

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Mask of Bourgeois Masculinity and Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*

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Abstract

This article interrogates how Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* and its early reception reflected an uneasiness about the confines of manhood. As an opera with a complex genesis and a difficult reception history, *Die Gezeichneten*'s allure comes from its resistance to being reduced to only one thing. I nevertheless seek to locate this opera around the time of its premiere towards the end of the First World War. I contend that *Die Gezeichneten* and its immediate reception charted a key transition in Austro-German masculinity. Specifically, the opera's early performances marked a move away from the period's normative models of bourgeois masculinity (and their corresponding ideas about appearance, health and nationhood) and towards an alternative masculinity preoccupied with degeneracy. I focus on the opera's masks, arguing that, through acts of concealment and disclosure, the opera's two male protagonists struggle to negotiate expectations of an emotionally controlled modern manhood, calling attention to wartime anxieties about what it meant to be a man. Such anxieties resulted in a hardening of attitudes towards the masculine gender, which influenced contemporary music criticism too. *Die Gezeichneten*'s highly sensationalist early reviews relied on a language of degeneracy. Yet I suggest that the opera's initial reception captured a critical moment in this language's history before it was subsumed under Nazi ideology.

Keywords: Masculinity; Degeneracy; Degeneration; Music criticism; Franz Schreker; First World War

The opera *Die Gezeichneten* ('The Marked Ones' or the 'Stigmatised') by the Austrian composer Franz Schreker (1878–1934) straddled the pre- and post-First World War periods. Schreker wrote the opera's text himself in 1911, after his Viennese contemporary Alexander Zemlinsky requested a libretto about 'the tragedy of the ugly man'.¹ He

¹ Zemlinsky's request followed Schreker's *Der Geburtstag der Infantin*, a dance-pantomime after Oscar Wilde's 'The Birthday of the Infanta' for the *Kunstschau* of 1908. As Lewis Wickes argues, Zemlinsky was clearly thinking about Wilde's short story when he approached Schreker about writing a libretto. Lewis Wickes, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der *Gezeichneten*', in *Die Gezeichneten* (programme to the opera's 1979 Frankfurt production), 188–93; cited in Christopher Hailey, *Franz Schreker, 1878–1934* (Cambridge, 1993), 339 (n. 27).

Wilde's short story is about a hunchbacked dwarf who falls in love with a princess but ends up dying from a broken heart, after seeing himself in the mirror for the first time and realising that his ugliness renders him ridiculous and unlovable. There has been frequent – or, as Sherry D. Lee (2010: 199) writes, 'perhaps too frequent' – comparison drawn between Zemlinsky and Wilde's Dwarf on the basis of Zemlinsky's ultimately thwarted relationship with Alma Schindler and her repeated descriptions of his ugliness: 'He's dreadfully ugly' (Mahler-Werfel

never parted with the text, setting most of it to music before the arrival of the war and finishing the score in June 1915. Wartime conditions pushed back the opera's premiere: it was initially planned to take place in Munich in 1915 but finally materialised in Frankfurt on 25 April 1918.² *Die Gezeichneten's* allure comes from its resistance to being reduced to only one thing.³ While much scholarship on the opera has focused on the pre-war context of its composition,⁴ this article seeks to locate *Die Gezeichneten* around the time of its premiere towards the end of the First World War. The opera's first performances coincided with the end of the war, and its early reception with the birth of the Weimar Republic as well as the short-lived Republic of German-Austria.⁵ The economic, social and psychological consequences of Austria and Germany's defeat informed *Die Gezeichneten's* reception during those years;⁶ indeed, César Saerchinger wrote in 1919 that

In the last year of the war, in the midst of that terrible spring offensive which tore Germany down into the abyss, Schreker's great new work, 'Die Gezeichneten', was produced. The way in which the people received it seemed to say that here, at last, was what they had been groping for.⁷

While 1918 presents no complete break from the world before, I contend that *Die Gezeichneten* and its immediate reception charted a key transition in Austro-German masculinity. Specifically, the opera's early performances marked a move away from the period's normative models of bourgeois masculinity (and their corresponding ideas about appearance, health and nationhood) and towards an alternative masculinity marked by degeneracy.⁸

1998: 253), 'He's as ugly as sin!' (Mahler-Werfel 1998: 259), and 'He was a hideous gnome. Short, chinless, toothless' (Mahler Werfel 1958: 13). Centred on the crisis of self-recognition, Wilde's story was popular among early twentieth-century composers. In addition to Schreker's dance-pantomime, Lee (2010: 204) notes that 'At least three other ballets were composed on it within the next ten years, in Germany, Hungary, and the United States.' Since Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* began as a commission from Zemlinsky, it reflects that fascination with self-recognition, too. Sherry D. Lee, 'The Other in the Mirror, or, Recognizing the Self', *Music & Letters* 91/2 (2010), 198–223; Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Diaries 1898–1902*, trans. Antony Beaumont (London, 1998); Alma Mahler Werfel, *And the Bridge is Love* (New York, 1958).

² Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 81–2.

³ In addition to Wilde's short story, Schreker also drew inspiration from Otto Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) and Frank Wedekind's *Hidalla oder Sein und Haben* (1904). Weininger's intensely misogynistic ideas about women and 'sexual types' have been the subject of several studies on *Die Gezeichneten*, most recently Michael Ewans, 'Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*: Motifs and Meaning', *Opera Journal* 52/1 (2019), 45–67. In the programme produced for its 2018 production of *Die Gezeichneten*, Opernhaus Zürich makes an explicit comparison between Schreker's opera and Wedekind's play; 'Programmabuch "Die Gezeichneten"', Opernhaus Zürich, opernhaus.ch/service/shop/programmabuch-die-gezeichneten/.

⁴ This scholarship includes analyses of modernist subjectivity in the *fin de siècle*, Schopenhauer's Will and Freud's Unconscious, and real-life Viennese personalities in the opera's characters; see, respectively, Sherry D. Lee, 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects', in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, ed. Blake Howe, Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, Neil Lerner and Joseph Straus (Oxford, 2016), 661–83; Arne Stollberg, *Ohr und Auge: Klang und Form* (Stuttgart, 2006), 249–72; Gösta Neuwirth, 'Musik um 1900', in *Art Nouveau, Jugendstil und Musik*, ed. Jürg Stenzl (Zürich, 1980), 89–133.

⁵ These events would leave their marks on Schreker's next opera, *Der Schatzgräber*, which he completed the day after the Armistice, inscribing on its manuscript, 'On the day of the proclamation of the Republic of German-Austria and its annexation into the German Reich!' ('Am Tage der Ausrufung der Republik Deutsch-Österreich und dem Anschluß an das Deutsche Reich!')

⁶ For an analysis of how the war and its consequences shaped Schreker's and, more specifically, *Die Gezeichneten's* Austrian and German reception, see Hailey, *Franz Schreker*, 113.

⁷ César Saerchinger, 'Franz Schreker, An Austrian, Hailed as the Messiah of German Opera', *Musical Courier* (28 August 1919), 17.

⁸ Biddle examines hegemonic bourgeois masculinity in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Austro-German context: Ian Biddle, *Music, Masculinity and the Claims of History* (Farnham, 2011), 157–60.

In order to understand this shifting conception of masculinity, I focus on the opera's use of masks and on the language of degeneracy that critics used to describe its vision of a subversive, anti-bourgeois masculinity. The opera's masks – a recurring but seldom discussed feature of *Die Gezeichneten* – emerged out of a *fin-de-siècle* Austro-German fascination with appearance and concealment;⁹ their arrival onstage challenged the First World War-era pressure on disfigured veterans to uphold a normative standard of masculine beauty by donning masks. Focusing on literal masks and figurative forms of masking (such as a disconnection between appearance and voice), I argue that Schreker's opera called attention to wartime anxieties about manhood. The anxieties resulted in a hardening of attitudes towards the masculine gender, which influenced contemporary music criticism too. In the final part of this article, then, I re-examine *Die Gezeichneten*'s early reception by analysing reviews of its German and Austrian premieres. The highly sensationalist reviews relied on a language of degeneracy, a quality associated with formlessness, excess and artifice, which later became a primary linguistic register of Nazi Germany's fascist regime; Schreker was classified as a 'degenerate' composer. I will argue here that the early reviews captured a critical moment in this language's history before it was subsumed under Nazi ideology. Ultimately, both the opera and the early reviews reflected an uneasiness about the confines of manhood, and they confronted these limitations by deliberately highlighting the attractions of degeneracy.

Bourgeois masculinity in and after the First World War

Physical appearance played an important role in European perceptions of masculinity, even – and perhaps especially – in the middle of a bloody war. The face, in particular, became a site of intense socio-political scrutiny about normative masculinity in the First World War. Since the face was the part of the body least protected against the increased power of artillery in the early twentieth century, facial wounds were not only common but also frequently severe.¹⁰ Moreover, new medical developments enabled the survival of badly injured – including badly disfigured – soldiers who previously would have died. War-maimed faces exposed the vulnerability of the human body, while also representing a frightful encroachment of the war on the home front. As Ana Carden-Coyne writes after Suzannah Biernoff, the 'extreme suffering and the violation to the face, the touchstone of humanity, undercut fantasies about heroic warfare and the capacity of military masculinity to withstand modern technological warfare'.¹¹ While reconstructive surgery hid the damage of warfare to some extent, there were nevertheless facial injuries so awful that men felt it necessary to conceal their broken features

⁹ Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Vienna, specifically, was fascinated by mask as both a device for disguise and a means for traversing social norms. Indeed, Schreker already used masks in the *Casa di Maschere* of his *Der ferne Klang* (premiered in Frankfurt 1912), which reflects the world of Viennese masked balls and Hans Makart's historicist theatrical costumes. In *Die Gezeichneten*, as Gösta Neuwirth writes, Schreker similarly explored Vienna's tradition of masking from Makart to the Art Nouveau through the opera's *Renaissancismus*. But more specifically, Neuwirth speculates that Schreker drew inspiration from Archduke Otto for his two male protagonists, Alviano and Tamare. Archduke Otto was Emperor Franz Joseph's nephew, whose private life was – in the words of Karl Kraus – 'a Viennese attraction' ('eine Wiener Attraktion'). His face was disfigured by syphilis, which he covered up by wearing a leather nose mask. Neuwirth, 'Musik um 1900', 116–19.

¹⁰ Sander L. Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful* (Princeton, 1999), 157.

¹¹ Ana Carden-Coyne, 'Masculinity and the Wounds of the First World War', *French Journal of British Studies* 20 (2015, online), journals.openedition.org/rfcb/305; Suzannah Biernoff, 'Flesh Poems', *Visual Culture in Britain* 11 (2010), 25–47; 'The Rhetoric of Disfigurement in First World War Britain', *Social History of Medicine* 24 (2011): 666–85; Suzannah Biernoff and Jane Tynan, 'Making and Remaking the Civilian Soldier', *Journal of War and Culture Studies* (2012), 277–93.

with masks.¹² Previously a playful device for concealment and for transgressing social norms in the *fin de siècle*, masks acquired a new purpose – and a new set of meanings – as a means to deny the trauma of war. Rather than facilitating re-entry into civilian life, such masks (even carefully crafted artisanal masks) caused facially disfigured soldiers to become the subject of fervent socio-political debate. People not only expressed physical repulsion towards men who wore masks but also – often irrationally – questioned these men’s ability to work. Masks therefore obscured the injuries of war but cast doubt on the men’s socioeconomic values and even moral standards, raising issues that bound good looks with a man’s worth in the evolution of modern masculinity.

Indeed, looking ‘repulsive’ was conceptualised as analogous to ‘being dependent’.¹³ Even though damaged faces do not hinder physical labour in the same way as damaged limbs, the soldiers’ war-torn faces became an obstacle to both the Allies’ and the Central Powers’ post-war economic recovery, because the men simply did not fit the modern image of manhood.¹⁴ As George L. Mosse argues, ‘not only comportment but looks mattered’ in the modern conception of the masculine ideal.¹⁵ To look good was not only to look a part but to *be* a part of the new bourgeois ideology of masculinity that privileged industriousness as well as the social and material achievements that were assumed to follow.¹⁶ Even before the war ended, the militaries of both the Central and the Allied Powers dismissed ‘men who were badly disfigured for the reason that the psychologic effect on other soldiers interfered with discipline’.¹⁷ The post-First World War debate on masculinity and appearance continued in this same vein, connecting a facial injury’s destabilising impact to the loss of financial independence and, consequently, of normative manhood.¹⁸ In this context, where male beauty was closely tied to masculine identity, society and nationhood, the men who returned from the war with mutilated faces lost more than their previously intact physiognomy.¹⁹

This correlation between outward appearance and inner nature came to encompass the private sphere, too. An unsightly face in the bourgeois conception of masculinity indicated not only a compromised ability to work but also an inability to control one’s desires.²⁰ It was in this moralistic pursuit of a highly regulated bourgeois masculinity that the Central Powers’ medical professionals legitimised their encroachment on ordinary men’s sex lives, by citing the need to ensure a steady supply of military power during the First World War.²¹ Sex – and more precisely, state-sanctioned bourgeois sex within the

¹² Katherine Feo, ‘Invisibility: Memory, Masks and Masculinities in the Great War’, *Journal of Design History* 20/1 (2007), 17–27, at 17–18.

¹³ Feo, ‘Invisibility’, 20. The facial disfigurement described here differs from the duelling scars (*Schmisse*) that young men wore as a ‘badge of honour’ in nineteenth-century Austria and Germany, and were later appropriated and venerated by the Nazis. Not all scars were created the same and treated equally. For example, as Sander Gilman writes, when Jewish men were barred from Christian duelling fraternities at the end of the nineteenth century, ‘For a Jew to bear a facial scar is to hide his sickly essence from the mainstream’ (123–4). Similarly, unlike duelling scars, surgical scars (such as those from cosmetic surgeries on ‘Jewish’ noses, especially male Jewish noses, given their association with male genitalia), ‘reveal[ed] the inauthenticity of the body and the effort to “pass” through medical intervention’ (132). Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful*.

¹⁴ Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful*, 18.

¹⁵ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man* (Oxford, 1996), 19.

¹⁶ David Blackbourn, ‘The German Bourgeoisie: An Introduction’, in *The German Bourgeoisie*, ed. David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans (Abingdon, 1993), 1–45, at 9.

¹⁷ Adalbert G. Bettman, ‘The Psychology of Appearances’, *Northwest Medicine* 28 (1929), 184; quoted in Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful*, 162.

¹⁸ Feo, ‘Invisibility’, 20.

¹⁹ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 23.

²⁰ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 59.

²¹ Jason Crouthamel, ‘Male Sexuality and Psychological Trauma’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17/1 (2008), 60–1.

institution of heterosexual marriage – served as a technology for circumscribing permissible forms of masculine behaviour and therefore a German ‘remasculinisation’.²² The wartime image of a soldier was in essence asexual.²³ After all, his love for his country *ought* to transcend his own bodily desire when he was in battle away from his wife, and his innate mental strength *should* prevent him from the supposedly perverse sexual behaviours that were emerging from the psychological traumas of the war. Indeed, the Central Powers’ authorities worked themselves into a frenzy over the licentiousness of the military’s ‘sexual deviants’. Just as Frankfurt Opera was preparing to premiere Schreker’s *Die Gezeichneten*, then, news was spreading on the home front about soldiers’ sexual activities in the horrifyingly bloody trenches.²⁴

Offering no corrective to perceived gender anomalies, *Die Gezeichneten* resisted – in parallel with diverging realms of wartime society – bourgeois standards of masculinity. For example, the *Männerbund* (male society) – a term that describes all-male military or military-adjacent camaraderie with homoerotic overtones in the post-1871 but pre-Second World War context – allowed men to bypass the social conventions of bourgeois masculinity while still appearing faithful to middle-class principles of honour and purity.²⁵ In the sphere of media production, the *Herrenabende* (gentlemen’s evenings) organised by movie companies such as Saturn-Film before the war similarly contributed to subverting hardening ideals of the appropriate male expression of desire.²⁶ Reportedly producing films more tantalising than those of their French competitors, the Austrian Saturn-Film showed not only pornography but also films about bodily deformities and surgical operations.²⁷ Although Austria outlawed the ‘gentlemen’s evenings’ before the war as a result of unwanted international attention, the organisers of these events simply operated out of the sight of state authorities until they re-established themselves in the field cinemas of the First World War.²⁸ Saturn-Film’s interests in the erotic as well as the grotesque contributed to contemporary bourgeois anxieties about what it meant to be a man – about male appearance, sexual desire and the moral injunctions ascribed to both the exterior and the interior of maleness. By refusing to connect bourgeois respectability with national aspirations, Saturn-Film demonstrated support for factions of marginalised society which were ostensibly sexually excessive and strange-looking.

What transpires in *Die Gezeichneten* that puts it in dialogue with institutions such as Saturn-Film? Set in sixteenth-century Genoa, the opera features a crippled, hunchbacked nobleman, Alviano Salvago. His ugliness contrasts sharply with the beauty of the count, Vitellozzo Tamare, who forms a sort of *Männerbund* with a group of sex-driven aristocrats that excludes Alviano. Instead of simply finding homosocial solace, they abduct and rape Genoa’s daughters in a secret grotto underneath Alviano’s paradise island, Elysium. Elysium’s wonder is an externalisation of Alviano’s hitherto unfulfilled erotic desire. Yet in response to learning how his peers have corrupted his idea, Alviano gifts the island to the people of Genoa. In the process, he encounters Carlotta Nardi, the Podestà’s daughter and a talented painter who makes Alviano believe in the possibility of love despite his

²² Crouthamel, ‘Male Sexuality and Psychological Trauma’, 61.

²³ Jason Crouthamel, *An Intimate History of the Front* (London, 2014), 15–20; esp. 15–16.

²⁴ Crouthamel, *An Intimate History of the Front*; Carolyn J. Dean, *The Frail Social Body* (Berkeley, 2000).

²⁵ Crouthamel, *An Intimate History of the Front*, 19. *Männerbund* would become part of a more sinister, hyper-militarised – and homophobic – culture of the Stormtroopers under the Third Reich: Jason Crouthamel, ‘Homosexuality and Comradeship’, *Central European History* 51/3 (2018), 420.

²⁶ S. S. Praver, *Between Two Worlds* (New York, 2005), 72.

²⁷ Leigh Goldstein, ‘Projections of Desire, Saturn’, *Moving Image* 9/1 (2009), 253–6.

²⁸ Michael Achenbach, ‘Die Geschichte der Firma Saturn und ihre Auswirkungen auf die österreichische Filmzensur’, in *Projektionen der Sehnsucht*, ed. Michael Achenbach, Paolo Caneppele and Ernst Kieninger (Vienna, 2000), 75–102, at 99.

appearance. She wishes to – and does – paint Alviano. Yet as soon as she finishes her painting, she appears to lose interest in the ugly protagonist and runs away from their betrothment. The story culminates in the uncovering, in front of all the Genoese, not only of the criminal sexual activities hidden beneath Elysium but also of Tamare's devouring of Carlotta. The heartbroken Alviano stabs his romantic rival to death, just as the dying Carlotta wakes and calls out to Tamare. Scholars such as Michael Ewans have focused on the opera's triangular romance, declaring the opera's key themes to be 'love and loss'.²⁹ Here I wish to interrogate what lies beyond this amorous entanglement: namely, the opera's treatment of masculine gender stereotypes and what they say about early twentieth-century politics of degeneracy.

The opera presents to its contemporary audience figures onstage that resist narratives of normative manhood. Adrian Daub writes that the presence of an ugly character in early twentieth-century opera represents a revolt against the totality – 'the overweening integration and the overweening Germanness' – of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*.³⁰ Ugliness as 'the only detail amiss in the lavish spectacle' reveals a new, post-Wagnerian perspective that is more sympathetic to the fractured tale of Mime than to the heroic myth of Siegfried. *Die Gezeichneten* is among the works that Daub studies, and it is emphatically enormous even by Schreker's standards: it comprises 30 singing roles (although some parts may be doubled), a chorus, mute actors, dancers and a 120-person orchestra.³¹ However, while I concur with Daub that the presence of a deformed protagonist challenges Wagnerian fantasies of wholeness and grandeur, I suggest that *Die Gezeichneten*'s departure from such fantasies rests not solely on Alviano's appearance but also on music that sometimes falls short of a purported masculine ideal; indeed, the size of Schreker's orchestra is itself already an instrument of musical excess. I contend after David Klein that Alviano's voice is not always beautiful.³² Rather, Alviano sometimes lapses into declamation. Moreover, despite his distinctive ugliness, Alviano is not alone in being confronted with the failure of his own voice. Through acts of concealment and disclosure, both Alviano and Tamare will struggle to negotiate expectations of an emotionally controlled modern manhood, rising above descriptions of them as opposing emblems of beauty and ugliness.

Alviano's masculine masks

Alviano is physically, socially and audibly different. Physically, he is as Daub describes – he stands as a 'solitary' figure and even an object of 'derision or incomprehension' among the opera's outwardly beautiful characters.³³ He is sexually frustrated, and somewhat lonesome even in his own lavish and staffed palace. As a direct reference to Wilde's

²⁹ Ewans, 'Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*', 45, 61. See also David Klein's Weiningerian and Freudian readings of the opera's central sexual relationships, in his '*Die Schönheit sei Beute des Starken*': Franz Schreker's Oper '*Die Gezeichneten*' (Mainz, 2010), 119–40 and 163–85 (especially 174ff.). It should be noted that Klein briefly discusses the masked procession of Act III, describing it as a symbol harbouring the instinctual impulses of both ancient Greece and the Renaissance (182).

³⁰ Adrian Daub, *Tristan's Shadow* (Chicago, 2014), 76.

³¹ Christopher Hailey, Liner notes to Schreker: *Die Gezeichneten*, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Lothar Zagrosek, DECCA 444 442-2 (1995), CD, 25. Franz Schreker, *Die Gezeichneten* [vocal score] (Vienna, 1916), 2. By comparison, Schreker's *Das Spielwerk und die Prinzessin* asks for only 19 singers and *Der Schatzgräber* 21. Contemporary operas set in the Italian Renaissance are often smaller still: Pfitzner's *Palestrina* requires 19, Schillings' *Mona Lisa* 15, and Zemlinsky's *Eine florentinische Tragödie* merely 3 and without a chorus. Franz Schreker, *Das Spielwerk* [vocal score] (Vienna, 1919); Schreker, *Der Schatzgräber* [vocal score] (Vienna, 1918); Hans Pfitzner, *Palestrina* [study score] (Mainz, 1916); Max [von] Schillings, *Mona Lisa* [vocal score] (Vienna, 1914); Alexander Zemlinsky, *Eine florentinische Tragödie* [vocal score] (Vienna, 1916).

³² Klein, '*Die Schönheit sei Beute des Starken*', 288–309.

³³ Daub, *Tristan's Shadow*, 66.

'The Birthday of the Infanta' and in an act of self-denial, Schreker's Alviano has 'banished mirrors from his apartments', as someone 'who hates himself, who flees from himself'.³⁴ The libretto indicates as much early in the opera: for example, during Alviano's first meeting with the Podestà's family at his banquet, organised to initiate the gift of Elysium (Act I scene 4). At this meeting, the Podestà marvels at the house before he introduces his wife and daughter to Alviano,³⁵ evidencing their unfamiliarity and Alviano's self-seclusion (notwithstanding that there are, of course, dynamics of class difference in play, with the elected representative of middle-class Genoese finding himself in the middle of an aristocratic palace). Crucially, too, while the rest of the noblemen appear to socialise regularly at Alviano's house, they are not necessarily there *because* of Alviano; indeed, Alviano only learns about the true horror of his fellow noblemen's sexual adventures at the beginning of the opera.³⁶ Alviano's aristocratic status and his grand palace allow him to be at the centre of Genoa's high-status social scenes. However, the opera's libretto repeatedly points to not only his sexual frustration but also his social alienation.

This alienation is musically audible. At first hearing, Alviano's music is unremarkable: in Daub's description, he can 'sing just as beautifully as everyone else', fulfilling what Sherry D. Lee calls 'the fundamental operatic requirement of beautiful singing'.³⁷ In both the orchestra and the vocal part, his music nevertheless reveals more than meets the ear about his psychic interior. As the curtain opens on Act I scene 1, for instance, the restless (*hastig*, 'hurried') Alviano is in a heated discussion with his fellow noblemen about their appalling crimes of abduction and rape. Straight away, this character – who is, in Daub's terminology, a reiteration of Mime rather than Siegfried – is compromised by the almost sinister-sounding opening from the bassoons and horns (4 bars before rehearsal 1). Then the intertwining orchestral figures in steps, thirds and turns in close range, in the initial 21 bars alone, insinuate a character whose bewilderment drives him in circles. Alviano's voice, too, differentiates him from his fellow noblemen in this opening scene. While his first 'somewhat melodious line' (*einigermassen melodiöse Linie*) only emerges after ten bars, the rest of the noblemen's more sustained phrases instantly and collectively create a sense of 'endless melody'.³⁸ As Klein contends, the broken syntax of Alviano's first sentences reflects the character's fragmented psyche; his voice, which resists the safety of bel canto singing, indicates a deeper and more complex personhood.³⁹ The bel canto emerges when Alviano conceals aspects of himself that might render him a weak, unstable and nervous man. The unremarkableness of his bel canto hence masks his insecurity.

Masks feature concretely and figuratively in *Die Gezeichneten*. They allow for an exploration of the relationship between exteriority and interiority – between 'surface appearance and inner nature' – which was already fundamental to *fin-de-siècle* aesthetic

³⁴ Alviano confesses to Carlotta in the Atelier scene of Act II: 'Mir – mir – der sich selbst hasst, der sich flieht, der aus den Räumen, die er bewohnt, die Spiegel verbannt!' Unless otherwise stated, I use Gery Bramall's 1995 translation for the DECCA recording of *Die Gezeichneten* (DECCA 478 4157).

³⁵ The Podestà says [*very cordially*] Your humble abode! Noble Signor Salvago, you are too modest. The splendour of the rooms through which we have passed is surely unrivalled throughout Genoa ... This is my wife and this my child, my beloved daughter Carlotta.' ([*sehr herzlich*] Euer schlichtes Haus! O edler Signor Salvago, Ihr seid zu bescheiden. Die Pracht der Räume, die wir durchschritten, hat wahrlich nicht ihresgleichen in Genua ... Und hier mein Weib und mein Kind, meine vielliebe Tochter Carlotta.)

³⁶ Alviano's first words in the opera are 'Stop! Enough! I will hear no more! I am disgusted, appalled!' ('Laßt! Genug! Ich will nichts mehr hören! Es widert mich an, entsetzt mich!')

³⁷ Daub, *Tristan's Shadow*, 67; Lee, 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects', 674.

³⁸ Klein refers to noblemen's ensemble at bb. 69–92; Klein, '*Die Schönheit sei Beute des Starken*', 290 and 292.

³⁹ Klein, '*Die Schönheit sei Beute des Starken*', 289–90. Bel canto has been subject to a range of interpretations and arguably has no fixed meaning, but it is Klein's choice of terminology.

culture, as Lee writes in her comparison of Schreker's opera with Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.⁴⁰ For Alviano, while the uniform bel canto singing of his noblemen peers denotes a normative presentation of masculinity that is not wholly accessible to him, this ugly character's beautiful island of Elysium can similarly be read as a façade. He has envisioned and financed the construction of an externalised mask, the Elysium, through which he seeks self-worth and his own sense of beauty. I concur with Klein that all three of *Die Gezeichneten*'s central characters grapple with the inconsistency of their singing voices, lapsing at times into declamation and even almost speech. Alviano nonetheless uniquely bears the burden of his ugliness. His onstage presence resonates with the contemporaneous necessity of concealing wartime injury. As such, more than a commentary on *fin-de-siècle* aesthetic culture,⁴¹ Alviano's story represents a challenge to the social politics of a technocratic-militarist masculinity that persisted through the tail end of the First World War.

Tamare's masculine masks

In contrast to Alviano's precarious beginning, Tamare starts by singing confidently, and yet he also takes on masks of his own. His singing destabilises the myth of Siegfried because his music is often so exaggerated that it becomes suspect.⁴² Already, in the prelude, the first sounding of Tamare's leitmotif is marked 'with brutal passion' (*Mit brutaler Leidenschaft*) (rehearsal 10), and Lee observes that it modulates from D major to B flat major in its initial four bars, which 'darkens the rest of the theme'.⁴³ Likewise, vocally, this handsome baritone's high-flown singing suggests an attempt to disguise his fears and insecurities about his masculinity with the mannerisms expected of heroic tenors, prompting listeners to ask what might lie behind his carefully stylised voice. He rushes onstage in Act I scene 3 to the sonorous welcome of his noblemen friends, who have just been startled and exasperated by Alviano's announcement about Elysium. Unapologetic about his late arrival, Tamare projects his singing voice against the entire orchestra. His voice is warm and exuberant with four separate expression markings at b. 269 that underscore the potency of his music: for the voice, 'effusive' (*überschwänglich*), and for the orchestra, *Appassionato*, *molto espressivo*, 'spirited' (*schwungvoll*) and 'with strong, lavishly expressive intonation' (*mit starker, überschwenglich gefühlvoller Tongebung*) (Example 1). This handsome character establishes himself straightaway in the richly coloured, exultant key of B (via E) with sustained arches of melodic phrases in the bright upper register of his voice (bb. 269–77). His overly forceful pursuit of beautiful singing has the effect of projecting – as Alviano's bel canto singing does – a normative masculine outlook.

The dialogue with Duke Adorno, the opera's figure of paternal authority, in Act II scene 2 confirms that singing for Tamare functions to maintain a veneer of masculine self-control, and it operates in conjunction with rather than in opposition to non-singing. Two factors support this reading. First, Tamare declaims as Alviano does (as Klein observes),⁴⁴ and Tamare's short and declaimed opening phrases from this scene suggest

⁴⁰ Sherry D. Lee, 'Portraits, Identities, and the Dynamics of Seeing in Berg's Operatic Sphere', in *Alban Berg and His World*, ed. Christopher Hailey (Princeton, 2010), 163–94, at 178. Lee considers how Carlotta shields aspects of herself behind her paintings (179–181); later I explore Tamare's mask as emblematic of masculine posturing.

⁴¹ Lee, 'Modernist Opera's Stigmatized Subjects', 667–8. *Fin-de-siècle* aesthetic culture was already tied to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century eugenic fantasies; for example, Courtney J. Andree, 'Reproducing Disability and Degeneration in the Victorian Fin de Siècle', *Literature Compass* 13/4 (2016), 236–44.

⁴² Wagner's character Siegfried is, of course, also an overblown caricature. Yet, this character is one that has been given the symbolic meaning of a hero. Wagner himself, for example, deemed it appropriate to name his own son after this character.

⁴³ Sherry Lee, 'Gezeichneten: Portrait of the Artist as a Marked Man' in her 'Opera, Narrative, and the Modernist Crisis of Historical Subjectivity' (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2003), 168–201, at 180.

⁴⁴ Klein, 'Die Schönheit sei Beute des Starken', 298.

270

Appassionato, molto espressivo. (schwungvoll)

270

Appassionato, molto espressivo. (schwungvoll)

f mit starker, überschwänglich gefühlvoller Tongebung.

Example 1. Act I scene 3, bb. 269–271. Franz Schreker *Die Gezeichneten* © Copyright 1916 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien / vocal score UE 5690

an emotional terrain that overlaps with Alviano's at his entrance. Second, Tamare is only able to sing with relative ease while he idealises a past of blissful ignorance. His phrases elongate as he reminisces in a Siegfried-like fashion about a time when he knew no suffering. His arching 'arioso, with momentum' (*arios, mit Schwung*) flows above the orchestra's chordal accompaniment (b. 115ff.).⁴⁵ Yet Tamare only resembles Siegfried on the surface. His overdetermined singing takes over the remainder of the scene and exposes his inability to conform to the bourgeois ideal of emotional restraint.⁴⁶ He loses control as he continues. Acutely aware of his self-fashioning, he enunciates in the third person: 'Count Andrae Vitellozzo Tamare offering her his heart and hand.'⁴⁷ (Example 2) With every note accented, his voice almost bursts with anger at the beginning of the descending A minor line, which is made dissonant by the voice's suggestion of G⁷ (bb. 183–86).⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Klein, 'Die Schönheit sei Beute des Starken', 299–300.

⁴⁶ Susan McClary similarly writes about how 'the extravagant sensuality and the extravagant anguish' expressed by Monteverdi's Orfeo rendered him 'effeminate' at a time when men were 'encouraged to stifle their feelings'; Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis, 2002/1991), 50.

⁴⁷ Tamare: 'Ein Graf Andrae Vitellozzo Tamare beut Herz und Hand.'

⁴⁸ Schreker's score does not indicate a sudden burst of the voice. However, given the emotional momentum that has accumulated by this point of the scene and the dynamic increase written in the score for the orchestra immediately beforehand (reaching *sfz*), singers might allow a moment of rupture here. Such rupture is perhaps most audible in Sigmund Cowan's interpretation (Franz Schreker, *Die Gezeichneten*, Cochran, Schmiege, Cowen,

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line for Tamare (bass clef) and the piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line begins with 'Ehr: Ein Graf' and continues with 'Du bist wahr-lich ver-rückt!'. The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and a 7-measure rest, with dynamic markings such as *f*, *sffz (f)*, and *ff*. The second system shows the vocal line for Tamare (bass clef) and the piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line begins with 'An-drae Vi-te-loz-zo Ta-mare beut Herz und Hand Ge-' and continues with 'Du bist wahr-lich ver-rückt!'. The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and a 7-measure rest, with dynamic markings such as *dim.*, *f*, and *mp*. The score is marked with measure numbers 185 and 186.

Example 2. Act II scene 2, bb. 182–186. Franz Schreker *Die Gezeichneten* © Copyright 1916 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien / vocal score UE 5690

The violence of his voice culminates when he declares that he will forget Carlotta only when he has made her his ‘whore’,⁴⁹ reaching F_4 (b. 288) in a full-blown desire for revenge. Tamare’s strained voice disrupts the effortlessness required for the representation of an ideal, making his masculinity not wholesome but instead deviant. Between his overstated machismo and emotional breakdowns, Tamare’s singing produces at best hollow bravado, and his declamatory disintegration confirms the rigidity of his vocal posturing.

Most tellingly, Tamare puts on a literal mask, disguising his vulnerable self. Hidden behind a mask, he resumes his command of lyricism when he reappears in Act III scene 15. Tamare’s theme has been rendered suspect from the beginning, but his music is overstated once again as he regains composure behind his mask. When his orchestral leitmotif is reintroduced in this scene, alongside expression markings including ‘with brutal passion’, the composer further specifies ‘in the Italian style’ (*in italienischer Art*) (b. 660), drawing on the traditional Italian mode of operatic performance and exploiting

Oosterkamp, van Tassel, Dutch Radio Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra, cond., Edo de Waart, Marco Polo [1990] 8.223328-330 CDs). As a comparison, Monte Pederson sings this phrase with a somewhat greater degree of restraint (Schreker, *Die Gezeichneten*, cond. Lothar Zagrosek [DECCA]).

⁴⁹ Tamare says ‘I will forget her ... after this lady, if she does not wish to be my wife, has become my whore!’ (‘Ich will sie vergessen ... bis diese Frau, will sie mein Weib nicht sein, meine Dirne ward!’)

Rufe „Evve Bacche“ auf der Bühne auf. Entfernt vernimmt man noch das Tosen und Stampfen des dahin brausenden Zuges.

Der Graf hat Carlotta erhascht, umfängt sie
660 Mit brutaler Leidenschaft.
(In italienischer Ari.) (Breite Viertel.)

Example 3. Act III scene 15, bb. 659–660. Franz Schreker *Die Gezeichneten* © Copyright 1916 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien / vocal score UE 5690

long-held stereotypes of Italian masculine bravado (Example 3). Schreker taps into German prejudice against Italian opera’s ‘shallow music tailored to the latest fashion’ (as Gundula Kreuzer has summarised).⁵⁰ The superficiality of Tamare’s Italianate sexual prowess appears at odds with German stoicism, and it merely follows Italian operatic clichés.⁵¹ Since Tamare is wearing his mask when Carlotta surrenders to his embrace, she succumbs merely to the idea of a beautiful man and not Tamare. By disguising himself, he essentially admits not only that he needs Duke Adorno’s help, but that he can only successfully navigate the world in the appearance of someone else. Tamare’s multilayered disguises, void of substance, become another means through which *Die Gezeichneten* is critically reflective of the contemporary unease about gender and nation.

Love interest and paternal authority

Some space must be given to two characters in the opera who closely relate to Alviano and Tamare and who obviously shape their masculinities. The first is Carlotta, the opera’s female protagonist, and the second is the above-mentioned Duke Adorno. Carlotta stands between Alviano and Tamare as their mutual love interest and is at different times attracted to and repelled by them. Significantly, her relationships with them undermine rather than affirm heterosexual romance’s promises of modern bourgeois masculinity and its moral integrity, because there is always at least one character who hides their true self in the romantic encounters. For example, in the opera’s Atelier scene, in which Carlotta paints Alviano and makes him bare his inner self by talking him into a rapture, she conceals her own interior as she attributes her works and artistic desires to a female acquaintance (Alviano likewise resists Carlotta’s gaze at first because he is haunted by ideas of normative beauty).⁵² It is only at the very end of the scene, when she faints and in effect forecloses any real possibility of consummating with Alviano, that she unwittingly uncovers a painting of a hand – one she has ascribed to the friend – to reveal her true self.⁵³ Likewise, when she runs away with Tamare after having previously rejected

⁵⁰ Gundula Kreuzer, *Verdi and the Germans* (Cambridge, 2010), 16.

⁵¹ These include ‘tuneful melodies with homophonic accompaniments’. Kreuzer, *Verdi and the Germans*, 15.

⁵² Alviano observes to Carlotta, ‘But if on a glorious day, in a bed full of the loveliest flowers, you were to find a hideous monster which spoils your mood?’ (‘Doch wenn ihr an einem prangenden Tage, in einem Beete voll schönster Blumen, fändet irgend ein scheussliches Untier, das Euch die Laune vergällte?’)

⁵³ Alviano recognises Carlotta’s concealment as he ‘Looks at the picture, starts, understands it, but does not give himself away; he supports her, strokes her like a sick child: solemnly.’ Even though she ultimately ‘draws him softly towards her. They remain in a strangely timid, chaste embrace.’ (Alviano ‘erblickt das Bild, fährt zusammen, begreift, verrät sich nicht, stützt sie, streichelt sie wie ein krankes Kind; feierlich und voll Mitleid ... Sie zieht ihn sanft zu sich empor. Die Beiden verharren in einer seltsam zagen, keuschen Umschlingung.’)

him so cruelly that his voice crumples,⁵⁴ she does so with Tamare in disguise, his identity hidden, as discussed above. Despite her position as a woman artist (remarkable both in terms of Schreker's opera and what was permissible historically at the time), she ultimately becomes a foil for the opera's central male characters.⁵⁵ As Lee observes, Carlotta becomes at the end 'unmistakably a Weiningerian woman, whose complete surrender to sexuality overrides not only rationality and morality but lofty intellectual or creative ideals'.⁵⁶ Her unmasked self is a tool for the opera's examination of manhood.⁵⁷

The opera puts further pressure on normative masculinity via the figure of Adorno. As the opera's chief embodiment of a technocratic-militarist masculinity, he reigns over Genoa by virtue of his title, wealth and private army. He uses his power to enable Tamare's heterosexual romance with Carlotta but to thwart Alviano's – and, in the process, to defend himself.⁵⁸ Adorno offers to pursue Carlotta on Tamare's behalf when Tamare reveals in Act II scene 2 the fragility of his masculinity, having failed to win Carlotta's attention. However, Adorno's defence of Tamare's amorous pursuit is quickly rendered suspect because Adorno can only fulfil his promise dishonestly by covering up Tamare's crimes and blaming Alviano for them. While Adorno appears as a disciplinarian whose restrained high-bass voice is kept within the octave of C₃–C₄, there are glimpses into the tenuousness of this supposedly stoic militarist masculine subject. For example, towards the end of Act II scene 2, as Adorno becomes increasingly agitated by Tamare's descriptions of the crimes that happen underneath Elysium, he progressively loses control of his voice, reaching C₄, D₄ and even E₄ (b. 414ff.; bb. 442–444 especially) (Example 4). With Alviano, since the ugly protagonist's gift of Elysium must be ratified by him and because Alviano is to wed Carlotta at the celebration of his gift, Adorno is in a position to – and does – frustrate Alviano's sexuality. By refusing to endorse Alviano's gift, Adorno prevents Alviano's chance at marriage and at achieving a marker of normative manhood, thereby prolonging the psychological torment of this character.

Act III: The populace in a frenzy

The arrival of the Genoese citizens on the island prompts Act III's rapid succession of 20 short scenes as *Die Gezeichneten* progresses towards its climax. Eventually donning their own masks, the Genoese will play an important role in challenging the parameters of masculinity *in* and *for* the opera. They are a heterogenous group in their age, gender and aesthetic values; they are, in Peter Franklin's description, 'divide[d] variously into potential

⁵⁴ Previously, Tamare gets to interact with Carlotta onstage for the first time in Act I scene 4, and his bel canto singing is troublingly brief. His gentlemanly posturing slips away as Carlotta 'laugh[s]' (b. 416) and 'mock[s]' (b. 447) like a 'spoilt child' (b. 449). Unable to cope with Carlotta's rejection, his voice falls into declamation before it ruptures in frustration. Tamare's hurt masculine ego is made explicit through Schreker's stage direction: 'roughly, very disturbed, forcing the words out' (bb. 462–3). Having completely lost his sense of melody, he abruptly yells: 'Lady, you are the very devil!' (b. 462ff.).

⁵⁵ Lee, 'Portraits, Identities, and the Dynamics of Seeing in Berg's Operatic Sphere', 179.

⁵⁶ Lee, 'Portraits, Identities, and the Dynamics of Seeing in Berg's Operatic Sphere', 180.

⁵⁷ Notably, after Act II scene 2, Tamare will only reappear onstage after Adorno has spoken with Carlotta in Act III scene 10, facilitating Tamare's pursuit of her. Given that Act III scene 15 is the second of the two scenes that Tamare and Carlotta actively share (the first being Act I scene 4), the many narrative segments devoted to Tamare's male circles demonstrate masculinity and homosocial dynamics' centrality to the opera's plot development.

⁵⁸ Indeed, class and politics occupy an important place in this complex opera. Adorno helps Tamare pursue Carlotta because Adorno himself is at risk of being ousted from power if Tamare's evil acts are exposed. Adorno says to Tamare sharply in Act II scene 2: 'The citizens are restless and ill-disposed, and my people [his soldiers] are away in the field.' ('Die Bürgerschaft ist unruhig und arg verstimmt, und meine Leute sind draußen im Feld.')

Example 4. Act II scene 2, bb. 442–444. Franz Schreker *Die Gezeichneten* © Copyright 1916 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien / vocal score UE 5690

aesthetes, conservative art censors and the more passively manipulated'.⁵⁹ As such, the Genoese fulfil two functions. First, they participate in – and push back against – the cultural codification of femininity and degeneracy by their sheer presence, which represents part of the opera's excess and in turn threatens the masculine ideal of restraint; indeed, as Franklin contends, spectacular scenes such as the final ones of *Die Gezeichneten* are indicative of 'Schreker's extraordinary grasp of the implications of feminized theatrical and musical spectacle'.⁶⁰ Second, they test the boundaries of the hegemonic masculinity that circumscribes the two central male characters by observing and commenting on the events of the Act. Given their position as spectators, the Genoese citizens effectively experience the events onstage for the audience in the theatre. *Die Gezeichneten's* Act III therefore offers a metadiscursive turn: the Genoese become the critics within the opera whose voices and opinions allow the composer to answer his critics outside of it. *Die Gezeichneten* opens up possibilities for subverting hegemonic masculinity because it actively plays a part in 'discourse about art and degeneracy in the spirit of the times in which it was written'.⁶¹

Building on Franklin's reading of the opera's treatment of the pre-fascist discourse of degeneracy, I argue here that the Genoese citizens allowed Schreker's 1918 opera to engage directly with contemporaneous anxieties about degeneracy. Franklin points to a moment in Act III concerning a young boy. The instance comes as a mysterious C sharp minor motif leads a small group of rather prudish Genoese citizens onto Elysium in Act III scene 1. The citizens are amazed by the 'paradise' island. However, their hushed, hesitant music indicates an unease about the 'lewd spirits': erotically arranged marble statues, fauns, naiads, bacchantes and nymphs. Schreker has the boy ask, 'Who knows, father, they could be angels?', turning towards his somewhat scandalised parents, 'as if both

⁵⁹ Peter Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*', in *Music, Theatre and Politics in Germany*, ed. Nicolaus Bacht (Aldershot, 2006), 182.

⁶⁰ Peter Franklin, 'Lost in Spaces', *The Opera Quarterly* 29/1 (2013), 19–30. Together with Schreker's 'Casa di Maschere' from *Der ferne Klang*, which is another instance in Schreker's oeuvre that 'welcome[s] its own categorization as "decadent"' (Franklin 2013: 25), I suggest here that *Die Gezeichneten's* final scenes form a part of an early twentieth-century operatic imaginary depository, which might also include Korngold's *Violanta* (premiered in Munich, 1916). Carnavalesque scenes (often set in Renaissance Italy) are strategically deployed to suggest a greater range of permissible activities and moral standards. In Korngold's *Violanta*, the opera's namesake asks her military commander husband Simone to kill Alfonso for seducing her now-dead sister. Yet, in the middle of the opera's Venetian carnival night, *Violanta* also succumbs to Alfonso's seduction. When Simone attempts to stab Alfonso, he ends up killing his own wife instead. Indeed, similar to *Die Gezeichneten*, Korngold's *Violanta* draws upon the rhetoric of disguise, deception and masks: Ben Winters, 'Korngold's *Violanta*: Venice, Carnival, and the Masking of Identities', in *Music, Modern Culture, and the Critical Ear*, ed. Nicholas Atfield and Ben Winters (London, 2018), 51–71.

⁶¹ Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*', 177.

mocking and attempting to relieve their prudery' (Franklin observes).⁶² To take the boy's question seriously: *what if* the spirits are harmless or even good? Indeed, the citizens will willingly entertain that the fleeting tableaux of mythological creatures represent a finer experience than the pictures hanging in the palace of the late Doge Francesco Sforza.⁶³ The aliveness of the island appears to challenge an aesthetic purity signified by the authority of the doge's palace. As Franklin writes, the 'problem of interpretation and categorisation' is explicitly thematised in the opera, specifically through the presence of the Genoese in this opening scene, as 'down-to-earth observers within an over-determinedly "grand-operatic" setting'.⁶⁴ Citing an early prose draft of the opera, Franklin further argues that they – and equally importantly, we, the audience – are the 'Gezeichneten', spellbound by operatic late-romantic charms when we are not supposed to be.⁶⁵ The Genoese boldly claim – for us – their desires, which are governed by the apparent baseness of their senses.

As the Genoese are intoxicated by Elysium, their mood becomes ecstatic and their music wild. A critical shift occurs over the course of several scenes in Act III, in the opera's use of masks and the citizens' engagement with artistic excess: the Genoese appear to leave the stage only to return in 'a grotesque yet splendid procession of masques' as the 'lewd spirits' they feared and admired at the start of the Act (Figure 1).⁶⁶ The shift begins in scene 11 with Carlotta, whose descending sigh-like 'Ah, what a night' and subsequent arch-shaped melodies (b. 518ff.) prove irresistible to all (albeit inaccessible to Alviano).⁶⁷ First echoed offstage by the noblemen Menaldo and Julian/Gonsalvo (the score indicates either), her melodies are then taken up by the choir sopranos' half-murmur (b. 532ff.). Excitement ensues, and the Youth and the Girl act out (in scene 14) the formula of 'courtship – resistance – intense pursuit – final surrender' already outlined in the stage directions at the outset of Act III.⁶⁸ The Youth's musical gestures are reminiscent of Tamare's music, and the young couple's seemingly formulaic liaison ironically underscores the absurdity of heteronormativity and the hegemonic masculine sexual subjectivity it often demands. The whole chorus – the populace 'in a frenzy' – come to gather on the front of the stage until the Youth and the Girl join in with them in their intoxicating 'Oh, what a night!' before they 'hurry away into the night ... joining with delight in the mightily thunderous singing'.⁶⁹ The effect emphasises the spectacle of excess represented by the Genoese, which defies the ideal of masculine self-containedness.

⁶² Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*', 174.

⁶³ 3rd Citizen: 'Under the late Doge Francesco Sforza – God rest his soul, he was a stern ruler – I once assisted with some kind of picture ... Well then – when I came in and saw everything, I recalled the painting – there are lots of them over in the palace – but this here (*indicating the surroundings*) indeed, this is much finer.' Mother: 'Because everything is alive.' (Dritter Bürger: 'Unter dem sel'gen Dogen Francesco Sforza – Gott geb' ihm Ruh's war ein strenger Herr – da hab' ich mal mitgeholfen bei so 'nem Bilde – ... Na, also, – Wie ich da 'rein kam und alles sah, da dacht' ich wieder an das Gemälde – 's gibt im Palast dort deren viele – doch dies hier (*er deutet auf die Umgebung*) wahrlich, ist noch viel schöner.' Mutter: 'Weil alles lebt –')

⁶⁴ Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*', 174.

⁶⁵ Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*', 180, 183. Franklin's scholarship on Schreker locates the composer between a hardening – masculinist – modernist narrative oriented toward the figure of Schoenberg and the cultural discourse of effeminacy and degeneracy that eventually deteriorated into Nazi politics of extermination. Peter Franklin, *The Idea of Music* (London, 1985); Peter Franklin, *Reclaiming Late-Romantic Music* (Berkeley, 2014); also John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (London, 1992).

⁶⁶ 'ein grotesk grossartiger Maskenzug' and 'lockern Geister'.

⁶⁷ 'Ah, welche Nacht!'

⁶⁸ 'Werbung – Abwehr – heftiges Drängen – endliches Gewähren.'

⁶⁹ 'Sie eilen verschlungen, jubelnd in den mächtig einherbrausenden Gesang einstimmend in die Nacht hinaus.'



Figure 1. Photo from *Die Gezeichneten*'s Frankfurt premiere, Act III, 'Eiland Elysium, Maskenzug'. Reproduced by permission of Deutsches Theatermuseum.

The masked procession properly enters in scene 15. The emphatic beauty of the collective singing comments on the extraordinary beauty of Elysium. However, it contrasts sharply with the crumbling voice of Alviano, who conceptualised the island but now finds himself on it with Carlotta nowhere in sight. Elysium's magic comes to full bloom, then, just as Alviano's fear of losing Carlotta intensifies, and his lapses into declamation signal once again an inability to participate in normative masculinity. As one mask – his bel canto voice – slips away, the other – the beauty of Elysium – is clung to tightly, even when it is no longer desirable. The unstable voice cruelly points to the success of Elysium, his externalised mask. Alviano's desperate cries of 'Where is she, my betrothed?' go unheard.⁷⁰ Each of his phrases, which barely sustain two bars (bb. 605²–6³ and bb. 607²–8²), is first obliterated by the chorus's drunken 'Ah ...' (bb. 606–7² and bb. 608–9¹) and subsequently silenced by the orchestra's festive music (b. 609ff.; Example 5). Troublingly, while the Youth's music above already evokes Tamare's, the orchestra actually assumes it 'with brutal passion' and 'in the Italian style' (b. 660ff.). Given that Tamare's music expresses a masculinity that is overblown and hence feigned, the People's masked celebration can similarly be described as overwrought. Critically, Act III scene 15 is also when the masked (hence anonymous) Tamare catches Carlotta and flees the scene with her. The two modes of masculinity represented by Alviano and Tamare will go head to head, with Alviano finding himself, heartbroken and delirious, confronted by the opera's authority figure.

The appearance of the 'Capitano di Giustizia' near the end of *Die Gezeichneten* further pushes back against the German remasculinisation project. Amid Alviano's confusion and

⁷⁰ 'Wo ist sie, meine Braut?'

15. Szene.

605 Doppelt so schnell.

Alviano (hinter der Szene.)

(Von hier ab entwickelt sich ein grotesk großartiger Maskenzug, die Vereinigung der Antike mit der damaligen Zeit – der Renaissance – allegorisch darstellend. Faune blasen dazu auf der Syrinx die Fanfare.) 1. Herolde im Stil der Zeit.

Wo ist sie, mei-ne Braut? (schon entfernter) Sah nie-mand Car-

Sopr.

Alt.

nacht!
Ten.

hen-de Nacht! --

605 Doppelt so schnell.

mp

sfz (mp) *sfz*

mf

p I.H. (hoch)

(*pp*)

Al.

lot-ta? Sah nie-mand Car-lot-ta?

Tenor (hinter der Szene, sehr entfernt.)

Ah!

610

sfz *sfz*

mf (übergreifen)

610

Example 5. Act III scene 15, bb. 605–610. Franz Schreker *Die Gezeichneten* © Copyright 1916 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien / vocal score UE 5690

the People's celebration, the Capitaneo enters in Act III scene 18 as head of Adorno's private army, and his authorial presence only prompts sympathy for Alviano from the citizens. The Capitaneo is an embodiment of Adorno's technocratic militarism and speaks for the 'judges and upholders of the law'. He is essentially Adorno's double, since the two characters, as Schreker's score indicates, can be sung by the same performer. He charges Alviano with the sex crimes for which Tamare and the rest of noblemen are responsible, yet fundamentally he is also accusing Alviano of degenerate excess: of 'being possessed by the Evil one and ... of having bewitched the people'.⁷¹ While the citizens have held varying views about Elysium and despite the fact that they have just taken on Tamare's music, they unite here against the opera's representation of masculine power:

⁷¹ 'Kraft unsrer Macht als Richter und Wahrer des Rechts, dehnen wir aus die Anklag', gegen den Ritter Alviano Salvago, und zeihen ihn, der besessen vom bösen Geist, verfallen des Satans und böser Dämonen Gewalt, der Behexung des Volks.'

You see, that's what it's all about! – They're stealing from us! – They grudge us our pleasure! – Confounded thieves! – Beasts! – (*louder murmurs*) Down with Adorno! ... Alviano, speak! – Defend yourself! – We believe you! – We stand by you! – We will protect you!⁷²

The citizens' comments about theft and intentional depravity here imply a commentary on class conflict and feudalism; indeed, a future study might focus on questions of class division and economic power in the opera, and on these themes in relation to the politics of masculinity in and after the First World War. What is important for the present argument, however, is that when the citizens rally around Alviano, they unanimously show their distrust of paternalism as well as their distaste for the authority's cruelty and macho posturing. The citizens speak as one and implore the opera's audience to sympathise with the opera's most obvious example of deviant manhood. At the end, for all of Tamare's proximity to violence during the opera, it is the ugly protagonist who is driven to commit the ultimate violence on impulse. Alviano fatally stabs Tamare. In this first and final encounter between the two male protagonists of the opera – a moment reminiscent of Wilde's Dwarf's confrontation with the mirror – it is as if Schreker and his audiences confront the horrors of their wartime and post-wartime present.⁷³ Momentarily void of orchestral accompaniment and hence musically alone (bb. 1304–14), Alviano, 'in a completely different voice [is] distraught [and] staggers through the crowd towards the background' (b. 1320ff.). Alviano's 'voicing out' articulates 'the last hope in the face of the brutalizing anonymity of public masculinity, commercial culture, mechanized production' in a fragmenting Austria, as Ian Biddle writes in relation to the *fin-de-siècle* 'masculinity in crisis' (though his focus lies in Kafka's and Mahler's creative expressions rather than Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*).⁷⁴ Drawn to Alviano's cry and his ever more intensely fragile, sonorously feminised, and hence non-German and non-masculine body, audiences are left wondering about Alviano's fate, just as the final D minor chord resounds.

Degeneracy, and what the critics said

Between Tamare's death and Alviano's descent into madness, *Die Gezeichneten* offered its first audiences no moralistic resolution. Instead, it opened up possible forms of alternate masculinity at a time when bourgeois notions of martial maleness reigned supreme. Despite the opera's origin before the First World War and its Italian Renaissance setting, Schreker's earliest audiences heard resonances of the war. A number of Schreker's contemporary critics referenced the war in their reviews of the opera immediately after the premiere, including writers at the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* (Karl Holl), the

⁷² 'Seht Ihr, darauf läuft's hinaus! Man bestiehlt uns! Gönnt uns die Freude nicht! Verfluchte Räuber! Bestien! (*stärkeres Gemurmel*) Nieder Adorno! Tod den Alberghi! Erschlagt sie, die Schufte! Alles Lüge! Er soll sich verteid'gen! Alviano soll reden! Alviano – rede! Verteid'ge Dich! Wir glauben Dir! Wir steh'n zu Dir! Wir schützen Dich!'

⁷³ I thank Christopher Hailey for suggesting the inclusion of this idea. The confrontation between Schreker's two male protagonists as if they are facing themselves in the mirror is a point that Lewis Wickes has argued in his now largely unavailable dissertation, 'Studies on Aspects of Franz Schreker's Opera *Die Gezeichneten*' (PhD diss., Technische Universität, Berlin, 1990).

⁷⁴ Biddle, *Music, Masculinity and the Claims of History*, 185. Biddle builds on Sarah Webster Goodwin, 'Wordsworth and Romantic Voice', in *Embodied Voices*, ed. Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones (Cambridge, 1994), 70.

Dresdner Nachrichten (anonymous) and the *Frankfurter General-Anzeiger* (Hugo Schlemüller).⁷⁵ Schlemüller went so far as to bemoan ‘the most dreadful war’ at the opening of his review.⁷⁶ Although this line was removed when his review was reprinted in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, his initial comment evidences the proximity between Schreker’s stage work and the fears and anxieties brought on by a devastatingly violent though persistently masculinist war. I turn in this section to reviews, like Schlemüller’s, of *Die Gezeichneten*’s first performances in Germany and Austria (in Frankfurt and Vienna respectively), and I focus primarily on reviews collected from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.⁷⁷ Just as Schreker’s opera explores degenerating manhood, several music critics similarly demonstrate a fascination with qualities of decay – of musical aesthetics, national values and gender norms.

Schlemüller’s review was first published in the *Frankfurter General-Anzeiger*. An excerpt of the cellist and composer’s assessment was also included in the booklet of *Pressestimmen* (press commentaries) issued by Schreker’s publisher, Universal Edition (henceforth UE), in May 1918, during the opera’s initial runs. Schlemüller began (as many critics did) by reminding his readers of Schreker’s recent success with *Der ferne Klang* (1912).⁷⁸ His focus then shifts, however, to questions of aural pleasure and material extravagance:

Now with his latest opera, *Die Gezeichneten*, he appears to have achieved the full height of his strange, somewhat extravagant, but deeply and strongly human artistry. He created by himself, from free imagination, his [libretto] book. A poetic work that is, even by itself, a pleasure to read ... Admittedly, however, the composer Schreker has just conjured up the right atmosphere with his music. His music is intoxicating and indulges our senses. The last act [is] ripe with emotionalism [*Temperament*] and unbridled passion.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Holl reminded readers that Schreker’s musical-dramatic intentions were only partially realized ‘due to the many restrictions of the war’ (‘infolge der mancherlei Kriegsbeschränkungen nicht ganz ideales Bild von Schrekers musikdramatischen Absichten’), while the *Dresdner Nachrichten*’s anonymous reviewer wrote that Schreker ‘in the middle of the most terrible wars’ captured ‘a powerful force’s wave of beauty’ and ‘for a brief moment brought Frankfurt’s citizens to an intoxicating frenzy’ (‘Mitten im furchtbarsten Kriege ist eine Schönheitswelle von starker Kraft aufgebraut, und hat die Frankfurter auf kurze Zeit in einen berausenden Taumel versetzt’). Paul Bekker et al., ‘Franz Schreker’s Oper in 3 Akten: *Die Gezeichneten*’ [*Pressestimmen*, press commentaries] (Wien & Leipzig, 1918), 8–9. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB) F3 Schreker 201 (‘Pressestimmen und ähnliches’). Hugo Schlemüller, ‘*Die Gezeichneten*’, *Frankfurter General-Anzeiger* (FGA), 26 April 1918; reprinted in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (NZfM) 85/18–19 (9 May 1918), 108.

⁷⁶ Schlemüller, ‘*Die Gezeichneten*’ (FGA): ‘In the midst of the most dreadful war, this drama of longing unleashes our own longing for the Elysian fields where peace and joy reign’ (‘Inmitten des furchtbarsten Krieges entfesselt dieses Sehnsuchtsdrama doppelt stark unsere eigene Sehnsucht nach seligen Gefilden, wo Friede und Freude herrschen’). I thank Mathias Jehn of Goethe Universität Frankfurt for helping me access the *Frankfurter General-Anzeiger* archive at the Universitätsbibliothek J. C. Senckenberg.

⁷⁷ I relied on both digital and on-site collections of these two libraries, which are the ‘Zeitung on-demand’ database and the Zeitungsbteilung (Westhafen) of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, and the ‘ANNO Historische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften’ database and the Musiksammlung of the ÖNB. The booklet of *Pressestimmen* cited in fn. 75 plays a critical role in this article. I came across this document towards the end of my archival research, having examined a broader set of reviews (including those that are excerpted in the *Pressestimmen*).

⁷⁸ Schlemüller also mentions Schreker’s densely symbolist and – therefore, to the writer – less successful *Das Spielwerk und die Prinzessin* (double premiere in Frankfurt and Vienna, 1913).

⁷⁹ Schlemüller, ‘*Die Gezeichneten*’ (NZfM), 108: ‘Jetzt scheint er mit seiner neuesten Oper “*Die Gezeichneten*” die volle Höhe seiner merkwürdigen, etwas extravaganten, aber menschlich tiefen und starken Künstlerschaft erreicht zu haben. Er schuf sich selbst nach freier Erfindung sein Buch. Ein poetisches Werk, das zu lesen schon allein ein Genuß ist ... Freilich der Komponist Schreker hat mit seiner Musik erst die rechte Stimmung

The remarks on Schreker's 'strange', 'somewhat extravagant' and 'intoxicating' sounds are noteworthy, as these qualities stand in fundamental contrast to the 'chastity, earnestness, and self-control' emphasised by modern bourgeois masculinity.⁸⁰

This contrast – and the connection between a degenerate musical aesthetic and a degenerate nation – was sometimes made even more explicit in the early reception of the opera. In February 1920, when *Die Gezeichneten* arrived in a Vienna that was no longer the centre of an empire but instead only of a small – and deeply insecure – republic, the organist, composer and pedagogue Max Springer brazenly contrasted the opera's supposed degeneracy with the wholesome healthiness of true German art. In his review for Austria's Christian Social newspaper, the *Reichspost* (a leading antisemitic publication), his desire to affirm a strong Greater Germany is immediately apparent:

While the essence of German music is strengthened by the primal source of melody and rhythm, out of which it draws an indestructible health and vitality to become soul-infused art [*Seelenkunst*], all of the newer artefacts are built on pathologically over-refined culture, are ill-defined by the nervous stimuli of colour and sound, [and] draw their main nutrients from decadence and weakness. While German art laughs from the blue eyes of a child, flourishes in the bright sunshine of a German spring day, joyous in the forest and meadow, and is found in the most free and wholesome of nature, the nervous art [*Nervenkunst*] staggers on in its own murky, self-consuming glow, most preferably under the oppressive tropical sun of exotic countries, or it blossoms out of the glaring gleam of a greenhouse. Franz Schreker counts among our most sublime nervous artists, and is above all the best one.⁸¹

Presented here are discursive clichés of degeneration. Springer juxtaposes musical 'health and vitality' with the aesthetics of pathology, illness and nervousness, equating the former with the Germans' innate virtues and the latter with foreigners' destructive artificiality. To Springer, Schreker problematically belonged to the second group and was seen as one of its leaders.

The composer himself was prepared for such criticisms. Amid the intensification of nationalist sentiment brought on by Austria and Germany's defeat in the First World War, Schreker was aware of the effect that the war would have on *Die Gezeichneten's* immediate reception. With more than a hint of wistful self-irony, he therefore commented on both his own un-Germanness and *Die Gezeichneten's*:

I succumbed – miserable, unpatriotic, un-German fellow that I was, under the spell of my work – to the ruinous influence of Southern magic, and gave Italianate colouring to the Italian setting! The war came, and popular feeling carried over destructively

erweckt. Seine Musik ist berauschend und sinnebetörend. Im letzte Akte voller Temperament und ungezügelter Leidenschaft.'

⁸⁰ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 79.

⁸¹ Max Springer, 'Schreker's neue Oper', *Reichspost*, 28 February 1920 (morning edition), 1: 'Während das Wesen der deutschen Musik an dem Urquell der Melodie und des Rhythmus erstarkt ist, und aus ihm unverwüstliche Gesundheit und Lebenskraft gesogen hat, zur Seelenkunst geworden ist, sind alle diese neueren Kunstprodukte Gebilde einer ins Krankhafte überfeinerten Kultur, sind in Farbe und Klang umgesetzte Nervenreize, ziehen ihre Hauptnahrung aus Dekadenz und Schwäche. Während die deutsche Kunst aus blauen Kinderaugen lacht, im hellen Sonnenschein eines deutschen Frühlingstages gedeiht, sich froh in Wald und Wiese ergeht, und in Gottes freier Natur am wohlsten befindet, wankt die Nervenkunst mit flüssigem Blei in den Adern, an der eigenen trüb lohenden Glut sich verzehrend, am liebsten unter der drückenden Tropensonne exotischer Länder oder holt sich ihre grellschimmernden Blüten aus dem Treibhaus. Franz Schreker zählt zu unseren sublimsten Nervenkünstlern und ist, um es vorweg zu nehmen, der Besten einer ...'

into art. So I became an 'Internationalist' ... The collapse of Germany, even the decline of our culture, is clearly presaged in the music and in the degenerate character of this work.⁸²

In this deliberately overdramatic manner, then, the composer admits that 'the degenerate character' of his storyline and musical aesthetic compromises the self-preservation of a war-torn nation. Indeed, Schreker appears to concede that his music was, as another critic wrote elsewhere, 'morbid', 'languorously sensual' and antithetical to the 'German element' of 'forceful masculinity'.⁸³ Yet by engaging directly with debates about health and nation, Schreker acknowledged and even took discursive control of the 'Internationalist' qualities attributed to him and his music.

There is something profoundly subversive in the ironic tone of Schreker's commentary. I suggested above that *Die Gezeichneten* contributed to contemporaneous efforts from other spheres of cultural production (such as Saturn-Film) to challenge the parameters of acceptable masculinity. Here I argue that the composer's self-ironic analysis of his degeneracy tested, in a similar way, the limits of criticism. Schreker's words point to a larger, early twentieth-century cultural-artistic phenomenon of which he was a part, and to which a number of his critics were evidently receptive, including Schlemüller. To draw further attention to Schreker's intoxicating extravagance, in the same review quoted above, Schlemüller cites the composer's enormous orchestra, which included the piano, celesta, bells and 'all kinds of percussion instruments'.⁸⁴ Yet as the critic continues to describe Schreker's 'blurred, undefined sounds [with] disappearing tonal consciousness', instead of condemning the composer, he positively and unreservedly praises Schreker's artistry, not least in nationalist terms. Schreker was thereby no longer a 'German Debussy'; rather, Debussy should now be called the 'French Schreker'.⁸⁵ The critic ultimately offers his seal of approval; UE would subsequently include Schlemüller's review in its booklet of *Pressestimmen*.⁸⁶ Schlemüller's eventual confident embrace of the composer's musical excess suggests a critical fascination with degeneration.

It is worth lingering over the UE booklet (Figure 2). As would be expected from publicity materials, UE's excerpts of reviews were enthusiastic about *Die Gezeichneten*, and they documented the many standing ovations for Schreker and the performers at the initial performances of the opera. Interestingly, UE was careful to draw readers' attention to certain passages of these excerpts by printing them in bold, making plain the kind of critical sensibility that the publisher – and perhaps even the composer – considered germane to experience of the opera. It is noteworthy that the bold highlight emphasised the language of degeneration ('feverish', 'confusing' and 'overwhelming').⁸⁷ Daub elucidates this particular mode of critical exploration through a separate review of *Die Gezeichneten* by

⁸² Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*', 176. Franklin's translation, originally from H. Schreker-Bures, H. H. Stuckenschmidt and W. Oehlmann, *Franz Schreker* (Vienna, 1970), 22.

⁸³ Hailey, *Schreker*, 173; originally from a 1924 *Nordbayerische Zeitung* review of the Nuremberg production of *Der ferne Klang*.

⁸⁴ Schlemüller, 'Die Gezeichneten' (NZfM), 108: 'Seine Art zu instrumentieren verlangt ein Orchester von riesigen Dimensionen. Klavier, Celesta, 2 Harfen, Glocken und allerhand Schlagzeuge dürfen nicht fehlen.'

⁸⁵ Schlemüller, 'Die Gezeichneten' (NZfM): 'Hat man früher Schreker ob seiner verschwommenen, unbestimmten, dem Tonalitätsbewußtsein entschwindenden Klänge den deutschen Debussy genannt, so wird man Debussy jetzt als den französischen Schreker bezeichnen müssen.'

⁸⁶ Schlemüller, 'Die Gezeichneten', in Bekker et al., 'Franz Schreker's Oper in 3 Akten' (*Pressestimmen*), 6.

⁸⁷ Bekker et al., 'Die Gezeichneten' (*Pressestimmen*): 'fiebrhaft' (7), 'sinnverwirrend' (11), and 'überwältigend' (6). Benjamin Korstvedt writes about a similar case, in which Bruckner's publicist exploited the sensational appeal of negative reviews to advertise Bruckner's 7th Symphony; see his 'Reading Music Criticism beyond the *Fin-de-Siècle* Vienna Paradigm', *The Musical Quarterly* 94/1–2 (2011), 156–210.

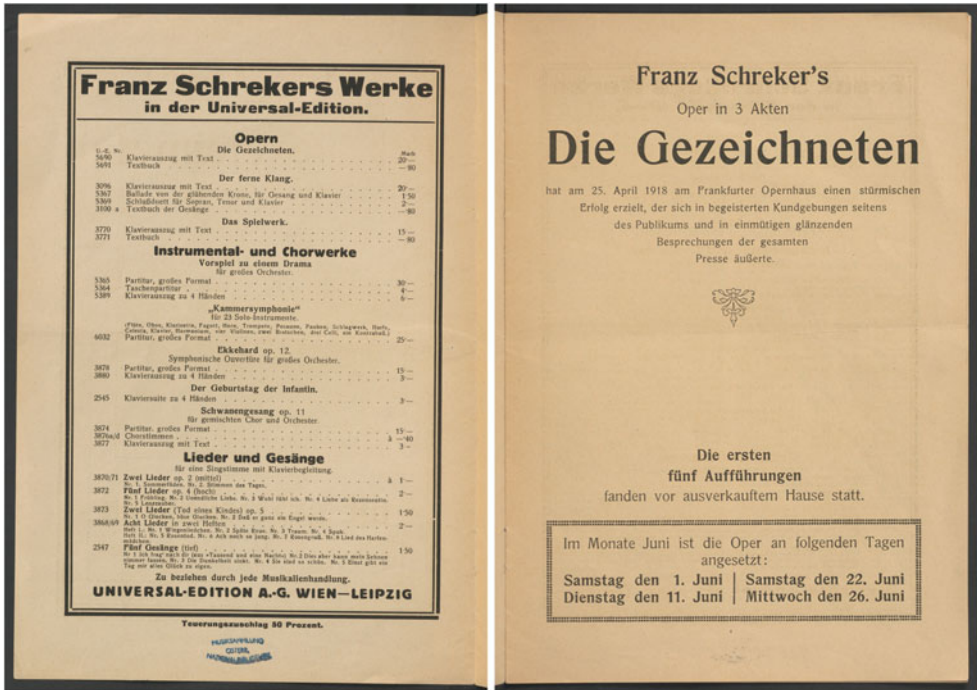


Figure 2. UE's *Pressestimmen* for *Die Gezeichneten*'s Frankfurt premiere. Reproduced by permission of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Schreker Collection, F3 Schreker 201. (Colour online)

Joachim Beck, dated 1919.⁸⁸ In it, Beck described Schreker as a ‘genius in/of decline’, contending that ‘the exhaustion of this second type [the first being one who “starts something”] can have something intoxicating to it as well’.⁸⁹ Since the remainder of Beck’s review deploys conventionally affirmative language, Daub contends that Beck’s ‘genius in/of decline’, despite its proximity to degeneration, should be read as praise as opposed to criticism. Beck’s review arrived too late for UE to include it in its collection, yet together they evidence a prevalence of such engagement with decay. Just as militarised masculinity was defined by what it was not, musical health was co-constituted and in negotiation with degeneration.

In case there remain doubts about the possible scope of the category of degeneration, I return here, too, to Springer’s review. Although the critic would insist on the centrality of a ‘German’ spirit and declare that Schreker’s ‘splendid qualities ... can presumably only reach their full potential when invigorated by the primal force of German music’,⁹⁰ he would nevertheless almost turn his own opening paragraph (referenced above) on its head and assert that Schreker ‘shows his noblest and most valuable qualities’ in *Die Gezeichneten*. No longer sick, albeit still somewhat foreign, Springer declares that:

⁸⁸ Daub, *Tristan’s Shadow*, 56–61; Joachim Beck, ‘Die Gezeichneten’, *Die Weltbühne* 15/2 (1919), 77–8.

⁸⁹ Daub, *Tristan’s Shadow*, 56.

⁹⁰ Springer, ‘Schreker’s neue Oper’, 2. The original German is quoted in its context below in fn. 91. I thank Christopher Hailey for helping me translate this sentence.

Schreker possesses a rich imagination, a rare sense of sound, a highly developed technical ability, an assured dramatic instinct, one that pours out of a sensual, full-blooded nature and a glowing temperament ... *Die Gezeichneten* signifies the climax of Schreker's musical and dramatic oeuvre to date.⁹¹

The critic thus reclaimed Schreker's music and, because of the intensity of his newfound conviction as well as the speed of his change (in only two half-pages), his shift from one critical position to its almost opposite is remarkable. Springer's untroubled manoeuvre between claims of illness on the one hand and health on the other suggests a critical awareness of the opposition constructed around the figure of Schreker. These two opposites were two sides of the same coin, and Springer was evidently attracted to their interplay. Ultimately, Springer's review signals something in the critic's confidence to employ the language of 'degeneration' – not as a weapon to control, but instead because such language actually allowed the subversion of bourgeois values of male-gendered wholeness and wholesomeness.

The questions of masculinity raised by *Die Gezeichneten* were thus answered by critics who were unintimidated by the presence of degeneration. Given that critics so frequently opened their criticisms in bold, almost insolent terms before settling into more moderate prose, it is possible that the prospect of profit played a role in the music critics' language. After all, 'Imitations of [Max Nordau's] *Degeneration* sprang up in book and article form all over Western Europe' because, as Alexandra Wilson writes, 'editors in the burgeoning press realised how effectively they boosted sales'.⁹² Indeed, at a time when sensationalism permeated journalism, there seems to have been a formula that afforded writers a steady flow of readers.⁹³ Again and again, a provocative opening was followed by a straightforward presentation of the plot, some measured analysis of the opera, and eventually praise for the performers and the production team. These critics' collective willingness to engage with the aesthetics of decline should be no surprise. In musicology alone, scholars such as Daub, Stephen Downes and Katherine Fry have shown in their research a steady early twentieth-century interest in questions of decline in Europe, after Wagner but before the consolidation of Nazism.⁹⁴ Outside of musicology, the field of English literature, for instance, has similarly witnessed continual claims of decadence and degeneracy as a legitimately 'formative force' – as Vincent Sherry writes – of modernism.⁹⁵ David Weir, moreover, points out that such force is a phenomenon that anglophone scholars are only beginning to grasp following the lead of their Continental European colleagues.⁹⁶ Degeneracy held its own allure.

⁹¹ Springer, 'Schreker's neue Oper', 2: 'Hier zeigt der Musiker seine edelsten und wertvollsten Eigenschaften. Schreker besitzt eine reiche Phantasie, einen seltenen Klangsinn, ein hochentwickeltes technisches Können, einen sicheren dramatischen Instinkt, ein aus sinnlicher Vollblutnatur strömendes, glühendes Temperament, lauter prächtige Eigenschaften, die sich vermutlich erst dann in voller Kraft ausleben können, wenn sie einmal an der Urkraft deutscher Musik gesundet, die Bande impressionistischer Hemmungen gesprengt haben. "Die Gezeichneten" bedeuten den Höhepunkt des bisherigen musikdramatischen Schaffens Schreker's.'

⁹² Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem* (Cambridge, 2007), 16.

⁹³ Korstvedt, 'Reading Music Criticism beyond the *Fin-de-Siècle* Vienna Paradigm', 156–210; Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (Chicago, 1973/1996), 79.

⁹⁴ Daub, *Tristan's Shadow*, 56–76; Stephen Downes, *Music and Decadence in European Modernism* (Cambridge, 2010), 1–28; Katherine Fry, 'Nietzsche's Critique of Musical Decadence', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 142/1 (2017), 137–72.

⁹⁵ Vincent Sherry, *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* (Cambridge, 2015), 7, 126.

⁹⁶ David Weir, 'Vincent Sherry: Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence [review]', *The Review of English Studies* 66/275 (2015), 591–3.

Disfigured soldiers, as noted above, experienced significant political violence on their return from the front. After the First World War, however, these reactions developed into a more extreme moralistic pursuit of aesthetic standardisation.⁹⁷ The masks that facially disfigured soldiers wore, for instance, were no longer enough in the post-war era.⁹⁸ Rather, cosmetic surgeries to improve appearance for the purpose of gaining employment grew increasingly common.⁹⁹ One surgery clinic's advertisement typical of its time thus read: 'Empty-handed again! ... You may have had the skills, but your looks weren't good enough. You have to do something about it!'¹⁰⁰ These surgeries were not only jointly pushed by middle-class business owners and cosmetic surgeons but also legislatively encouraged by the state through welfare policies and employment laws.¹⁰¹ Indeed, the idea that 'social cosmetics' could help the 'oppressed and stigmatised' was so normalised that even the ruling Social Democratic Party incorporated it into its Weimar-era health policy.¹⁰² As historians have shown, aesthetic and racial standardisation via sports, dance and nudism in the 1920s brought about ever more violent consequences that culminated in the Holocaust.¹⁰³ We know where it all led:¹⁰⁴ to an ever more intensified ideology of masculine standardisation and purity that followed the contours of the so-called *Sonderweg* (special path) thesis.

The reviews cited above are likely what scholars of *Entartete Musik* today would consider bellwethers of later political persecution. Yet, before the Nazis had control over the language of 'degeneracy', the reviews of *Die Gezeichneten* clearly evidenced a sincere engagement with the concept, finding something in it that was alluring and also, as exemplified by Schreker's opera, possessed of a critical potential to destabilise contemporary moralistic beliefs about manhood. Historian Scott Spector thus provocatively suggests that the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century were an age of utopia precisely because of the period's intimate association with decline.¹⁰⁵ In other words, it was only when the Austrians and Germans felt self-assured enough about the advancement of their social progress that they became positive about confronting decay.¹⁰⁶ In

⁹⁷ Dean, *The Frail Social Body*, 103–4. Carolyn Dean, 'The Great War, Pornography, and the Transformation of Modern Male Subjectivity', *Modernism/Modernity* 3/2 (1996), 59–60.

⁹⁸ Feo, 'Invisibility', 24.

⁹⁹ Annelie Ramsbrock, 'Social Cosmetics', *German History* 34/4 (2016), 555–78.

¹⁰⁰ Ramsbrock, 'Social Cosmetics', 563–4; originally cited from Ulrike Thoms, 'Dünn und dick, schön und hässlich', in *Bilderwelt des Alltags*, ed. Peter Borscheid and Clemens Wischermann (Stuttgart, 1995), 277.

¹⁰¹ Ramsbrock, 'Social Cosmetics', 565–71, 568.

¹⁰² Ramsbrock, 'Social Cosmetics', 566.

¹⁰³ Mary Devereaux, 'Beauty and Evil', in *Aesthetics and Ethics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Cambridge, 1998), 227–56; Ramsbrock, 'Social Cosmetics'; Felix Saure, 'Beautiful Bodies, Exercising Warriors and Original Peoples', *German History* 27/3 (2009), 358–73, esp. 372–3. Both Saure and Devereaux discuss Leni Riefenstahl's films. While Saure cites Riefenstahl's films as 'the most striking examples for the aesthetic and political staging and instrumentalization of a supposedly Green physical culture during National Socialism' (373), Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* is Devereaux's main subject of enquiry. Devereaux critiques Riefenstahl for making her Nazi propaganda film beautiful – a quality considered virtuous since Plato.

Incidentally, Herbert Windt, who composed the film score for *Triumph of the Will* in the 'heroic' style of Wagner and Bruckner, and who was Schreker's student for a brief amount of time before their falling out (44), was 'Due to his disability and severe [facial] disfigurement ... not [considered] a trophy-artist for the Nazi [and] was often perceived as an embarrassment' (49–50). Reimar Volker, 'Herbert Windt's Film Music to *Triumph of the Will*', in *Composing for the Screen in Germany and the USSR*, ed. Robynn J. Stilwell and Phil Powrie (Bloomington, 2008), 39–53.

¹⁰⁴ I borrow this phrase from Franklin and I likewise use it ironically; Franklin, 'Reflections on the Pre-Fascist Discourse of Degeneracy in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*', 173.

¹⁰⁵ Scott Spector, *Violent Sensations: Sex, Crime & Utopia in Vienna and Berlin, 1860–1914* (Chicago, 2016). For a parallel discussion from musicology: Kevin C. Karnes, *A Kingdom Not of This World: Wagner, the Arts, and Utopian Visions in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (Oxford, 2013), 8–36.

¹⁰⁶ Spector, *Violent Sensations*, 20.

their confidence at having emerged unscathed from engaging with decline, they saw a composer such as Schreker dispensing with the kinds of moral correctives that Wagner offered in his operas.¹⁰⁷ Daub therefore rightly sums it up when he argues that the post-Wagnerian ‘genius in/of decline’ told Mime’s – instead of Siegfried’s – side of the story.¹⁰⁸ Even during wartime, and perhaps especially because of wartime, then, *Die Gezeichneten* persisted in its deliberate grappling with topics that were ostensibly too sensational.

The end of *Die Gezeichneten* inspired no revolutionary ambitions, and the critics likewise were uninterested in artistically induced social change. Instead, they revelled in the opera’s refusal to adopt an explicit code of ethics. Indeed, the opera’s resistance to being reduced to a moral lesson stems from Schreker’s compositional intent. While the Italian Renaissance already occupied an important place in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German imagination, the Renaissance signified to Schreker a time free from moral judgement. It allowed Schreker to see people as neither good nor evil (‘ich sehe die Menschen weder als gut noch böse’), and it permitted a kind of moral ambiguity that was to him more difficult to find in times before or after the Renaissance.¹⁰⁹ Then and now, it seems, *Die Gezeichneten* was and is interesting as a pre-1933 opera because it lets entangled ideas of degeneration (health, gender and nation) stay entangled. Tellingly, Joachim Beck returned again to Schreker’s *Die Gezeichneten* in the 1950s, specifically revisiting his own review of the Frankfurt premiere in order to clarify his views (coincidentally at around the time that Theodor Adorno penned an infamously damning radio essay about Schreker).¹¹⁰ In the wake of Nazism, Beck wanted to explain what he meant when he first described the opera in terms of its degeneration. After commenting on the overwhelming but effective orchestral music of the final scenes, he wrote:

Yet, as an objection-conscious young critic, I was curious about – and also opposed to – this orgy of sonic excess and its somewhat nebulous flow. Perhaps my impression of the following evening’s premiere was also ambivalent: the sense of being entranced and revolted at the same time.

So I revised my experience of art – great and feverish, but also somewhat morbid and exhausted, and began my newspaper review, forcibly simplified with condemnatory sentences: ‘Genius is strength. Franz Schreker possesses none.’

¹⁰⁷ Spector, *Violent Sensations*, 21, 24; also Downes, *Music and Decadence in European Modernism*, 14–15; and Fry, ‘Nietzsche’s Critique of Musical Decadence’, 137–72.

¹⁰⁸ Daub, *Tristan’s Shadow*, 75.

¹⁰⁹ Paul Bekker / Franz Schreker, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Christopher Hailey (Aachen, 1994), 34.

¹¹⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Schreker’, in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London 1998/2011), 130–44. Adorno wrote in his 1959 radio essay: ‘One had visions of some huge, surging monstrosity, something altogether excessive and perhaps even alarming, triggered off by ... shocking erotic scenes’ (131). With more than a hint of embarrassment, Adorno recalled his fourteen-year-old self’s experience of being swept away by *Die Gezeichneten*’s ‘atmosphere of scandal’ (131). As a persistent supporter of Austro-German high culture, Adorno rejected his teenage taste for ‘supersensory sensuousness’ (135) and dismissed Schreker’s music as something ‘from the age of courtesans’ (137), propped up by ‘tawdry’ tactics of carnal gratification (133). Sherry D. Lee has contextualised Adorno’s critical assessment of Schreker within a wider ‘loss of a sense of historical continuity’ after the First World War; Sherry D. Lee, ‘A Minstrel in a World Without Minstrels’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58/3 (2005), 639–96. Adorno nevertheless tended to elevate the Second Viennese School’s intellectualism at the expense of Schreker’s late-romanticism. For example, in regard to Berg’s use of ‘Schrekerian sound’ in *Wozzeck*, Adorno wrote that ‘it would be idle to speculate how much of it is parody and how much elective affinity’ (‘Schreker’, 136). Adorno’s now worn-out clichés about Schreker’s musical excess, as Franklin (2006: 175) writes, problematically resonate with the Nazis’ oft-illogical conceptions of ‘degenerate music’, especially when Schreker was no stranger to discussions about degeneracy with respect to his operas.

Strange, however! Even at the time of writing something rumbled inside me. It whispered to me that I did wrong to the work; that a terminal apparition such as Franz Schreker could also have something brilliantly enervating. Indeed, that the physical weakness of the man – similar to Chopin – absolutely yielded the fermenting agent for his music, its luminous character, its innermost value.¹¹¹

Note how this passage lays bare the early twentieth century's allowance for critical ambivalence, the absence of moral absolutes, as well as a sincere flirtation with the sensational and even the repulsive. Beck's 1956 article, then, begs us to consider how, in the pre-Nazi era, critics and artists engaged with markers of degeneracy in deliberately equivocal and even positive terms in spite of a parallel, bourgeois policing of masculinity. Thus, in case his readers still doubted what he meant, Beck plainly asserted: 'what had seemed negative until then, I now interpreted positively'.¹¹²

Beck's 1956 words are a reminder of how profound revising the language of degeneration in criticisms of Schreker's 1918 opera could be, even when my reading now comes perilously close to resuscitating the very terms used by the Nazis to dismiss Schreker. In our effort to recuperate music that once bore the loaded label of 'degeneration', it is natural for us – scholars of twentieth-century German music – to want to speak forcefully against the evils of Nazism. We should never forget that the Nazis' politics have shaped Schreker's reception for eight decades, because to do so implies a kind of forgetting that we can barely afford. We want to rescue Schreker from oblivion, because we are invested in reparative justice for *'Entartete Musik'*. Yet while the politics of antisemitism have coloured the language of degeneration, so have the norms of bourgeois masculinity (indeed, anxieties about race and gender are too often entangled). The Nazis have cast a retrospective shadow on the decades before they gained total control, and it has been too easy to read the 1910s and the 1920s as leading inevitably to fascism. Schreker's historiography has been decidedly rooted in the politics of the Second World War. Yet even when the language of Schreker's initial reception so closely anticipates the terms that the Nazis used to dismiss him, this teleological view of history requires a degree of resistance. If Schreker is only read in light of Nazism, other important cultural-historical angles remain unexamined. The concept of bourgeois masculinity, which overlapped with but was not identical to antisemitism, evidently structured *Die Gezeichneten* and its reception. This article's First World War-centred enquiry seeks, above all, to open up that era's own questions about manhood.

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¹¹¹ Joachim Beck, 'Die Taufstunde eines Geniewerks', *Die Andere Zeitung*, 2 August 1956: 'Doch machte mich einwandbedachten jungen Kritikus grad das schon Übersteigerte dieser Tonorgie, ihr etwas nebuloses Verfließen nochmals stützen und widerspenstig. So konnte es geschehen, daß auch der Eindruck der nachfolgenden abendlichen Uraufführung zwiespältig war: Hingerissen- und Abgestoßenwerden zugleich.

Also durchdachte ich Schreibverpflichteter nochmals das Kunsterlebnis, das große und heiße, doch auch etwas morbide und schlafmüde, und begann meine Zeitungsrezension, gewaltsam vereinfachend mit den Verdammungssätzen: "Genie ist Kraft. Franz Schreker besitzt keine."

Merkwürdig jedoch! Schon beim Hinschreiben rumorte etwas in mir, das mir zuflüsterte, daß ich dem Werke Unrecht täte; daß auch eine beendende Erscheinung wie Franz Schreker etwas genial Erschöpfendes haben könnte; ja, daß die physische Schwäche des Mannes – ähnlich Chopin – geradezu den Gärstoff für seine Musik hergäbe, ihr Leuchtzeichen, ihren innersten Wert.'

¹¹² Beck, 'Die Taufstunde eines Geniewerks': 'was mir bis dahin negativ erschienen war, deutete ich jetzt positiv'.

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