

Post-war programming in West Germany and elsewhere in Europe in the 1940s and 1950s maintained a degree of internationalism at first focused upon distinct national traditions – mirroring the programming of the ISCM – then moving away from this. This allowed for forms of modernism which did not appear to have obvious or explicit national roots, as in the Weimar era, but these did not attain any type of prominence, let alone domination, until the 1960s at the earliest (and even then only in certain institutions). Many German concert series, festivals, radio programmes and critical writings continued for some time to group compositions by nation state, with internationalist modernism (represented in the 1950s by serialism and various forms of electronic music; and towards the end of the decade by the textural composition of Xenakis, Penderecki and Ligeti and the emergence of a new type of experimental music theatre) remaining on the relative periphery.²⁶¹ In many ways, the consolidation of an internationalist or transnationalist outlook was slower in the post-war era than it had been in Weimar Germany. Nonetheless, the ideological conditions that allowed this gradual trajectory to occur were firmly rooted in responses to an at least partially imaginary immediate past.

Reconstructing a ‘Special Relationship’ from Scattered Archives: America, Britain, Europe and the ISCM, 1922–45

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In an account of the early history of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) for a 1946 BBC broadcast, president of the ISCM Edward Dent recounted the ‘two main reasons’ why London was proposed as the society’s initial headquarters at that first meeting in 1922 in Salzburg. Firstly, he maintained, ‘it stood apart from all the quarrels and jealousies of the Continent’, and secondly, and most importantly for the purposes of this article, he outlined a triangulated relationship: ‘[London] was regarded as a link between Europe and America.’ ‘American music’, he continued, ‘really needed that link in those days; and the general feeling of

programming include Elizabeth Janik, *Recomposing German Music: Politics and Tradition in Cold War Berlin* (Leiden, Brill & Biggleswade: Extenza Turpin, 2005), David Monod, *Settling Scores: German Music, Denazification, and the Americans, 1945–1953* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Amy C. Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2006); Toby Thacker, *Music after Hitler, 1945–1955* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Ferdinand Kösters, *Als Orpheus wieder sang ... Der Wiederbeginn des Opernlebens in Deutschland nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Münster: Edition Octopus, 2009); and Andreas Linsenmann, *Musik als politischer Faktor. Konzepte, Intentionen und Praxis französischer Umerziehungs- und Kulturpolitik in Deutschland 1945–1949/50* (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, 2010).

²⁶¹ A key transitional book in this respect is Ulrich Dibelius, *Moderne Musik 1945–1965* (Munich: Piper, 1966), which continues to include a substantial section on groups of composers from different nation states (270–332). For a critique of arguments asserting modernist/serialist dominance in Germany in the 1950s, see my paper ‘The Cold War in Germany as Ideological Weapon for Anti-Modernists’ (presented at the Radical Music History Conference, Helsinki, 8 December 2011), at <http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/6482/> (accessed 20 September 2019).

the European musicians was that they would provide the music and England the money to pay for it.' But then (again using 'the Continent' and 'Europe' interchangeably) he signalled a profound shift: 'Today the situation has changed. It is Europe now which needs the link with America, for America has become a great music-producing country, while it will take the Continent some little time to recover its creative energy.'²⁶² Tantalizing though Dent's references to 'links' may be, obtaining clarity on what these transatlantic connections were and how they operated has proved elusive. The telling of an international and transnational history by way of searches of nationally bounded archival collections has raised certain methodological challenges.²⁶³ Rising to meet them, however, has uncovered some interesting threads which in turn offer an alternative dimension to a story that is often told from a Eurocentric perspective; one, as already noted by the editors of this round table, which places the Austro-Germanic modernist tradition at its centre.²⁶⁴ Moreover, Dent's framework of a transatlantic musical internationalism that triangulated England, Europe and America as three distinct entities with a set of different and fluid musical relationships and roles has obvious resonances today as Britain, the USA and Europe are once again struggling to rearticulate their positions in respect of each other in a rapidly shifting world order.

This article explores certain Anglo-American 'links' related to the ISCM during a period in which the USA not only emerged as the major world power but was also undergoing a cultural transformation that included a musical coming of age. It is no accident that at either end of the interwar period the first two British ISCM presidents and active 'agents of internationalism' – Dent and the London music critic Edwin Evans – turned their gaze westwards away from the Channel and across the Atlantic.²⁶⁵ And they were not alone. Other Britons who engaged directly with the modern music scene in America included the young composers and ISCM participants Arthur Bliss and Eugene Goossens. The chronology of what amounted to an infatuation with the USA suggests differing motivations that will be explored below. Dent's words also remind us of the American involvement in the ISCM from its outset. An examination of the early period of the ISCM United States Section (US Section) from its shaky beginnings to its hosting of the wartime festivals of 1941 and 1942 and its difficult relationships with other American new music societies, such as the International Composers' Guild and the League of Composers, provides valuable context for a better understanding of these connections between Britain and the USA. This article considers how these 'links' worked (or not) against the wider backdrop of power shifts in the aftermath of the Great War which saw the emergence of the United States as a major world power in stark contrast to a bankrupt, war-torn Europe. In order to do this it takes into account aspects of formal US foreign policy with specific reference to Britain; the path of post-First World War American internationalism; and

²⁶² Edward J. Dent, 'International Society for Contemporary Music', 30 June 1946, typed transcript, 1–3 (p. 3), Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge, The Papers of Edward Joseph Dent (hereafter Dent Papers), EJD/1/4/5.

²⁶³ I distinguish here between the international and the transnational in the following way: the international retains a sense of the discrete bounded nation and describes relations *between* nation states, whereas the transnational suggests movement, for example flows of people, ideas and material objects *across* state borders. For discussion of transnational history, see *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective*, ed. Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2005) and Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

²⁶⁴ See the Introduction to this round table, by Sarah Collins, Barbara L. Kelly and Laura Tunbridge.

²⁶⁵ See Jessica Reinisch, 'Introduction: Agents of Internationalism', *Contemporary European History*, 25 (2016), 195–205.

some of the musical consequences of the mass population shifts caused by the rise of European totalitarianism.

This case study aims both to extend our understanding of the ISCM beyond ‘the Continent’ and to reveal almost uncanny similarities between major global political and economic transformations and those in the world of modern music. The exploration of transatlantic movement and exchange undertaken here argues for the importance of an informal transnational sociability. This was a sociability fostered by members of a musical elite who recognized kindred spirits across national borders, which reminds us that Anthony Pagden’s observation – albeit made of a much older Europe – that ‘the literate, intellectual elites [...] had far more in common with similar groups from other nations’ holds true in this context.²⁶⁶ The retracing of these transnational networks, often created through personal friendship and close association, reveals the formation of an international community that was fundamental to the production of international modern musical culture. The central role of key individuals which emerges below supports Benjamin Auberer’s argument for an ‘actor-centred’ approach when writing transnational and international histories, for it is at the granular level – through an assemblage of detailed episodes – that lived experience can be brought into contact with and animate more abstract patterns of international relations.²⁶⁷ But this need for detailed transnational stories takes us beyond the bounds of the nation state, which in turn presents methodological challenges.

Glenda Sluga has identified ‘the archives of international organizations’ as ‘an extraordinary fertile, undervalued, underutilized, and endangered source of historical research of the transnational kind’.²⁶⁸ This is undoubtedly true, but I remember my sense of dismay on realizing that in the case of the ISCM for the period before 1953 such an archive does not exist.²⁶⁹ An explanation for the scattered archives lies in part in the federated nature of the organization, which has determined where the material is housed. When they drew up the constitution in early 1923, Dent and Evans decided that the ISCM should be a federation of already existing national societies. They cited as examples the newly established London Contemporary Music Centre (LCMC) and Vienna’s Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen. Societies like these would act as ‘autonomous national sections’ headed by a chosen representative (for example, Evans was the first head of the British Section). Scholars interested in telling the interwar stories of the ISCM and interwar musical internationalism more generally must therefore effectively construct the international archive through its component parts. The challenge is not only to find them, but to bring them into dialogue. This demands a wide-ranging approach which identifies key individuals and national societies; more than usual it requires a transnational researcher. It should be noted also that the many little magazines devoted to new music – often

²⁶⁶ Anthony Pagden, ‘Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent’, *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 33–54 (p. 45).

²⁶⁷ Benjamin Auberer, ‘Editor’s Note: Situating Internationalism 1919–1940s’, *New Global Studies*, 10 (2017), 1–8 (p. 2).

²⁶⁸ Glenda Sluga, ‘Editorial – the Transnational History of International Institutions’, *Journal of Global History*, 6 (2011), 219–22 (p. 220).

²⁶⁹ The ISCM deposited its archive with the Royal Library of Denmark, Copenhagen, in 2000. The contents date from the early 1950s when the presidency returned to continental Europe. Interestingly, the archive is arranged around the collections of three main figures in the organization from this time. The earlier period is represented through the private archive of Anton Haefeli, which comprises copies of printed material used for his major study of the society. See Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik*.

aligned with these national societies – which appeared from the early 1920s provide an invaluable resource. Their reports cover ISCM work at local and national levels as well as at international ones.

Further explanation for the dearth of ISCM records before the 1950s can be found in the relatively ad hoc administrative structures that were in place. Giles Masters has skilfully shown how the ISCM adopted the stagecraft of major international organizations such as the League of Nations; but these trappings could neither offset the relatively small scale of the society nor mitigate its scant resources.²⁷⁰ Archival records relating to the ISCM are scattered across the personal papers of key actors and only in a very few cases are found in the collections of national societies. The first three ISCM presidents until 1953 – Dent, Evans and Edward Clark (all British) – had to squeeze their ISCM work into days filled with many other responsibilities. As a consequence ISCM material is interspersed throughout their collections.²⁷¹ The relatively small scale of the ISCM and the paucity of organizational archives for the interwar period brings individual relationships into central focus and renders personal papers an invaluable collection type. By definition, collections such as these reflect the idiosyncrasies of an individual life and do not fit easily within the categories of the national or international.

This case study connects archives on either side of the Atlantic, but they in no way tell the entire story. Nevertheless, a granular approach to the study of these archives is illuminating. They constitute pieces of a larger jigsaw puzzle of dispersed archives that stand ready to reveal many stories of interwar modern music-making across national borders.

In his reminiscences of the foundation of the ISCM, 'Looking Backward', Dent recalled that it was 'the Americans' who proposed that he be chosen as ISCM president and the head office be located in London. 'The Americans', he stressed, 'were very properly determined to make Europe realize that America [...] was a musical continent, and they felt that London was the most convenient link between the two worlds'.²⁷² It is difficult to undervalue the significance of this comment for what it reveals of early American influence within the society. With the understandable exception of the ISCM's progenitor, the Serbian-cum-Austrian theorist and composer Rudolph Réti, the proposal was 'agreed to unanimously'.²⁷³ This raises the question, then, of just who 'the Americans' were in Salzburg in 1922. The answer is surprising. The sole American at the preliminary meeting was the critic César Saerchinger (although Leo Sowerby did attend to perform his Violin Sonata). Born in France in 1884, Saerchinger became an American citizen in 1910 and from 1919 returned to Europe as critic for the *New York Post*. This example not only reminds us of the very small scale on which the ISCM operated, requiring it to rely so heavily on interpersonal relations, but also calls attention to the thorny questions of nationality and citizenship that were to detain the US Section throughout the interwar period examined in more detail below.

²⁷⁰ Masters also reminds us of Anne C. Shreffler's observation that the ISCM had 'no real authority and few resources of its own'. See above, n. 8.

²⁷¹ Sadly, no organizational archive survives (or none that I have yet found) for the LCMC/ISCM British Section until 1953, when it became the Music Division of the Institute of Contemporary Arts. The ICA Archives are held at the Tate Archive in London.

²⁷² Edward Dent, 'Looking Backward', *Music Today: Journal of the International Society for Contemporary Music*, 1 (1949), 6–25 (p. 10). It should also be noted here that this banding together of the Anglosphere was in part driven by a desire to weaken the Austro-Germanic hegemony within the society. This was not only an emotional hangover from the recent hostilities, but also stemmed from a desire to open the ISCM to include more peripheral players. I am grateful here to Sarah Collins for this observation.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

The American desire to use Britain as a link to Europe is not so surprising given their long, shared history. Although their relationship was admittedly complex and not always amicable, their deep bonds, expressed symbolically as ‘hands across the sea’ or ‘Pax anglo-americana’, were based on a common language and a sense of ‘shared inheritance’.²⁷⁴ From the early twentieth century, it was clear that these feelings were, as C. J. Lowe and M. L. Dockrill suggest, ‘much stronger at the British end’.²⁷⁵ In 1921 a cardinal feature of British foreign policy was ‘to cultivate the closest relations with the United States’,²⁷⁶ but as Jeffrey Legro observes, ‘There was a puzzling absence of any type of nascent Atlantic Alliance or Anglo-American cooperation to deal with the post-World War I power vacuum.’²⁷⁷ This period saw the rapid expansion of American power when Britain was considerably diminished by the war and experiencing challenges from within its empire.

Despite the growing imbalance in economic and political power, in the area of musical culture, America and Britain shared an anxious and ambivalent relationship to continental Europe which was coloured by feelings of insecurity and inferiority. This shared lack of confidence initially drew them together. However, timing was critical. Saerchinger’s request for British mediation and support ironically coincided with America’s post-war economic and political transformation; this in turn imbued its culture with a new-found confidence that quickly recalibrated the Anglo-American musical relationship.

America’s embrace of isolationism after the Great War was redolent of the ‘splendid isolation’ that characterized late nineteenth-century British foreign policy. Long leery of entanglement in the political affairs of other nations, the USA emerged after 1918 utterly disillusioned with its role in the First World War. The majority of Americans (in 1937 the figure was still 70 per cent) saw it as a terrible mistake for which they blamed President Woodrow Wilson.²⁷⁸ As part of their recriminations, they rejected his internationalist platform; thus, the architect of the League of Nations was unable to convince his own congress to join. This formal turning inwards, however, paints only part of the picture. Scholars such as Frank A. Ninkovich, Katharina Rietzler and Bear F. Braumoeller have shown that American internationalists did not disappear, but redirected their energies into non-official, private avenues. Cultural diplomacy became the province of major New York-based philanthropic foundations such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Rockefeller Foundation. These groups worked informally but closely with the League of Nations, attaining, in effect, ‘quasi-membership’.²⁷⁹ Other forms of soft power that used ‘banks not tanks’ included the American Library Association, which developed cultural programmes across Europe, and the American University at Fontainebleu, established in 1921.²⁸⁰ (The founding composition teacher at Fontainebleu, Nadia Boulanger, went on to teach generations of American composers.) The same internationalist zeal of the philanthropic institutions was felt

²⁷⁴ C. J. Lowe and M. L. Dockrill, *The Mirage of Power*, 3 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), i: *British Foreign Policy 1902–14*, 96.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ See ‘Report of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance Committee’, 21 January 1921, in Lowe and Dockrill, *The Mirage of Power*, iii: *The Documents: British Foreign Policy, 1902–22*, 647.

²⁷⁷ Jeffrey W. Legro, ‘Whence American Internationalism’, *International Organization*, 54 (2000), 253–89 (p. 277).

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 272.

²⁷⁹ Katharina Rietzler, ‘Before the Cultural Cold Wars: American Philanthropy and Cultural Diplomacy in the Inter-War Years’, *Historical Research*, 84 (2011), 148–64 (p. 160).

²⁸⁰ Bear F. Braumoeller, ‘The Myth of American Isolationism’, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 6 (2010), 349–71 (p. 367).

in the new modern music societies that appeared in New York in the 1920s. And as American critic Paul Rosenfeld proclaimed, 1918 was the year that New York ‘became central’.²⁸¹ While bankrupted European centres struggled to recover, New York emerged as a global cultural capital and by the 1920s had, as Carol Oja shows, become an ‘international bazaar for modernist music’.²⁸²

Evans had become aware of the extraordinary musical transformation taking place across the Atlantic. He was captivated by the idea of New York, and before the ISCM was founded he had already established American contacts. The beginnings were informal and piecemeal. In 1920 he was having coffee with ‘Americans’ at London’s Pagani’s Restaurant; the following year, Emerson Whithorne, who represented America in the earliest festivals and was to be on the board of the US Section, sent him scores, and, writing later in 1923 from the Hotel Algonquin, agitated for ‘some reciprocal action between the modern groups here and in London’.²⁸³ In late 1923, determined to have a direct experience of the New York, Evans embarked upon what became a humiliating venture. He had become convinced – in part, it seems, through wishful thinking – that he had won an appointment as music critic with the *New York Times*. Long-time critic for *The Times*, Percy Scholes, who was at that time on exchange with the *New York Times*, was forced to tell Evans that he had not only been unsuccessful, but that Adolf Ochs, the newspaper’s owner, was instead ‘in pursuit’ of another of London’s foremost critics, Ernest Newman.²⁸⁴ Ochs did telegram Evans directly, expressing regret over the ‘misunderstanding’, but no offer eventuated despite Newman turning down the proposition.²⁸⁵ Unfortunately, Evans found out only after he had informed many friends and colleagues both in Britain and America; the letters that flowed in, initially of congratulation and then of disappointment, attest to his American connections. George Eastman of the Kodak Company happily expected Evans’s imminent arrival, but his enthusiasm did not match that of American critic Lawrence Gilman, who wrote fulsomely on behalf of ‘all of us in New York who have followed your splendidly pioneering work for many years’.²⁸⁶ Convinced of his arrival, Dorothy Lawton, music librarian of the New York Public Library and secretary and treasurer of the US Section, had busily been organizing speaking events for him on suggested topics such as ‘Contemporary Music from a European’s angle’, or the ‘Salzburg Festival’.²⁸⁷ Her letter suggests a warm friendship, one she shared also with Dent. Her disappointment was real: it was, she lamented, ‘a

²⁸¹ See Paul Rosenfeld, ‘When New York Became Central’, *Modern Music*, 20 (1945), 83–9 (p. 83).

²⁸² Carol J. Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 182.

²⁸³ Letter from Emerson Whithorne to Edwin Evans, 11 October 1921, Westminster Archives, Westminster City Council, Evans Correspondence (hereafter Evans Correspondence), CML/489. Other correspondence includes an interesting exchange with Ezra Pound, who was enthusiastically promoting Antheil’s music from Paris, and a detailed account of modern British music sent to the American critic, Irving Scherke, also working in the French capital. See letter from Ezra Pound to Edwin Evans, 29 March 1923, Evans Correspondence, CML/355.

²⁸⁴ Letter from Percy Scholes to Edwin Evans, 5 November 1923, Evans Correspondence, CML/45; letter from Scholes to Evans, 14 December 1923, Evans Correspondence, CML/46. For Ernest Newman, see Paul Watt, *Ernest Newman: A Critical Biography* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2017).

²⁸⁵ Letter from Adolf Ochs to Edwin Evans, 4 January 1924, Evans Correspondence, CML/334.

²⁸⁶ Letter from George Eastman to Edwin Evans, 22 December 1923, Evans Correspondence, CML/89; letter from Lawrence Gilman to Edwin Evans, 13 November 1923, Evans Correspondence, CML/127.

²⁸⁷ Lawton was also active in musicological circles; for her involvement in the establishment of the American Society for Comparative Musicology, see Tamara Levitz, ‘The Musicological Elite’, *Current Musicology*, 102 (2018), 9–80 (p. 21).

deprivation to us all'. She went on to reveal her Anglophile tendencies by stepping in for Evans with her own lecture on 'Modern British Composers'.²⁸⁸

Evans persisted, undeterred, approaching such prominent figures as the journalist and cultural critic H. L. Mencken for support. Mencken's cautiously positive response captures the temper of the times: 'I surely hope that arrangements may be made that will bring you to the United States. You will find it, at worst, a very amusing show. Two-thirds of the money in the world is now accumulated here, and spending it makes a colossal spectacle.'²⁸⁹ Evans's close friend Goossens was in the States throughout the 1920s where he agitated on Evans's behalf, purportedly 'ramming' his name 'down people's throats', determined to procure him a place at one of the big newspapers.²⁹⁰ Despite the embarrassing episode, Evans maintained a long-distance engagement with his American colleagues, seen, for example, by his position on the board of New York's important new music journal *Modern Music* and his articles on modern British music written expressly for its early issues.²⁹¹

Around the same time as Evans was desperately trying to get to America, Saerchinger had returned home, and as 'temporary representative' for the ISCM in the United States, he was required immediately to organize a local committee for the US Section. He undertook the responsibility with great seriousness and canvassed many different groups in an effort to be open and democratic.²⁹² He saw it as an opportunity to improve the reputation of American music internationally, but from the outset it was fraught with difficulty. Of immediate concern was the ISCM constitution's definition of contemporary music, which restricted it to 'music of all *European* countries written within the last fifteen years' (emphasis added). In dismay, Saerchinger complained to London with immediate results: 'European' was removed and the definition expanded.²⁹³ This example of Eurocentrism, however, fuelled the ongoing concern that the Europeans did not take American music seriously. Certainly, early selections for ISCM festivals represented a particular kind of American music that expressed an 'American Outlook', or music inflected with popular music and jazz indicative of America's peculiar brand of modernity. The composers involved in the early festivals include lesser-known figures such as Sowerby, Whithorne, Marion Bauer and Louis Gruenberg – the transitional generation characterized by Oja as 'the forgotten vanguard'.²⁹⁴ They wanted to be equal players and resented what they saw as European condescension. Oja noticed a marked psychological shift in this exchange, claiming, 'The country that had led the way to victory in an international conflict was no longer content simply to worship European

²⁸⁸ See letter from Dorothy Lawton to Edwin Evans, 20 November 1923, Evans Correspondence, CML/279; letter from Lawton to Evans, 21 February 1924, Evans Correspondence, CML/280.

²⁸⁹ Letter from M. L. Mencken to Edwin Evans, 14 January [1924], Evans Correspondence, CML/317.

²⁹⁰ Letter from Eugene Goossens to Edwin Evans, 14 December 1925, Evans Correspondence, CML/131.

²⁹¹ The first issues of this influential journal appeared under the title *League of Composers' Review* until April 1925. See, for example, Edwin Evans, 'The New Spirit in English Music', *League of Composers' Review*, 1 (1924), 20–3; Evans, 'Who Is Next?', *League of Composers' Review*, 1 (1924), 3–6; and Evans, 'Half-Time in England', *Modern Music*, 3 (1926), 10–15. His ongoing fascination with New York musical culture is documented in his meticulously maintained and voluminous clippings collection held at the Westminster Archives, London, and which cover all aspects of musical life there.

²⁹² See Anon., 'To Form Section of New Music Society', *Musical America*, 6 January 1923, 4. Quoted in David Gresham, 'The International Society for Contemporary Music, United States Section: 1923–1961' (DMA thesis, Juilliard School, New York, 1999), 37.

²⁹³ Gresham, 'The International Society for Contemporary Music', 41, 39.

²⁹⁴ Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 162, 159.

cultural heroes.’ It wanted ‘parity’.²⁹⁵ Henry F. Gilbert took particular issue with the European response to his symphonic poem *Dance at Place Congo*, performed at the 1927 Frankfurt festival. His lengthy account of the festival rehearsed many of the anxieties and concerns felt by young American composers struggling with questions of national identity and how to respond to the pressure of a European heritage.²⁹⁶ Aaron Copland, one of the most famous products of the ‘Boulangerie’ and an active transatlantic figure, was fresh back from Fontainebleau in 1924. He became an influential voice in this debate, producing articles such as ‘What Europe Means to the Aspiring Composer’ and ‘America’s Young Men of Promise’ in which he delved into these difficult questions. His conclusion, which had far-reaching effects, was to forgo the ‘pale internationalism’ he saw around him.²⁹⁷ ‘What’s needed’, he said sternly to his friend Minna Lederman, editor of *Modern Music*, ‘is more about the *Here* as well as the *Now*’ (emphasis added).²⁹⁸

Another difficulty felt acutely by the US Section, because it represented a nation of immigrants, was the question of what constituted being American – Saerchinger was himself a case in point. Sowerby was the only ‘native-born’ American represented at Salzburg in 1922. Of immediate concern at this point was how to deal with the influx of Russian refugees arriving after 1917. In order to exclude these recent arrivals from membership, the section instituted by-laws mandating citizenship; however, this issue only became increasingly urgent, and the by-laws required further amendment in the 1930s as waves of European exiles and refugees sought haven in the States.

Saerchinger’s British ‘links’ did not seem to help the US Section in the early years. Whereas positioning London and Dent and Evans at the heart of the ISCM did encourage the wider dissemination of British music,²⁹⁹ American music suffered from under-representation on ISCM concert programmes. Indeed, there were several years in the interwar period when no American work was selected for performance at the festivals, much to the chagrin of the US Section (although it is notable that the 1931 Oxford festival saw the best representation of American music to that point). Often, too, their selections were ignored in favour of those made by the international jury. Salt was rubbed in the wound when early offers to host a festival in America were rejected.

Some explanation for the failure of the US Section to find firm footing in the ISCM in this early period can be found in the contemporaneous appearance of the two major modern music societies operating outside the auspices of the ISCM: Varèse’s International Composers’ Guild (ICG) and wealthy philanthropist Claire Reis’s League of Composers. Together these societies offered home-grown alternatives to the ISCM despite the rivalry that characterized their own relationship from the outset. The League of Composers was formed from a breakaway group of

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁹⁶ Whereas Gilbert saw Europe as being ‘at the summit of centuries of development of the art of music’, America was ‘practically at the beginning of the development of her own native musical culture’. He saw the development of a ‘native musical culture’ as critically important and was wary of being ‘too imitative of Europe’. Henry Gilbert, ‘Notes on a Trip to Frankfurt in the Summer of 1927’, *Musical Quarterly*, 16 (1930), 21–37 (p. 27).

²⁹⁷ Aaron Copland, ‘What Europe Means to the Aspiring Composer’, *Musical America*, 3 January 1925, 15, 27; ‘America’s Young Men of Promise’, *Modern Music*, 3 (1926), 13–18.

²⁹⁸ Minna Lederman, ‘Copland – Then and Now: A Close-up’, typewritten draft, 1970, 1–11 (p. 11), Library of Congress, Washington DC, Minna Lederman Daniel Collection, Box 6 [Copland], Folder 2. *Modern Music* was the journal of the League of Composers and chief among the many new music journals of this period.

²⁹⁹ See my forthcoming book chapter, ‘British “Internationalmindedness” and the Early Years of the International Society for Contemporary Music’, *A Great Divide? Music, Britain and the First World War*, ed. Michelle Meinhardt (London and New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

the ICG just three weeks after the ISCM US Section constitutional meeting of March 1923. Both were based in New York and their internationalist platforms had much in common with that of the ISCM. The ICG, first formed in 1919, was the realization of Varèse's vision for a 'League of Nations in Art', and the League of Composers' debt to the League of Nations is self-evident in its name. The League of Composers' mission, to 'present contemporary music of all nationalities and all trends' and to 'effect co-operation between composers of all nations' bore a strong resemblance to that of the ISCM. After the demise of the ICG in 1928, the League of Composers went on to become *the* major force in American modern music.³⁰⁰ The success of these two New York-based societies reflects the force of the personalities that directed them – Varèse and Reis. The US Section was not shaped by charismatic authority or well-connected patronage; rather, it was run in a bureaucratic manner that worked against it in the New York scene. Although the ISCM had succeeded in federating a wide range of European music societies, it did not gain a similar purchase in the USA. The dominance of the ICG and the League of Composers in New York's new music scene to a large extent rendered the local US Section redundant. And neither was willing to take on the dual role as the ISCM US Section. Indeed, Reis dismissed it as a subsidiary to the league and was successful in actively resisting its merger with her society until 1954.³⁰¹

The League of Composers went so far as to bypass the US Section to work directly with the European sections of the ISCM, thereby further undermining its position. 'By 1921–22 we were benefitting from reports from Europe about International festivals for contemporary music,' remembered Reis.³⁰² The league's first seasons drew directly upon not only the repertoire presented at the Salzburg festivals, including Bliss's *Rhapsody* and Lord Berners's *Valses bourgeoises*, but also the musicians. Reis recalled that in 1923, 'A young British composer Arthur Bliss [...] had arrived in the United States just in time to add international prestige to our first board of directors.' He was invited to conduct a programme of his own music to 'thunderous applause', followed by a reception in his honour. Bliss's subsequent correspondence with Reis spans three decades and documents an increasingly familiar relationship.³⁰³

Both the ICG and the League of Composers had been hosting European musicians and disseminating European modernist music from 1923. This included interactions with British composers other than Bliss. Goossens was a frequent guest conductor in the USA from the early 1920s. He took the opportunity to visit New York and conduct several of the ICG's Sunday-night concerts that featured his own music, and he was invited on to the board alongside fellow Briton Bernard van Dieren. After the demise of the ICG, Goossens became an enthusiastic supporter of the League of Composers, as seen in a 1943 letter to Reis in which he explicitly referenced the society's interest in music beyond American borders: 'Now, more than ever,' he wrote, 'at a time when *this country is keeping alive the flame of international musical culture*, it is necessary that the League should be supported and encouraged in its vital work' (emphasis added).³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ Claire Reis, 'Introduction to an Era in Contemporary Music', typewritten draft, n.d., New York Public Library, League of Composers/ISCM Records, JPB11-5, Series 1 'Reis Collection' (hereafter League of Composers/ISCM Records), Box 3, folder 3.4 'Biographical Information – II'.

³⁰¹ Despite the attempt to marginalize the US Section, there was significant overlap in personnel. Key ISCM figures including Whithorne, Gruenberg and Bauer, for example, were also deeply involved in the League of Composers.

³⁰² Reis, 'Introduction to an Era in Contemporary Music'.

³⁰³ Claire Reis, *Composers, Conductors and Critics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 32–3. See also League of Composers/ISCM Records, Box 5, folder 5.20 '[League of Composers] Bliss, Arthur'.

³⁰⁴ Letter from Eugene Goossens to Claire Reis, 15 September 1943, League of Composers/ISCM Records, Box 6, folder 6.13 '[League of Composers] Goossens, Eugene'.

Unlike Goossens and Bliss, Dent has almost no presence in the carefully curated papers of Reis or Lederman, but it is clear from his own collection that at some point in the mid-1930s this great connoisseur of European culture with his close-knit networks across the Continent became besotted with the USA. From around 1936 his writings, both public and private, reveal an increasingly enthusiastic embrace of America. As he wrote to Clive Carey in 1940, 'I become more and more devoted to the US every time I go there.'³⁰⁵ From 1936 he undertook several trips to the US, touring the country and lecturing at Harvard in 1936 and Cornell in 1938. These were made possible by his 'great friend', the American composer Randall Thompson, who was also closely involved in the ISCM. (Dent described Thompson to Evans as 'very English and New England and Harvard'.³⁰⁶) In part, Dent's turn to America was a response to the devastating realization that Europe was spent; the Old World was being replaced by the New. Writing to Lawrence Haward in 1938 on board the SS *Manhattan*, he wondered if he would ever go to Germany or Italy again, concluding, 'Quite likely not'.³⁰⁷ He realized with an ever-increasing conviction that, 'One must strike root in the US because the future of the world's culture lies with America.'³⁰⁸ This was to become a recurring refrain in his correspondence. For Akira Iriye, an important scholar of cultural internationalism, this period saw the 'decline of European prestige'. It was, Iriye contends, a time when 'Europeans felt themselves to be on the defensive, no longer the unquestioned center of civilization nor the foundation of wisdom'. Like Dent before him, Iriye identified the shift towards the States. 'Europe', he suggests, 'had little to offer the world as it sought to reconstruct itself', and saw 'that the task of defining the peace – not only geopolitically but economically and culturally – would have to be entrusted to others, above all the United States'.³⁰⁹ Dent intuitively understood this. Moreover, his visits to America coincided with the mass exodus of Europeans, for the 1930s ushered in, as Edward Said has reminded us, the 'age of the refugee, of the displaced person'.³¹⁰ It is ironic to think that as America tightened its policy of isolationism through the Neutrality Acts of 1935–7, the arrival of European refugees was transforming its social and cultural fabric. This unprecedented dislocation of peoples included many of the interwar community of musical modernism, who effectively became a modernist musical diaspora.

Although Dent's European circles comprised composers, performers and critics as well as scholars, it seems that in the States he moved mostly in academic circles and, despite remaining the ISCM president until 1938, did not gain a footing in societies such as the League of Composers. One important contact was Lawton, a central figure in the US Section. Her relationship with Dent was similar to that with Evans; she was a staunch ally and personal

³⁰⁵ Letter from Edward Dent to Clive Carey, 5 March 1940, Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge, The Papers of Francis Clive Savill ('Clive') Carey, GBR/0272/PP/FCSC (hereafter Clive Papers), Dent Letters to Clive Carey 1918–1923, FCSC/1/1/8.

³⁰⁶ Letter from Edward Dent to Edwin Evans, 23 December 1940, Evans Correspondence, CML/73.

³⁰⁷ Letter from Edward Dent to Lawrence Haward, 4 January 1938, Dent Papers, Dent–Haward 1935–1940, EJD/4/111/10/9.

³⁰⁸ Letter from Dent to Haward, 27 February 1938, Dent Papers, Dent–Haward 1935–1940, EJD/4/111/10/9.

³⁰⁹ Akira Iriye, *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 115, 116.

³¹⁰ Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 174. Quoted in Brigid Cohen, 'Musical Modernism beyond the Nation: The Case of Stefan Wolpe', *Crosscurrents: American and European Music in Interaction, 1900–2000*, ed. Felix Meyer, Carol J. Oja, Wolfgang Rathert and Anne C. Shreffler (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 197–209 (p. 201).

friend, and visited him in Britain on various occasions. One such occasion was in May 1939, when over dinner in London, Dent gave Lawton the disappointing news that the delegates council in Warsaw had turned down the American offer to host the 1939 festival, opting instead for Budapest. Distance was given as the reason, as it had been for earlier unsuccessful attempts beginning in the mid-1920s. By September, however, Europe was at war and that very same distance was now *why* the next two ISCM festivals of 1941 and 1942 were held in the USA. The first was in New York and the second shared between New York and Berkeley, California, as a way of disseminating the work of the society across the nation. The choice of James G. McDonald to open the 1941 New York Festival speaks to the shared ideals of the ISCM and League of Nations: McDonald was the former chairman of the Foreign Policy Association, previously known as the League of Free Nations Association, which had been founded in 1918 to support President Wilson. His speech made clear the close relationship with Britain, although he must have ruffled some Austro-Germanic feathers when he revised the origin myth of the ISCM back beyond the 1922 Salzburg meeting to a 1921 arts conference in London.

Delighted though Lawton was to be able finally to host the festivals, it was a task made impossibly difficult because of wartime conditions, not to mention that union action brought the 1941 festival to the brink of financial collapse.³¹¹ Showing a remarkable enterprise born of desperation, Lawton called upon the generosity of major conductors such as Serge Koussevitsky and Eugene Ormandy to include selected works in their programmes and, perhaps with the 1938 London Festival's use of BBC broadcasting in mind as a precedent, took advantage of the new innovation that was broadcast radio. Both of the festivals were presented 'nation-wide' and many of the concerts were broadcast by either NBC or CBS. Lawton even endeavoured, albeit unsuccessfully, to extend the reach by asking the BBC to have the concerts sent by short-wave radio to Europe and South America.

Of course, the mass migrations under way during this period had immediate and fundamental effects on the shape of the festivals. A report on the 1942 festival unequivocally demonstrates this: 'In this Nineteenth Festival [...] the second to be held in the United States, thirteen nations were represented on the regular program by thirty-four composers, seven of whom are native Americans. Four are now listed as being in Europe; one in Canada; six in Latin America, while twenty-three are now living in the United States.' Again the question of citizenship arose. Whereas in 1941, when America was still neutral, musicians from the Axis were classified on ISCM programmes as 'Independents', by 1942, after Pearl Harbour and the American entry into the war, European refugee-composers were given dual assignments: Krenek, to take one example, was from 'Austria-USA'.³¹²

Despite Lawton's Herculean efforts, the festivals were seen by many as anomalous and not entirely successful. After the war they again crossed the Atlantic, with London hosting the 1946 festival. Dent's BBC broadcast that articulated the shift in power between Europe and the United States was part of the lead-up to this event, and he made the reversal of fortune clear in his acknowledgement that 'a meeting in London would be the best way of encouraging the European sections to revive their activities'.³¹³ Lawton's passionate commitment to the ISCM was undeniable, as were her valiant efforts to develop and maintain the US Section's

³¹¹ See Dorothy Lawton, 'The Eighteenth I.S.C.M. Festival', *The Music Review*, 2 (1941), 185–9.

³¹² 'Nineteenth I.S.C.M. Festival Held in Berkeley', newspaper cutting, League of Composers/ISCM Records, Box 9, folder 9.22.

³¹³ Dent, 'International Society for Contemporary Music', 1.

relationship with Britain through friendships such as those with Dent and Evans; but as a music librarian she did not wield the power and influence of a society patron like Reis.

Dent's triangular formation, with Europe set up as an undifferentiated entity alongside Britain and the USA, demands further consideration. As the mediator of constant squabbles between various European sections, Dent was well aware of the inherently fractious nature of the 'International', but in his 1946 broadcast he chose to invoke a single Europe (notably one that did not include Britain). As Pagden rightly suggests, Europe has always been 'a highly unstable term'.³¹⁴ As a society for modern art music, the ISCM offered a version of Europe that was arguably considerably expansive and geographically diverse. Concert music at this time traversed all of Europe, and went well beyond what Jessica Reinisch describes as 'the Western-centric map of "Europe" or the European north-west'. It extended to the fringes of Europe including Scandinavia, central and eastern Europe and, until 1933, the Soviet Union; the areas that have been, as Reinisch again reminds us, 'so often written out of the histories of Europe'.³¹⁵ And, as Dent's remarks from 1946 also show, the ISCM from the outset looked beyond both Europe and Britain for member states.³¹⁶ Can it be argued, then, that the peculiarities of Western art music meant that interwar musical internationalism operated differently from other forms of international society? Did a shared musical culture based on a common notational system and common performance conventions, repertoires and practices make the transference of ideas and people across national borders easier? Arguably, all were brought together by the lingua franca of staff notation. This ability to bypass linguistic barriers was noted by one critic at the first Salzburg festival in 1922. It was, he ventured, 'a hopeful thing to see how ... German, French, English, and Dutch musicians' came together as an 'amicable ensemble' for a performance of Bliss's *Rout*.³¹⁷ It is important to keep in mind here, however, that staff notation produced another bounded world that, despite its internationality, excluded musical traditions and practices that did not use this form of communication.

It is worth remembering too that Dent's articulation of a new balance of power in musical internationalism in June 1946 came only months after Churchill invoked the term 'special relationship' to describe his vision for post-war Anglo-American relations. The so-called 'special relationship' did not, however, last long in the musical sphere. Indeed, there is a certain irony in the fact that Saerchinger's request to have London as the necessary 'link' to America coincided with a geopolitical shift that rendered that 'link' unnecessary. In the first instance this was because of the USA's changing cultural status from the outset of the twentieth century, and in the second it was because by the end of the 1930s many of Europe's leading musicians had arrived on American shores. Andrew Rawnsley, writing for *The Guardian* in 2018 on Europe, Brexit and Theresa May's inability to influence Donald Trump, used strikingly similar language to Dent's when he remarked, 'It used to be the conceit of British prime ministers that they could be a transatlantic "bridge" between Europe and the US. This was often delusional, but occasionally bore some relation to the truth.'³¹⁸ Although the search undertaken here to understand how

³¹⁴ Pagden, 'Europe', 45.

³¹⁵ Reinisch, 'Introduction: Agents of Internationalism', 204.

³¹⁶ In addition to the USA, membership until 1946 included not only other anglophone countries such as Australia (from 1926), but also Argentina (1924), Cuba (1932), Israel (1932), Colombia (1933), Peru (1933), Japan (1935), Egypt (1938) and China (1946). See Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik*, 621.

³¹⁷ Scott Goddard, 'Music in Salzburg, August, 1922', *The Sackbut* (August 1922), 72–3 (p. 72).

³¹⁸ Andrew Rawnsley, 'Europe Is Fast Losing Interest in the Brexit Soap – It has Bigger Worries', *The Guardian*, 17 June 2018.

Britain mediated the relationship between Europe and America may be equally problematic, it has shown that the efforts of the ISCM within a transatlantic context deserve a place in the historical record. The exploration of Britain's relations with its former colony through the lens of culture has also revealed many fascinating connections (even 'special relationships'). It is perhaps too easy to point out the resonances between then and now as once again Britain, Europe and America struggle to rearticulate their relationships in a seemingly ever-deepening state of disarray.