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Max Reger and Karl Straube

Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition

Christopher Anderson

MAX REGER AND KARL STRAUBE


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Perspectives on an Organ Performing Tradition

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Preface

In 1911 at the outset of his Harmonielehre, Arnold Schoenberg voiced the ancient sentiment that inquiry itself is to be prized more highly than the particular answers it may or may not yield. If the thought seems out of place as an introduction to a harmony text, this is because mainstream thinking about 'analysis' is conditioned by a line of pre-established questions which only rarely lead to insights beyond those of university theory textbooks. Schoenberg, who also observed that musicians are not used to thinking, might well have said something similar about music historians. Indeed, the situating of a performer's repertory in an historical web—involving not only various modes of traditional analysis, but also points of intellectual history, politics, religion, and so on—might be thought in some sense foreign to the aims of the performer, since the musician (even the one concerned with so-called 'authenticity') naturally desires clear answers which will guide the exigencies of actual performance. The assurance of a 'right' answer, often translated into notions about the composer's intent, determines the direction of the hunt even before the dogs are loosed. When music history sets itself the task of accounting for a performing tradition—particularly one which, like Karl Straube's Reger interpretation, has about it an undeniably authoritative voice due to its proximity to the composer—it must, like Schoenberg, articulate from the beginning that understanding (and hence playing) will be enriched more by the search than by the answers.

That performers and audiences find Reger's music difficult to understand and assess is not in itself a contemporary phenomenon. Since Reger's day, performers have struggled to make sense of his scores, and Reger's music often has been either dismissed as a needlessly dense contrapuntal and chromatic landscape or subjected to zealous but ultimately unconvincing performance. This situation, which makes of Reger something of a problem which resists solution, has fed a belief among Reger enthusiasts that there must be a 'right' way to realize his music. Aside from Reger himself, several performers in the composer's circle began to navigate the Regerian musical labyrinth with consistent and apparently convincingresults—the violinist Henri Marteau, for example, and the pianist Frieda Hodapp—but the early, vigorous advocacy of the Berlin organist Karl Straube has contributed almost overwhelmingly to Reger's being known still today first as an organ composer. That same advocacy, and the resulting close relationship between Straube and Reger, has rightly made Straube a starting point for many discussions about Reger interpretation for about a century, and it serves likewise as the object of the present study.

Straube's vast experience with the organs of Reger's time, his emergence from the same late Romantic musical culture which informs Reger's thinking and taste, and his close association with Reger early on—all these factors contribute to the authoritative foundation on which Straube's ideas about the composer (whether philosophical or practical) rest. But, especially for performing organists who might be seeking here an 'authentic' Reger, it is important to note that Straube's musical answers do not constitute either a right or wrong approach (and there has been no shortage of voices on both sides), only a particularly informed one. To ask whether Reger would have played his organ works differently had he been as technically accomplished as Straube is not only to ask a question with an obvious answer, but also to direct the issue into a line of thinking that is, bluntly put, simply irrelevant. Extremely relevant, on the other hand, is the extent to which Reger's organ music became known in the first place under Straube's hands and feet, and the reasoning behind Straube's particular solutions given the historical and musical problems he thought he faced. Such investigation ought serve not only a deeper understanding of an era: when put in the service of good musical sense by contemporary performers, it might promote responsible music making that well serves Reger's music. As musicians of our own time, we might be reminded in the process that the time-honored relationship between exemplum and imitatio is dynamic rather than static.

Christopher Anderson
Grand Forks, North Dakota, August 2002

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It is of course impossible to name all the individuals who have helped guide me from my initial interest in this topic through its realization as a degree dissertation at Duke University, and finally through the revisions resulting in the present monograph. Probably the most fundamental catalyst for the work was my organ study in the late 1980s with Robert T. Anderson, who introduced me to the works of Reger and the questions about their performance. My graduate committee at Duke during the 1990s, chaired by the inimitable Professor Peter Williams, was instrumental for the shape of the original text, retained in essence in this book. I am especially grateful to Professor Williams and Professor Robert Parkins of Duke for their many readings of the drafts. Also impossible to omit from these acknowledgments are those institutions which hold many of the documents essential to the study: these include especially the librarians and archivists of St. Thomas Church and the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in the city of Leipzig, particularly Hildegund Rüger, now retired as archivist for the latter institution; Dr. Susanne Popp and Dr. Jürgen Schaarwächter of the Max-Reger-Institut in Karlsruhe and Dr. Susanne Shigihara, formerly of the MRI, for much information, counsel, and support; Herta Müller of the Reger Archive at the Staatliche Museen, Meiningen; Peter Dohne of W. Sauer Orgelbau, Müllrose; and Gerhard Walcker of E. F. Walcker Orgelbau, Kleinblittersdorf. Information about relevant extant organs was made possible largely by generous access to those instruments granted me by Ullrich Böhme and Almuth Reuther of St. Thomas Church, Leipzig; Stephan Audersch of the Michaeliskirche, Leipzig; Andreas Sieling of the Domkirche, Berlin; and especially Klaus Schmidt of the Stadtkirche, Bad Salzungen, whose unending hospitality and expertise made possible the recording which accompanied the original dissertation. I must also thank those individuals from Karl Straube's circle who generously gave of their time and resources to speak with me about various aspects of the study: these include particularly Dr. Dieter Ramin of Ingelheim a. Rh., Professor Amadeus Webersinke of Dresden, and Walter Heinz Bernstein of Lindenberg.

Five institutions are due particular recognition for making possible the appearance of many of the volume's illustrations, without which portions of this study would be almost meaningless. Figures 2.2—2.20 appear by kind permission of the Max-Reger-Institut, Karlsruhe; Figures 3.2—3.10 and 4.4 by permission of C. F. Peters Verlag, Frankfurt a.M.; Figures 4.1—4.3 and 4.7 by permission of the Hochschule für Musik und Theater "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy," Leipzig; Figure 4.5 by permission of E. F. Walcker

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Introduction

I haue giuen the Rule, where a Man cannot fitly play his owne Part: If he haue not a *Frend*, he may quit the Stage. – Francis Bacon, 'Of Frendship'

(*Essayes or Covnsels, Civill and Morall*, 1625)

The career of Max Reger (1873-1916) distinguishes itself from that of his prominent German and Austrian contemporaries—Mahler and Strauss, for example—in that Reger first gained widespread recognition as a composer of organ music. That a young composer, struggling to attract critical attention to himself, could or would use the organ as an important means to his breakthrough is certainly unique to Reger in his own time and place. At the turn of the century the organ retained, at least in Germany, a primary association with the Church and its liturgy, whatever the contributions of composers like Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Rheinberger to the contrary. Given the overwhelmingly secular climate of late Wilhelmine Germany's musical mainstream, the nature of Reger's initial success stands in stark contrast to his contemporaries' work in the fields of symphonic music and Wagnerian musical drama. It is Reger's organ music from which his fame—or notoriety—first arose, and that same repertory is the principal basis for his position in modern music histories.[1]

The close association of Max Reger with the organ arose in part from his formative years in the provincial atmosphere of a Catholic Bavarian village, and from his correspondingly conservative musical studies with Adalbert Lindner and Hugo Riemann. But the fact that he turned his attention so vigorously to the production of organ music at the turn of the century is undoubtedly due to the encouragement of the young Berlin organist Karl Straube (1873-1950). At the time of their first acquaintance in 1898, Reger had experienced little success in having his music performed, and he had much to gain from the advocacy of a rising virtuoso who viewed his musical style so positively. Straube, in turn, came to Reger's music via the Berlin organ circle of Heinrich Reimann. Like Reimann, Straube believed that German organ music and organ playing had fallen into degeneracy during the nineteenth century, and he encouraged Reger's musically daring, technically demanding scores for the betterment of German organ art generally and for the advancement of his own concert career specifically. The two men maintained a close friendship until Reger's untimely death in 1916, by which time the composer had produced a sizeable corpus of organ music, most of it

from the years 1898 to 1903, largely in response to Straube's concert needs.

Although other organists took up Reger's cause almost as early as Straube, none of them had the close personal friendship with the composer Straube could claim, giving him a perceived absolute authority in matters of interpretation. It is difficult to know the exact nature of Straube's authority in matters of Reger performance, particularly in the early years. It is clear, though, that Straube's solutions to the performance problems offered by Reger's scores were respected among Straube's colleagues already in the first decade of the new century,[2] and that these solutions were considered effective enough to legitimize the republication, still in Reger's lifetime, of some smaller pieces from op. 59 in a new, 'practical' edition by Straube.[3] This editorial practice, whereby Straube often significantly altered Reger's performance directives, would manifest itself again in 1919 and 1938.[4] By the end of his life, Straube had agreed to the herculean task of producing a new edition of the complete organ works, an undertaking he presumably never began. Naturally, the existing editions supply important information about Straube's performance practices and about how those practices changed over a long period. Such evidence becomes even more important in light of the fact that Straube left no acoustic recordings of Reger's music and that most of his performance materials were destroyed during World War II or otherwise lost. Only the autograph copies prepared by Reger, some of them clearly used by Straube in his first performances, are available for study today. In any case, no such performance materials exist from after 1918, since Straube appeared as an organist very infrequently after he assumed the post of Thomaskantor in that year, and then only with earlier repertories. Furthermore, Straube never wrote down his views about Reger, his music, or its performance in any systematic way. We must instead glean these statements from a number of essays, reviews, and private letters spanning a period of nearly fifty years, often evincing stark contradictions depending on the time period or the audience.

Straube's close friendship with Reger gave him not only considerable interpretive license, but also an active part in the genesis of the works themselves. Hence, many of the revisions undertaken by the composer, ranging from large-scale deletion of material to modification of performance directives, derive from Straube's notions of musical architecture and performance practice, and these are worthy of study in their own right. Perhaps no other aspect of Straube's activity has gained him such an unfavorable reputation in recent years. However, the extent and nature of his involvement has not yet been subjected to any kind of thoroughgoing study, and a good critical edition of Reger's music on that basis has yet to appear. Particularly problematic in this regard is the case of the *First Sonata in F-sharp minor* op. 33, a work Straube considered pivotal for Reger's style and one in which he was deeply involved during the formative stages. Straube's copy is replete not

only with marginal notes and textual revisions in his own and Reger's hand, but also with practical markings (articulations, phrasings, pedalings, etc.) which undoubtedly aided his performances. Much of what follows addresses such evidence in terms of performance practice and also with a mind toward Straube's role as a kind of co-composer, or Mitkomponist.

Finally, a study of the Reger-Straube relationship and its effect on organ performance would not be complete without consideration of the professional ties both men had to the musical institutions of Leipzig, particularly St. Thomas Church and the Conservatory of Music. Straube settled in Leipzig in 1903, on the occasion of his prestigious appointment as organist to the Bach church. Reger followed in 1907, when both he and Straube gained teaching appointments at the Conservatory, Straube for organ and Reger for counterpoint, harmony, and composition. Two years after Reger's death, Straube gave up his performance career to become Cantor of St. Thomas, and he continued to teach organ at the Conservatory. By the time of his retirement in 1948, he had assembled a vast circle of students, many of them with prominent careers of their own, and he had established Reger as one of the very most important canonical composers in the organist's curriculum at Leipzig. Reger became one of the structural pillars in a Germanic repertory rooted in the 'old masters' (among them Lübeck, Pachelbel, Buxtehude, Walther), proceeding through Johann Sebastian Bach to Reger, then onward to the best music of the modern period. For Straube and his Leipzig school, at the heart of the canon was a logical and continuous line of organic development, with a defining center in the music of Bach, the genius loci of Leipzig itself. While Reger was still alive, Straube understood him as the composer in whom was recovered the lost art of Bach and the 'old masters.'[5] After Reger's death and the rise of the neoclassicizing Orgelbewegung, he became the indispensable link between the very distant past and the aesthetic vision of the immediate present, embodied in figures from Straube's own Leipzig circle like Johann Nepomuk David and Hermann Grabner. Reger's position in the Leipzig organists' canon was regarded in some sense as a justification for the direction of modern organ music in the 1920s through the 1940s, since it was *his* style (and not that of Rheinberger before him or Karg-Elert after him) that served as the most immediate reference point from which the new music might organically emerge. Given the number of prominent organists and pedagogues who issued from Straube's Leipzig school, it is not surprising that the 'Buxtehude-Bach-Reger-David' canon is still largely operative in German music schools today.

However one defines a performance tradition for Reger's organ music, it is important to understand how the unique atmosphere of Leipzig contributed to the development, modification, and propagation of that tradition. At the end of this study, several appendices show Reger's music in context of the larger Leipzig repertory, both in concerts of the Conservatory and under

Straube at St. Thomas Church. Of course, this information interests not only on account of Reger's place in it per se, but also because of other questions it helps answer (What was the mainstream repertory before Straube arrived in Leipzig? What composers, like Felix Mendelssohn and Joseph Rheinberger, were prominent at the end of the nineteenth century and then receded in importance as Straube began to make his influence felt? What was the nature of J. S. Bach's continued prominence through a period of fifty years?). The appendices do show, though, a very concrete tradition of Reger performance in a specific place during a specific period, and as such they should contribute to a performance history of that repertory.

The many-faceted nature of the Reger-Straube relationship yields much useful information for the practicing organist and the historian alike, and it is virtually impossible to discuss fully any one aspect without reference to several others. I intend this book to contribute as much toward a broad performance history as to the specific details of a performance practice, and as much toward a general portrait of German conservatory music education as to the cultural history of a city very much aware of its own musical traditions. On one level, the work addresses Max Reger and Karl Straube as musicians, the intersection of their careers, and the way each influenced the ideals, professional success, ultimately even the historical perception of the other. On another level, it addresses the larger environment in which these events took place, an environment beset with constant upheaval on political, economic, religious, intellectual, and artistic fronts. Although they were exact contemporaries, Straube outlived Reger by thirty-four years, and during this time he was caught up in the consequences of profound cultural changes associated with the downfall of the Wilhelmine Reich, the unsuccessful struggle of a democratic Weimar Republic, Hitler's reactionary regime, the onset of Soviet communism, and the unprecedented destruction of two World Wars. Obviously, these events came to bear upon the German mindset and, by extension, its approach to the writing of history and performance of music. Straube and his circle were no exception to this phenomenon, and Reger's music was often reinterpreted in light of new ideals which themselves extended quite beyond the mere surface features of a performance style.

It is not my purpose to justify or to condemn Straube's changing interpretations in pursuit of an illusive performance ideal for Reger's music. Rather, I will consider the motivating forces behind Straube's practices, forces to be found, I believe, as much in the broad-based cultural shifts mentioned here as in Straube's own personality. Straube's view of Reger as an extremely important composer of canonical organ music had developed significantly already by the new century's first decade, and that view was buttressed in Straube's mind not only by certain absolute musical and aesthetic considerations, but also by a very complex philosophy of social history

in which seventeenth- and eighteenth-century (principally Protestant) piety, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Enlightenment, and various contemporary German Bewegungen constituted the most prominent elements. The fact that Straube formed such a positive view of Reger is as much a commentary on what Straube believed were the highest societal and religious ideals in Western culture as it was on the external worth of Reger's music per se. I aim at a fresh evaluation of the Reger-Straube relationship in light of such contextualization, particularly in view of Straube's repeated attempts to assess the composer anew over a period of fifty years.

There exists as yet no major critical study of Reger, Straube, and the effect of their collaboration on a half century of performance practice. Literature on Straube has been largely panegyrical as a matter of tradition, most of it written by students who knew and studied with him at Leipzig. Some of this literature is useful from the standpoint of performance practice, like Heinz Wunderlich's 'Karl Straubes Vortragsbezeichnungen in der Symphonischen Phantasie und Fuge op. 57.'[6] In recent years, though, scholars have begun to adopt a more critical stance toward Straube, sometimes radically calling into question his editions, his teaching methods, and his influence on Reger's compositions. Of these, the work of Wolfgang Stockmeier ('Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret'),[7] the Straube pupil Johannes Piersig ('So ging es allenfalls'),[8] Susanne Popp (critical edition of the Reger-Straube correspondence),[9] and Günther Hartmann (*Karl Straube: 'Das Ganze war ein Mythos'*; *Karl Straube: ein Altgardist der NSDAP*)[10] offer the most interesting departures from the traditional Straube image. Along these lines as well should be counted Bengt Hambraeus' essay 'Karl Straube, Old Masters and Max Reger.'[11] Further notice should be given to Kathryn Schenk's dissertation, *Heinrich Fleischer: The Organist's Calling and the Straube Tradition*,[12] and her attempt to address issues of Straube's Leipzig school through the perspective of one of its most important living students. Hermann Wilske's work (*Max Reger: Zur Interpretation in seiner Zeit*)[13] turns up much useful information about Reger's own aesthetics and performing habits, and about the composer's attempt to create a performance tradition around himself. In terms of the German Organ Reform Movement and its relationship to a number of repertories, Roman Summereder's extensive *Aufbruch der Klänge: Materialien, Bilder, Dokumente zu Orgelreform und Orgelkultur im 20. Jahrhundert*[14] presents a representative collection of source materials. Michael Kaufmann's study *Orgel und Nationalsozialismus*[15] extensively addresses both the political ideologies which enveloped the organ and its repertory in Nazi Germany and the role of Straube's Leipzig school within that environment. Finally, since the completion of this text in 1999 in the form of a dissertation at Duke University, two works of particular relevance to its content have appeared. In *Der junge Reger: Briefe und Dokumente vor 1900*,[16] Susanne Popp has allowed for a more thorough study of Reger's

early development than had been possible before, with insight into the mind-set that a troubled and struggling Reger brought to his initial friendship with Karl Straube in 1898. Antonius Bittmann's valuable dissertation *Negotiating Past and Present: Max Reger and* Fin-de-siècle *Modernisms*[17] places the reception of Reger's person and his music within the wider context of a nuanced intellectual history, effectively questioning—for the first time to this extent—the ways in which the modernist categories of tradition and innovation have been applied to Reger.

This study will examine Reger's music and its performance tradition by means of four broad approaches, each developing issues and questions that come to bear, of course, upon the other three. I begin with the Reger-Straube relationship as such: the friendship of the two men between 1898 and 1916, and the professional and personal backgrounds each brought to that friendship. The second chapter examines more closely Straube's involvement in the genesis of Reger's music, his first performances of Reger, particulars of his musicianship, and the organ ideal of the time. The third chapter addresses Straube's role as an editor, including the important correspondence between Straube and Oskar Söhngen in 1946 about a complete edition of Reger's organ works. The study closes with a discussion of the cultivation of Reger's music at Leipzig, particularly at the Conservatory and Straube's Church Music Institute (Kirchenmusikalisches Institut), and the idea of a 'Leipzig school of organists' in general. Because the material they address involves a period of time extending well beyond Reger's death, both Chapters 3 and 4 intersect issues of the so-called Organ Reform Movement and Reger's place within it, at least with respect to Straube's editorial and pedagogical practices.

Notes

1. The contemporary view of Reger as primarily an organ composer is informed by similar views arising during the composer's own time: it is itself an 'historical' attitude. It should be noted, though, that Reger's contributions to other genres surpass, in quantity and often in quality, those in organ music.
2. See e.g. Walter Fischer, *Über die Wiedergabe der Orgel-Kompositionen Max Regers* (Cöln: Tischer & Jagenberg, 1910).
3. Max Reger, *Drei Orgelstücke* op. 59 Nr. 7-9, ed. Karl Straube (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1912).
4. Max Reger, *Präludien und Fugen* opp. 59, 65, 80, and 85, ed. Karl Straube (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1919). Max Reger, *Phantasie über den Choral 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott'* op. 27 (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1938).
5. See, for example, Straube's dedication of his *Alte Meister des Orgelspiels* (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1904) to 'the young master Max Reger' [Dem jungen Meister Max Reger

zu eigen], and his statement in the *Choralvorspiele alter Meister* (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1907) that 'Only at the turn of the XIX. century, Max Reger in his chorale-based works composed monuments for German art music that are equal to the creations of past eras and, like the latter, may be called to withstand time.' [Erst um die Wende des XIX. Jahrhunderts hat Max Reger in seinen Choralwerken der deutschen Tonkunst Denkmäler gesetzt, die den Schöpfungen der vergangenen Epochen gleichwertig sind und berufen sein dürften, wie jene die Zeiten zu überdauern.] Straube's attitude—that the art of Bach had been lost after 1750 and that it reemerged first with Reger—originated early on during his studies with Heinrich Reimann, and it resulted in the neglect of certain nineteenth-century composers who had a solid place in the Leipzig curriculum prior to Straube's appointment there.

6. Heinz Wunderlich, 'Karl Straubes Vortragsbezeichnungen in der Symphonischen Phantasie und Fuge op. 57,' in *Zur Interpretation der Orgelmusik Max Regers*, ed. Hermann J. Busch (Kassel: Merseburger, 1988), 64-71.
7. Wolfgang Stockmeier, 'Karl Straube als Reger-Interpret,' in *Max Reger 1873-1973: Ein Symposion*, ed. Klaus Röhring (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1974), 21-29.
8. Johannes Piersig, 'So ging es allenfalls mit (VI) mit Thomaskantor Prof. D Dr. Karl Straube,' *Der Kirchenmusiker* 29 (1978): 112-119.
9. Max Reger, *Briefe an Karl Straube*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Reger-Institutes Elsa-Reger-Stiftung, ed. Susanne Popp, no. 10 (Bonn: Dümmler, 1986).
10. Günther Hartmann, *Karl Straube und seine Schule: 'Das Ganze war ein Mythos'* (Bonn: Verlag für systematische Musikwissenschaft GmbH, 1991). Idem, *Karl Straube: ein Altgardist der NSDAP* (Lahnstein, by the author, 1994).
11. Bengt Hambraeus, 'Karl Straube, Old Masters and Max Reger: A Study in 20th Century Performance Practice,' *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning* 69 (1987): 37-73; reprint with revisions in *Reger-Studien 5: Beiträge zur Regerforschung* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1993), 41-72.
12. Kathryn Eleanor Schenk, *Heinrich Fleischer: The Organist's Calling and the Straube Tradition* (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1989).
13. Hermann Wilske, *Max Reger: Zur Interpretation in seiner Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1995).
14. Roman Summereder, *Aufbruch der Klänge: Materialien, Bilder, Dokumente zu Orgelreform und Orgelkultur im 20. Jahrhundert* (Innsbruck: Edition Helbling, 1995).
15. Michael Gerhard Kaufmann, *Orgel und Nationalsozialismus: Die ideologische Vereinnahmung des Instrumentes im 'Dritten Reich,'* Schriftenreihe der Walcker-Stiftung für Orgelwissenschaftliche Forschung, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, no. 5 (Kleinblittersdorf: Musikwissenschaftliche Verlags-Gesellschaft mbH, 1997).
16. Susanne Popp, ed., *Der junge Reger: Briefe und Dokumente vor 1900*, Schriftenreihe des Max-Reger-Instituts Karlsruhe, no. 15 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 2000).
17. Antonius Bittmann, *Negotiating Past and Present: Max Reger and* Fin-de-siècle *Modernisms* (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 2000).


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Chapter 1

Reger, Straube, and the Organ: Aspects of the Relationship, 1898-1916

Max Reger and Karl Straube first met in the spring of 1898 on the occasion of three organ recitals Straube gave in St. Paul's Church/Frankfurt a.M., the second of which on 1 April featured portions of Reger's *Suite in E minor* op. 16. We do not know how much Reger knew of Straube—his background, his technical talent, his ideas about performance, his sympathies toward old and new music—before he journeyed to Frankfurt from his home in Wiesbaden to hear Straube play. Hence, we cannot know if Reger's only motivation for attending was the fact that his music was being performed publicly—certainly rare in 1898—or if his curiosity had been fed by the rising reputation of the performer. We can be sure, though, that the Reger-Straube relationship arose from Straube's initial interest in Reger's music, an interest almost certainly acquired from the Berlin organist Heinrich Reimann (1850-1906) and stimulated by the young composer's blend of tradition and innovation in a highly individual approach to counterpoint, harmony, and form. At the time of their meeting, Straube and Reger had learned to value the great musical past (which they both regarded as self-evidently German and primarily Bachian), and they thought about the relationship of past to present in similar ways. Straube allowed the possibilities of Wilhelm Sauer's instruments to shape an original, orchestrally oriented approach to old organ music (i.e. by J. S. Bach and his predecessors) consciously removed from 'historical performance' as we would think of it today. Reger manifested a similar philosophy by composing music that was at once almost pedantically historical in form and brazenly modern in harmony.

Such is the common ground upon which Reger and Straube built their relationship from 1898 onward. By contrast, the two men brought to their lifelong association very different backgrounds with respect to environment, education, and personality. Writers soon recognized this, and they began to describe a relationship built as much on contrast as on similarity. Notions of the Reger-Straube friendship settled into broadly drawn stereotypes on which many received assumptions are based. Aside from isolated efforts to explore the details of the relationship—Susanne Popp's 1986 edition of the extant correspondence, for example—most writers have contented them-

selves with the kind of description offered already in 1907 by Gustav Robert-Tornow:

> The Bavarian [is] a potent genius, essentially related to his time only through music and the intimate experiences of youthful years filled with disappointment. The north German [is] a scholarly intelligence, capable of every type of objective and logical thought; he is comprehensively educated, primarily as an historian, but not only with respect to art. As well as an amateur could possibly be, he is also at home in the experiences of many peoples and times. Reger, at least in the works of his 'Sturm und Drang' period, is the impressionist, perhaps not lacking the tendency to preserve what he improvises and therefore often criticized. Straube, who sees immediately the wealth of possibilities via experiment and reflection, is always struggling with his own self-criticism. Even with regard to accomplishments of great integrity, he is ready at the drop of a hat to reject all his work in favor of a new idea that suddenly suggests itself to his restless mind ... Straube is a modern historian in that he lives in the charm of details and shapes each detail with charm.[1]

Robert-Tornow's comments give rise to a portrait of the two men no doubt accurate in many respects. His statements about Reger's relationship to improvisation and Straube's penchant for detail are remarkable for 1907. However, general observations like these invite certain inaccurate assumptions. From the contrast between an improvising Kraftgenie and a considered scholar does not necessarily follow, for example, that Reger was unconcerned with detail or self-criticism. That Reger's early years as a composer were difficult does not mean that Straube's performance career developed in a smooth and untroubled way. And Straube's willingness to abandon his interpretive ideas (likewise a remarkable observation for 1907), while more accurate with respect to certain repertories than others, never took the form of categorical and irrevocable self-rejection.[2]

Max Reger, the 'potent genius'

Max Reger was the first child of Joseph and Philomena Reger, a devoutly Roman Catholic couple living in the village of Brand (Bavarian Oberpfalz). Reger's father was a schoolteacher, and at Easter 1874 the family moved to the somewhat larger nearby town of Weiden, where Joseph took up a new position at the local Catholic preparatory school. After receiving rudimentary music lessons from his parents, Max began piano and organ study with Adalbert Lindner (1860-1946) in 1884.[3] Lindner, who had received instruction in music theory, geography, and German from Joseph Reger at the Weiden preparatory school,[4] himself became a schoolteacher at Weiden

in 1879. At least partially through a common interest in music and music-making, Lindner became a friend of the Reger family and was entrusted with Max's further practical training in music through 1889. In 1888, the fifteen-year-old Reger attended performances of *Parsifal* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at Bayreuth, and he may have decided to pursue a musical career based at least in part on the strong impressions made by those works.[5] In 1890, upon the recommendation of Lindner and against the wishes of his parents, Reger took up compositional studies with Hugo Riemann (1849-1919) at the Sondershausen Conservatory, following Riemann shortly thereafter to his new post at the Freudenberg Conservatory in Wiesbaden. Riemann, whose own musical tastes and theoretical presuppositions led to a largely negative view of Liszt and Wagner, directed Reger towards intense study of the Viennese masters (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms), and he encouraged in his pupil a fluid contrapuntal ability based on both tonal and modal models. Aside from what must have been at the time an uncommonly detailed working knowledge of musical style,[6] Reger gained from Riemann in the early 1890s a veneration of Johannes Brahms as the most significant figure for the future of tonal music and a preoccupation with the contrapuntal techniques of canon, fugue, passacaglia, and variation. The first of these characteristics—an appreciation of Brahms—realized itself through the remarkable imitation of Brahmsian manner in Reger's first published works. Reger's unqualified positive stance toward Brahms would diminish over the years, particularly with regard to Brahms' orchestration techniques. By contrast, Reger's interest in thoroughgoing counterpoint would never ebb, although he would sacrifice linearity to a remarkably free harmonic language. Riemann accepted a position at the University of Leipzig in 1895, and he was able to secure Reger as his replacement for theory instruction in Wiesbaden. The relationship between the two men gradually declined upon Riemann's departure, as did Reger's state of mind generally.[7] His remaining years in Wiesbaden would be plagued with depression, alchoholism, financial difficulties, and the failure to gain any wide positive recognition as a composer. His meeting with Straube in the spring of 1898 came just before the mental collapse that necessitated his return to his family home in Weiden.[8]

When Reger did gain some attention—if not success—for his compositions, it was primarily through the efforts of the organist Straube, and Reger's production of organ music increased dramatically after the two men met in 1898. In part because Reger rose to prominence as an organ composer, and in part because he and Straube actively promoted an image of Reger as the rightful successor to Bach, Reger's ability to write complicated organ music nourished the assumption that he could play the organ in an equally masterful way. This notion of Reger as an accomplished organist—able to play, say, his own large works or those of Bach—has proven remarkably

durable. Already in 1901, Heinrich Lang voiced the assumption that anyone who can compose such difficult music for the organ must be able to play it:

> I do not know whether Herr Reger himself is an organist of note, but I would tend to assume so, because his compositions offer the performing artist seemingly unsurpassable difficulties.[9]

Nicolas Slonimsky referred to him as late as 1994 as a 'formidably industrious and prolific German composer and master organist.'[10] Reger must have demonstrated some practical ability on the instrument; otherwise it is difficult to understand why he would have received appointments to teach organ at the Wiesbaden Conservatory in 1891 (where he was concurrently a student in piano and theory) and at the Munich Academy in 1905.[11] On the other hand, we know nothing about his duties in Wiesbaden and only little about them in Munich, but it must say something significant about German conservatory music education if a person of quite limited practical ability and no performance record could be appointed to a teaching position, particularly to a prominent one once occupied by Josef Rheinberger. In the end, though, it is perhaps no less or more reasonable to expect that Reger, on the basis of these appointments, was an accomplished organist than it is to expect that J. S. Bach would have been capable of competently translating Scotus or Quintilian because he taught Latin grammar to schoolboys at Leipzig.

The assumption that Reger was an able organist grew concurrently with another, related tendency to grant him authority in matters of performance practice, especially regarding Bach. In 1910, Walter Fischer appeared before a conference of Westphalian organists, admonishing them to regard registration and rubato indications in certain works of Reger as 'a hint for the performance of similar organ pieces by Bach,'[12] and a reviewer of Arthur Nikisch's 1907 production of the *St. Matthew Passion* BWV 244 at St. Thomas/Leipzig complained of the organ continuo with the aside 'NB: For the working out and publication of such artful and stylistically faithful organ parts, Max Reger would have been the right man.'[13] Of course, this idea proved relatively short-lived in the face of a rising movement toward authenticity. It does, however, serve to highlight the need for a thorough examination of Reger's education regarding the organ and its repertory.

In the summer of 1885, Reger's father salvaged parts of the Weiden preparatory school's practice organ, to which Lindner laconically referred as 'no longer sufficiently fulfilling its purpose,'[14] in order to build a small house instrument. Reger helped his father in what must have been at best a dilettante effort, and Lindner's exaggerated assertion that with this 'the foundation was laid for a comprehensive knowledge of organ building which would later serve him well in his own magnificent creations for Cecilia's noble instrument'[15] should not be taken too seriously. Upon Reger's entry into the

preparatory school in the autumn of 1886, he was able to practice on the single-manual Steinmeyer organ which had replaced the instrument disassembled the previous summer, and shortly thereafter, he took up part-time duties as organist in Lindner's Catholic Stadtpfarrkirche, 'at first [playing] various masses and finally the entire Catholic organ liturgy at high mass and at Vespers.'[16] From 1886 through 1888, Reger played masses on Sundays and feast days, as well as regular Vesper liturgies. Such activity would have given him considerable opportunity to improvise, and, although Lindner credited him with having advanced 'to the BACH fugues of Schumann [op. 60] and pieces by Bach, Mendelssohn, and Liszt,'[17] he seems in fact to have relied heavily upon his ability to extemporize (probably freely, but possibly upon updated versions of Gregorian melodies), especially on high feast days.

> When, on high feast days, he allowed his inexhaustible fantasy free reign on the full organ at the beginning and end of the service, one could hear chords and chord progressions of such unprecedented daring that one would likely have searched in vain for them in the harmony books in use at the time.—This harmonic severity reached its zenith, however, after my organist had deeply immersed himself in the tonal world of Richard Wagner. His improvisations became more and more chromatic, dissonance-laden, and often so thick and full of notes, that my poor old bellows pumper could no longer supply the necessary quantity of wind, despite the greatest exertion via the four large, in part already defective, feeder bellows. The pumper sometimes showed a not unreasonable desire to abandon the whole affair in the middle of this cruel labor of Sisyphus.[18]

Lindner describes here a keyboard style virtually identical in its harmonic language and its approach to texture (significantly, he does not mention counterpoint) with that Straube confronted in the *Suite in E minor* op. 16, composed about ten years later. Reger began to teach himself counterpoint during this period, and study with Hugo Riemann would allow him to develop a fluid contrapuntal ability in the 1890s. But it was undoubtedly the improvisational, experimental language described here—ultimately concerned more with harmonic and sonorous effect than with polyphonic devices—that supplied the initial parameters for Reger's style.

The period from 1886 through 1888 constituted Reger's only extended practical contact with the instrument, and Lindner is probably right in claiming that it was 'of immense fundamental significance'[19] for his organ works. Reger continued to study organ with Riemann in Sondershausen, and when both teacher and pupil moved to Wiesbaden in the autumn of 1890, he began to teach, probably using only the pedal piano owned by the Conservatory. We do not know what repertory Reger had played by this time, but it is impossible to take seriously his spectacular claim to Theodor Kroyer in 1902 that

already by the early 1880s he had played 'the complete organ works of Bach and Mendelssohn.'[20] More important than his active repertory (insofar as one can speak of such a thing in Reger's case) or the nature of his technical ability is the fact that the majority if not all of the instruments with which Reger had contact in the 1880s and 1890s were mechanical action organs with comparatively limited possibilities as to orchestral crescendi and the like. The new Steinmeyer instrument at the Weiden preparatory school, the Steinmeyer organ in the Erbendorf Simultankirche which Reger played on occasional visits to his uncle, and the Walcker organ of the Wiesbaden Marktkirche—with which he may have had limited contact in the 1890s[21]—had mechanical cone chests, whereas Lindner described the organ of the Stadtpfarrkirche in Weiden where Reger served during the late 1880s as having 'a hard action and long stop knobs that were difficult to draw,'[22] probably a reference to slider chests. Lindner stated that the instrument was built in the eighteenth century 'by a master from "lower Germany",'[23] and he gave the following disposition:

Table 1.1 Weiden (Oberpfalz): Stadtpfarrkirche (Simultankirche, Michaeliskirche)

Hauptwerk

Left:		Right:	
Pedalkoppel		Subbaß	16'
Gedackt	4'	Octavbaß	8'
Hohlflöte	8'	Mixtur IV	2'
Quint	5 1/3'	Gedackt	8'
Gamba	8'	Octav	2'
Prinzipal	8'	Octav	4'

Oberwerk

Left:		Right:	
Gedackt	4'	Salizional	8'
Flöte travers	8'	Geigenprinzipal	4'

Lindner added:

> A manual coupler does not exist in this disposition. The coupling of Haupt- and Oberwerk had to be accomplished by sliding the keyboard of the latter,

> an impractical, clumsy, easily fallible affair often hardly realizable during performance.[24]

Based on evidence at the central diocesan archive in Regensburg, Rudolf Walter has shown that the instrument in fact originated in 1564/1565 and underwent two renovations—the first in 1791/1792 by Andreas Bock (Trauschendorf bei Weiden) and the second in the nineteenth century by Ludwig Weineck (Bayreuth)—during which the disposition was altered.[25] With the exception of its sixteenth-century casework, the organ was completely replaced in 1902/1903 when Weiden's Protestant parish took exclusive possession of the building.

Reger's experience, in terms of both performance and instruments, contrasts greatly with that of Straube in Berlin during the same period. Probably more so than Straube, who spent a great deal of time with the new pneumatic devices, Reger would have been in a position to observe the relationship between touch and mechanical actions, a principle 'rediscovered' in Hamburg by Günther Ramin, Hans Henny Jahnn, and others some thirty years later. However, insufficient evidence—from Reger's or Lindner's statements, and from the scores themselves—makes dangerous any extended speculation about the influence of these organs upon Reger's compositional style. At least as pertinent would be, for example, Hugo Riemann's discussion of organ action and registration in his 1888 *Katechismus der Orgel*, published only two years before Reger took up study with him.[26] And although Straube's statement in 1946 that Reger was 'influenced by the sound of old organs'[27] in his works through op. 30 (i.e. through 1898, including the works produced that year after the two men met in April) is not easily dismissed, Reger surely would have been interested in the possibilities of Sauer's instruments as they were presumably described to him by Straube.

Karl Straube, the 'scholarly intelligence'

Whereas Reger matured against the background of a Bavarian Catholic provincialism, Karl Straube was raised and educated wholly in Berlin, the cosmopolitan capital of Bismarck's united German empire. Günter Hartmann has rightly called attention to the fact that Straube's early biographical data are inexact or lacking altogether.[28] A thoroughgoing biography of Straube—which Hartmann's controversial work does not purport to be—in fact does not yet exist, and of the small body of literature which does address Straube's formative years, much of it seems to have been propagated as if by rote from a single early source: the Straube pupil and colleague Johannes Wolgast's *Karl Straube: eine Würdigung seiner Musikerpersönlichkeit anlässlich seiner 25jährigen Tätigkeit in Leipzig*.[29] Like Reger's parents,

Straube's mother and father were also musicians, probably of somewhat higher technical accomplishment. Johannes Straube issued from a family of Lutheran clergymen and received training from the Institut für Kirchenmusik in Berlin. He was an instrument maker specializing in harmonium building and the organist of Berlin's Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche, the church at which Karl would make his first public appearance as an organist. His mother, Sarah Palmer Straube, was the daughter of a well-to-do English family and piano pupil of Julius Benedict in London. According to Wolgast, she 'spoke fluently German, French, and Italian, [and] she read the Bible in the original Greek and Hebrew.'[30] She passed on to her son an interest in literature, and, unlike the Reger household, both parents were apparently supportive of Straube's career choice of music. Furthermore, Straube's close proximity to important political happenings, together with the considerable intellectual stimulation afforded him at home, would form the foundation for his wider interests in politics, philosophy, and history. It seems likely that Straube's general exposure to fields of historical inquiry contributed to his preoccupation with early music by the mid-1890s at the latest, well before his meeting with Reger. Whereas Reger stubbornly and single-mindedly pursued success as a composer, Straube's humanistic inclinations made him somewhat ambivalent about a musical career.[31] In any case, he never pursued an advanced formal education, either through a university or at any of the conservatories which were gaining popularity in Germany at the time.[32] He, like Reger, received his first music lessons from his parents, subsequently studying the organ with the Berlin organists Otto Dienel and Heinrich Reimann. Wolgast also mentions 'theoretical and compositional work'[33] with Philipp Rüfer and Albert Becker, as well as technical studies on the piano with Leipholz (?) during the years 1895-1897. With varying degrees of frequency, most of these names have been repeated in the sources through the present day, Heinrich Reimann being the only one mentioned by Straube himself.[34]

The paucity of biographical data about Straube's early years is the consequence of a tendency among the sources to show Straube less a product of his education than of his own genius and industry. The image of a self-made artist, with its attendant notions of natural ability and unremitting hard work, is not very different from that which Reger propagated for himself, but in Straube's case the result has virtually precluded any examination of his background. Furthermore, efforts to present Straube and his activities in the best possible light, some of them originating with Straube himself, have given rise to errors and misunderstandings about his life.[35] The Straube pupil Johannes Piersig rightly noted in 1978 that '[i]f one considers the fact that the intellectually and musically universal Karl Straube was a 'self-made man' in the formal sense of the word, ... one has the underlying motive for his historical evaluation.'[36] Piersig's critical voice has been the exception,

though, and Wolgast's assertion that Straube 'is as an organist basically self-taught' is echoed in subsequent writings.[37]

Straube undertook his first formal organ study with Otto Dienel (1839-1905), organist of Berlin's Marienkirche and Music Director to the Kaiser, sometime before 1888. Mention of Dienel is absent from Straube's own 'Ruckblick und Bekenntnis,' but Wolgast states that Straube studied 'a few things of Joh. Christ. Heinr. Rinck, as well as easier works of Bach.'[38] Wolgast, who in any case could not have known Dienel, probably reproduced Straube's opinion in characterizing him as 'one of the most popular and, for his time, progressive organists in Berlin.'[39] Dienel was himself a product of Berlin's education system, having studied—like Straube's father—at the Royal Institute of Church Music. His position in one of Berlin's most important churches and his appointment under Kaiser Wilhelm II must have made study with him a matter of considerable prestige. The 'old Wagner organ' of the Marienkirche, on which Wolgast reports Straube to have received his lessons,[40] was the work of Joachim Wagner (1690-1749), designed and built between 1719 and 1723. In 1800 the instrument became subject to one of Abt Vogler's simplification experiments, but it was restored in 1829 to its original condition:[41]

Table 1.2 Berlin: Marienkirche
Joachim Wagner 1719-1723

Hauptwerk (C, D - c3)		Hinterwerk (C, D - c3)	
Principal	8'	Gedackt	8'
Cornet V (c1 - c3)		Quintadena	8'
Bordun	16'	Octav	4'
Viole di Gamba	8'	Rohrflöt	4'
Rohrflöt	8'	Octav	2'
Octav	4'	Waldflöt	2'
Spitzflöt	4'	Quinta	1 1/2'
Quinta	3'	Cimbel III	1'
Octav	2'	Echo V	
Scharf V	1 1/2'		
Cimbel III	1'		
Trompet	8'		
Oberwerk (C, D - c3)		Pedal (C, D - d1)	
Principal	8'	Principal-Baß	16'
Quintadena	16'	Violon	16'

Gedackt	8'	Gembßhorn	8'
Octav	4'	Quinta	6'
Fugara	4'	Octav	4'
Nassat	3'	Mixtur VI	2'
Octav	2'	Posaune	16'
Tertie "aus 2 fuß"		Trompet	8'
Siefflöt	1'		
Mixtur IV	1 1/2'		
Vox humana	8'		

Manual couplers
2 tremulants
Zimbelstern
Slider chests
Ventils for each chest

The classical instrument of the Marienkirche—with rich choruses in each division, the relative abundance of mutation stops, and the absence of registration aids (Was there a pedal coupler?)—certainly did not correspond to Dienel's own ideas about organ design. In 1889, he produced a pamphlet under the title *Die Stellung der modernen Orgel zu Seb. Bach's Orgelmusik*, expanded in the following year into a full-scale apologia on the merits of the 'modern' organ. Dienel compared traditional and modern building practices, called for the establishment of new performance techniques matched to the possibilities of the modern instrument, and attempted to demonstrate the advantages of the new organs in sacred as well as secular settings:

> With this publication I aim to clarify the particulars by which the action and specification of the modern organ is differentiated from that of the old organ, the influences which caused these alterations, and how the modified tone color and enhanced versatility of the modern organ makes possible and **requires** a modified treatment. [¶] I must firmly deny the contention that the technical reforms I propose [i.e. as regards performance] could distort or even profane the purposes of the organ, insofar as these are ecclesiastical, in any way ... [¶] Finally, it is incumbent upon me to consider the modern organ as a solo instrument and to discuss thoroughly the performance of pieces composed for the old organ, especially those of Bach.[42]

Dienel's treatise contains much useful information about current performance norms in different areas of Germany, especially as regards Bach's music. He advocated a flexible, orchestral treatment of organ sound based on the subtle gradations of color offered by the new instruments. Dienel argued that advances in organ building, focused on tone color and ease of playing,

do not preclude clarity in polyphonic textures so long as the player adopts a modified—and necessarily more elaborate—approach in performance. Like Hans von Bülow's treatment of Beethoven's orchestral music, the organist's approach to Bach (and, by implication, to any other composer) must be both objectively and subjectively informed. Unlike Bach and those of his time, the modern organist could now enlist the services of sound itself in the communication of meaning: the possibilities of smooth, grand crescendi and the lifting out of important motives in complicated textures offered, according to Dienel, enormous potential for the clarity of Bach's musical architecture.[43] Given his wholesale endorsement of the 'modern' organ, it is not unreasonable to doubt the efficacy of Dienel's approach to the classical instrument at St. Mary's, and one is curious to know the nature of Straube's lessons there, especially since Dienel's main premise in fact already contains everything on which Straube based his early treatment of Bach. This would not differ in any essential way from Straube's approach to Reger in 1897 and beyond. Again, Dienel in 1890:

> The suitable Bach player will be the one who allows his subjectivity to fuse with Bach's own and uses modern means only for a clear exposition of Bach's ideas in a sympathetic, ideal way implied by the composer himself. Such a person will also be able to choose the right thing from the means offered by the techniques of modern organ building. These means will in fact enable him to become the right, comprehensible Bach interpreter for our time.[44]

Dienel's statements bear striking similarity to Straube's own in the preface to his *Alte Meister des Orgelspiels* (*Old Masters of Organ Playing*, 1904), one of Straube's earliest editorial efforts:

> It is the goal of this publication to stimulate interest, particularly among those directly involved [i.e. organists], in a more thorough occupation than hitherto with the great art of the forever young old masters. That the achievement of such a goal is not possible without a rather strong element of subjective feeling is known to everyone who has attempted similar projects. 'As I see it': to this bears witness every one of the fourteen arrangements brought together on the following pages ... As a child of the times, I have not hesitated to employ all the expressive means of the modern organ to make possible a musical rendering corresponding to 'the Affekts.'[45]

It is not clear how long Straube studied with Dienel or why he began study with Heinrich Reimann in 1888, but it seems likely that Reimann's own wider intellectual interests attracted Straube. Reimann had earned a university degree in classical philology at Breslau in 1875, having studied organ simultaneously with the Silesian composer and organist Moritz Brosig

(1815-1887). He changed his profession to music only in 1886 and became active in Berlin as an organist, choral conductor, and writer on subjects from Byzantine music through Wagner and contemporary composition. It is not known where Straube took his lessons from Reimann in the late 1880s and early 1890s, since Reimann did not hold a church position in Berlin until 1895. Perhaps he received instruction on the Schlag und Söhne instrument (1888) of the Berlin Philharmonie, since Reimann was closely associated with the orchestra during that period. Furthermore, since the Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche was both the church which employed Straube's father and the site of Straube's first public performances, it is likely he worked extensively on the organ there. Wolgast qualified his remarks about Straube's period of study with Reimann:

> However, the small number of works that he played under Reimann sheds light on just how little even Reimann comes into question as Straube's direct teacher:
>
> 1. Johann Sebastian Bach, Fugue in C minor (Collected Works XXXVIII, p. 94). [Legrenzi, BWV 574]
> 2. Johann Sebastian Bach, Dorian Toccata (without fugue). [BWV 538]
> 3. Johann Sebastian Bach, Prelude and Fugue in D major (Coll. Wks. XV, p. 88). [BWV 532]
> 4. Johann Sebastian Bach, Prelude and Fugue in A minor (Coll. Wks. XV, p. 189). [BWV 543]
> 5. Johann Sebastian Bach, Prelude and Fugue in G major (Coll. Wks. XV, p. 169). [BWV 541]
> 6. Josef Rheinberger, Sonata Nr. 15. [in D major, op. 168]
> 7. Philipp Rüfer, Sonata Nr. 16. [in G minor? Cf. Appendix 5, 2 March 1894]
> 8. Felix Alexander Guilmant, Sonata Nr. 5. [in C minor, op. 80]
> 9. Gottlieb Muffat, Passacaglia.
> 10. Johann Pachelbel, Chaconne in D minor.
>
> Besides these works he looked over Liszt's Fantasy and Fugue on BACH with Reimann.[46]

Appendix 5 supplements this repertory list from 1893 forward. From 1895, Straube began to include early music in his programs with good success in the press. According to Wolgast, Straube's interest in old music arose in the 1890s 'through his association with Heinrich Reimann, but also through Spitta's Bach biography.'[47] Unlike his later editions of old music, and unlike his 1921 inaugural recital on Gurlitt's 'Praetorius' organ at Freiburg University, Straube's early programs represent English, French, and Italian composition alongside German alte Meister. He continued this practice through

the first years of the new century (e.g. Munich, 27 February 1899; Leipzig, 6 November 1903), but by the time Straube began to take on pupils of his own, his performances of older music appear to have attenuated in favor of a working repertory more decidedly weighted toward German composers.

Although Wolgast placed Straube's first recital in 1894, he in fact first performed in public on 3 March 1893. Max Seiffert, the Berlin musicologist to whom Straube later would dedicate his 1907 collection *Choralvorspiele alter Meister*, submitted a revealing, somewhat negative review:

> On the third of this month in the Church of the Holy Cross a concert occurred in which took part, besides Herr Waldemar Meyer and the a cappella choir of Herr H. Putsch, a young organist: Herr Karl Straube. From him I heard Rheinberger's D-major Sonata [op. 168] and Liszt's Ave Maria and Trauerode. One could soon hear that Herr Straube has pursued sound study under wise leadership. Nevertheless, he does not yet possess unqualified confidence in the technical treatment of the complicated instrument. In the first place I missed, as soon as the full organ came into play, rhythmic exactitude in his playing, which is the most important requirement in dealing with such colossal masses of sound. That manual changes did not always proceed smoothly is perhaps due to his inexperience with nerves. But I recommend strongly to Herr Straube a wiser moderation in the use of the Rollschweller. Just as he sometimes employed it to beautiful effect, at other times its rushed and exaggerated use was quite disturbing: the polyphonic web would lie transparent before us, and then thundering waves of sound would suddenly pour over it, violently drawing the previously beautiful musical picture into the maelstrom of the unintelligible. Truly artistic restraint must also be learned. One may advise Herr Straube not yet to consider himself all too accomplished in this regard.[48]

Seiffert's charge concerning excessive rhythmic freedom would resurface in later years: it was a quality of Straube's playing which would have been a logical byproduct of his preoccupation with polyphonic phrasing. The reason for its mention here in particular regard to the full organ is unclear, but it might be attributable simply to insufficient technical command. From Seiffert's comments, too, we know that the organ of the Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche was 'modern' enough to possess a Rollschweller of some type, and that Straube—certainly with the sanction of his teachers Dienel and Reimann—was experimenting with it, at least in the relatively contemporary music of Rheinberger and Liszt.[49]

Straube's name appeared again in Berlin's *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* almost one year later, on 2 March 1894. Seiffert's comments are at once more positive and less detailed. In his eyes, the novice 'organ player' (Orgelspieler) of 1893 has become the 'young organ virtuoso' (junge[r] Orgelvirtuos) of 1894:

> I can report with pleasure on the church concert that Herr Karl Straube offered on 20 February in the Church of the Holy Cross. The young organ virtuoso has lately improved extraordinarily. Besides the purely technical certainty on the manuals and pedal already noted earlier [?], a confident, refined affinity for the intimacies of organ performance came to light in this case. Bach's G-major Fugue [?], Rüfer's G-minor Sonata, and Liszt's 'Ave Maria' (the end of which unfortunately was almost inaudible) and BACH Fantasy increasingly indicated how well considered and aware of his artistic purpose was Herr Straube in the use of the organ's expressive means for the interpretation of those works.[50]

If Straube had mastered the 'expressive means' of the organ by 1894 (which Seiffert and others no doubt largely equated with the subtleties of registration), he would have had ample opportunity to explore them further in 1895, by which time Reimann had secured the position of organist at Berlin's new Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche. The church had commissioned Wilhelm Sauer's largest instrument to date, and, while the degree to which Reimann took part in the planning remains unclear, the new organ certainly corresponded to his own progressive ideas about organ design. Straube, who according to Wolgast quickly became Reimann's assistant at the church, would have had opportunity to perform frequently in the regular Thursday recitals there.[51] Reimann described the organ in an 1895 essay:[52]

Table 1.3 Berlin: Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche Wilhelm Sauer 1895 (Opus 660)

Hauptmanual (C - g3)		Manual III (Schwellwerk, C - g3)	
Principal (façade)	16'	Quintatön	16'
Bordun	16'	Lieblich Gedakt	16'
Principal (façade)	8'	Principal	8'
Geigenprincipal	8'	Gedakt	8'
Gedakt	8'	Konzertflöte	8'
Doppelflöte	8'	Quintatön	8'
Flûte harmonique	8'	Aeoline	8'
Quintatön	8'	Voix céleste	8'
Gemshorn	8'	Schalmei	8'
Viola di Gamba	8'	Traversflöte	4'
Rohrflöte	4'	Quintatön	4'
Spitzflöte	4'	Praestant	4'
Fugara	4'	Viola	4'
Octave	4'	Nasard	2 2/3'
Piccolo	2'	Flautino	2'

Rausch-Quinte	2 2/3' + 2'	Harm. aetherea III	
Cornett III-IV		Cornett III	
Mixtur III		Vox humana	8'
Scharf V		Oboe	8'
Bombarde	16'	Trompette harm.	8'
Trompete	8'		
Clarino	4'		

Manual II (C - g3)		Pedal (C - f1)	
Principal (façade)	16'	Untersatz	32'
Gedakt	16'	Lieblich Gedakt	16'
Principal (façade)	8'	Subbaß	16'
Lieblich Gedakt	8'	Baßflöte	8'
Dolce	8'	Salicet-Baß	16'
Rohrflöte	8'	Dulciana	8'
Traversflöte	8'	Violon	16'
Spitzflöte	8'	Violoncello	8'
Salicional	8'	Principal-Baß	16'
Flauto dolce	4'	Principal-Baß	8'
Octav-Flöte	4'	Octave	4'
Gemshorn	4'	Quintbaß	10 2/3'
Octave	4'	Gedaktquinte	5 1/3'
Zartflöte	2'	Terz	3 1/5'
Quinte	2 2/3'	Fagott	16'
Octave	2'	Posaune	16'
Cornett III		Trompete	8'
Mixtur IV		Clarino	4'
Cor anglais	8'		
Tuba	8'		

All normal couplers
Collective foot lever for all couplers
Foot lever for tutti
6 free combinations
Rollschweller
Swell shoe for Manual III (mechanical?)

Concerning the free combinations, Reimann added that

> [a] device—as simple as it is sensible—allows for the alteration, intensification, or reduction of each engaged combination during performance, i.e. during the use

of that combination. The couplers, too, may be engaged in or retired from the combinations during performance.[53]

Furthermore, the instrument 'possesses tubular pneumatic action according to a time-proven, exceptionally reliable, and unsurpassably precise system invented by the builder.'[54] Already by 1897, the instrument had acquired a fourth manual controlling a ten-stop echo division placed atop the existing casework. Reimann discussed the additions in an essay from the same year.[55] The placement of the whole organ in a recessed, cupolated area over the nave allowed for a soundproof duct leading from the new echo case through a stone wall to a screened opening directly above the main part of the church. Both ends of the duct, Reimann explained, were outfitted with swell shutters: the shades directly in front of the new division were controlled by a mechanical shoe, those on the far end above the nave by a pneumatic porcelain tab over the fourth manual. He cited the specification of this elaborate addendum:

Table 1.4 Berlin: Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche Wilhelm Sauer 1897 (additions to Opus 660)

Manual IV (C - g3, Echowerk)

Quintatön	16'	(displaced from Manual III)
Principal	8'	
Spitzflöte	8'	
Bourdon	8'	
Vox humana	8'	(displaced from Manual III)
Gamba	8'	
Voix céleste	8'	
Spitzflöte	4'	
Octave	4'	
Trompete	8'	

Tremulant for Vox humana
2 swell devices for entire division
Tutti tab for Manual IV

The swell division stops Quintatön 16' and Vox humana 8', now removed to Manual IV, were replaced with 'a very beautifully successful Physharmonica 16' (on the model of the one in Freiburg) and a powerful 8' Flöte' respectively.[56] In addition, Manual I's Spitzflöte 4' was exchanged for a new Konzertflöte 4'. Furthermore, Reimann seems to have believed he was doing

something historically accurate when he reported that Sauer 'will install a Glockenspiel (Pedal, in 4' range) of the type foreseen by Bach in the Arnstadt [*recte*: Mühlhausen] organ.'[57] The new division was pneumatically controlled, and its stops were strongly voiced 'under the greatest possible wind pressure.'[58] The tone of Reimann's essay leaves no doubt that he was extremely pleased with the product, not least because of its size and the 'no longer surpassable number and beauty of its tonal effects.'[59] The installation of six free combinations was at the time unique among Sauer's instruments (there was normally a maximum of three, even in his largest organs),[60] undoubtedly due to Reimann's belief that large organs needed a proportionally greater number of registration aids. He had voiced this opinion in his 1891 essay for the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 'Noch einmal über den Vortrag der Orgelkompositionen Johann Sebastian Bachs':

> The more numerous the ranks of an organ, the more impractical the instrument becomes w i t h o u t combination pistons. A monstrosity of unwieldiness in this regard, it appears to me, is the much praised organ in the new Ulm Cathedral [Walcker], which with its 101 ranks has barely 3 or 4 combination pistons. On the other hand, a unicum of technical perfection is the new organ in C h i c a g o [undoubtedly the Roosevelt instrument in the city's concert hall] which was played publicly for the first time on 12 October last year (Herr [Clarence] E d d y, a pupil of our old master [Carl August] H a u p t).[61]

By the time Reimann's essay had been republished in a collection of his works in 1900, he had changed the last sentence to read

> A unicum of technical perfection, with its great simplicity and clarity, is the organ in the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin with its 91 ranks (including Glockenspiel) and an echo division of astounding, perfect beauty.[62]

Straube was intimately acquainted with Reimann's instrument in Berlin both before and after its expansion, but he would have had greater opportunity to experiment with it in its original three-manual format:[63] the renovated organ was dedicated on 21 and 22 March 1897, and Straube was elected on 13 May as the new organist of Wesel Cathedral.

Despite Wolgast's assertion that Reimann was only marginally a 'direct teacher' of Straube, it is clear from Straube's own 'Rückblick und Bekenntnis' that he considered Reimann the starting point for his own practices. At the end of his life, Straube reflected on the significance of Reimann's presence in late nineteenth-century Berlin, nevertheless attempting to show the originality of his own approach (in this case, to Bach's music). It is the most extended discussion Straube offers in print about organ performance:

When, with my teacher Heinrich Reimann and through intense private study, I acquired my organ technique in order to develop Bach's organ music anew for my time—i.e. the last decade before the turn of the century—the music of Wagner and Liszt was the dominant artistic reality of the up-to-date musician and music lover ... In an era of an unlimited egocentricity, this appraisal granted Wagner's orchestral music a position of supremacy in musical composition which was not seriously contested by any other composer ... The magic of Wagnerian orchestral sound was so extensive that one was inclined to measure the greatness of earlier masters on the strength of their echo in Wagner's music. One discovered various Wagner similarities in pre-Wagnerian music and heard even more into it. [¶] If the old custom of playing Bach's organ works in a thick soup of sound was to be at all liberated from the bonds of a schoolmaster-like conservativism, and if the reputation of being old and outmoded was to be removed from Bach's music, this was only possible by a performance style which reproduced Bach with the sensuality of Wagnerian sound ... [¶] I therefore considered it my task as an organist, employing all the tonal possibilities of the modern organ, to make audible the daring of Bach's music, the personal expression which superseded all traditions and conventions of musical language. Two artistic ideas, which I took from my formative years in Berlin to my organist position at the Willibrordi Church in Wesel, were of decisive influence. [¶] The first originated with the impulsive manner in which Heinrich Reimann did away with the usual routine of Bach playing in Berlin, i.e. in a uniform fortissimo. Reimann came from the school of the Breslau Cathedral Kapellmeister Moritz Brosig, who was decidedly opposed to this stiff Berlin Bach style. Reimann continued the fight against this sound pedantry as a smart and vivacious artistic personality. An adherent of Wagner and Liszt, he recognized how the musical public, itself under Wagner's spell, was alienated from the 'queen of instruments.' He was able to rescue the organ's honor not only by his interpretation of contemporary organ music of a Liszt and Julius Reubke, whose dynamic requirements he fulfilled through a differentiated sound of orchestral color. He also awoke the Berlin Bach style out of its ossification by his crescendo technique. Reimann usually began a Bach fugue on the organ in a mezzo forte, which he then built to the full organ at the end by way of occasional episodes on the second and third manuals. The effect of this long crescendo was intensified by a constant accelerando. Usually the closing tempo was twice as fast as the beginning ... [¶] The second step to the rehabilitation of the organ as a Bach instrument lay in turning Reimann's art of differentiation, which he used only in terms of volume, also to the sound character, using the color of individual stops and certain stop groups to support the mood. I took this step with complete awareness that, with it, I was striving for something other than what Reimann intended. Reimann was probably searching in the first place for the great sound pathos in Bach which would restore to the organ its lost royal dignity. I strove to allow the subjective origin of the music to sound alongside the

> objective tonal language of Bach's polyphony. With Bach, this never destroys the form, rather only protects it in its clarity from an unyielding schematicism.[64]

From his association with the instruments and organists of Berlin, Straube developed a colorful, varied registration practice matched to the capabilities of Sauer's instruments, and by the first decade of the new century, he had come to regard Wilhelm Sauer as Germany's greatest modern organ builder.[65] Clearly, he believed that his own choices of stops—at least in Bach and at least on instruments built along the lines of Sauer's orchestral aesthetic—were at once more detailed and more logical with regard to formal architecture than were Reimann's.

The second 'artistic idea' to which Straube made reference issued from the violin playing of Josef Joachim. Joachim's Bach playing, according to Straube, led to the realization that Bach's music must be perceived as a series of simultaneous melodic lines, and from this Straube developed his extremely detailed approach to phrasing and articulation:

> I learned to sing Bach at the organ ... I approached every line in the polyphonic texture as a piece of musical life. There could no longer be any dead movement which merely filled and thickened the sound without individualizing it. Every counterpoint actually had to be heard as a counterpoint, as a speaking voice in the organ choir. It was my goal to expose, in the seemingly secondary or fortuitous motivic work, the organic relation to the whole.[66]

Concerning ideas about phrasing and the like, Straube was probably right to mention Joachim instead of Reimann. Reimann's two extended essays on the performance of Bach are actually treatises on registration, and he made clear his belief that the success of any modern performance would be based 'in the first place on the dynamic shading of a melody.'[67] Straube went on to say that his phrasing principles, specifically in Bach's organ music and especially in his editions from 1913 onward, were governed by the relationship between text and music he perceived in Bach's vocal works. However, there can be little doubt that Straube's way of phrasing—employed similarly in editions of Bach, Reger, and others—owed much to Hugo Riemann's theories concerning the primacy of upbeat (Auftakt) formations, even though Straube never mentions the connection.[68] There is no available evidence to substantiate any kind of relationship between Straube and Reger's tutor Riemann, but it is difficult to imagine that it would not have existed, especially since Riemann was already lecturing at the University of Leipzig when Straube moved to that city in 1903. Considering Straube's by then already mature friendship with Reger, who himself was intimately acquainted with Riemann's theories, it seems likely that Straube would have known of his work early on.[69]

Reger, Straube, and the beginnings of collaboration

Straube became aware of Reger's music during his period of study with Heinrich Reimann. No doubt in part because of shared interests between Reimann and Hugo Riemann on musicological fronts, and because of Reimann's influential position as a music critic for the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, Riemann had turned Reimann's attention to Reger in the spring of 1893. Riemann sent his Berlin colleague a collection of Reger's first published compositions, to which Reimann responded with qualified enthusiasm.

> Very dear Dr., I have looked through the compositions of your pupil Max Reger with great interest. This is an extraordinarily *intense* musical nature which may cause headaches for some! There blows a youthfully fresh, powerful quality through all these things, and one may certainly expect that, after certain elements in him become defined and more objective, his most unique artistic personality will emerge in an even more exact and clear way than it already has.[70]

In July 1893, Reimann published a review of the young composer's opp. 1-4 and op. 6, thus echoing these same sentiments in a public forum and painting a portrait of Reger as 'a real musical hothead, ... full of daring plans to conquer the world, until he encountered the theoretical school of Hugo Riemann and learned that "one, two, three" is necessary to composition.'[71] Just as he had to Riemann privately, Reimann observed that Reger was by no means a mature composer. He was nevertheless very optimistic for Reger's future, and he closed with the wish (now often quoted in Reger literature) 'that the good expectations which this newly rising, great talent promises might be fulfilled!'[72] Given Reimann's anticipatory tone, Straube surely would have taken note of Reger's first publications for the organ when they began to appear later that same year: the classicizing *Three Pieces* op. 7 were published by Augener of London in the fall, and his chorale prelude without opus number *O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid* appeared in 1894 in Berlin's *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, the journal with which Reimann himself was closely associated.[73] But according to Wolgast—and his account is, again, the one which has reappeared in all subsequent discussions—it was Reger's extended *Suite in E minor* op. 16, composed early in 1895 and dedicated 'to the manes of Johann Sebastian Bach,'[74] which attracted Straube's attention. The story seems almost andecdotal, designed to say at least as much about Straube's talent and industry as about the supposed quality of Reger's music:

> In the autumn of 1896, Reimann showed Straube Reger's four-movement Suite in E minor op. 16 with the remark that the work was so difficult as to be completely unplayable. This assessment provoked Straube's virtuosic ambition, so that he set

> about mastering the work, which placed him before utterly new technical problems, with unflagging energy. Already by March 1897, he was the first to perform publicly Reger's first large organ work. The concert took place in Trinity Church on an unfortunately insufficient organ ... For Straube's life, this concert signified the beginning of his virtuosic mastery and simultaneously—certainly not by chance—the end of his Berlin years.[75]

As to the 'utterly new technical problems' to which Wolgast refers—thick, pianistic chords[76] in alternation with strict counterpoint; a stubbornly chromatic language in fast harmonic rhythm; and the concentration requirements for a piece of about fifty minutes' duration—all of this must in fact have been a significant imposition on a German organist in the 1890s, even on one trained by the most progressive players in Berlin. And Reimann, who had believed at least since 1891 that Bach's *Sonatas* BWV 525-530 and *Passacaglia* BWV 582 were not intended for the organ,[77] probably found unreasonable Reger's inclusion of a demanding 67-bar trio in the third movement and a passacaglia of 213 bars as a finale to op. 16.

Straube performed Reger's *Suite* for the first time on 3 March 1897. That he did so on an 'unfortunately insufficient organ'[78] rather than on Reimann's magnificent Sauer instrument in the Kaiser Wilhelm Church must be due to the fact that the renovations to the latter (see above) were still underway at that date. We know little about the nature of his playing: Straube's copy of the piece—which, unlike his performance materials for Reger's large works from op. 27 through op. 52, took the form of a published score—has not surfaced. Straube is known to have performed portions of op. 16 again in his series of concerts at Frankfurt a.M. on 1 April 1898, at which point he met the composer, and he played the second and fourth movements in a recital of Reger's works on 13 September at Wesel Cathedral, where he was by that time employed. At this point, the performance history of the piece appears to end. Whatever meaning the *Suite* may have had for Straube's introduction to Reger's style, it was apparently not enough for him to retain it in his active repertory, and Straube never mentioned the work in print.

On 1 June 1897, shortly after his premiere performance of Reger's op. 16, Straube took up his first full-time church position as organist of St. Willibrord Cathedral in Wesel (Rhein). The organ, on which Straube would play the first performances of Reger's opp. 27, 29, 30, 40/1, 46, and 52/1—i.e., many of the large works from Reger's so-called second Weiden period—was one of Sauer's largest instruments to date, built in 1895 just before Berlin's Kaiser Wilhelm organ.