

Reviving Walter

Walter Kaufmann was among the hundreds of composers whose careers were compromised and their music forgotten once they had fled Nazi-occupied Europe. Canada's ARC Ensemble—Artists of the Royal Conservatory—and Simon Wynberg its Artistic Director, are dedicated to the exploration and recovery of this lost repertoire.

For the last 85 years, All India Radio (AIR) has begun the broadcast day with a sinuous violin melody accompanied by the buzzing drone of the tanpura. The melody, familiar to tens of millions, has come to represent the very essence of India, evocative and nostalgic in the way of a familiar hymn or national anthem. This, while the very same fourteen notes are catalyzing nostalgia for the next generation of Indians.

That AIR's signature tune, based on the Shivarenjani raga, is the work of a 27-year-old Jewish composer from the Sudetenland, rather than a home-grown Indian, always comes as something of a surprise. I find this less surprising than the fact that it is the *only* Kaufmann melody that anyone knows.

Mehli Mehta, the violinist who recorded the AIR theme, later emigrated to Los Angeles and became a distinguished music-educator. His son is the celebrated conductor Zubin Mehta and when we spoke in October 2017, he had clear childhood memories of Kaufmann. He contrasted his work and his reverence for Indian music with the 200 years of arrogance and indifference exhibited by his British colleagues. In one of a number of curious coincidences related to my Kaufmann research, Zubin's son Mervon is a colleague of mine at The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

Three other Walter Kaufmanns, a physicist, a philosopher and a writer—all Germans—help to frustrate one's research into Kaufmann the musician (and there are several of these too.) But like so many composers whose music remains unknown, Kaufmann's life has been surprisingly well-researched. It is almost as if the act of compiling a composer's life-story and work-list relieves the biographer of any obligation to explore the actual music. One cannot imagine reading the biography of a novelist or visual artist without access to their novels or pictures. This peculiarity has something to do with the mechanics of musical recovery. Music insists on intermediaries. Copyists might be needed to prepare scores and parts, but musicians are essential if the piece is to be played, as is an audience if the piece is to be publicly performed. Little wonder then that classical music's repertoire remains relatively static compared to that of the literary and visual worlds.

For any musician or musicologist involved in researching composers who were suppressed, murdered or exiled under the Nazi regime, Bret Werb is the person you contact when you have reached an impasse. Unassuming, diplomatic and blessed with a sense of humor as dry as it is

artful—some of his ripostes are only fully savored days after their delivery—Bret has a vast knowledge of his subject, and as Curator of Music and Sound Archives at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum he has helped to uncover a wealth of music. When he asked me if I knew anything of Kaufmann's music and I replied "Who?" he suggested we rendezvous in Bloomington and take a look at the Kaufmann archive. All of the composer's manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, programs and reviews are housed in the William and Gayle Cook Library at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.

Before leaving for Indiana, I read all the online Kaufmann material I could find, and driving down from Toronto I found myself wondering about Walter's journey from Winnipeg to Bloomington in 1957, some sixty years earlier—a trip that marked the fulfillment of a 23-year quest to move to the United States. I met Bret in the lobby of the University's hotel. He had flown into Indianapolis from D.C. and taken a bus to Bloomington. We discussed the historic benefits of the town's isolation. So many musicians have described how the town provided a perfect training ground for the ambitious performer: inspirational teaching from legendary performer/pedagogues such as the violinist Josef Gingold, cellist János Starker and pianist Menahem Pressler. And, unlike the myriad diversions that surround a big-city school like Juilliard, very little to distract one from practice and study.

Bret and I wandered across the University's parkland to the Cook Music Library and began a random examination of Kaufmann's legacy. An overview of the Kaufmann archive is available on the Cook Library's website and I had emailed the librarian, Misti Shaw, and asked her to put the chamber music boxes aside. The string quartets, trios, violin sonatas and sonatinas, plus a Septet for piano and strings all seemed to have been composed during Kaufmann's Indian sojourn between 1934 and 1946. A Piano Trio is a delightful exercise in Dvořákian pastiche, and most of the chamber music doesn't fit with anything one would expect from a composer of the time. In fact, all the pieces seem strangely hip and modern. There are hints of Satie, Stravinsky and Bartok, and echoes of Bohemian and Jewish folk-music, even a sophisticated sort of minimalism, but it is clear that Kaufmann's principal intention was to fuse the musical languages of India and the Orient with the European tradition in which he had been trained. There are extended cello drones, looping piano figurations, propulsive rhythms and (as I subsequently learned) melodic material rooted in the composer's intimate knowledge of Indian ragas. Sadly, the library has very few archival recordings of Kaufmann's music, and we have yet to access any audio or video of the composer, but Bret had found a recording of a piano work that Kaufmann had composed using twelve-tone technique. It concluded, rather cheekily, with a perfect cadence—I would later read of Kaufmann's antipathy to serial composition. Bret, who has family in Winnipeg, had also tracked down information that would lead us to Walter's descendants. I ordered scans, made copious notes and planned a return visit to further explore the archive.

A week after my return to Toronto I was sharing my Bloomington experience (and a bottle of wine) with my neighbor, the pianist Robert Kortgaard. “Hang on,” he interrupted me. “Is this the Kaufmann who conducted the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra? Because if it is you have to talk to Sue Dexter. She was telling me all about him a few days ago. He was a regular dinner guest at her family's house, and she is pretty sure that her mother, like so many Winnipeg women, was smitten.”

When it comes to karma and destiny, I remain deeply skeptical. Coincidences happen. This was one of them. Still, it seemed mystifyingly well-timed. I know Sue from our neighbourhood's historic “roving dinner parties,” extended and exhausting meals that moved from house to house for each course. Sue spent much of her childhood in Winnipeg, but is now a proud Torontonians, committed to frustrating the more egregious plans of Toronto's developers. She is also a keen amateur pianist. We met a few days later for coffee.

Sue's childhood memories of Walter Kaufmann are sharp. As a newcomer to Winnipeg—he arrived in late 1948—Walter had enjoyed regular meals at the Dexters' house, and his matinee-idol good looks, his energy, charm and an infectious musical enthusiasm had made a powerful impression. As Sue was reminiscing, she took a music manuscript book from her bag and slid it across the table to me. The cover was worn, labeled with a child's writing. I opened it and froze. The short piano piece on the first page was in Walter's hand, identical to the script of the chamber music manuscripts I had examined in Bloomington a few days earlier. Sue told me that Walter had composed a series of graded piano pieces especially for her. Seven decades later, here they were.

I had scanned many of the photographs in the Kaufmann archive. There were family and school pictures, candid images of friends and musicians, and a number of glamorous publicity shots of his second wife, the Canadian pianist Freda Trepel. I opened my laptop to show Sue the pictures. There were two of Walter sitting on a couch with an attractive woman in her early forties. She was holding a drink, and in the second image she was leaning into Walter and laughing. His arm was around her and they seemed very comfortable with one another. “That's my mom!” said Sue.

With the substantial archival materials, and the help of a genealogist friend, it was fairly easy to assemble a chronology of Kaufmann's life. The years prior to his time in India have already been well-researched by Agata Schindler, a musicologist in Dresden. He was born on April 1, 1907 in Karlsbad, a popular and picturesque spa town in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Karlsbad has long been a fashionable destination, drawing royalty, artists and the well-to-do to its thermal springs. There is a famous picture of Beethoven and Goethe strolling its streets together, but the town has also welcomed Paganini, Chopin, Liszt, Tolstoy, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. After World War I, the largely German-speaking, Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia was an early casualty of Nazi expansionism, and by the end of World War II,

ninety percent of Karlsbad's Jewish population had been killed. Now part of the Czech Republic, the town has retaken its Czech name, Karlovy-Vary. In its heyday, a full orchestra entertained guests at the Grand Hotel Pupp (famously featured in the Bond movie *Casino Royale*) which, together with several other splendid hotels, still attracts wealthy tourists and provides venues for conferences and an annual film festival.

Walter was the only child of Julius Kaufmann and Josephine Wagner, an affluent, assimilated couple and prominent members of Karlsbad's Jewish community (Josephine had converted when they married.) Julius worked as the managing clerk for the Jewish entrepreneur, inventor and philanthropist Paul Schottländer who had a major interest in Karlsbad's mineral springs. Walter enjoyed a happy, childhood in the family's comfortable house on the appropriately named Panoramastrasse. He attended local schools and his uncle Moritz, a music historian and the proprietor of the local music academy, provided him with his first music-lessons. When he was a little older, Walter took a Sunday morning train to the Prague Conservatory, where he studied the violin with Willy Schweyda and composition with the improbably named Fidelio Fiske. After graduating from Karlsbad's Franz Josef gymnasium, he moved to Berlin, ostensibly to begin a law degree. When Julius paid an unannounced visit, he was dismayed to discover that Walter had registered at Berlin's Musik Hochschule and joined the class of Europe's pre-eminent composition teacher Franz Schreker. He immediately cut off Walter's allowance. There was neither further punishment nor pleading, but Walter now struggled to make ends meet. Music did have its advantages however, and Kaufmann came to know a number of celebrated musicians and intellectuals, among them a physicist and a competent amateur violinist by the name of Albert Einstein.

Kaufmann was almost certainly introduced to Einstein by his step-daughter, Margot. There was a grand piano in the living room of the Einstein's large Berlin apartment at 5 Haberlandstrasse and Kaufmann would accompany Albert and then join the family for dinner. According to Kaufmann, Einstein kept an exceptionally good table. Throughout the Hitler years, Einstein used his fame and influence to help émigrés enter the United States, and when I read about Kaufmann's duet sessions with Walter, I wondered whether any correspondence had survived beyond the testimonial letters in Bloomington. I contacted the Einstein Archive in Jerusalem and after a mix-up in identifying the correct Kaufmann—Einstein had also corresponded with Walter Kaufmann the physicist—I received the scans of a batch of letters that added fascinating detail to Kaufmann's biography and it is clear that a friendship. Further letters to Kaufmann from Margot and Einstein himself, were auctioned by Sotheby's in December, 2017 but failed to make their reserve. I have not yet discovered their contents which is hugely frustrating.

In reading of Einstein's love of the violin, I came across an anecdote, possibly apocryphal, about another of Einstein's accompanists, the legendary pianist Arthur Schnabel. After a series of missed entrances Schnabel apparently stopped Einstein and complained: "Albert, you know

your problem is that you cannot count!” Einstein was sufficiently accomplished to play Mozart violin sonatas, which he adored, and which Walter would almost certainly have accompanied.

The musicologist Curt Sachs emerges as the critical influence on Kaufmann's musical career. Sachs was the pre-eminent authority on the history and development of musical instruments, a field now known as organology. “[He was] an unbelievably learned teacher who taught me to organize my thoughts first before I wrote down anything.” With Sachs’ encouragement, Kaufmann immersed himself in the music of the East, Indian music in particular. He writes:

“When I heard the music on the gramophone for the first time, I found the music alien and incomprehensible. However, I knew that since this music was created by people with heart and intellect, one had to assume that many, in fact millions, had to appreciate or actually love it. As this music was foreign to me, I decided that the fault was entirely my own, and that the right way to understand it would be to undertake a study tour of the place of its origin.”

From 1929 to 1933, Kaufmann conducted summer seasons of opera at Berlin’s Charlottenburg Opera, where he assisted Bruno Walter, and in Karlsbad, and Eger, a spa town in Northern Hungary. With the arrival of the talkies, he scored movies for the Universum Film-Aktiengesellschaft, or UFA, the state-of-the-art movie facility in Babelsberg outside Berlin. UFA would soon be appropriated by the Nazis’ propaganda machine. Kaufmann’s First Symphony, his Piano Concerto, Suite for Strings, Five Orchestral Pieces and a number of songs, were enthusiastically received via broadcasts from Prague, Vienna, Leipzig and Berlin. A composer, pianist, violist and an accomplished conductor with a thorough knowledge of the traditional repertoire, Kaufmann typified the musical all-rounder routinely produced by European conservatories.

When Kaufmann registered at Prague's German University in 1929, Paul Nettl, another of the century's pioneer musicologists, was on faculty—Nettl was almost certainly instrumental in Kaufmann's appointment to Indiana University's music department nearly thirty years later—and it was not long before Walter had met many of the city's leading musicians and intellectuals, among them Dvořák’s son-in-law, the violinist and composer Josef Suk, and the writers Franz Werfel, Max Brod, Otto Pick and Willy Haas. All had been members of Franz Kafka's circle. Kafka's mother rented Kaufmann a room in her house at no. 4 Bilkova Street, and Gerty Hermann, the daughter of Kafka's eldest sister Gabriela, accompanied him to plays and concerts.

In Prague, Kaufmann learned that his doctoral supervisor Gustav Becking was also overseeing a local Hitler Youth troop. In Berlin, Kaufmann’s friend, Knoecker, was attacked by Nazi thugs.

Knoecker had managed to flee but a companion was kicked to death. If this could become routine in cosmopolitan Berlin, one imagines Kaufmann's anxiety for his family in parochial Karlsbad must have been acute. It was a town—to paraphrase Isaiah Berlin's definition of anti-Semitism—that hated Jews more than was absolutely necessary, and Kaufmann well understood how Nazi-sympathizers might behave once they were off the leash. He wrote to Einstein in the hope that he might affect an introduction to an influential American.

Einstein had met Carl Laemmle, the head of Universal Pictures, during a visit to Hollywood in January 1931 and he wrote to both Laemmle and MGM on Kaufmann's behalf. Neither studio responded. Kaufmann wrote again, wondering whether Palestine might offer a potential refuge. Einstein was stuck in the Belgian seaside town of Le Coq-sur-mer, awaiting the papers that would allow him to leave for Princeton. Responding to a \$5,000 bounty that the Nazis had placed on his head, the Belgian government had set up a round-the-clock security detail. Einstein, ever attentive to the predicament of his friends, replied to Kaufmann on April 23rd, 1933:

“Unfortunately, I have so little faith in the possibility of prevailing as a musician in Palestine at this time that I would not even want to try. I believe that ultimately, only America would be a likely choice for you. You could become a conductor there, or a professor of music at a University. Next winter, when I am moving there myself, I shall try to somehow help you along these lines. Write to me in Princeton next November, care of the Institute of Advanced Studies, to make sure I do not forget it.”

For many Jewish musicians, 1933 marked the final year of their European careers. With providential timing, a wealthy entrepreneur offered Kaufmann and his librettist ten thousand krone each (around \$15,000) for the performance rights to their operetta *Die Weisse Göttin* (The White Goddess.) Kaufmann, who had little enthusiasm for the work and even less faith in its future, leapt at the offer.

It was fairly easy to acquire an Indian visa during the early years of National Socialism and Kaufmann was among several thousand Jews who applied. Having booked a passage to Bombay with the proceeds of *Die Weisse Göttin*, he informed the university that he was unable to pursue a doctorate under the supervision of a Nazi. Then he telephoned his father to share his plans. Julius was unimpressed. Like so many of his generation, he believed Germany's infatuation with Hitler would eventually wither, and the many distinguished Jews who had chosen to leave the country would ultimately return. Walter was deeply apprehensive, but he was also keen to explore Indian music in situ. In February 1934 he travelled to Venice where he boarded the SS Conte Verde and set sail for Bombay.

That September, Kaufmann's marriage to Gerty Hermann was formalized in an extraordinary proxy union. Both sets of parents witnessed the civil ceremony in Prague, Walter's friend Otto Pick standing in for the groom. Whether Gerty's family was worried at the prospect of an unmarried woman traveling alone to India, or whether the families wanted the marriage formalized in Prague, rather than Bombay, is not clear. But a month later Gerty and Walter were reunited. They moved into a house rented from the Maharajah of Rewa in the posh Breach Candy neighborhood.

Kaufmann's arrival in Bombay coincided with the establishment of All India Radio, the country's national broadcaster now known as Ākāshvāṇī, literally “voice from the sky.” The BBC's Director General, John Reith (later Lord Reith) sent a senior producer called Lionel Fielden to set up the network. He arrived in 1935 and had soon appointed Kaufmann as AIR Bombay's Director of Western Music Programming with a broad remit to provide live music. Kaufmann immediately assembled a chamber orchestra which he conducted, often in performances of his own music.

Whether he found himself in Prague, Bombay, Winnipeg or Bloomington, Walter Kaufmann always became a musical catalyst, his energy and enthusiasm clearly infectious. Shortly after arriving in India he established the Bombay Chamber Music Society, with weekly concerts at the Willingdon Sports Club, now arguably the most exclusive club in India. In Kaufmann's day, membership was exclusively British, although (exceptionally for the time) its members were permitted to invite Hindu and Parsi guests. The Willingdon concerts, as well as those at AIR Studio 1, were broadcast live at 9:00 or as late as 10:15 pm. By the end of Kaufmann's 12 years in India, the society had presented over 500 concerts. A much-recycled contemporary image purports to show the trio who regularly performed for the Society, Mehli Mehta, the Italian cellist Egidio Verga and Walter, but both Bret Werb and I suspect the pianist in the photograph is someone other than Walter Kaufmann.

Kaufmann also pursued his research into India's indigenous music, traveling as far as the Kingdom of Nepal, a notoriously difficult region for Europeans to gain entry to. When I met Kaufmann's nephew Randy Lazer, he recounted one of Walter's favourite anecdotes—of waking up in his tent to find a cobra nestled comfortably on his chest. Kaufmann also composed prodigiously: symphonic works, concertos, chamber music, incidental music for radio-dramas and several film scores.

A number of exiled German film-makers had found work in Bombay's embryonic Bollywood, and like Kaufmann, several had worked at the UFA Studios. *Toofani Tarzan*, a flamboyant Indian take on the Tarzan story, and *Ek Din Ka Sultan* (Sultan for a Day) are among several films for which Kaufmann supplied music. I watched these online and was struck by the scores' authenticity, literally worlds away from the usual Western caricatures of Eastern music, with none of the musical clichés that wink at an exotic locale. In a letter home published in the

Karlsbader Abendblatt, Kaufmann writes:

“I use a lot of Indian motifs. I sometimes write my score for European instruments, but I largely prefer Indian instruments — sitar, tabla, sagari and vina. I am now familiar even with the Indian and the Urdu notation. I enjoy writing the score in the Indian notational system.”

Evidently Kaufmann had internalized Indian music and learnt to write idiomatically for India’s indigenous instruments within a couple of years of his arrival. With an intimate knowledge of both Indian and European traditions, as well as an equivalent respect, he was able to marry them in a way that remains convincing, characterful and passionate. This musical marriage is evident in many of the works Kaufmann wrote in India, notably the Indian Piano Concerto, which he premiered in Bombay in 1936 (probably performing a version that employed a smaller ensemble.) On January 17th the following year, Prague Radio broadcast the concerto with Edith Kraus as soloist, the orchestra conducted by Henry Swoboda. An enthusiastic review appeared in the *Karlsbader Abendblatt*.

“Walter Kaufmann combines Indian motifs with European forms to create an unimaginably interesting new structure. The set with the dance motif is particularly effective, and the other with a cantilena shepherd song. The piano as a solo instrument joins in, now leading, now integrated into the interval steps so alien to our ears... one cannot deny that it is a unique, valuable, highly interesting composition.”

Edith Kraus, whom Kaufmann had known as a child in Karlsbad, would survive internment in Terezín and move to Israel after the war. Kaufmann sent her the score of the concerto after he settled in Bloomington, and it was bequeathed to Edith’s daughter after her death in 2013 at the age of 100. The Indian Concerto still awaits a second performance.

As Europe inched towards war, Kaufmann’s desire to leave India grew more impatient. Again, he appealed to Einstein, now in Princeton, for advice. In November 1937, he sailed to France and met his parents in Paris—it was the last time he saw his father, and it would be another 11 years before he was reunited with his mother—then he boarded the S.S. Aquitania in Cherbourg and set sail for New York.

Five years into Hitler’s rule, thousands of musicians had arrived in the United States, thousands more were applying for admission. Older, more established European composers and conductors had assumed important positions but the locals were closing ranks and work was at

a premium. In January 1938, following their reunion in Princeton, Einstein wrote to the conductor Alfred Wallenstein, suggesting that he hire Kaufmann for his radio broadcasts on WOR New York. Einstein also provided Kaufmann with several signed copies of his testimonial. The return journey to Bombay would have taken around two to three weeks.

By the late 1930s Indian hostility to the British Raj was intensifying. The “Quit India” campaign had been ruthlessly crushed, with hundreds of protesters killed or imprisoned. The antagonism between Hindu and Muslim communities that would explode with partition was intensifying, and Kaufmann who was suffering from recurring bouts of malaria and dysentery, was aching to leave India. In August 1938 he again wrote to Einstein begging him to use his influence.

“This is a very forlorn place and despite introducing everything possible... it leads to nothing, and it is sad to see how everything, built with so much effort, is broken apart by ignorance and the national madness of a brutish party.”

In April 1939 Kaufmann's friend John Foulds, a composer and colleague who had just been invited to head the Calcutta branch of All India Radio, died of cholera. By September the world was at war. It would be another six years before Walter could even consider leaving and during this period there was no word from his family in Czechoslovakia. Despite the stress and frustration, Kaufmann continued to research, compose, and to organize and schedule programs for All India Radio.

At war's end Walter was finally able to plan his departure. On June 12, 1946 he wrote to Einstein: “You might say that a merchant [in German, ‘Kaufmann’] only writes if he wants something.” He describes how British appointees would soon be replaced by locals (quite rightly in his view) and that his doctor has suggested he move to a more benign climate. His tone is apologetic as he asks if there is any way he might find work in America, opportunities to lecture on Indian music for example—he mentions a 1000-page study on Hindustani Music that he hopes to publish (the manuscript eventually found its way into the Performing Arts Division of the New York Public Library.)

Again, Einstein made the case for Kaufmann, writing to the pianist Josef Schwarz who, like Kaufmann, had accompanied him in their Berlin days. Josef's son Boris, an eminent violinist and musicologist, was now a professor of music at New York's Queens College, but the doors to an American career remained closed.

There was an alternative to the United States however, although it was far less attractive. Kaufmann's position at All India Radio had qualified him for British citizenship and a recent commission from the BBC's Theatre Orchestra (latterly the BBC Concert Orchestra) may have hinted at the possibility of further work. He arrived in England on

August 30, 1946. Gerty and their three-year-old daughter Katherine joined him some months later. Their flat in Lauderdale Mansions was a short walk from the BBC's Maida Vale studios, and Kaufmann spent the following year conducting the occasional concert for the BBC's Theatre Orchestra and scoring two documentaries, *The Sudan Dispute* and *Palestine*, part of the Rank Organization's series *This Modern Age*. Despite Bombay's political turbulence, India had provided the Kaufmanns with a relatively serene and comfortable life. Unlike Londoners, who had lived through the Blitz, the Kaufmanns were unprepared for the devastation and rationing of post-war England. Their distress would have been amplified as news of Walter and Gerty's families began to emerge.

In October 1938, shortly after Germany's annexation of the Sudetenland, Nazi sympathizers burned Karlsbad's Great Synagogue to the ground. Most of the town's 2,500 Jewish residents then fled east, among them Julius and Josephine Kaufmann, who, like so many others, moved to Prague. Walter's family was decimated by the Nazis. His father Julius, his uncle Moritz, his Aunt Laura and uncle Hugo were all sent to the Terezín ghetto north of Prague, where Julius died. Moritz was killed in Treblinka, Laura and Hugo in Auschwitz, together with Gerty's aunt Ottla. Gerty's mother Elli and aunt Valli died in the Chelmno extermination camp. After the war, most of the German-speaking minority, over two million people, were forced out of Czechoslovakia. In Prague hundreds of Germans, many of them non-combatants, were tortured and shot in the bloody reprisals of May 1945. Included in their number was Kaufmann's doctoral supervisor and Nazi sympathizer, Gustav Becking.

The Kaufmanns two houses had been confiscated by the Germans and then appropriated by Czech families. Nothing remained of the family's assets. Nevertheless, Kaufmann did contemplate a poorly-paid lectureship in Prague, although he soon realized that his homeland was unlikely to provide a durable future. He also contacted Max Brod, who had emigrated to Palestine. But the lure of America persisted and on August 12, 1947 Kaufmann boarded the *Mauretania II* in Southampton and left once again for New York.

Shortly afterwards, Kaufmann moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia, as head of the Maritime Conservatory's piano department. No doubt he hoped this would be an interim job, relatively close to New York, where he returned for the festive season. Gerty had refused to move to Canada. Instead, she decided to return to Bombay with Katherine in the hope of resuming her teaching career. It was a rash decision and it's fair to assume that the Kaufmann's marriage was unravelling.

One imagines that teaching the piano in a parochial Canadian community would have left Kaufmann feeling isolated and under-stimulated but, as was his custom, he simply threw himself into the town's cultural life. From contemporary newspaper reports we know that by March 1948, Kaufmann's works were being performed in both Halifax and Toronto. He had

agreed to a three-year contract at the Maritime Conservatory, but when the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra announced a search for its first full-time music-director he applied immediately. Although Kaufmann had never intended to be a professional conductor, he had spent many years coaching and conducting ensembles of varying sizes and ability. Moreover, he had been impeccably trained, and as a violist and chamber musician he was well-acquainted with the subtleties of string-playing. Sir Ernest MacMillan, Canada's most distinguished musician and the conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, approved his appointment and Sir Adrian Boult's support would have confirmed the choice. Kaufmann began working with the Winnipeg Symphony in late 1948 at the modest annual salary of \$5,000.

The preparations for Kaufmann's debut were accompanied by a particularly fierce blizzard. Rehearsals took place in the large boardroom of the Winnipeg Free Press (where Sue Dexter's father worked) and the concert took place on December 16th, 1948 at the city's Civic Centre:

“Triumphant is the word to describe the first concert of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra given before a large and vastly enthusiastic audience. There was an ovation for Walter Kaufmann, the new conductor, and the musicians covered themselves with glory, rising to the occasion with a fervour that was heartening and at times electrifying.”

Frank Morris, *Winnipeg Free Press*

The orchestra had had an unstable history, its membership a mix of professionals and amateurs whose jobs and domestic commitments competed with rehearsals. The principal horn-player worked in a shoe factory; one of the bassoonists was a window-cleaner. Kaufmann was forced to confront that most disagreeable of orchestral challenges, a changeable and sometimes incomplete ensemble.

Kaufmann's mother Josephine, joined Walter in Winnipeg in October, 1948, a few weeks after his arrival. Gerty and Katherine arrived the following May. After a separation of over 18 months, her decision to join Walter was one of desperation rather than desire. Shortly after her arrival, Walter met Freda Trepel, a local pianist and one of four highly musical sisters. Confident, poised and glamorous, Freda had appeared with the Chicago, Minneapolis and Toronto Symphony Orchestras and had worked with the conductor Dmitri Mitropoulos. “Maybe one day you could write me something difficult” she teased Walter, as she sight-read his demanding Piano Concertino. Walter was dazzled. He immediately expanded the work, dedicated it to Freda and scheduled its premiere with the Winnipeg Symphony for March, 1950. They were married a year later. Their union, and Freda's divorce from her first husband, a dentist from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, were concluded in Reno, Nevada, the go-to destination

for quick marital solutions.

Freda's sister Joyce, herself a talented pianist, married William (Bill) Lazer, a graduate of the University of Manitoba. Walter and Bill, who has enjoyed a distinguished career as an academic and marketing guru, were close. Now in his mid-nineties, Bill has vivid memories of his friend and brother-in-law. We met in Boca Raton, in his sunny condominium overlooking the ocean. He remembers Walter as a mild-mannered gent, charming and sophisticated; a polyglot with a quick sense of humor and a penchant for wordplay—the Kaufmann Archive has a forty-page collection of Walter's original limericks, many as filthy as they are funny. Bill described his deep intolerance of pretense or vanity, qualities entirely absent in Walter himself. Gregarious but intensely private, his unaffected joy in music-making and his prodigious talent often made him the centre of attention. Sue Dexter had told me of his reluctance to attend social events at houses that did not have a piano. Bill described how he had to be begged to attend society events, even those where he was the guest of honour.

With Kaufmann as its conductor, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra presented a number of international soloists, among them the Polish violinist and former leader of the Berlin Philharmonic, Szymon Goldberg and the pianists György Sándor, Rudolf Firkušný and Rosalyn Tureck. A young Glenn Gould performed Bach's D minor keyboard concerto. "I have played this concerto many times," he wrote to Walter, "But this was the most perfect accompaniment I have ever had."

By his third season, the orchestra's subscription base had grown to two and a half thousand and Kaufmann had become a central part of Winnipeg's vibrant cultural life. He had wooed and won over the orchestra, built its repertoire (which included several of his own compositions) and energized an enthusiastic community of volunteers and fundraisers. Although North American orchestras function in a financial environment very different from that of their European counterparts, Kaufmann seems to have developed an instinctive understanding of what Winnipeg's orchestra needed to thrive. A fervent advocate of early musical education, he established relationships with Winnipeg's schools and organized children's concerts. He collaborated with the Winnipeg Ballet, and his own ballet score, *Visage*, was included in a Command Performance attended by Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh in October 1951.

Finally, in 1956, after nearly a quarter of a century in limbo, Indiana University offered Kaufmann a post as a lecturer in musicology, and for the next two decades he taught in Bloomington. The position provided him with the time and opportunity to augment, consolidate and publish his research. Several extraordinarily detailed books emerged in short order: studies of both North and South Indian Ragas, an examination of Tibetan Buddhist Chant and the exhaustive *Musical Notations of the Orient*. They remain seminal texts, and together with a number of other volumes and scholarly articles, secured Kaufmann's reputation as a

world-authority on music outside Occidental traditions. He rarely stopped working, and his study in the Kaufmann house on Mitchell Street was strictly off-limits—a tumult of research materials and documents whose order and content were known only to him.

Kaufmann's students were in awe of his learning and the easy style with which he taught. The semester's final lecture would inevitably conclude with an ovation. Teaching and research were complemented by an impressive output of operas and orchestral works.

His work in the opera field had begun in his twenties with the story of Esther, a collaboration that involved his friend, the Viennese poet Heinz Politzer, later an important Kafka scholar and a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. Max Brod and Franz Werfel were enthusiastic about the work, but with the rising anti-Semitic tide it was never produced. "In an insane world the Esther theme is not a proposition," Kaufmann observed.

By the time his first full opera *Der Hammel bringt es an den Tag* was premiered, Kaufmann had probably left Prague. Over twenty operas followed, including radio dramas such as *Anasuya* for AIR and *The Clock* for the CBC. During the 50s and 60s he wrote a slew of short dramatic works: *A Parfait for Irene*, set in the drugstore of a small American town, was premiered at Indiana University in 1952, well before his move there. It was the first half of a double bill that also featured the first staged version of Gian Carlo Menotti's television opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. *Sganarelle*, based on a play by Molière, was first produced in Vancouver in 1958 and later revived by the John Brownlee Opera Theater of the Manhattan School of Music—the latter received a glowing notice in *The New York Times*. *The Scarlet Letter*, after Nathaniel Hawthorne's eponymous novel, was presented at IU in 1961; *A Hoosier Tale*, commissioned by the Indiana Historical Society in 1966, celebrated the sesquicentennial of the state. Its review in the *Courier Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky) was a lot less enthusiastic.

There are also over eighty orchestral works, including six symphonies, several concertos for piano, violin and cello, and all manner of shorter, programmatic works. Kaufmann also wrote songs, children's works and solo piano pieces, in addition to the chamber music he produced in India. Indian elements feature in much of his output. They are evident in the works of the 1920s; in his *Sechs Lieder* for example, with their sparse, repeated piano figures and uninterrupted pedal points, and they define the *Nocturne for Orchestra*, *Madras Express*, *Indian Symphony*, *Six Indian Miniatures*, and the Third Violin Concerto.

In an industry now obsessed with branding and self-promotion, Kaufmann's attitude to his music will likely seem rather bewildering. In the Bloomington archive there are scarcely any letters that address the dissemination or promotion of his works. A note to the composer and theorist Dr. Heinrich Simbriger dated January 25, 1976 provides some insight:

"[...] I once had a good connection with Schirmers in New York, but the

gentlemen did nothing other than offer to rent my operas to theaters for incredibly high fees. That got a little too stupid over time, and I was very relieved to dissolve the whole arrangement. Since then (and also before) I have never cared much about publishers. I didn't offer anything for printing and so I was rarely disappointed.”

There are two American performing arts licensing organizations which collect royalties for their composer-members. Kaufmann joined neither of them. His explanation is simple: “I wrote mainly to please myself, I've never been out to make money from my music, If people like it, fine. I am very grateful. If they don't like it, that is also fine.” According to Bill Lazer, Walter suffered from that common musical syndrome, a pathological inability to manage money.

During his eight years in Winnipeg, Kaufmann was considered a new-Canadian and several of his works were issued by the Canadian Music Centre (CMC)—the 1950s saw a number of initiatives that aimed at encouraging Canadian cultural activity—but when it became clear that he was leaving Canada for the United States, and taking one of the country's prize pianists with him, the CMC's interest evaporated. In fact, Kaufmann's CMC publications remain unlisted in its catalogue. Together with a few later pieces, they constitute the small trove of his works that survive in library collections. In January, 1964, Kaufmann became a US citizen. His allegiance to the country is confirmed in an apologetic note written by George Schick some nine years later—Schick was President of the Manhattan School and the conductor of Kaufmann's one-act opera *Sganarelle*: “Sorry about that Canadian composer business,” he writes. “This information did not come from us but probably from someone who knew you in Canada. In any case I will tell our publicity department that you want to be known as an American composer.”

In some ways Kaufmann was a victim of his own industry. He was relentlessly productive—it is almost impossible to imagine him sitting in front of a blank page—but once a piece had been completed performed, it was largely forgotten as he moved on to his next assignment. The journey from composition to performance appears to have provided an adequate reward. His productivity was accompanied by a large dose of self-criticism. Bill Lazer recalls Kaufmann's enigmatic response to the premiere of *The Scarlet Letter*. As the cast took their bows and the audience cheered, he turned to Bill, shrugged and said simply “Nu?”

Kaufmann's last major project was *Altindien*, part of the ambitious *Musikgeschichte in Bildern* (Music History in Pictures) series. This virtuosic display of scholarship and erudition traces the early history of Indian music through an examination of iconographical evidence. The volume was published in 1981. Kaufmann died in Bloomington of congestive heart failure on September 9, 1984. Freda died some six years later.

Kaufmann's first wife Gerty, ultimately moved to Ottawa where she became a parliamentary librarian. There was little contact between Kaufmann and their daughter Katherine once he had married Freda, but Katherine's daughter Jessica Andrews, whom I met in Montreal, remembers the occasional visit to her grandfather with her sister Perdita, where the girls were swamped with gifts. But until April 2018 and the ARC Ensemble's Toronto performance of Kaufmann's String Quartet no. 11, she had only heard his famous AIR theme online. The performance was one of those occasions which raise the proverbial hairs on the back of a musical archeologist's neck. It is one thing to have one's hunch about a work confirmed in a reading or rehearsal, but it is quite another to sense a similar enthusiasm from 1100 strangers, all of whom are hearing the work for the first time. The Toronto performance of the quartet was almost certainly its first in over 80 years. An introduction to the concert by Mervon Mehta, whose grandfather Mehli would have premiered the piece in Bombay, and the attendance of Jessica, her father Alan and daughter Eden, a talented young percussionist, amplified the sense of occasion. Keen ears might have detected a speeded-up version of the AIR theme in the final *Allegro barbarico* movement, an in-joke that Willingdon club's audience would have appreciated.

Since that first modern performance of the Kaufmann quartet, the ARC Ensemble has performed his works in Europe and North America, including all-Kaufmann programs in Toronto and Los Angeles. Relatives and former students, now in their seventies and eighties, are renewing their relationship with Kaufmann through his music. Bill Lazer's daughter Simone has signed-up her uncle Walter to ASCAP and is registering his works so that royalties can be collected. These funds will probably be directed to the Freda and Walter Kaufmann Prize awarded annually by Indiana University's Musicology Faculty.

In September 2020, the ARC Ensemble's recording of Walter Kaufmann's chamber-works—the first commercial recording devoted to his music—will be released on the Chandos label. A sliver of his enormous output is finally entering the repertoire.

Simon Wynberg