

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) was one of the composers in the twentieth century who sought his musical language at that moment when composers had been trying to find the “new sound” of the twentieth century that resulted in the diversity of styles and concepts. The exploration of tonality began after the idea of declining tonality, particularly in the hand of Richard Wagner (1813-83), but there were no outstanding composers in Germany after Wagner’s death until Hindemith came along. Together with Boris Blacher (1903-75), Karl Amadeus Hartmann (1905-63), and Wolfgang Fortner (1907-87), Hindemith became the principal composer among the four. Although he had changed his approach to composition several times between the Wars (see point 2.2.), particularly during the Nazi regime, Hindemith’s musical style crystallizes in his mature works from 1933 until the end of his life. Hindemith’s sojourn in Turkey led him to develop his own tonality principles that were later proposed in *The Craft of Musical Composition*. In 1936, he composed three important piano sonatas that marked the beginning of his mature period.

There have been previous researches on Hindemith's piano sonatas. Frances Ashcraft McBane (1970) in his thesis attempts to uncover the relationships between the structure and elements in Hindemith's first piano sonata, revealing the musical logic underpinning an overall design.¹ McBane examines melody, harmony, structure, and other elements using a traditional approach. Ju Ji Hye

¹ Frances Ashcraft McBane, “Musical Architecture in Hindemith’s First Piano Sonata” (Master’s thesis, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1970), iii, Jackson Library.

(2009) uses the second sonata as a trial and a verification of formal music. Her thesis gives an overall analysis of Hindemith's second sonata that aims to prove the possibilities of creating tonal music in modern form considering Hindemith's unique theory.² Nevin L. Harner (1962) focuses on examining form, vertical organization, cadences, tonality, melody, and other aspects of the third sonata.³

In comparison to Hindemith's works for woodwinds, strings, and other orchestral instruments, there are fewer studies on his piano music, including the three piano sonatas. The few literatures on piano music that remain are largely published between the 1960s and the 2000s. At the time of this writing, Stephen Luttmann's *Paul Hindemith: A Guide to Research* (2005) is the only guide in published book-form for conducting research on Hindemith's music. It is past time to add more current literature and make it more accessible on modern platforms.

Despite Hindemith's unique language and mature musical concepts provided in his writings, the above-mentioned studies are typically conducted using traditional methods. Previous studies have tended to focus on *A Composer's World* and *The Craft 1* as the theoretical framework, with *The Craft 2* and *3* receiving less attention. Current available researches mention Hindemith's tonality principles—which will be covered in Chapters II and IV—without explaining their application in his music. When talking about Hindemith's principles, *The Craft 2* plays an important role in explaining the implementation of the tonal language in his works. Rather than using a common conventional method, it is preferable to examine the

² Ju Ji Hye, “*Paul Hindemith e Piano Sonata No. 2 e gwanhan bunseok yeongu*” [A Study on the Analysis of Paul Hindemith Piano Sonata No. 2.] (PhD diss., Chosun University, 2010), vi, Chosun University Repository.

³ Nevin L. Harner, “Hindemith: Third Piano Sonata. An Analysis” (Master's thesis, University of Rochester, 1962), ii, UR Research.

works based on Hindemith's principles. In this regard, the second volume of *The Craft* should be studied more closely to gain a better understanding of his intention in producing piano music and to prove how Hindemith's principles work.

Based on the concerns above, this research will evaluate Hindemith's musical language in his three piano sonatas using the combination of the conventional method of analysis and understanding of Hindemith's principles through his available writings.

1.2. Research Question

The fact that Hindemith's three piano sonatas were composed within the same year might indicate that it is likely his most concentrated stage of musical language development. Considering this reason, this research addresses the following question: "How did Hindemith apply his musical language to his three piano sonatas?"

1.3. Purpose of the Research

1. To provide insights of Hindemith's personal musical language
2. To analyze the three piano sonatas based on Hindemith's language
3. To evaluate the stance of Hindemith's musical language in the second half of the twentieth century

1.4. Significances of the Research

This research is conducted to provide new research material in the scarcity of literature on Hindemith's piano works.

1.5. Scopes of the Research

1. Hindemith's third compositional phases (1933-63).
2. Hindemith's three piano sonatas

