Viktor [Victor] Zuckerkandl

born Vienna, July 2, 1896; died Ascona, Switz., April 24, 1965

Documents associated with this:
- Correspondence
- Diaries

Austrian musicologist, critic, and writer on music.

Career Summary

The son of Viennese-Jewish intellectuals – his father, Otto, being a medical doctor and Professor at the University of Vienna – Zuckerkandl studied piano with Richard Robert, and embarked on the study of musicology and art history at the University of Vienna in 1914. Those studies were interrupted by war service first in Italy (1915–16), then on the Russian front (1916–18, during which time he reports having seen his father and mother in Lemberg (OJ 2/3, p. 393)). The war over, he married Marianne Bachrach in 1918. From then until 1927, he was active as a conductor in the opera house and concert hall in Barmen, Elberfeld, and Vienna, and directed the Philharmonic Chorus in Vienna 1926–29. In 1927 he took his PhD with a dissertation *Prinzipien und Methoden der Instrumentation in Mozarts Werken* [Principles and Methods of Instrumentation in Mozart Works] under Guido Adler. From 1927 to 1933, he worked as music, literature, and art critic in Berlin for the *Ullstein Blätter*, and thereafter taught briefly at the Vienna Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst. He was acquainted with, among others, the conductors Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer, and Wilhelm Furtwängler.

In 1938 he left Austria for Stockholm, and in late 1939 emigrated to the USA, where he taught mathematics, philosophy, and music theory variously at Wellesley College, near Boston (–1942), the New School of Social Research in New York (1946–48), and St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland (1948–64). For the latter institution, he developed and taught a course especially for the liberal arts student—a course that has been taught there with its accompanying textbook, *The Sense of Music*, ever since. He received six years of scholarships from the Bollingen Foundation for research into "the nature, structure, and significance of the tonal language [of] the great composers," which resulted in two of his book publications. In 1960–64, he gave lectures at the Casa Eranos, in Ascona, Switzerland, where he settled in 1964. After the death of his first wife, he married Gertrude (Gerty) Bamberger (1904–65: former pupil of Felix Salzer at the *Neues Wiener Konservatorium*, sister of the Schenker pupil Carl Bamberger, and who had taught ear-training at the *David Mannes Music School* in New York) in the 1964, following a thirty-year acquaintance.

In the open letter for Gustav Mahler a digest of which was published in the *Neue Freie Presse* for May 25, 1907, seeking to persuade Mahler not to resign his position at the Vienna Court Opera House, among the 69 signatories (which included Schenker, Moriz Violin, and Schoenberg and many other distinguished names in music, literature, the theater, and visual arts) appear the names of his famous anatomist uncle and journalist aunt "Hofrat Professor Dr. Emil Zuckerkandl [and] Bertha Zuckerkandl."
Zuckerkandl and Schenker

Zuckerkandl's initial introduction to Schenker, perhaps by Richard Robert, was on September 24, 1914 (OC 1/16, p. 720). Sometime in 1914 he took counterpoint lessons briefly with Eusebius Mandyczewski (OJ 1/7, p. 840), but then embarked upon study with Schenker in October 1914, taking lessons throughout the 1914/15 season, until in August 1915 he was called up and sent to the Italian front line. While at the front, he read Schenker's latest work, kept abreast of music journals, and corresponded with Schenker, visiting him on at least one period of leave. After the war, he seems not to have resumed instruction with Schenker. In June 1919, Hans Weisse reported that Zuckerkandl, with Paul Breisach, was taking instruction in "modern instrumentation, especially that of Richard Strauss," from the conductor Georg Szell (OJ 2/14, p. 2080).

In the acknowledgements to his first book, *Musikalische Gestaltung* (1932), Zuckerkandl states: "For the musical conception that ultimately lies at the heart [of this book] I have the teaching of the great theorist Heinrich Schenker to thank" (p. VII), in reaction to which Schenker remarked: "A great and delightful surprise to me was Viktor Zuckerkandl's new book and his commitment to me as expressed in the Foreword. I conclude from it that [mentioning] Schenker clearly no longer signifies peril for life and limb, but instead a protection" (OJ 89/5, [13], December 17, 1932). In his *Sound and Symbol*, vol. 1 (1956), Zucherkandl declares: "While Hanslick connected the concept of motion with a shallow and rigid concept of form, we find a far more fruitful linking of the two ideas, form and motion, in the work of the greatest musical theorist of our time, Heinrich Schenker, who understood the musical work of art as a complex kinetic organism." (p. 78). Later in the same book, he speaks of repetitions that "are hidden in the inmost depths of the very tones, whose presence was first pointed out by Heinrich Schenker, and in which the miracles of the organic formation of great masterpieces are revealed." (pp. 212–13).

Under the pseudonym Viktor Zauner, Zuckerkandl wrote the article "Wort und Ton bei Mozart" in *Der Dreiklang* ii (May 1937), 41–52.

Correspondence with Schenker

Of the correspondence from Zuckerkandl to Schenker, three letters survive as OJ 15/34 (undated, probably 1912/13; undated, probably 1914/15; January 14, 1918). At least two non-extant postcards from Schenker to Zuckerkandl are recorded in Schenker's diary, the tone of one of which ("some jokes about Adler's latest presumptuousness: a 'double-eagle joke'", December 10, 1916) suggests cordiality between the two men. Their communications while Zuckerkandl was fighting on the front line, especially OJ 15/34, [3] and diary entries, are of great interest.

Bibliography: Zuckerkandl's Book Publications:

*Musikalische Gestaltung der grossen Opernpartien: jugendlich-dramatisches Fach* (Berlin: Max Hesse, 1932)
*Die Weltgemeinschaft der Juden* (Zürich: Die Liga, 1938)
Vom musikalischen Denken: Begegnung von Ton und Wort (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1963)
(and many articles in journals)

Sources:
NGDM2 (2001 and online)
OeML Online

Contributors:
Marko Deisinger and Ian Bent

Correspondence

Zuckerkandl asks to call on Schenker.

Zuckerkandl reports on life in the military.

Jonas reports from Berlin on a lecture given shortly before in Munich to introduce Schenker's teaching. Requests a letter of recommendation for use in Berlin.

Weisse is delighted by the chance to rehearse his forthcoming lecture at Schenker's apartment. His Sextet will be performed at the Musikverein in Vienna; he goes through a list of Schenker's circle of adherents who might be invited to his forthcoming lectures at the Central Institute for Music Education and Teaching in Berlin.

Schenker thanks Hoboken for the lesson fee, and reports that as he worked through Brahms's file of Oktaven und Quinten, he found a piece of work in his own hand! — He reports progress on Der freie Satz.


Schenker cautions Jonas that he detects "something afoot" with Hoboken and
his wife. — Mentions Hans Wolf's reentry problems and reports on German students coming to him. — An article on Schenker has been included in Spanish Enciclopedia universale. — Reports on Zuckerkandl, Breisach, von Cube, and Weisse.


Miss Elias thanks Mrs. Schenker for photographs, and regrets having missed her phone calls. — She hopes Mrs. Schenker will recuperate in the spa house. — She reports that Mrs. Schenker's wishes have been carried out with regard to Heinrich's gravestone and remarks on the beauty of the inscription. — She comments on an article by Victor Zuckerkandl, and reports her own activity in graphing a piano piece by Schenker and re-graphing Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata.

Diaries

Diary entry by Schenker for 24 September 1914

Diary entry by Schenker for 25 September 1914

Diary entry by Schenker for 1 October 1914

Diary entry by Schenker for 22 October 1914

Diary entry by Schenker for 26 October 1914

Diary entry by Schenker for 30 November 1914

Diary entry by Schenker for 28 December 1914

Diary entry by Schenker for 7 November 1917

Diary entry by Schenker for 14 December 1917

Diary entry by Schenker for 1 January 1918

Diary entry by Schenker for 3 January 1918

Diary entry by Schenker for 17 January 1918

Diary entry by Schenker for 12 June 1919

Diary entry by Schenker for 22 November 1930

Diary entry by Schenker for 27 November 1930

Diary entry by Schenker for 14 December 1932

Diary entry by Schenker for 18 December 1932