duration, Maria becomes central to the plot of the story, taking an active role toward implementing social change. Maria assumes the strong position of almost all of Strauss's previous heroines by stepping between the two men and forcing her husband to look beyond the Emperor and his obligations. Following Maria's intervention there is a momentary pause as the fate of the town and the hope of peace depend on the action of the Commandant. Dramatically, this is the point at which members of the audience are on the edge of their seats waiting for the final outcome. After the Commandant's decision has been made, the entire ensemble, led by Maria, sings the joyous hymn to peace.

Unlike Marek, Dominique Jameux, author of *Richard Strauss*, offered a blanket opinion of Strauss's compositions from the period of the "Third Reich." He claims that "the only true 'resistance' by Strauss to the [Nazi] regime is not found in his life, but deep down, in his work, or rather in the absence of his work."¹⁴⁶ Jameux continues by surmising that none of the works composed between *Die schweigsame Frau* (1934) and

¹⁴⁶ Dominique Jameux, *Richard Strauss* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971), 151.

Capriccio (1942) are musically worthwhile, confirming for him that Strauss was in a “musical crisis.”¹⁴⁷ His inspiration was only revived after the war in what Jameux calls his “Indian-Summer.”¹⁴⁸ Quite simply, Jameux’s assessment of Strauss’s output is painted with a rather broad brush.

It is likely that critical assessment of Strauss’s compositions during the “Third Reich” has been coloured by his involvement with Hitler’s regime. Yet, this thesis has sought to heed Pamela Potter’s challenge presented in the first chapter by “viewing Strauss in a broader social context and looking at him not for what he might or should have been but for what he unquestionably was.”¹⁴⁹ Strauss did, as we saw, welcome the new Reich in 1933, going so far as to become president of the RMK. However, he soon realized that working with the government would not allow him to associate with whomever he chose, specifically his new Jewish librettist, Stefan Zweig. Following the prompt withdrawal of their opera, *Die schweigsame Frau*, Strauss was unceremoniously dismissed as RMK president and declared *persona non grata*. In response to his growing disillusionment with Hitler’s regime, Strauss deliberately selected as his next operatic venture the one project that he had previously rejected, *Friedenstag*. Whereas for Zweig, the purpose of the opera had always been to spread a pacifist message, Strauss only warmed to the idea of composing what he felt to be an artistically uninspiring libretto when he wished to make a political statement of resistance to a war-like regime.

Therefore, Richard Strauss was politically aware during the “Third Reich,” to the extent

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 155.

¹⁴⁹ Pamela M. Potter, “Strauss and the National Socialists,” in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and his Work*, Bryan Gilliam, ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 109.

that he consciously chose *Friedenstag* as his next project in response to the regime's actions.

This being said, it is nevertheless difficult in a collaborative project such as opera to glean the motivations of individual collaborators. However, while working toward a completed opera, each of the three partners, Strauss, Zweig and Gregor, put something of himself into the *Friedenstag* score. Stefan Zweig provided the origin and framework of the story, with the fundamental goal of propagating the idea of peace and brotherhood among audiences in 1938 Germany. Strauss, in addition to composing the music, specifically developed the character of Maria, molding her into a strong, proactive female figure. Though for different reasons, both Zweig and Strauss were reacting to governmental abuses. Joseph Gregor, as Zweig's replacement, did not have the same emotional or political investment in the project as the other two men. Nevertheless, he was able to successfully incorporate the Piedmontese scene and, with assistance from both Zweig and Strauss, he provided the opera's text. Despite the work and personal feelings of the three collaborators, they all chose to remain silent when the opera premiered; in their absence the early interpretations came from Nazi and foreign commentators. Understanding the intentions of the collaborators gives insight into the opera, making the anti-Nazi interpretations more plausible. In 1964, the English music critic William Mann succinctly summarized the overall themes of the opera:

Strauss and Zweig had been careful to remove all references to times and places. There were many cities, at the end of the Thirty Years' War, being beleaguered by Lutheran troops from Holstein. *Friedenstag* might have taken place in any of them, even this is unimportant. We are to keep company, for some eighty minutes, with a soldier who lives for war and who cannot imagine, let alone desire, peace. We are to sense the dullness, deprivation, spiritual poverty of wartime, and

the purposeless servitude which it means to those who are forced into waging war when they are not dedicated soldiers ...It is a plea for tolerance and friendship between people who hold different opinions about creed, race, government and all other beliefs on which Adolf Hitler was most narrow-minded.¹⁵⁰

This pacifist reading of the opera is worth taking seriously. After all, in 1935, Stefan Zweig sensed the new government's tendency for violence and dogmatism. He responded by imagining an opera imbued with themes and principles directly opposite from those of the Reich. Although Strauss was not immediately taken by the story, he eventually realized the importance of its message. *Friedenstag* represents Strauss's testament to pacifism during a regime bound to brutality and war.

¹⁵⁰ William Mann, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Study of the Operas* (London: Cassell and Company, LTD, 1964), 305.

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Appendix One: Stefan Zweig's initial *Friedenstag* sketch sent to Richard Strauss on August 21, 1934

The time: the last year of the Thirty Years' War. The place: the interior of a German fortress which is besieged by Swedish forces. The commander laying siege has vowed not to give pardon. Misery reigns in the town below the fortress. The mayor pleads with the commander to surrender the fortress. The townspeople press forward, individual voices representing want, fear, hunger (single voices intermingling, a great crowd scene). The commander does not yield. He has the people, who curse him, thrown out by force. Alone with his officers and soldiers, he admits he can no longer hold the fort. But he is not going to surrender it, he will blow it up. He gives everybody permission to go down to the town and ask pardon of the enemy, but he is incapable of surrender. Now a few individual scenes (concise and sharply defined). Some leave, some stay depending on their characters. Amongst those who elect to remain a mood of tragic heroism reigns. A religious scene. The commander's wife appears. He orders her to leave without telling her what he intends to do. She guesses his plan. A powerful scene. She makes no effort to dissuade him because she knows his vow. But she does not leave him. She stays with him – this represents the lyrical element – to die with him. Preparations to blow up fortress. Final farewells, all embrace. The fuse is prepared. It is lit. Total silence. Suddenly – a cannon shot. Everybody jumps up. The commander expects a charge. The fuse is extinguished. They prefer to die in open battle. But no second cannon shot. All wait, surprised, confused. A moment of new intensity and suspense. There, from the distance, from a neighboring village, a bell (far away) sounding in the silence. Then a

second one from another village. Then, still far away, a third. The sound of a trumpet. It is announced that an envoy bearing the white flag of truce is on his way. Then more and more bells. And, suddenly, from below, the cry: peace. The bells sound stronger and stronger and fuse with the jubilant shouts of the (invisible) townspeople. The envoy appears. Peace has been concluded at Osnabrück. The enemy commander asks to greet the fortress commander. The latter agrees. A scene of awakening. Again and again the bells sound, flooding the scene like organ music. The enemy commander appears. The two glower at each other. Each had vowed to destroy each other. They join hands. They embrace. The town people come rushing in, cheer the commander. He addresses them: Everybody is to take on a task. Reconstruction and conciliation. Everybody responsible for everybody else. Some voice their agreement. One representative of the various social classes after another says a few words. And from all this grows, step by step, a grand chorus in which all tasks and accomplishments of world peace, as they concern the people in all walks of life, are glorified; in the finale the chorus unfolds into a mighty Hymn to Brotherhood.

This, then is my plan. The idea of international peace can always be dismissed as pacifist, but in this example it seems to me to be in a heroic framework.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, *A Confidential Matter: The Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, 1931-1935*, translated by Max Knight (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 52-54.

Appendix Two: Stefan Zweig's extended *Friedenstag* sketch sent to Joseph Gregor on July 3, 1935

Letzter Tag des dreißigjährigen Krieges

In einer Zitadelle einer belagerten Festung. Zu Beginn steigende steigende Unruhe, Stimmengewirr von Außen steigend und steigend, das Volk bricht gewaltsam herein. Es ist kein Brot mehr in der Stadt. Hunger! Hunger! Frauen und Kinder, Tumult. Forderung an den Kommandanten die Festung zu übergeben.

Der Kommandant verneint zuerst schroff solange man ihn bedroht. Schließlich von Bürgermeister, Priester über die Notlage belehrt, gebietet er dem Volk in die Stadt hinunter zu gehen und gibt dem Bürgermeister die Erlaubnis, am nächsten Tage, aber nicht früher, die Stadt dem Feind zu übergeben. Beruhigung des Volkes. Der Bürgermeister und das Volk ab.

Der Kommandant, allein geblieben, ruft seine Offiziere und Soldaten zusammen. Er hat geschworen die Festung nicht lebend zu übergeben. Er wird sein Wort halten. Er teilt seinen Entschluss mit, die Zitadelle in die Luft zu sprengen. Er hat noch Pulver genug in den Kammern und stelle jedem der Offiziere und Soldaten frei, sein Leben zu retten und in die Stadt hinab zu gehen.

Nun Einzelszenen, wie einzelne sich entschließen, scheu, beschämt dies anzunehmen. *Verschiedene Typen* dieses Entschlusses, musikalisch verschieden auszudrücken. Zurück bleibt der Kommandant mit einer ganz kleinen erlesenen Schaar, die entschlossen sind mit ihm zu sterben.

Er läßt nun seine Frau rufen, gibt ihr unter einem Vorwand den Auftrag, sich in die Stadt hinunter zu begeben. Sie merkt an der Art seines Abschieds sein Vorhaben und weigert sich. Entschlossenheit mit ihm zu sterben. Die einzige Szene der Oper, die das Lyrische gewissermaßen durch das Heroische transponiert.

Er nimmt, gerührt von ihrer Entschlossenheit, das Opfer an. Nun die letzten Vorbereitungen, Aussprache, die Todgeweihten reichen sich die Hände und umarmen sich. Dann geht es an den Tod! (sie verhüllen ihre Gesichter). Der Kommandant entzündet eine Lunte, um sich hinab zu begeben in den unteren Raum, wo die Pulverfässer liegen. Gespanntester musikalischer Augenblick dieses Schreitens, jeden Schritt muss man bis in das Herz spüren, und dann gelöst in eine vollkommene, in eine absolute Stille.

In diesem Augenblick ein Kanonenschuss. Der Kommandant hält inne. Ein zweiter Kanonenschuss. Jubel, die Feinde greifen an, welches Glück: man kann in offenem Kampfe sterben, statt sich selbst zu vernichten. Er zertritt die Lunte. Dritter Kanonenschuss. Er gibt seine Befehle zur Verteidigung. Nun musikalisch allerstärkste Möglichkeiten. Kanonen werden geladen, Lafetten bereit gestellt, Posten ausgesandt (steckendes Öl gekocht in den Pfannen), alles klirrt und lärmt rhythmisch von Bereitschaft. Dann wieder Pause. Alles ist fertig. Jeder an seinem Platz. Sie sind für den Ansturm bereit.

Aber – Überraschung – es bleibt vollkommen still. Der Kommandant fragt hinauf zum Wachturm ob die Feinde sich schon in Bewegung setzen. Antwort: Nichts im feindlichen Lager, nur sonderbare Bewegung. Der Posten schildert, die Feinde schwingen Fahnen, sie treten zusammen, Reiter traben hin und her. Der Kommandant ist ganz

versteinert. Er versteht das nicht. Was für ein durchdringliches Manöver, „Was wollen sie? Ich verstehe das nicht.“

Plötzlich hinein in die Stille das erste Schwingen einer Glocke. Alle staunen auf. Dann von einem zweiten Kirchturm eine andere Glocke (anders gestimmt). Sie nennen alle diese Glocken beim Namen. Abermals staunen sie. Dann eine dritte Glocke. Dann beginnt von nahe die Glocke der eigenen Stadt zu dröhnen. Mit einem Male sind sie alle umschwungen von diesem rätselhaften Glockenläuten. Und immer unten der Kommandant erstaunt: „Was ist? Was geht vor? Ich verstehe das nicht.“

In das Glockenläuten mengen sich ferne Rufe die man nicht versteht. Allmählich werden sie deutlicher. Plötzlich ein Ruf schon verständlich: Friede! Und immer stärker von allen Seiten: Friede! Sie können es noch nicht glauben. Es ist wie von Himmel gefallen. Nur die Frau wirft sich in die Knie und sagt: „Friede! Gott sei gelobt.“ Und schon stürmen Schritte heran. Das Tor wird aufgerissen. Der Bürgermeister erscheint. Er bricht ein und schreit: „Friede!“ Hinter ihm der Priester, das Volk. Der Ruf wiederholt und wiederholt sich. Und schon die ersten Meldungen. Die Feinde winken mit den Fahnen. Sie haben ihre Reihen verlassen. Sie schmücken die Kanonen mit Kränzen. Dann neue Nachricht. Von seinen Offizieren begleitet, die weiße Fahne in der Hand, reitet der Kommandant der Belagerungsarmee heran. Jetzt ist er beim Tor, jetzt wird ihm geöffnet. Jetzt reitet er durch die Stadt. Er wird gleich hier sein.

Allgemeine Begeisterung. Der Kommandant ist als einziger düster und streng. „Ich habe geschworen, dass niemals einer von ihnen diese Stadt betreten darf solange ich lebe.“

Und schon Fanfaren. Der feindliche Kommandant tritt herein. Er wird von allen jubelnd begrüßt. Er kommt dem Kommandanten der Festung entgegen, will ihm die Hand reichen. Dieser wendet sich schroff ab.

Nun die große Szene zwischen den beiden. „Ich habe geschworen, dass niemand die Festung betreten darf.“ „Ich habe geschworen, sie im Sturm zu nehmen.“ Dazu die hellere Frauenstimme: „Aber jetzt ist Friede.“ Der eine Kommandant: „Es sind zu viele gefallen. Ihr habt das Land verwüstet.“ Vorwürfe. Immer wieder dazwischen die mildernden Stimmen der Frau, des Priesters, des Bürgermeisters. Schließlich lockert sich die Spannung. „Ihr habt jeden Stein verteidigt.“ „Ihr habt wie Helden uns angegriffen.“ Allmählich wird der beiderseitige Respekt eines Führers vor dem andern deutlicher. „Ich habe Euch oft bewundert.“ usw. Unwillkürlich sind sie aus der Abwehr einander näher getreten, Steigerung und Steigerung im Dialog und plötzlich umarmen sie sich.

Jubel des ganzen Volkes und nun allmählich ansteigend eine Fuge. Künftiger Aufbau. Die blutige Erde in fruchtbare verwandelnd, die Volker versöhnt. Steigend und steigend der große Chor in einen Hymnus. Dies muss allmählich aus Männerstimmen, Frauenstimmen, Kinderstimmen aufgebaut werden, aus dem Feierlichen ins Verheißende und Jubelnde hinein.

Finale

Die musikalischen Hauptpunkte scheinen mir:

Der leidenschaftliche, verzweifelte Chor des Anfangs. Volkstumult.
 Die heroische Liebesszene zwischen Mann Frau.
 Die gespannten Szenen der letzten Vorbereitungen und des Abschieds. Die Todesatmosphäre. Dann die rhythmisch illustrative Szene der

Verteidigungsvorbereitungen, die gespannte Szene des Wartens und die Glockensymphonie.¹⁵²

Translation of Appendix Two

Last Day of the Thirty Years War

In the Citadel of a besieged fortress. At the beginning there is increasing unrest, a buzz of voices outside increases and increases [in volume], the people burst in. There is no more bread in the city! Hunger! Hunger! Women and children riot. They demand the Commander of the fortress to surrender.

The Commander denies them gruffly so long as he is threatened. Finally, having been informed about the distressing situation by the mayor and the priest, he orders the people to go down to the city and permits the mayor to surrender the city to the enemy on the next day, but no earlier. Quieting of the people. The mayor and the people leave.

The Commander, remaining alone, summons his officers and soldiers. He has sworn to never surrender the fortress alive. He will uphold his word. He communicates his decision to blow up the Citadel. He still has enough powder in the chambers, and gives every officer and soldier the option of going down to the city in order to save his life.

Now single scenes, to show how individual soldiers decide, timid, embarrassed, to accept this [option]. *Different types* of this decision, to be expressed differently in music.

¹⁵² Stefan Zweig and Joseph Gregor, *Correspondence 1921-1938*, Kenneth Birkin, ed. (Dunedin: University of Otago, 1991) 231-235.

The Commander remains behind with a very small select group, those who are determined to stay with him and die.

He has his wife summoned, and under a pretext orders her to go down to the city. From the manner of his farewell, she realizes what he has in mind and refuses. She is determined to remain with him and die. This is the only scene of the opera where the lyrical is transposed to the heroic.

Touched by her determination he accepts her sacrifice. Now the last preparations, dialogue[s]; the doomed shake hands and embrace. Then to death (they hide their faces). The Commander lights a fuse, and betakes himself to the lower room, where the powder barrels lie. This walking [down to the lower room] is the most tense musical moment; each step has to be felt in the core of one's being and then resolved into absolute silence.

At this moment, a cannon shot. The Commandant pauses. A second cannon shot. Jubilation, the enemy is attacking, what joy: the soldiers can die in open battle instead of taking their own lives. He extinguishes the fuse by stepping on it. A third cannon shot. He gives the order to defend. Now the very most powerful possibilities for the music. Cannons are loaded, gun carriages are made ready, guards are sent to their posts (oil is boiled in the pans), everything clangs and rhythmically makes noise from preparedness. Then another pause. All is ready. Everyone in his place. They are ready for the assault.

But – surprise – everything remains perfectly still. The Commander asks the watchtower if there is any movement from the enemy yet. The answer: nothing in the enemy's camp, except a strange motion. The guard relates that the enemy is waving flags, congregating, horsemen are riding back and forth. The Commander is completely

transfixed. He does not understand. What a baffling maneuver! “What are they up to? I do not understand.”

Suddenly into the silence the first swinging of a bell. All are astonished. Then from a second church tower another bell (tuned differently). They [the soldiers] call all of the bells by name. Again they are astonished. Then a third bell. Then the bell from their own city begins to clang. Suddenly they are all enveloped in this mysterious ringing of bells. And throughout, down below, the Commander [says] with amazement: “What is this? What is going on? I do not understand.”

Into the bell sounds distant calls are blended that cannot be understood. Gradually they become clearer. Suddenly a comprehensible outcry: Peace! And then stronger from all sides: Peace! They cannot yet believe it. It is as if it had come out of the clear blue sky. Only the Commander’s wife falls to her knees and says: “Peace! Praise be to God.” And already steps storm up [to the gate]. The gate is opened wide. The Mayor appears. He bursts in and cries: “Peace!” Behind him comes the Priest and the people. They repeat the call again and again. And already the first reports. The enemy waves their flags. They have broken their ranks. They adorn the cannons with wreaths. Then more news. Accompanied by his officers, the Commander of the besieging army rides in with the white flag in his hand. Now he is by the gate, now it is opened for him. Now he rides through the city. He will be here momentarily.

General enthusiasm. Only the Commander is grim and severe. “I have sworn, that not one of them shall ever enter this city as long as I am alive.”

There are fanfares. The enemy Commander walks in. He is jubilantly greeted by all. He approaches the Commander of the fortress, offers his hand. The latter abruptly turns away.

Now the big scene between the two [Commanders]. “I have sworn, that no one may enter this fortress.” “I have sworn to take it by storm.” Then the higher voice of the wife: “But now there is peace.” The Commander: “Too many people have died. You have devastated the land.” More accusations. The soothing voices of the woman, the Priest, and the Mayor keep interjecting. Finally the tension relaxes. “You defended every stone.” “You attacked us like heroes.” Gradually the mutual respect of the leaders becomes more evident. “I have often admired you”, etc. Involuntarily, their hostility has yielded to greater friendliness. Greater and greater warmth in their conversation, and suddenly they embrace.

All the people are jubilant and now, gradually mounting [in volume], a fugue. Further development later on. The blood-soaked earth transformed into fertile soil, the people are reconciled. The large choir builds and builds into a hymn. This [hymn] must gradually be developed out of male, female, and children’s voices, out of the solemn into the auspicious and jubilant.

Finale

The main musical passages seem to me to be:

The passionate, desperate chorus at the beginning. The people’s uproar.

The heroic love scene between the Commander and his wife.
The tension filled scenes of the last preparations and the farewell. The death atmosphere.
Then the rhythmically illustrative scene of the defense preparations, the tense scene of waiting, and the bell symphony.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Ibid. Translation by Dr. Harald M. Krebs and Patricia Moss.

Appendix Three: Stefan Zweig's July 26, 1935 comments on Joseph Gregor's first draft of *Friedenstag*

Now to your sketch. It begins excellently. The scene with the Piedmontese soldier is throughout musically conceived. Now come my first objections. The great speeches of the Kommandant and his wife are not to my mind rhythmical enough to lend themselves to music, apart from which they are rather too complicated. I would like the Kommandant to be harder, simpler and more powerful, more stately, with simple, terse, clear phrases. He must have a military diction right from the start which in itself should be quite distinct from the other characters, a man who is testy and used to being obeyed. Also the Bürgermeister should be more naïve, stammering in speech, anxious before the Kommandant. Finally, the people, not just one woman, should be allowed to utter short entreaties which rise to wild phrases and cries, and the images of hunger should first present themselves in short, terse scenes which continually become wilder. All the elements of hunger and need – not a crumb of bread; hunting for rats; no milk at the breast; sickness – all these must accompany the furious cries which assail the Kommandant. Hunger must not be spoken but must be bellowed, unleashing a primitive power which does not appear in the speech of the woman in your sketch. It seems to me even, that one of them could sink down before him and plead for death because this would be more merciful than this long drawn out desperate misery. There-upon must the Kommandant show the first signs of giving way. This must not be anything actually spoken, because one often cannot in music understand the words, rather it should be some sort of inspired gesture of urgency which will be taken up by all people in this manner:

‘Kill us! Throw us from the walls! Make an end of everything! Strike this child to death, I can not longer bear to see it grow hungry!’ But in any case a completely primitive outburst which overcomes him. Hopefully, I can discuss and explain all of this to you in Vienna, but those two elements appear to me to be the most essential. First, that from the beginning, the Kommandant should be rough, terse and decisive, and the inner warmth and tenderness should first break through in the lyrical scene with his wife; secondly, that the people instead of the poetics of the woman, will generate the impulsive repetitive, clamorous and thunderous power of an elemental uproar. Hunger and need must stand right from the start as something frightful in order to justify the resolution. Also the precedence of a powerful force from the people would be extremely desirable and would contrast with the prudent voice of the Bürgermeister, breaking angrily into his speech. Further, the mandate of the Kaiser would have greater weight and import if it hinted at some sort of underlying secret implication: ‘Every hour counts. Hold on at any price’. For the Kaiser, of course, already knows about the peace negotiations, making it even more a question of honour that the town is held.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Stefan Zweig and Joseph Gregor, *Correspondence 1921-1938*, Kenneth Birkin, ed. (Dunedin: University of Otago, 1991), 239-240. Translated in Kenneth Birkin, *Friedenstag and Daphne: An Interpretive Study of the Literary and Dramatic Sources of Two Operas by Richard Strauss* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 131-132.

**Appendix Four: Concise Chart of the Similarities and Differences
between the Historical Thirty Years' War and *Friedenstag's*
Libretto**

Danish Intervention within the Thirty Years' War
(1625-1629)

Holsteiner – Christian IV, b. 1577	Commandant - Albrecht von Wallenstein*, b. 1583 or Count Jean Tilly, b. 1559
Leader: Christian IV, King of Denmark and Norway. He was also the Duke of Holstein.	Leader: Hapsburg Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II and The Catholic League of Germany
Religion: Lutheran	Religion: Catholic
Conflict: Began when the Duke invaded Lower Saxony	Resolution: Wallenstein and Tilly are victorious, Treaty of Lübeck** in 1629 reached.

* Wallenstein was a Bohemian nobleman who pledged his army to Ferdinand II. Throughout the Thirty Years' War he fought in Bohemia, Bavaria, Holstein, and Magdeburg (to name a few)

** Christian IV was able to keep control over Denmark and all other pre-war possessions. However, he was forced to promise to never again invade the Empire

References to the Thirty Years' War within *Friedenstag's* Libretto
(Oct. 24, 1648)

Holsteiner (Commander of the besieging army)	Commandant (Commander of the besieged town)
Leader: Unknown	Leader: Emperor
Description: much younger than the Commandant, men and equipment in far better condition (p.115)	Description: about 50 and handsome, his army is starving, munitions are spent, on the verge of defeat (p.65)
Conflict: successful invasion of the Commandant's citadel	Resolution: the Holsteiner brings word that peace has been reached at Münster*
Identifying Remarks: called heretic (121), enemy (passim), foreigner (97), comes from the north (121)	Identifying Remarks: fought at Magdeburg (83), Bohemia (85), follows Emperor, hates heretics

* The Peace of Westphalia included the Treaty of Osnabrück (May 15, 1648) and the Treaty of Münster (October 24, 1648), ending both the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ The information contained in this chart comes from several sources including *Friedenstag's* Libretto and "History of Europe" and "Christian IV," *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2010, <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-58354>.