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Radical Socialism, Simplified Serialism: John Weinzweig and CBC Wartime Radio Drama during the Second World War

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Résumé de l'article

Pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, le théâtre radiophonique est devenu une forme de divertissement populaire pour les Canadiens et était souvent utilisé comme un outil de propagande par la Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). À cette même époque, le théâtre radiophonique est aussi devenu une forme d'expression permettant aux artistes d'exprimer leurs valeurs sociales et politiques. Cette article examine la musique de scène écrite par John Weinzweig pour la série *New Homes for Old* en fonction des conditions socio-politiques au Canada pendant les années 1930 et 1940, et plus particulièrement du mouvement politique du Front populaire.

En se servant de documents d'archives conservés à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada (BAC) et au Centre for Broadcasting and Journalism Studies (CCJBS) de l'Université Concordia, cet article porte sur la modification et simplification de la technique sérielle utilisé par Weinzweig dans ses oeuvres radiophoniques. Faisant suite aux travaux d'Udo Kasemets (1960), Elaine Keillor (1994), et Brian Cherney (2011), cet article soutient que l'intérêt de Weinzweig pour l'art radiophonique a eu pour effet non seulement d'assurer la promotion de ses oeuvres, mais également d'influencer son approche sérielle en la simplifiant, un processus qui reflète les idéaux culturels, politiques, et esthétiques du Front populaire.

Radical Socialism, Simplified Serialism: John Weinzweig and CBC Wartime Radio Drama during the Second World War[1]

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Aunion of the literary, theatrical, and musical arts, radio drama became a quintessential source of entertainment for Canadian audiences during the Second World War. Throughout the war, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) not only relied on this artistic medium to disseminate wartime propaganda and garner support for the Canadian war effort, but radio drama also became an indispensable creative outlet for Canadian artists, providing them with the necessary financial and artistic support to broadcast their works to a national, at times international, audience.[2] For Canadian composer John Weinzweig, CBC radio drama thus granted him the rare opportunity to garner a national audience base for his serial compositions. While scholars such as Udo Kasemets and Elaine Keillor draw attention to his use of the twelve-tone technique in these works (Kasemets 1960; Keillor 2011), an examination of Weinzweig's manuscript scores and sketches for his first CBC radio drama commission *New Homes for Old* (1941) reveals that he uses a modified technique, distinct from the twelve-tone approach and modernist language he uses in his concert works at this time. Although it is possible that Weinzweig's decision to modify his serial approach in his radio works may have been prompted by a variety of circumstances, including time constraints, the technological demands of live radio broadcasting, and Canada's conservative musical climate during the mid-twentieth century, some consideration of Weinzweig's engagement with radical socialism during the 1930s and 1940s may further elucidate his compositional decisions at this time.

By drawing upon relevant archival materials, including manuscript scores, radio scripts, program schedules, recordings, and biographical documents, this article investigates how Weinzweig's personal, artistic, and political ties with the radical left may have encouraged him to modify his modernist idiom and simplify his serial language. By framing his early career in light of Canada's wartime sociopolitical climate and the rise of leftist movements such as the Popular Front, this article considers the various factors which led Weinzweig to adopt a more accessible musical language in his radio works, one which embraced the cultural, political, and aesthetic ideals of leftist socialism. In doing so, this article ultimately demonstrates how Weinzweig uses both the medium of radio broadcasting and the art of radio drama as a soapbox for his engagement with radical socialism during a time of political upheaval.

John Weinzweig and Radio Drama

During the early years of radio drama production at the CBC, incidental music was provided by stock music used for silent film, and performed live by the radio studio orchestra (Weinzweig 1988, 79). As noted by Keillor, by the early 1940s, the CBC made the decision to hire Canadian composers to write original music for their radio dramas (Keillor 2006, 171). This was partially prompted by the frustration experienced by radio drama directors and scriptwriters who felt constrained by the limited selection of stock music, as well as motivated by their desire to promote the work of young Canadian composers at this time (Weinzweig 1988, 79; Keillor 1994, 23).

In 1941, Weinzweig was approached by the CBC's musical director of the time, Samuel Hersenhoren, to write original background music for CBC wartime radio drama.[3] Throughout his short career at the CBC, Weinzweig wrote over one hundred original scores for several radio drama

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[1]   An abridged conference proceeding version of this full-length article appears in *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* (2016a). This version was first presented at the Muscan 2017 annual conference, "Canada 150: Music and Belonging."

[2]   For a history of the early developments of radio drama in Canada and North America, please see Fink (1976-1977; 1983; 1981), Jackson (1967) and Sterling (2004). Sources pertaining to the CBC's wartime initiatives and programing during the Second World War include Nash (1994), Stewart (1975) and Ciment (2007). For general sources pertaining to the aesthetics and technology of radio drama, see Crook (1999) and Hand and Traynor (2011).

[3]   As evidenced in the finding aid for the CBC Music Library Fonds housed at Library and Archives Canada, the CBC hired a number of Canadian composers (following Weinzweig's appointment) to write incidental music for radio drama, including: Godfrey Ridout (1918-1984), Russ Gerow, Howard Cable (1920-2016), Bob Farnon, Ernest Dainty (1891-1947), Louis Applebaum (1918-2000), Murray Ross, Barbara Pentland (1912-2000), Arnold Walter (1902-1973), Gerald Bales (1919-2002), Johnny Dobson, and Samuel Hersenhoren (1908-1982).

series, including *Brothers in Arms* (1941-1942), *Canada Marches* (1942), *The British Empire Series* (1942), *Comrade in Arms* (1942-1945), and *Our Canada* (1942-1943).[4] His first commission at the CBC was for the radio drama series *New Homes for Old* (NHFO). Written by CBC script writer Alistair Grosart and produced by CBC producer Ian Smith, NHFO is an eleven-week series based on the experiences, traditions, and aspirations of "new Canadians" who immigrated from countries including Czechoslovakia, Russia, Germany, Ukraine, Poland, Austria, and the Netherlands (Grosart 1941).[5]

Writing for Radio Drama

Writing for radio drama significantly impacted Weinzweig's compositional language at the time, and required him to adjust his approach to meet the constant demand for the production of music for radio drama. Because most dramas were broadcast on a weekly basis, he had limited time to write his scores, many of which were approximately twenty-five pages in length and scored for small chamber orchestra.[6] Reminiscing upon his experience working for the CBC, Weinzweig explains that he was given a script which included cues indicating desired musical effects, entries, themes, or genres for each drama, which provided him with some rough guidelines for his creative task (Keillor 2011, 104). He explains that he would meet with production members (scriptwriter and director) to discuss his scores for each program to ensure that they complemented the expressive intent of the dramas (Keillor 2011, 104). According to Keillor, Weinzweig would receive the program script at the beginning of the week, and would complete the scores by Wednesday or Thursday of that same week (2011, 104). Once completed, he would rehearse his scores with the studio orchestra, and conducted the live broadcasts of his compositions (Keillor 2011, 104).

Although writing for radio drama was challenging for the young composer, it ultimately gave him the unique opportunity to pioneer a new genre of incidental music which suited the aesthetic needs of radio drama and the complexities of live radio broadcasting. Despite having to adjust his compositional approach, this experience ultimately helped him hone his orchestration skills, as he recollects:

> Writing music for radio plays was an experience that taught me to meet deadlines, sharpen my orchestral craft, responding to dramatic situations with brevity, to be prepared for those last-second cuts in the script, and frequently, to say good-bye to a great music cue, and as well, to stay clear of complex fugal activity behind voices (Weinzweig 1988, 79).

Working for radio, therefore, proved to be both a beneficial and influential experience for the development of Weinzweig's compositional career. Not only did this opportunity allow the young composer to have his works performed and broadcast on a weekly basis, but it also helped him garner a broader audience base for his compositions.

Early Serial Encounters

Prior to his appointment with the CBC, Weinzweig was actively writing works which engaged with modernist techniques and approaches, including the twelve-tone technique and serial procedures. He adopted the technique while studying at the Eastman School of Music from 1937-1938, where he studied and analyzed serial works including Schoenberg's piano works and Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite* (Keillor 1994, 22). According to Catherine Nolan, the latter had a significant impact on Weinzweig's understanding and treatment of serialism; he was intrigued by Berg's idiosyncratic application of the technique including his alteration of the row pitch ordering and his interest in motivic relationships (Nolan 2011, 131-132). She further notes that Weinzweig was interested in the cyclical and intervallic qualities of Berg's piece, particularly the "symmetry of inversionally related intervals" (Nolan 2011, 132).[7]

Other sources of influence include Ernst Krenek, whose book, *Studies in Counterpoint Based on the Twelve-Tone Technique*, also served as a model for Weinzweig's early forays into twelve-tone writing. Published in 1940, this book supplied Weinzweig with his "first formal instruction in serialism" (Nolan 2011, 133). Although Krenek provides a brief introduction to the Schoenbergian twelve-tone approach, his book provides alternative methods to the

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[4] For an exhaustive detailed list of Weinzweig's work for radio, including program titles, script authors, production dates, and producers, see the appendix section of Keillor's *John Weinzweig and His Music: The Radical Romantic* (1994). Important biographical sources pertaining to Weinzweig's musical life and compositional career include Keillor (1994) and the collection of essays featured in John Beckwith and Brian Cherney's edited text *Weinzweig: Essays on His Life and Music* (2011). Full length studies addressing Weinzweig's wartime radio works include Sumner (2016b).

[5] As evidenced in a CBC program advertisement, the series was inspired by Grosart's experience travelling across Canada as a CBC wartime correspondent. During his travels, he met immigrant Canadians working in lumber industries, ship yards, and factories, and documented his experience for a CBC talk series entitled *Working for Victory*; see CBC (1941).

[6] As evidenced by Weinzweig's manuscript scores for NHFO, which are currently housed at Library and Archives Canada in the John Weinzweig Fonds. The scores for this series were orchestrated for strings, flute, oboe, clarinets, bassoon, trumpets, trombones, and percussion. There is some ambiguity as to how many players were hired to perform in the CBC studio orchestra at this time. In his chapter "Making of a Composer," Weinzweig notes that the studio orchestra ranged from 25 to 30 musicians (1996, 79), whereas Keillor states that there were approximately fifteen to twenty (2011, 104).

[7] For further discussion concerning Weinzweig's early serial works, please see Nolan (2011) and Webb (1977).

technique, ones which emphasize the motivic and melodic potential of the twelve-tone row (Krenek 1940, viii).

NHFO and the Twelve-Tone Dilemma

According to both Kasemets and Keillor, Weinzweig drew upon and applied the serial techniques he adopted early in his career in his works for radio. As Kasemets explains, Weinzweig used the twelve-tone technique in these works because he believed it suited the aesthetic of live radio drama and the "descriptive needs of radio music" (Kasemets 1960, 12). In her study of Weinzweig's works for radio, Keillor also argues that Weinzweig uses the technique extensively in both his concert and radio works at this time, including his scores for other CBC radio drama series such as *The British Commonwealth* and *Our Canada* (Keillor 1994, 127, 134). In her analysis of NHFO's fifth program, "Poland (1)", Keillor claims that Weinzweig's sketches for this program speak to his idiosyncratic application of the serial technique in his radio works. She explains that his pre-compositional material is built upon an incomplete twelve-tone series, G, C, F#, F, A, D, G#, E, B, B flat, E flat. Although Weinzweig includes this row in his pre-compositional material for "Poland (1)", Keillor stresses that there is no complete statement of the row in his completed scores for this program. Rather, he evokes the tone row by emphasizing specific re-occurring intervals, notably the F#–F dyad and the G#–G–E trichord (Keillor 2011, 104).

The observations made by Kasemets and Keillor are supported by comments made by Weinzweig during an interview with Jane Champagne, as he notes:

> Organizing the twelve notes of the chromatic field into a set of intervals helps you select a style—any style. The Twelve-tone method is *not* a style; it is only a technique … I applied the Twelve-tone technique, simply because that was the way of writing for me—and I created some high-tension scores. These were stories that had to do with violence, terror and escape; their sound tracks required a high level of musical tension (Champagne 1975, 26).

Admittedly, an examination of Weinzweig's sketches for NHFO reveals the importance of serially-derived tone rows in his pre-compositional material. However, as an analysis of his finalized manuscript scores for "Poland (1)" demonstrates, he only uses the tone row as intervallic, melodic, and motivic inspiration, without giving a complete presentation of the row and its various transformations. Examples include a reoccurring tetrachord motif, B–B flat–A–E, which derives from his pre-compositional tone row for "Poland (1)."

Although Weinzweig transposes this motif throughout the various titles of the score, he does not transform the motif using serial procedures including inversion, retrograde, or retrograde-inversion (see Examples 1, 2, 3).[8]

Example 1: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, "Poland (1)," Title 8, mm. 1-3. Tetrachord motif.

Example 2: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, "Poland (1)," Title 9, mm. 4-6. Inexact transposition of tetrachord motif.

Example 3: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, "Poland (1)," Title 9, mm. 14-15. Inexact transposition of tetrachord motif.

Upon further examination of his sketches and scores for the series, it becomes evident that Weinzweig uses the twelve-tone row as motivic and melodic inspiration, as further evidenced by his scores for the first and sixth programs of the series, "Czechoslovakia" and "Russia." Rather than elaborating an entire tone row, Weinzweig selects a set of tones which become the motivic and melodic basis for his composition. For example, in the title "War #1" from the first NHFO program "Czechoslovakia," Weinzweig organizes the musical material of his score around the tones D–G–A–B–B flat, in which the tones D–G–A–B become a reoccurring motif throughout the score, which is later transformed through transposition (see Examples 4 and 5). Similarly, in the program "Russia," Weinzweig also organizes his score around a selection of notes, this time a tetrachord consisting of the tones F–A flat–B flat–C flat, which becomes an important reoccurring motif which is also subjected to transposition (see Examples 6 and 7).

Arguably, Weinzweig's use of the row as a generator for motives in his radio scores recalls the methods advocated by Krenek in his *Studies in Counterpoint*, in which he emphasizes the importance of the row as a "store of motifs

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8. As evidenced in the original radio scripts for these programs and in the manuscript scores, Weinzweig's scores for these radio dramas were divided into short separate titles, ranging from five to twenty measures in length. Comparable to film music titles and musical cues, some titles include generic titles such as "war" or "ominous," while others are simply numbered.

Example 4: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, Program nº 1 "Czechoslovakia," title "War #1," mm. 2-5. D–G–A–B motif.

Example 5: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, Program nº 1 "Czechoslovakia," title "Scene Break 3," mm. 1-4. Transposition of original motif.

Example 6: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, Program nº 2 "Russia", Title 14. Tetrachord motif.

Example 7: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, Program nº 2 "Russia," Title 10. Transposition of tetrachord motif.

[…] which all individual elements of the composition are to be developed upon" (Krenek 1940, viii). Further, Weinzweig's idiosyncratic and flexible application of the technique in his radio works may have also been influenced by the serial works of Berg. Indeed, scholars including Arved Ashby note that Berg did not adhere to the strict serial methods taught by Schoenberg, particularly in his piece *Lyric Suite*. He notes that Berg adopts a freer approach to the technique, one which combined the twelve-tone technique with non-twelve-tone writing, evoking a "free-strict" duality in his piece (Ashby 2008, 183).[9]

Possibly inspired by his early serial influences, Krenek and Berg, Weinzweig appears to loosely apply the technique in these works, using the row as motivic and thematic fodder, without elaborating it in its entirety or using extensive serial transformations. However, as a brief examination of his early serial compositions reveals, there appears to be a disparity between his application of the technique in his early concert works and his radio works.

Composed during the same period he began working for the CBC, *Suite for Piano No.1* (1939), *Rhapsody* (1941) and Violin Sonata (1941), all feature twelve-tone rows and serial treatments. *Suite for Piano No. 1* features distinct twelve-tone sets in the second and third movements, *Dirgeling* (F#–C–B–B flat–E flat–A–A flat–D–F–D flat–E–G) and *Themes with Variables* (C–G flat–G–B–B flat–E flat–A flat–D–D flat–F–E–A), which undergo serial procedures and transformations. *Rhapsody* also features a distinct twelve-tone row, F–C–D flat–B flat–E–B–E flat–A–A flat–G flat–D–G, and uses serial treatments such as retrograde, inversion, and retrograde inversion (Keillor 1994, 128). Similarly, Violin Sonata features a complete twelve-tone row, F–A flat–B flat–C flat–F#–A–G–D–C#–E–C–E flat, which is transformed using serial procedures, including inversion and retrograde inversion (Nolan 2011, 134).[10]

These pieces evidence Weinzweig's use and application of strict serial procedures in his early concert works, and how they differ from the approach he uses in his radio works. This suggests, therefore, that Weinzweig was using two distinct compositional approaches at this time: one which drew upon strict serial principals and procedures, the other which may be understood as a modified and simplified serial technique. Commenting on his experiences composing for radio during the 1940s, Weinzweig states that he was using "two different kinds of mental operations at this time." As he explains,

> It took four to five weeks of mental adjustment in order to shake off the psychological habits of the background music activity—to change over to a different kind of creative activity where you don't accept easy solutions. And you are not pressed for time. That's the difference. It's a different psychological process (Keillor 2011, 108).

While this statement does not speak to Weinzweig's use of the serial technique in his works for radio, it does reveal that he was operating in two different mind sets at this time, and that he approached his works for radio differently from his concert works.

Constraints, Challenges, and Circumstances

In her study of Weinzweig's serial works, Nolan stresses that "serialism was a resource to be creatively shaped and adapted according to [his] artistic vision" (Nolan 2011, 148). While it is possible that Weinzweig modified his serial approach to suit the dramatic character of these radio works and as a vehicle for his creative visions, other external factors should also be taken into consideration. This includes the pressure

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9   Due to the scope of this article, a critical discussion of the development of Schoenberg's application of the twelve-tone technique has not been included; nevertheless, this author acknowledges that Schoenberg also developed and adopted a more flexible and less rigid approach to the technique upon immigrating to America during the 1930s, which may have also impacted Weinzweig's approach and application of the technique in his radio works of the time. For further discussion of Schoenberg's flexible approach serial approach, please see Haimo (1998), Straus (2008) and Feisst (2011).

10   For further discussion concerning Weinzweig's application of the serial techniques in these works, please see Keillor (1994) and Nolan (2011).

felt by Weinzweig from CBC staff members, conductors, and musicians to alter his modern musical language to make his scores both more playable and accessible (Weinzweig 1992, 5). Citing Weinzweig, Alan Gillmor writes that he was often criticized by CBC producers "for not writing 'friendly music'" (Gillmor 2011, 272). As further explained by Weinzweig, his radio works were criticized by the studio orchestra musicians, many of whom "didn't quite believe what they heard and often interrupted valuable rehearsal time asking whether a certain note or chord had been copied incorrectly" (Weinzweig 1988, 79). Due to the unwelcoming and critical environment in which he worked, it is possible Weinzweig modified and simplified his serial technique to appease both CBC producers and musicians, and to ensure the continued broadcasts of his works.

Other factors which may have led Weinzweig to modify his approach include the difficulties of writing for live radio broadcasting. Due to strict time constraints, Weinzweig had little time to compose his works, thus suggesting that he could not compose elaborate serial works on a weekly basis. Similarly, as noted by Kasemets, Weinzweig was also careful to write appropriate background music which both suited the technology of the microphone and did not overpower the voice actors during live broadcasts (Kasemets 1960, 12). Another factor which may have encouraged Weinzweig to simplify his modern and serial language was his desire to write music which appealed to conservative Canadian listeners. According to Helmut Kallmann, Canadian audiences of the time had little exposure to contemporary and modern works, which he believes was partly due to a lack of encouragement towards young composers because it was assumed that "everything worth saying in music had already been said" (Kallmann 2013, 91). The apprehension towards modernism and contemporary works is further evidenced by the CBC's programming at this time, which catered musical programming to suit the tastes of Canada's concert hall audiences. According to Brian Cherney, CBC broadcasts of the time were "tone washing listeners with a repertoire of familiar tonal, European music" (Cherney 2011, 66). Due

to these circumstances, it is thus possible that Weinzweig modified and simplified his serial language to ensure that his works appealed to Canada's wartime listeners.[11]

While these circumstances possibly informed Weinzweig's decision to modify his serial language in his radio works, it is important to consider how the broader socio-political climate which framed the formative years of his career may also have prompted him to temper his modern compositional language. Some consideration of the rise of radical socialism in Canada and the emergence of the international leftist Popular Front movement during the 1930s may help elucidate Weinzweig's idiosyncratic application of the technique in his works for radio. More importantly, some consideration of his early and continued exposure to radical socialism is also necessary, and may reveal how his engagement with these ideals encouraged him to use a simpler, more accessible and palatable serial language which embodied leftist and socialist ideals circulating in Canada during the 1930s and 1940s.

John Weinzweig, Radical Socialism, and the Popular Front: Biographical Ties

Rise of the Popular Front

An international socio-political movement, the Popular Front is best understood as a product of Soviet foreign policy which emerged in response to the rise and threat of fascism during the 1930s (Crist 2003, 20).[12] Uniting various groups and individuals, including unionists, socialists, communists, anti-fascists, émigrés, and activists, the Popular Front garnered significant traction among artists and composers at this time, many of whom used their art to express and voice their alignment with the political left (Denning 2010, 4).[13] Although the socialist ideals promoted by the Popular Front were mostly felt in the United States and France, similar ideals also circulated among Canadian artistic and intellectual circles during the interwar period, encouraging many to create works which embraced or reflected the ideals of leftist socialism.[14] Although Weinzweig likely encountered these ideals during his time at the CBC, it is important to

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[11]   Although beyond the scope of this article, it is important to also position Weinweig's radio works within the broader context of twelve-tone serial writing in North-America during the post-war period, particularly in the United States. At this time, several American ultra-modern composers adopted and transformed the Schoenbergian twelve-tone technique into their own idiosyncratic technique. For further discussion on the emergence of serial writing in the US, see Straus (2008).

[12]   The rise of the Popular Front in Canada is rooted in the activities and values embraced by the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) during the interwar period. The CPC embraced and adopted the ideals of the Popular Front following the seventh Comintern Congress in 1935, in which the general secretary Georgi Dimitrov called for the formation of a united Popular Front against the rise and threat of fascism. According to historian John Manley, the activities of the CPC during this period was largely determined by Soviet interests, stressing that the Popular Front in Canada was "inspired by and in large part directed by Moscow, which entirely subordinated the needs of Canadian socialism to its security requirements" (Manley 2002, 82).

[13]   In his book, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*, Denning describes this leftist artistic movement as the cultural front, a movement which he describes as the "extraordinary flowering of arts, entertainment, and thought" (2010, xvi) founded on the socialist ideas advocated by the Popular Front.

[14]   During the interwar period, several Canadian artists engaged with the aesthetic and political ideologies of the Popular Front. This resulted in an increase in leftist literary works in Canada, including poetry, plays, and novels. This period also saw the rise of socialist theatre in Canada and leftist artwork. For further information on the artistic left in Canada during the interwar period, see Rifkin (2005). For sources pertaining to the rise of the Popular Front and its impact on artistic and musical developments in the United States and France, see Denning (2010) and Moore (2008).

consider how his childhood exposure and introduction to radical socialism while living in Toronto's leftist Jewish community may have also informed his political beliefs at this time, ideologies which may have informed his artistic and compositional decisions later in his career.

Communal and Childhood Ties: Toronto's Jewish Community and The Workmen's Circle Peretz School

Born to Polish immigrant parents in 1913, Weinzweig grew up above his father's garment shop on College Street, located in Toronto's Jewish neighborhood (Keillor 1994, 6). As Benita Wolters-Fredlund explains, Toronto was an important hub for Jewish immigrants at this time, many of whom were forced to leave Eastern Europe due to anti-Semitism, oppression, and poverty (2002, 20). Later, during the interwar period, poor working conditions and racial discrimination prompted the rise of a pro-socialist labor movement, leading to the development of various trade unions and several socialist Jewish fraternal organizations in Toronto (Wolters-Fredlund 2002, 20). Wolters-Fredlund further stresses that these organizations promoted Yiddish culture and traditions, and developed an "activistic, pro-labour, and socialist-oriented culture within Toronto's Jewish community," resulting in the rallying of various socialist groups at this time, including Labour Zionists, Bundists, and Jewish Communists (Wolters-Fredlund 2002, 20; 2005, 11).[15]

The largest organization established in Toronto was the Arbeiter Ring, also known as the Workmen's Circle. Organizations such as the Workmen's circle established Jewish schools for children in Toronto which taught English, physical education, music, theatre, dance, and socialist ideology (Wolters-Fredlund 2002, 20). As a child, Weinzweig attended one of these institutions, the Workmen's Circle Peretz school (Keillor 1994, 6). Built by former members of the *Bund*, a Russian-Jewish socialist organization established in 1807, the Peretz School supported ideals of the *Bund*, and was dedicated to the "improvement in conditions for the working class and the perpetuation of Jewish history and culture" (Keillor 1994, 6-7; Cherney 2011, 51). While attending the Peretz school, Weinzweig was taught about both his Yiddish and Jewish Heritage, and also received his first introduction to music. More importantly, as explained by Weinzweig's childhood piano teacher Gertrude Anderson, it was while attending Peretz that Weinzweig "was taught to think clearly and independently along political and social

lines and incidentally, he imbibed here certain socialist ideas" (Cherney 2011, 51).

Family Ties: Joseph Weinzweig

In addition to his early education at the Peretz school, Weinzweig was also likely introduced to radical socialist ideals by his father, Joseph Weinzweig. A native of Kielce, Poland, Weinzweig's father was affiliated with the *Bund*, also known as the General Jewish Workers Union of Lithuania, Poland, and Russia (Cherney 2011, 50). During the early 1900s, Keillor notes that Joseph was incarcerated for his involvement in *Bund* activities, and was later granted amnesty to immigrate to Canada (Keillor 1994, 5). Brian Cherney argues that despite having to leave Kielce in 1907, Joseph would have carried his Bundist and leftist beliefs with him to Canada, and shared them with his son. He further notes that it was not uncommon for Jewish immigrant parents who practiced radical socialism to bring their children to socialist meetings and demonstrations, citing Ros Usiskin who stresses that "for many children of radical parents, this early introduction was to continue as their life-long guidepost" (Cherney 2011, 52; Usiskin 2003).

Cherney asserts that Joseph's affiliation with the *Bund* had a lasting impact on Weinzweig, and he notes that the composer identified strongly with his father's political activities in Poland. Specifically, he stresses that Weinzweig's personal documents attest to the influence his father's political beliefs had on his musical activities, as evidenced in written notes about his musical, and at times political, thoughts and musings (Cherney 2011, 48). In particular, a document entitled "Political-Music Activist" reveals Weinzweig's sympathetic ties to his father's Bundist ideology, as Cherney explains:

> One of these documents consists of handwritten notes comprising two short lists on a small scrap of paper […] The first list, under the subheading "statements," includes six of his compositions which had some sort of political reference […] this list begins with (1) "Father jailed in Poland" and (2) "Saco [sic] and Vinzetto [sic] death march age 14" (Cherney 2011, 48).

Cherney believes these notes are significant, and suggests that Weinzweig's strong affinity with his father's political ideologies likely impacted his "quasi-political activities as a composer" (Cherney 2011, 48). Thus, as evidenced by both

[15] According to historian Ian McKay, socialist ideology during the interwar period embraced the causes of the working class, in which socialism "became tightly defined as revolutionary seizure of power by a working class under the leadership of a vanguard party" (2005, 147). As further discussed by James Naylor, socialism and the political left in Canada during the interwar period was largely organized into two currents: The Communist Party of Canada (CPC) and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). While both organizations maintained varying views and perspectives concerning socialist ideology, they were both founded on the rejection of liberal individualism and capitalism, and socialists of the interwar period sought to both foster and defend a working-class identity (Naylor 2016, 9, 15). For further information on socialism in Canada, McKay (2005) and Naylor (2016). For further discussion on radical socialist ideology as practiced by Toronto's Jewish community during the labour movement, see Frager (1992) and Wolters-Fredlund (2002).

Weinzweig's early exposure to radical socialist ideologies and his own personal documents, it is likely that he espoused leftist and socialist political values that were similar to those of his father.

Artistic Ties: The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir

Despite his educational and familial ties to radical socialism, it is also important to consider how Weinzweig's artistic surroundings during the interwar period may have informed his political and artistic views. As John Beckwith explains, while living in Toronto, Weinzweig was influenced by leftist artists; as he writes "a sympathizer, though not an activist, [Weinzweig] was affected by the leftist politics of Toronto artists and writers in the between-war era" (Beckwith 1997, 180). This likely includes the prominent Toronto Jewish Folk Choir (TJFC), which became the voice for leftist ideals and assumed an important political identity during the late 1930s and early 1940s (Wolters-Fredlund 2002, 21). Established in 1925, the TJFC consisted primarily of working-class Jews, and according to Wolters-Fredlund, the choir was affiliated with Toronto's Jewish Labour League (2002, 21). A communist-oriented social and cultural organization, the Jewish Labour League promoted Yiddish culture and traditions, and supported cultural organizations such as the TJFC which promoted leftist ideology (Frager 1992, 54). As Wolters-Fredlund further explains, the repertoire performed by the choir reflected their socialist views, and included songs which supported socialist ideals of the working class, populism, and songs which supported Soviet ideology and political policy (Wolters-Fredlund 2002, 22-24).

Political Ties: The National Council for Canada-Soviet Friendship

In addition to his personal, educational, and artistic ties to radical socialism, it is important to take into consideration Weinzweig's political affiliations during the 1940s. According to Cherney, Weinzweig was possibly a member of the National Council for Canada-Soviet Friendship during the early 1940s, as evidenced in a dedication for his piece *Fanfare*. Performed for a concert sponsored by the organization during the Congress of Canada-Soviet Friendship in Toronto in 1943, the piece is dedicated "to the spirit of Leningrad and Stalingrad, to the present success and ultimate victory of the people of the Soviet Republics" (Cherney 2011, 59).

While this biographical evidence demonstrates how Weinzweig likely imbibed radical socialist (and even communist) values circulating in Toronto during the 1930s and 1940s, it does not elucidate how his musical works were influenced by these ideals. Scholars including Elizabeth Crist have considered how music, particularly concert music, can be reflective of a composer's political beliefs. In her study of Aaron Copland's works, Crist considers how Copland's alignment with the political left and Popular Front movement during the 1930s is pervasive in his musical works at this time. In particular, she claims that "concert music surely can articulate the aesthetic and ideological positions of the Front," and stresses that leftist composers such as Copland not only adapted and modified pre-existing musical forms and genres to suit current political and social contexts, but many "experimented with genres easily linked to radical politics" (Crist 2005, 10). Thus, in light of Crist's observations, the following discussion will consider how Weinzweig's scoring for *New Homes for Old* may have been similarly informed by Popular Front ideals of populism, accessibility, intelligibility, and social relevancy. In doing so, it will demonstrate how Weinzweig's alignment with these ideals prompted him to simplify his serial approach in favor of a more accessible and palatable musical language which reflect the aesthetic and ideological views of the Popular Front.

Writing for the People: Populism and the Popular Front

The Aesthetics of Populism

According to historian Michael Denning, "populism" was one of the central tropes of the Popular Front during the 1930s, one which "dissolved a politic of class conflict, of workers mobilization and self-organization, and obscured the divisions of ethnicity, race, and gender in an imagined unity of the 'people' and the 'people's culture'" (Denning 2010, 124). The values advocated by the Popular Front ideal of populism encouraged several composers to temper their modernist idioms in favor of a more accessible, comprehensible, and socially relevant musical language, and to create works which would appeal to the "people." The emergence of the populist ideals perpetuated by this movement had a significant impact on modern composers actively composing during the interwar period, both in Europe and America.[16]

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16 Due to both the scope of this article and the North American focus of the topic under study, this article does not explore possible European influences with regards to the Popular Front aesthetic. Studies which explore the influence of Popular Front aesthetics on music making in Europe include Christopher Moore's article on the impact of socialist realism and the Popular Front in France (2008). In his article, Moore explores how ideologies and cultural policies of socialist realism which informed the Front greatly influenced the musical aesthetic of several French modernist composers, including Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), Arthur Honegger (1892-1955), Louis Durey (1888-1979), George Auric (1899-1983), and Charles Koechlin (1867-1950). These composers were aligned with the pro-Soviet cause, composing works which embraced the socialist realist and populist ideals of the political movement; these works not only exhibit elements of simplicity and accessibility, but were ultimately intended to unite the French people under the anti-fascist banner. For further information, see Moore (2008; 2006; 2007) and Fulcher (2005).

Concern for audience accessibility and social relevancy also informed the works of American modern composers such as Charles Seeger (1886-1979), Henry Cowell (1897-1965), Ruth Crawford (1901-1953), Norman Cazden (1914-1980), and Aaron Copland (1900-1990). According to scholars including Carol Oja (2000), Melissa De Graaf (2013), Elizabeth Crist (2003), and Gayle Murchison (2012), many of these composers aligned themselves with the political left during the interwar period, which greatly impacted their modernist aesthetic and language. Specifically, it encouraged them to modify their highly experimental and modern language in favor of a simpler and more accessible aesthetic which embodied the Popular Front ideals of accessibility and social relevancy (De Graaf 2013, 74-78). As a result, composers purposefully simplified their modernist aesthetic and experimental language to accommodate the tastes of the general public, rather than those of the concert hall elite. For Copland, this entailed adopting a "simplified idiom" in his compositional works, one which incorporated accessible and recognizable idioms and genres, and also included the reduction of density of musical textures, tempering dissonant harmonies, and simplifying rhythms (Murchison 2012, 151). As Gayle Murchison also stresses, another important feature of the simplified idiom includes the quotation and integration of vernacular idioms, particularly folk tunes and melodies (Murchison 2012, 151). The incorporation of folk songs is significant, not only because it made modern works more accessible, relatable, and familiar, but it also reflected the ideals of populism and the aesthetic trope of the "people's culture" (Reuss 2000, 130).

Weinzweig and Populism

It is possible, therefore, that Weinzweig was persuaded by similar Popular Front ideals, prompting him to simplify his serial and modern language in his radio works to make what was once a highly inaccessible, elite, and bourgeois musical language accessible to the average Canadian listener, to the everyday "people." Statements made by Weinzweig during an interview with Peter Kambasis further confirms his concern for writing socially relevant music, one which appealed to, and represented the Canadian people:

> Of course you can write for yourself if you want to, you can make your own music for yourself, but it's perfectly natural to want to expose that music to others.

Composing music has a social purpose. Composers use music as hand maiden to send a message. After all, Shostakovich was writing symphonies that reflected the wartime conditions in the Soviet Union in the Second Great War, during the Nazi invasion, and his music and his name had a strong hold on the people of the Soviet Union. So he was a composer of the people, and I would like to be a people composer (Weinzweig 2002).

Thus, as this retrospective statement reveals, Weinzweig ultimately wanted to be recognized as a composer of the "people," an artist who creates socially relevant works which reflect the social, political, and cultural realities of the people for whom he was writing. Moreover, his statement also reveals Weinzweig's belief that music should carry a social message, and serve a political purpose. This further suggests, therefore, that Weinzweig used his radio works to write accessible and intelligible modern music, and to voice his own populist and socialist beliefs through music.

An examination of Weinzweig's work for *New Homes for Old* (NHFO) uncovers his adoption of a musical language which is not only tonal and familiar, but also uses musical elements, techniques, and materials which reflect the simplified aesthetic adopted by leftist artists and intellectuals who were creating artistic works reflective of the "people" and for the "people." Specifically, Weinzweig's scores reveal a gravitation towards simpler melodies, milder dissonances, and straightforward rhythms, which not only differs from his earlier serial aesthetic, but is similar to the simplified idiom used by composers such as Copland at this time. A prevalent feature of the simplified aesthetic used by Weinzweig is the incorporation of folk and vernacular idioms. In his scores for NHFO, Weinzweig draws upon and integrates the traditional music and folk tunes from the various countries featured in the program into his incidental scores, including Polish hymns and dances, Yugoslavian tunes, and Czechoslovakian melodies. According to Keillor, the inclusion of these materials helped underscore the plot of each program, and helped "evoke the flavor of the immigrant's country" (Keillor 2011, 105).

Weinzweig's scores also reveal his inclusion of popular genres including dances, hymns, chants, fanfares, and marches.[17] These materials, such as the traditional Polish hymn tune *Boze Cos Polske* which appears in the "Poland"

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[17] It is important to position Weinzweig's adoption of folk songs and vernacular idioms in these scores in light of the larger international aesthetic trend which emerged during the interwar period. Notably, the use of popular idioms such as hymns, mass songs, chants, and folk songs as an expression of the people's culture was an important element of prevailing socialist and leftist ideals circulating internationally during at this time. During the 1930s, the use of folk and vernacularly idioms were commonly adopted by leftist organizations and parties in the United-States to instill working-class values, and to reinforce populist values; see Reuss and Reuss (2000). The adoption of vernacular, popular, and folk songs as an expression of socialist and populist ideology stems from the Soviet socialist realist doctrine, which was officially adopted as the official aesthetic of the Soviet Union in 1934. Socialist realism was founded upon the belief that music (and art) should serve a social purpose and uplift the masses, and as Christopher Moore explains, "clarity and musical simplicity were virtues in these works" (2008, 476). For further discussion about Soviet socialist realism and its impact on art and music, please see James (1973), Bek, Chew and Macek (2004) and Frolova-Walker and Walker (2012).

program, provides Weinzweig with important reoccurring thematic material for his scoring. In her analysis of the "Poland (1)" score, Keillor explains that Weinzweig was able to "make links through common intervallic patterns" between his proposed tone row and the vernacular materials he quotes in his scoring for this program (Keillor 2011, 105). This includes the prominence of the perfect fourth interval in his row, a reoccurring interval found in both *Bose Cos Polske* and the Polish Krakowiak dance featured in the score for "Poland (1)" (Keillor 2011, 105).

While Weinzweig likely had to include these materials in his scores in order to evoke an appropriate soundscape for each program, he integrates these materials into his scores without forsaking his commitment to modernist idioms and the serial technique. Specifically, by drawing upon his pre-compositional tone row, both intervallically and motivically, Weinzweig was able to intertwine these songs, dances, and hymns into his serial language in his scoring for NHFO. In doing so, he balances his overall modern and experimental idiom with familiar and vernacular materials, making his serial language and aesthetic more palatable, accessible, and familiar for Canadian listeners who would tune in weekly to listen to these works.

Another significant vernacular idiom Weinzweig uses in his scoring for NHFO is the national anthem. Weinzweig quotes the national anthems from various countries in his incidental scores, including the Austro-Hungarian anthem and the Imperial Russian anthem (see Examples 8 and 9). While he utilizes and quotes various anthems in his scoring for the series, Weinzweig emphasizes and draws upon the Canadian anthem most frequently (see Example 10).

Notably, the Canadian anthem becomes an important motivic and thematic element in his scores, and as Keillor explains, he would integrate and blend motifs from the national anthem into his twelve-tone technique, as seen in the opening theme for the series (Keillor 1994, 124). It can be argued, therefore, that his use of the Canadian anthem in his scoring for NHFO further emphasizes the populist quality of his scoring for the series; not only was it highly familiar to Canadian listeners, but it was also musically representative of the Canadian people. In doing so, Weinzweig's scoring not only reflected the essence of the Canadian people tuning in to listen to this drama; but moreover, it embraced the arrival of the "new" Canadians portrayed in these dramas.

Conclusion

Although this article provides but a brief glimpse into Weinzweig's work for wartime radio drama, it sheds a necessary light on one of the most prolific and fruitful periods of his career, and demonstrates how his political values and affiliations may have significantly impacted his

Example 8: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, Program nº 1, "Czechoslovakia," mm. 1-4. Austro-Hungarian anthem, piano reduction.

Example 9: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, "Russia," Imperial Russian anthem" Title A, mm. 1-8.

Example 10: John Weinzweig, *New Homes for Old*, "Czechoslovakia," Title O Canada I, mm. 1-4. Canadian national anthem, piano reduction.

compositional decisions at this time. Specifically, it has shown how Weinzweig's early and continued exposure to radical socialist ideals may have prompted him to modify his serial technique in favour of a simplified musical language which embraced the contemporary ideals of leftist socialism and Popular Front ideals of populism. More importantly, however, this article demonstrates how working for the CBC during the Second World War not only helped Weinzweig acquire a national audience for his works, but ultimately provided him with an artistic outlet through which he could safely express and voice his political views. In doing so, this article shows how the study of Weinzweig's radio works, using both a cultural-historical and socio-political lens, offers a new and enlightening perspective through which we can better understand his life, career, and works.

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