

“Dear EzzROAR,” “Dear Anthill”:
Ezra Pound, George Antheil and the Complications of Patronage

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American composer George Antheil recalls his first encounter with the infamous Ezra Pound in his autobiography, *Bad Boy of Music* (1945).¹ As Antheil remembers the event, he and Pound first crossed paths in 1923 at the behest of Margaret Anderson, former editor of the *Little Review*. Recently expatriated herself, Anderson invited Antheil and Pound to a tea for actress Georgette LeBlanc, convinced that two such vivid personalities would certainly have interesting things to say to each other. In his memoir, Antheil recalls:

There for the first time I met Erik Satie and a Mephistophelian red-bearded gent who turned out to be Ezra Pound. Margaret [Anderson] had given Ezra quite a spiel about me; according to her I was a “genius,” and Ezra was vastly intrigued by all this, for, as everyone knows, Ezra was at that time the world's foremost expert in genius; in fact he frankly called himself an expert in genius.

He was unusually kind and gracious to me; and as I left he asked for my address and said that he would someday come around to see me.

Ezra turned up early the next morning, in a green coat with blue square buttons; and his red pointed goatee and kinky red hair flew off from his face in all directions

Ezra asked me to get some of my music and go with him to the home of a friend who had a piano. I did so, went with him, played for hours, and Ezra seemed very pleased with it all. He accompanied me back home and asked if by any chance I had written anything about my musical aims, and I said “Yes, I have”; which accidentally happened to be the truth

Ezra was most delighted with all of this and asked if he could keep the “precious sheets” for a while, he would take scrupulous care of them. . . .

After Ezra's visit, and as the weeks went by, it became more and more apparent that Ezra was working with the stuff I had written. Sylvia [Beach]—who like Eva Weinwurstel, always got to know everything first—told me that Ezra was planning to write a book about me, and that a friend of Ezra's, Bill Bird, would publish it in Paris.

This scared me (117-118).²

From the tone of this passage, one might never guess that Antheil took Pound or his advice seriously. Casting him as the devil himself, the composer suggestively mocked Pound's self-proclaimed position as Modernism's talent scout. To do business with Ezra Pound, he implied, is to sell your soul. Indeed, the “deal” Antheil struck with Pound seems to be one he would rather forget entirely. Although the two artists knew one another and worked together throughout the 1920s, Antheil scarcely mentioned Pound in the remainder of his memoir, and when he did, he continued to portray Pound as manipulative and domineering.

Over the years, scholars who have attempted to study Pound's relationship with Antheil have drawn heavily upon Antheil's memoir. They either disregard the relationship completely, or like Antheil, they seek to demonize Pound. Modernist scholars like Hugh Kenner, by virtually ignoring the relationship, effectively write it out of history and, in doing so, suggest that the creative interchange between the two men was of little significance.³ Musicologists Linda Whitesitt and Murray Schafer accept Antheil's version of the story, that Pound “merely wanted to use me as a whip with which to lash out at all those who disagreed with him” (119). Corroborating Antheil's account, they rely heavily not only upon the evidence offered in *Bad Boy of Music* but also upon a letter that Pound wrote to Antheil in October of 1927. This letter is cited as evidence of Pound's cruel and abrupt dismissal of Antheil and his work. I will argue, however, that this reading of the relationship is mistaken.

These accounts are flawed because both Pound's October letter and Antheil's memoir have been taken out of context. While *Bad Boy of Music* provides an entertaining description of the composer's life, the perils of equating Antheil's autobiography with “fact” should be readily apparent. By the early 1940s, the years when Antheil penned the document, Pound had fallen out of grace, both in the United States and in Europe, and Antheil himself had lost most of the fame he had once enjoyed. In retrospect, it seems likely that in the hopes of preserving what little artistic status he had left, Antheil fictionalized his doings, exaggerated his importance, and distanced himself purposefully from Pound in order to preserve his own reputation. He even admits, “It seems terribly unfair of me to criticize Ezra Pound now that the poet has fallen into disgrace. But, I emphasize, I would write these pages exactly this way if Ezra had become an international hero instead” (119). Antheil clearly tried to present himself as artistically independent in the hopes that future generations might remember his contribution to American music divorced from any association with the overtly fascist Ezra Pound.⁴

This relationship was not merely a case where Pound took advantage of a young and unknown talent to further his own ends as Antheil has suggested, nor is the relationship insignificant. It had real consequences for both men: it shaped the entire course of Antheil's career and helps to explain Pound's attraction to Mussolini and the Fascist State. Finally, in addition to furthering our understanding of two important Modernist figures, it reveals a great deal about the importance of patronage in the early Twentieth century. Antheil, like many artists in the early twentieth century, felt torn between pleasing his patron and remaining true to his artistic vision. Ultimately, he and Pound tried to have the best of both worlds: Antheil wrote the “mechanical” music he wanted to write, and he and

Pound together schemed to manipulate Antheil's patron and manage the public reception of work. Ultimately, they succeeded not only in misleading his patron and American public, but an entire generation of scholars as well.

Pound's 1927 letter to Antheil also poses specific problems for scholars investigating Pound's relationship with Antheil. By all existing accounts, Pound and Antheil's friendship ended with Pound's letter of October 27, 1927. In this letter, Pound openly criticizes the bulk of Antheil's *oeuvre* as a composer. "I am not interested," he writes to his former charge, "in anything that you have done since *the Ballet Mechanique*."⁵ Read as a single, isolated utterance, Pound's letter does seem to close the door on Antheil and his work. The context of this letter, however, has not been properly understood, primarily due to gaps that exist in the archival record of the event. While most of the letters that Pound wrote to Antheil are presumed lost, Antheil's replies to Pound still exist and are part of the Ezra Pound Collection at the Beinecke Library at Yale University. Unpublished, they serve to revise the current critical understanding of Pound's apparently dismissive letter and of his wider relationship to the American composer.⁶ Ultimately, these letters add an entirely new dimension to readings of Pound's association with Antheil. Pound, in my view, did not simply use the young and unknown Antheil to suit his own artistic ends. Antheil's association with Pound not only helped him gain access to the previously closed Parisian salons—it also led to serious conflicts with his patron and the ultimate compromise of his artistic career. Pound's investment in Antheil's artistic success and despair at his failure helped to fuel Pound's attraction to Mussolini's Fascist State.

In 1920, disillusioned with postwar London, Ezra Pound and his wife moved to Paris. Not only a locus of literary experimentation and innovation, the "City of Lights" was also ripe for revolutions in music and the visual arts. In the early twenties, a group of avant-garde composers led by Eric Satie, known as "Les Six," made their mark on French music while Russian expatriates in Paris celebrated Diaghileff's Ballet Russe. American musicians, however, offered no apparent counterpart to these revolutionary musical movements. The conspicuous absence of American talent bothered Pound who had been writing music criticism for A. R. Orange's *New Age* since 1917. Consequently, Pound himself began to consider composing in an attempt to fill the void. He had been thinking about writing an opera based upon the poems of Francois Villon, one of his favorite medieval French troubadours but knew that he lacked the formal musical training to accomplish such a task.

In 1921, Pound attended a performance of Debussy's *Pelleas et Mellisande*. Describing the evening in a letter to Agnes Bedford, he wrote:

Sat through *Pelleas* the other evening and am encouraged—encouraged to tear up the whole bloomin’ era of harmony and do the thing if necessary on two tins and a washboard. Anything rather than that mush of hysteria ... Probably just as well I have to make this first swash without any instruments at hand. Very much encouraged by the *Pelleas*, ignorance having no further terrors, if that damn thing is the result of musical knowledge (*Collected Letters*, 167).

Apparently, his disgust with Debussy was enough to inspire Pound to try to compose the Villon opera in spite of his inexperience. Unfortunately, the “first swash without instruments” did not go very well, and Pound ended up trying to play his imagined melodies first on the piano and then on the bassoon. He became increasingly frustrated because, musically illiterate, he could not translate his ideas into notes and staves.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, wary of provincial American audiences, a 22 year-old George Antheil went to Europe in 1922 to launch his career as a concert pianist, a career he hoped would support his greater ambition of composing new and ultramodern music. He received money for his travels from his patron, Mary Louise Curtis Bok, a wealthy philanthropist and loyal patron of American music. Mrs. Bok, as Antheil addressed her, is best remembered for founding the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, PA. Antheil’s former composition teacher, Constantin von Sternberg, had sent the young musician to her with hopes that she might support him. Thus, “[while] living the simplest possible life, he could devote himself entirely to his work without having to earn money for his bodily maintenance” (Shirley, 2). After much persuasion, Mrs. Bok reluctantly agreed to help the young musician get his start.

Antheil planned to win over the more conventional audiences of the United States by first establishing his reputation in Europe—a common ploy for American musicians at the time. Like many Americans of his day, Antheil imagined that European audiences would be much more receptive to artistic and musical innovation than their unsophisticated American counterparts. Once abroad, however, he soon learned that European audiences could also be hostile to an unestablished artist, especially a brash, young composer from the United States. Placing a loaded revolver on top of his piano before each concert, ostensibly to protect himself from abusive audiences, Antheil soon earned, or perhaps crafted, the reputation of *L’Enfant Terrible*. The gun not only, according to Eustace Mullins, served to “identify him unmistakably as an American artist, but it also served notice on the audience that he would not tolerate the riots that had characterized his public appearances before he had armed himself” (143-144).

The outrageous performances and “revolutionary” music of the self-proclaimed “Bad Boy” might have incited riots around the continent, but they also received enthusiastic reviews from critics. His successful streak

seemed to continue when Antheil met his musical hero, Igor Stravinsky, in Berlin in 1922. The following year, he followed Stravinsky to Paris and moved into one of the apartments above Sylvia Beach's famed bookstore, Shakespeare and Co. Antheil, however, apparently had a falling out with Stravinsky soon after his arrival in Paris. He immediately became acquainted with several American expatriates and other members of the Parisian avant-garde but nevertheless had a difficult time breaking into Europe's artistic circles. He ultimately concluded that European audiences would accept new music only if it were written by an already well-known composer such as Stravinsky or Arnold Schoenberg.

Antheil and Pound crossed paths at an important point in both their lives. Just as Antheil was growing dissatisfied with the conservative tastes of European audiences, Pound was becoming increasingly frustrated with his own musical limitations. Antheil saw in Pound a way into the closed Parisian salons, as well as an established and respected voice to validate his "ultra-modern" music. Pound saw in Antheil an accomplished musician who echoed the Vorticist ideals in a new medium: music.⁷ Soon discovering their mutual interest in music, Pound convinced Antheil to help him notate and orchestrate the score of his opera. As they worked together on the opera, they also spent a great deal of time discussing their ideas about music and art. Antheil's musical concepts of rhythm and time-space fascinated Pound, who thought he had finally found the musical equivalent of the vorticism of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Wyndham Lewis. His article, "George Antheil," which appeared in a 1924 issue of *Criterion* proclaimed Antheil's work the musical counterpart to Lewis and Pablo Picasso and argued for recognition of Antheil's genius. According to Pound, Antheil, like Picasso, Lewis, and Gaudier-Brzeska, wanted to "revive and revivify the perceptions of musical form" (Schafer, 256). When contemporary composers were preoccupied with musical color, Antheil was more interested in rhythm and "time-space" in music. "Antheil," Pound proclaims, "has not only given his attention to rhythmic precision, and noted his rhythms with an exactitude, which we may call genius, but he had invented new mechanisms, mechanisms of this particular age" (259). Soon after, "George Antheil" appeared in print, Pound published a book titled *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony*.

Despite Pound's obvious investment in *Treatise*, the book has received almost no critical attention. Most scholars simply view the work as another of Pound's propagandist efforts to boost the career of his latest protégé. Initially, one might assume that the book contains a summary of Antheil's theories of music, rhythm, and criticism, but in actuality, only the section titled "Antheil" actually deals with Antheil's ideas; the rest of the ideas in the volume belong to Pound himself.⁸ The book is difficult even for musicians to understand, and some of Pound's

ideas, such as absolute rhythm, are abstract and fanciful.⁹ Its real importance lay in publicly identifying Antheil and Pound as collaborators working together to develop a new musical aesthetic. It also placed Antheil in the spotlight amongst the Parisian intellectuals. He became Pound's newest protégé, following in the footsteps of T. S. Eliot and James Joyce. Pound also introduced Antheil to another young American musician, violinist Olga Rudge, and commissioned him to write two violin sonatas for her. Antheil agreed. Pound's commission not only gave him additional compositional and performance opportunities, but it also suddenly provided him with access to previously closed Parisian venues such as Natalie Barney's salon and the Champs Elysses Theatre. According to *Bad Boy of Music*, Antheil played additional concerts in Paris, and he and Rudge toured Europe. "One could not announce a concert of mine between autumn 1924 and autumn 1926," he perhaps idealistically claimed, "without it being sold out far in advance" (137). In any case, the favorable reviews his concerts received from contemporary newspapers in 1925-1926 support his statement. One reviewer even described his concerts as "historical events."¹⁰ Finally, with Pound's help, the European public began to recognize him as an important figure in the international music scene.

During the mid-twenties, Antheil focused on developing his "mechanical" aesthetic, a style that the Parisian avant-garde found interesting and attractive. Examples of this style include his "Airplane Sonata (1921)," "Sonata Sauvage," "Death of Machines," "Jazz Sonata," and "Mechanisms" (all 1923). Linda Whitesitt described his mechanical style as "constructed out of the addition and manipulation of rhythmically activated musical blocks delineated by different ostinato patterns. These musical blocks, the "time-space" components that Antheil superimposes upon his musical canvas, derive their energy from the rhythmic momentum of the repeated musical fragments" (88). Pound was even inspired to write a book about "Machine Art," which he did not complete but has been published posthumously. In a section titled, "The Acoustic of Machinery," Pound argues "One [has] to think of music as a definite entity in itself . . . a composition of sound, not merely the expression of something else."¹¹ He wrote that it was "not a question of taking an impression of machine noise and reproducing it in the concert hall or of making more noise, but composing, governing the noise that we've got" (76). The idea, he admitted, was inspired by Antheil's compositions.

Antheil's "mechanical" music culminated in the notorious *Ballet Mechanique*. The *Ballet* would surpass his previous "mechanical" pieces, such as the "Airplane Sonata," in both length and orchestration. First performed on multiple player pianos, its orchestration was soon expanded to include some rather unconventional "instruments." At the 1926 Paris premiere of *Ballet Mechanique*, the audience rioted under the attack of nine pianos and an odd

battery of percussion that included whistles, electric bells, and a working, full-size airplane propeller. According to Noel Stock, Pound “played a heroic role in the attempt by Antheil’s supporters to shout down the rioters and give the work a chance to be heard” (263). After Antheil performed *Ballet Mechanique* a second time in Paris that summer, he told Mrs. Bok that “My two concerts have established me as easily the leading young composer of Paris, now the leading music center of the world as far as new things go.”¹² He may have exaggerated his success a bit for his patron, but Kay Boyle and Robert McAlmon have documented Antheil’s position in the expatriate circle of the Parisian Left Bank in their memoir, *Being Geniuses Together*. McAlmon remembered “various musical affairs at which George Antheil’s music was played” (219). Hosted by Natalie Barney and other prominent members of Parisian society, these events were “well attended by both French and Americans of the art and diplomatic worlds” (219). Even if Antheil had exaggerated his celebrity to Mrs. Bok, McAlmon’s reports demonstrate that he was building a serious reputation for himself among the avant-garde artistic elite of Paris in 1926.

Later the same season, Pound’s opera, *Le Testament de Villon*, premiered at the Salle Pleyel. Apparently, not only did Pound help Antheil break into the inner artistic circles of Paris, but Antheil returned the favor and helped Pound to secure a live performance of *Villon*. Most of Paris’s “Modernist” circle turned out to hear the opera: Joyce, Hemingway, Djuna Barnes, Mina Loy, Sylvia Beach, Robert McAlmon, American composer Virgil Thomson, and even T. S. Eliot all attended the event. Although Antheil played piano in the performance and helped Pound notate and edit the piece, it is important to recognize that *Villon* was, musically speaking, very different from the mechanical pieces Antheil was composing at the time. While both composer emphasized rhythm and rhythmic innovation in their work, Pound’s opera had little incidental (non-vocal) music, and what instrumental melodies there were, did little more than double the vocal music of the text. A comparison of the two styles illustrates that Pound and Antheil did not want to confine their work to a singular musical aesthetic. Instead, they hoped, each in his own way, to broaden the current conceptions of music and to challenge the notion that Americans had nothing worthwhile to contribute to the international music scene.

In 1927, Antheil decided America was ready for his music. He arranged for a performance of his famous *Ballet Mechanique* in Carnegie Hall that spring. Antheil’s American concert promoter, Donald Friede, highlighted Antheil’s controversial reputation in the pre-concert publicity. Apparently the promotional material and program notes exaggerated the riots at his European concerts, and such antics offended many critics and listeners before they heard a single note of Antheil’s music. In addition to the sensational publicity, technical errors plagued the

performance. The performers missed cues, and the airplane propeller, aimed directly at the audience (unintentionally), assaulted those unfortunate enough to be sitting in the first eleven rows. Finally, the fire siren sounded, not at the climax of the piece as it should have, but several minutes later as Antheil rose to take his bow. In other words, the concert was a complete disaster. Afterwards, reviewers lambasted the performance. The *St. Louis Dispatch* declared the piece to be a “Mountain of Noise Out of an Antheil.” “Boos Greet Antheil Ballet of Machines,” reported the *New York Herald Tribune*.¹³ Finally, in *Bad Boy of Music*, Antheil recalled a headline he found especially offensive: “Forty million Frenchmen CAN be wrong!” (196). These reviews discounted the young composer’s years of European success based on a single botched performance. Antheil returned to Europe rejected and scorned by the American audience he had long hoped to win over.

This concert shattered Antheil’s reputation both in the United States and Europe, and the censure of his work wounded him deeply. Determined to become a successful composer, both financially and artistically, Antheil began to write music which sounded more conventional in an attempt to regain an audience. Like his former mentor, Igor Stravinsky, he abandoned his avant-garde ways and turned toward a more conservative, neoclassical style. According to most of the standard scholarly accounts, Pound, like the rest of the American public, turned his back on Antheil after his humiliation in New York. Pound, however, dropped Antheil not because of the disastrous performance, but because of the composer’s shift in *modus operandi*. Like several other scholars, Linda Whitesitt concludes, “Pound, especially, could not forgive Antheil’s abandonment of his earlier mechanical style” (41). As proof of her conclusion, she offers the often-invoked letter from Pound to Antheil, dated October 30, 1927:

Dear George,

I am not particularly interested in anything you have done since Ballet Mechanique. The third **violin** sonata an excellent piece of work, but am not sure it needed you to write it.

I was not aware that I had ever had any influence on your work. I succeeded in getting or in helping to get some of it performed several years ago but do not consider that that constitutes an obligation on your part. Am not interested in la rue de l Odeon, or in neo’classics, neo-thomists, or even neo-Ulyssism.

The yawps of the N.Y. press are certainly of no importance. Nothing is to be expected of that country, and least of all any sort of comprehension of anything.

Get your stuff printed, and the three dozen people capable of understanding it will eventually discover that it exists.

E. P.¹⁴

According to the standard accounts, while the two men met two or three more times during their lifetimes, they never worked together nor were close friends again. This letter allegedly ended both their personal and professional relationships. Pound evidently regarded Antheil's newest compositions as regressive excursions into “mere neoclassicism,” a style he deemed “the enemy” (Shirley, 13).

The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, however, has several lengthy letters from Antheil to Pound written after October 1927. The tone of the letters remains amicable and even intimate at times. Antheil writes of vacations to Africa and shares tales of his various antics and latest musical ideas as well as gossip about mutual acquaintances. He even invited Pound and Olga Rudge to visit him repeatedly. This archival evidence suggests that their friendship and even their working relationship surely did not end with Pound's dismissive letter, as critics have long believed. At the center of many of these affable letters are accounts of his lately vexed relationship with Mrs. Bok, his Philadelphia patron. Indeed, Antheil's relationship with Mrs. Bok was a theme central to much of Antheil and Pound's from the beginning. As a matter of fact, an examination of this archival evidence reveals the large extent to which Antheil tried (with Pound's help) to manipulate his patron and manage the public reception of his work.

From the earliest days of their acquaintance, Antheil and Pound both suffered financial difficulties. As friends, they shared the frustrations of their common commitment to art forms that the general public could not accept or appreciate. Both thought they could make more money if they conformed their work to meet the demands of popular venues, but they tried to resist the financial temptations of the mass market in order to preserve the integrity of their art. As Antheil wrote to Pound in 1925:

If I print my translation from the German I would get more than Frank Harris for his book, while his book has all beat. I would make a fortune (printing a translation of pornography—the worst book in Vienna) on the other hand I know damned well that you will probably never make any more money in your lifetime upon the publication of your books than I will by the publication of my present pile of manuscripts. I'm just talking about composers and writers in general, and how the situation lays . . . You and I have been in the same financial boat for such a long while and so far you will do all the laying out . . .

The reason you never saw more than 2000 bucks in your lifetime is because these animals we call people think that it ain't poetic for a poet to have enough to eat, and hate to profane the gorgeous ruin, etc.

Nuts, we are in the same boat and must work a way out.¹⁵

Because they were not willing to compromise their artistic standards to please the general public, neither Pound nor Antheil could count upon much steady income, at least during their lifetimes. Both yearned for the financial rewards of a mass audience but seem to have accepted the fact that such an audience would never understand their work. At the same time, neither was willing to compromise the integrity of their art to achieve financial success.

As a writer, Pound was able to support a meager existence, but Antheil, as a musician, faced a much greater financial burden. He not only had to pay for the printing, copying, and publishing costs of his work, but he also had to bear the additional financial burden of hiring musicians to perform his pieces and covering his own touring expenses. Such costs would be prohibitive to a struggling artist, for as Antheil stated in an interview with the *Paris Tribune*, “it costs several thousand dollars to give a single recital with a symphony orchestra.”¹⁶ As a result, Antheil relied heavily upon the financial support of Mrs. Bok. She not only provided him with a monthly stipend to cover his living expenses, but she also paid for the printing and publishing of many of his works, and bankrolled his travel and concert costs. It is safe to assume that without her support, Antheil would have faced severe financial hardship

In her account, Linda Whitesitt observes that Mrs. Bok had conservative musical tastes and frequently disapproved of Antheil's life and music (7). Because he was so dependent on her financial support, Antheil often felt pressure to appease her at the expense of writing music he wanted to write. As long as Antheil enjoyed some success and received favorable reviews, she did not object to his avant-garde tastes. The response to the American premiere of *Ballet Mechanique*, however, was more than she could bear. She thought the pre-concert publicity scandalous and despaired that it emphasized only the outrageous aspects of Antheil's career. Offended by such distasteful reports, she did not attend the Carnegie Hall premiere. Several of Mrs. Bok's friends and associates attended the performance in her place and conveyed their thoughts on the concert to her afterward, and she reported to Antheil “their opinion of the music offered is unanimously adverse” (Shirley, 16). As a composition, the *Ballet* was already dangerously close to offending her conservative tastes, and the negative reports and damning reviews of its performance further injured Antheil's precarious situation. Shortly after the Carnegie Hall debacle, Bok wrote to Antheil and informed him that she would give him no further funding beyond his monthly stipend. Antheil had already lost money on the Carnegie Hall concert, and the additional loss of Bok's support proved financially devastating.

In the wake of such a catastrophe, Antheil became determined to regain both Mrs. Bok's support and his former status as a prominent composer. He knew that she did not like the influence that the Parisian avant-garde had on his music, and she had a particular distaste for Pound. Earlier in his career, Antheil had sent Bok Pound's laudatory articles about his music and written to her about Pound's influence in the artistic circles of Paris. Pound even wrote to Bok himself in the early days of his acquaintance with Antheil to boast of the young composer's achievement. He stated: "It may interest you to know that George Antheil . . . scored no inconsiderable success here at the Salle du Conservatoire on Tuesday."¹⁷ Mrs. Bok, apparently, was not impressed by these efforts, as she later informed Antheil, "I don't care for the group you quote, nor their work . . . Pound, Joyce and so forth."¹⁸ Obviously, she altogether disapproved of Antheil's European acquaintances and must have feared their influence on the young composer.

After the Carnegie Hall fiasco, facing financial ruin, Antheil must have thought that if he could convince Mrs. Bok that Pound and the Parisian avant-garde had little influence on his work, she might change her mind and renew her financial aid. Without her subsidy, Antheil had little hope of regaining his former position as one of the leading American composers. To regain Bok's backing, he enlisted Pound's help. In mid-October 1927, Antheil wrote to Pound seeking his help in a complicated plot. Having faced financial hardships himself, Pound understood Antheil's plight and apparently agreed to help. Pound, Antheil decided, should write a letter to Mrs. Bok criticizing the musician's latest work and disavowing any friendship or artistic collaboration between himself and Antheil. The following letter to Pound, previously undiscovered, reveals Antheil's strategy:

Here is Mrs. Bok's letter. She promises to take me up again when she is convinced that I have changed from the bad, evil Ballet Mechanique which she has heard.....remember that... its deadly evidence.

Now I see no Goddamned use in waiting for I HAVE written a whole bunch of music to please herbut she won't listen to it, she's so certain I'm especially under your influence (I've always quoted you the most, so it's you she really means in this letter).

Do you see any harm in sending her some of the simplest examples of my LATE post-Mozartian music couched in simple piano keys for her own fingers . . . together with a recent letter from you.....scolding me good and proper (don't use cuss words) for writing Mozartian music... reactionaire! Instead of the Beautiful Ballet Mechanique music. If I send this, I might immediately have a check for a great deal of money, for I know Mrs. Bok very well. You see that you, "Joyce crowd" and the Ballet Mechanique worry her.

If you send this letter, send it in an envelop so I can send all.

AFTER I get the money, I shall take pains, I PROMISE to have her see the right side of you, and your somewhat larger views upon music that [sic] the Ballet Mechanique, but just at present she has the argument upon her side. She doesn't understand you, that's all, and I shall take pains... the very greatest I am capable off [sic] that she shall... afterwards. She is a powerful ally, and we need these kind.

Remember, at present, you are in a dreadful perplexity about me but later, after I get the money, you shall write me a letter, saying that you are convinced that the WAY I HAVE TAKEN TOWARDS my music was correct, and you are convinced. This will make her feel good and make her feel that she has done right. This does not mean that We cannot do exactly as we wish. Likewise don't worry about the Criterion [sic] article, I'm sure she's forgotten it, or has never read it besides you could have been thinking it over and over, and thinking more and more that this new classic music of mine is all wrong. Try to get me from wayward path if you care. But if you decline, in all cases send me your opinion of the situation. I sent her the letter you advised, and also the newspaper clipping made for her in the Herald the other morning, but no favorable answer yet.¹⁹

The newspaper clipping that Antheil cites in his letter ran in the Paris Edition of the *New York Herald* on October 24, 1927. Antheil mailed a clipping of the article to Mrs. Bok that same day.²⁰ In the article, titled "Father of Mechanical Symphonies Dislikes Being Called Jazz Artiste," Antheil claims that he is a serious composer who has "been exploited solely as a cymbal smashing exponent of mechanical Jazz." Aligning himself with the more reputable Classical tradition of symphonic music, Antheil takes pains to distance himself from jazz, a genre that would have been scorned by Mrs. Bok and her circle. He further comments on the *Ballet Mechanique* disaster stating:

What hurt me about my experience in America was that it put me in a wholly false light in my own country. I was advertised, without my knowledge, as a circus performer, and the audience that packed Carnegie Hall was there to see a circus. They were so intent on seeing it that they didn't even hear the music. Now I suppose it will be years before I can be recognized as a serious artist in America.²¹

Depicting Antheil as a victim, the article tried to convince readers that instead of orchestrating the entire Carnegie Hall fiasco, he knew nothing about it. The article fits well with Antheil's plan to distance himself from Pound and the "bad evil Ballet Mechanique."

The new evidence offered in Antheil's letter forces us to reconsider Pound and Antheil's relationship. Both the *Herald* article and Antheil's letter to Pound predate Pound's October 1927 letter of "dismissal." Clearly, Pound had nothing to gain by helping Antheil in this situation, yet help he clearly did. Read in the context of Antheil's correspondence regarding his financial difficulties, Pound's letter and the *Herald* article seem obvious efforts to manage the public reception of his music and mislead his patron into renewing her support. These documents also help to explain the lack of quirky spellings and colorful language in Pound's October 30 letter—a signature mark of his usual correspondence. Instead, he followed Antheil's script faithfully and drafted the letter in a formal, impersonal tone because his audience was not "Jarge" or "Anthill" (nicknames which open his other letters to the young musician), but rather Mrs. Bok. Pound's letter follows Antheil's instructions almost exactly. In this fraudulent letter, Pound gives the impression that he and Antheil have not been working together since the completion of the *Ballet Mechanique* two years earlier. It suggests that the two men are not even friends, let alone collaborators (or co-conspirators).

In sum, Pound's letter was a sham. He wrote it to convince Mrs. Bok that Antheil was free from the clutches of the evil "Joyce crowd" who had "driven" him to compose the dreaded *Ballet Mechanique*. The letter along with the *Herald* article and further pleas from Antheil finally persuaded her to renew her support in the fall of 1928. Mrs. Bok, however, was not the only person taken in by Pound's letter. Both music and literary critics have accepted this constructed version of Pound's relationship with Antheil (See Goss, Shirley, and Whitesitt for examples). Antheil himself perpetuated this myth in his autobiography by minimizing their connection and distancing himself from Pound as much as possible. Nevertheless, Ezra Pound and George Antheil did not part ways in 1927 over this letter as most scholars have supposed. On the contrary, they remained friends and worked together for the next six years.

Pound and Antheil continued to try to build a space for American music in the United States and Europe even though America had rejected Antheil's music. *Ballet Mechanique's* Carnegie Hall failure persuaded Antheil to remain abroad until he was convinced that the American people were ready to recognize his talent and the merit of his music. By 1928, Antheil had not been able to redeem his fallen reputation, and he desperately wanted to prove to the world that he could still write serious music. So, in an attempt to reestablish his reputation as an avant-garde composer, he turned from instrumental music to opera, the form in which he had long ago tutored Pound. Rumor had it that the Weimar Republic had begun to invest large sums of money into the arts and that German audiences

were eager for new and experimental operas. Apparently, “American” plots and jazz themes were the latest rage in Germany. Renowned European composers like Oscar Krenek and Kurt Weill had already achieved considerable success writing in this “American” medium. Hoping for similar recognition, Antheil began to work on composing a uniquely American opera infused with Jazz and popular American dance rhythms.

In the later years of their correspondence, he and Pound renewed their earlier discussion of operatic aesthetics, and almost from its inception, Antheil sought Pound’s advice about his opera-in-progress, eventually titled *Transatlantic: The People's Choice*. Their discussion lasted until the premiere of the work in 1930. Some months before opening night, Antheil sent Pound a score of the opera and a copy of the libretto. Even as late as 1930, Antheil obviously still valued Pound’s artistic advice and, when the Frankfurt State Opera accepted *Transatlantic* for its 1930 season, he wrote to Pound as soon as he learned the news—even before the theater itself had made the announcement—to ask Pound to come to Frankfurt a week before *Transatlantic's* premiere and advise him on the work. Antheil's letter to Pound upon the acceptance of *Transatlantic* indicates that he still conceived of the promotion of his opera and American music generally, as a joint venture between he and Pound. In the following letter, he outlined their preliminary plan:

I am in immediate need for the sheltered mountains, for the health necessary to strike, as I now must, for our common interests, and for my reinstatement, financially, in America.

Likewise, in the meantime also think up something to tell the reporters when they come to you.

This is positively the first time that an American Grand opera is to be given at State expense in Europe. If you say anything to the papers, it would be well to emphasize that ... but don't say that the opera is on a political subject whatever you do....

This acceptance assures me of the most prime position of importance at next seasons most important music festival.

Now sit back and figure how we can strike hard. This, of course, is visibly the greatest victory for the musical culture of the U.S.A. and everybody can't help seeing it, if at all fairly represented.

Meanwhile, during these hard two years and a half—You stuck to me—and were the only one who did. Words do not suffice.²²

Pound and Antheil had clearly remained friends and collaborators all along. Antheil’s repeated use of “we” and his mention of “our common interests” indicate that Antheil saw the creation of an American grand opera as yet another of their collaborative projects. The letter also reveals a great deal about the continuing tenor of their friendship. The

emotional nature of final lines lends a special poignancy to the letter—a sincerity that transcends issues of money and aesthetics. In other letters, Antheil frequently addressed Pound as his "artistic father"²³ or "the best friend I got in this world."²⁴ He even dedicated his second violin sonata (November 1923) to Pound with the inscription, "For E. P., best of friends" (Whitesitt, 219).²⁵ Such evidence contradicts all existing scholarly explanations of their friendship, including accounts by Antheil himself that all Pound wanted from their relationship was to use the composer to further his own ends. In my reading of the archival evidence, he and Pound not only maintained their professional relationship; they also remained friends.²⁶

Antheil also remained indebted to Pound's counsel on the subject of public relations. He feared that the opera's reception would suffer of the premiere's location. He had heard the Frankfurt audience described as the "most notoriously cold public in Europe."²⁷ He asked Pound to round up a group of Americans to come to the premiere and "clap hands" to ensure the opera's success. As he wrote to Pound, "Ezra, if I can put this over, I can do, in the future, practically any darned thing I want in the world of music. Now strikes the fatal hour."²⁸ Apparently, Pound again did as Antheil requested and began to ask "the Paris gang" to attend *Transatlantic's* premiere. Pound also purposefully tried to keep his association with *Transatlantic* quiet as not to alarm Mrs. Bok, but somehow word of his involvement got out. Once again, Pound was forced to disavow his efforts on Antheil's behalf. The following letter from Pound appeared in the Paris Edition of the *Chicago Tribune* on April 19, 1930:

I think there must be some misunderstanding. So far as I know Mr. Antheil's opera is not dedicated to me. I have not seen Mr. Antheil for some time. I have never heard Mr. Antheil express the slightest intention of dedicating an opera to me.

As long as the American musical world *y compris* the Metropolitan Opera House, the private Philadelphia back garden and its heavy chested musical foundations remain the pocket boroughs that they are now, I shd strongly advise Mr. Antheil or any other good composer to refrain from dedicating anything to me, or from being seen in my company. . . . (Qtd. Schafer, 319).

In the light of Pound's previous efforts save Antheil from poverty, this letter, like Pound's previous apparent dismissal, takes on a new meaning. Pound is, as Murray Schafer argues, killing a rumor that *Transatlantic* is dedicated to him, but he is not, as Schafer assumes, extinguishing this rumor because he is disgusted with Antheil's work. Instead, Pound was trying yet again to protect his friend. He knew that if Mrs. Bok suspected that he and Antheil still kept in touch, she might very well cut Antheil off again. He did not want Antheil to lose any more money.

Mrs. Bok apparently remained convinced of Antheil's loyalty because her support continued as Pound busily rounded up influential people to attend *Transatlantic's* premiere. Antheil was, in any case, pleased with Pound's efforts. In a letter to Pound, dated May 5, 1930, he wrote: "Hurray for Youse! Hurray for Youse! Nancy Cunard, Natalie Barney, Duchess de C. T. Polignacs should set them upon their heads in Frankfurt."²⁹ He proceeded to tell Pound of his plans should the opera succeed:

Ezra, my solemn word has it that you are the best friend I ever did have. You and Olga watch my smoke, if I ever do break through. It won't be long, anyhow, until something or another very definite is decided. And if the ayes have it . . . the first thing that is going to happen is a tour for Olga, and a performance of "Le Testament" at Darmstadt (which is only 80 minutes from Frankfurt) next season, revision by G.A. (orchestral) and we will still live to burn the tails of some people.³⁰

Confident of his upcoming success, Antheil's gratitude to his collaborator (and conspirator) is obvious in his letter. Unfortunately, after Pound had recruited a "Paris gang" of "hand clappers" for the audience, Antheil found out from his publisher, Hans Heinsheimer, that the plan might not be such a good idea after all: apparently, just weeks before, French composer Darius Milhaud had tried to guarantee himself a friendly audience in Berlin, and his plans had backfired. As Antheil explained the blunder to Pound: "Milhaud's French friends who came up from Paris got the Germans sore by applauding after the first act, and very conspicuously at that, so that the Germans all got cold, and remembered the war, and everything."³¹ Panicked, Antheil wrote several frantic letters to Pound asking him to be very careful which Americans he invited to the premiere. He stated, "A few of these kind Americans, coming specially to Frankfurt could not only put this performance on the blink, but possibly put the largest possible kink in all my future career."³²

Still feeling the sting of his Carnegie Hall debacle, Antheil remained quite defensive, almost paranoid, about *Transatlantic's* premiere. He did not want the critics to have any preconceived notions about the performance as they had had for *Ballet Mechanique*. He also feared that his fellow Americans would sabotage the opera by intentionally creating a stir in the audience thus offending the Germans. Still attempting to manage his own public reception, he sent Pound explicit instructions about the audience's behavior:

NO AMERICAN SHOULD ATTRACT ATTENTION TO HIMSELF IN THE AUDIENCE.
NO AMERICAN SHOULD BEGIN THE CLAPPING, IF ANY, BUT SHOULD TAKE THEIR
CUE FROM THE GERMANS.
DONT CLAP OR DEMONSTATE [sic] IN ANY WAY AFTER THE FIRST ACT.

THEY SHOULDN'T SPEAK TOO MUCH DARNED ENGLISH IN THE FOYERS BETWEEN ACTS, BUT WITHDRAW THEMSELVES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE UNTIL THE END. . . .

Now any kind of riot means death to an operatic work, under heavy financing by the state, and it also means it will never be played again, and my contract with the U. E. imperiled....

If any damned fool American takes it into his head to shout 'ata Boy, Antheil! After the first act..... you can take my future career out and shoot it for dinner tomorrow, and no fooling either.³³

Antheil drastically wanted to regain prominence as an American composer. To Pound he admitted, “This premiere involves three years of struggle of a most desperate kind. I don’t mind it being a flop on legitimate grounds, but if it is a flop just because of some wrong deadly diplomatic policy, especially involving my deadly enemies ... the Americans..... I shall be heart-broken.”³⁴

When it premiered, *Transatlantic* did, in fact, receive rave reviews: for example, in the *Chicago Daily News*, Irving Schwerke proclaimed: “*Transatlantic* [is] one of the most exciting spectacles on the operatic stage today.”³⁵ Unfortunately, despite its critical success, the opera did not appear again after its initial run in Frankfurt and once again Antheil was denied financial success. Antheil’s publisher attributed the work’s failure to two factors: the difficulty adapting a Homeric plot into German, and the loud and ostentatious manners of Antheil’s friends who had traveled from Paris to see the opera.³⁶ Their attitude, he believed, proved that the opera was very chic, but not serious or profound (Whitesitt, 129). A more likely reason for *Transatlantic's* demise was the opera's exorbitant production costs. Because Antheil took advantage of all the latest staging and cinematic techniques, presenting *Transatlantic* was extremely expensive, and it virtually barred the work's production in all but the most sophisticated opera houses (Cook, 507). Finally, the depiction of Americans and the United States in the opera insulted several Americans, including Mrs. Bok. She charged that it was "sordid" and "cheap ... [and] far from representative of real American life" (Qtd. in Shirley, 19, 20).

Antheil made several operatic innovations in *Transatlantic* and enjoyed a brief window of success, but ultimately he gained none of his desired recognition either in Europe or in the United States. He and Pound remained friends for another three or four years after *Transatlantic's* “failure” while he traveled between the U.S. and Europe before finally settling permanently in the United States in August 1933. The men kept in touch off and on through the 1930s, but by the mid-thirties, Antheil's days as America’s “Bad Boy of Music” were over. In addition, Antheil tried to arrange an American concert tour for Olga Rudge, but nothing materialized. He also asked Pound to collaborate on another project: “if you would give me the idea for a stage work (not an opera, although

there would be occasional solo) with your poetry I would set it, and produce it here in New York with the American Ballet.”³⁷ Pound declined the offer, replying, “The honor of succeeding [sic] Erskine as yr/ collaborator is NOT tempting.”³⁸ At this point, the archival records indicate that their partnership had finally ended as Pound and Antheil parted ways. By 1934, Pound was no longer interested in developing a scene for American music abroad; instead, he and Olga Rudge had begun to revive Italian music by composers such as Antonio Vivaldi. Antheil, constantly fighting to stay financially secure, finally succumbed to the commercialism of Hollywood. He intended to compose movie music just to earn enough money to support his “serious” music, but during his first years in Hollywood, he devoted most of his time to writing film music and neglected his other compositions.

Antheil’s final surrender to Hollywood in the 1930s marked the end of his relationship with Pound. This defection happened during a crucial moment in Pound’s career. Since the end of the First World War, Pound had been intrigued by the ideas of Major Douglas’s concept of social credit. In the early 1920s, while composing the “Malatesta Cantos,” Pound developed *Bel Esprit*, a program designed to fund worthy artists. In “Credit and the Fine Arts” (1922), he stressed that his program “is NOT a charity. [It] is definitely and defiantly not a charity.”³⁹ Pound intended for *bel esprit* to give artists enough money to live on, not live luxuriously, but enough to have the basic necessities so they could focus their time and energy on their art.

During the years of the Great Depression, Pound had become increasingly interested in economics. In 1933, he wrote *The ABC’s of Economics* to define his theory of economics and Social Credit. In addition, in the early 1930s, Pound also became increasingly attracted to Fascism, an attraction that was in some ways linked to the struggles he and Antheil had faced as artists in the twenties. Throughout the 1920s, Pound witnessed artists like Antheil fail repeatedly in their quest to establish himself as an artist, not because they lacked talent or ambition, but ultimately because they lacked money. Pound had struggled himself to make ends meet for his entire life and relied often on his wife’s money. Gaudier-Brzeska labored to scrounge up marble for his works. Wyndham Lewis often could not afford food and relied upon the Sitwells to provide for him. T. S. Eliot worked in a bank and was forced to moonlight as a poet, one of the causes of his nervous breakdown in the early 1920s. James Joyce could not afford to publish either *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or *Ulysses*, so he too had to rely upon the money of others. Harriet Weaver funded the first novel; John Quinn and Sylvia Beach contributed to the second. Antheil, like the rest of these artists, relied upon the support of a patron, and without her money, he could not afford to be a musician. As Hugh Kenner has noted, “These are not the conditions of freedom” (303).

For Pound, Antheil's submission to Hollywood was further proof that truly gifted and original artists could not survive unless they had some sort of subsidized income. The logical answer to the plight of the artist, as he saw it, was state support. Pound felt that artists made contributions to society that were at least as valuable as the average laborer. The general public, however, could not be expected to understand, appreciate, or support real art so as a result, artists were forced beg, borrow, and prostitute themselves to patrons like Mrs. Bok in order to survive. Government subsidy might have proved to be a viable alternative, if the government could be persuaded not to interfere with artists and their work. Pound, it seems, had found such a system in Italian history with its patron states. There, at least in the idealized version Pound presents in canto VIII, artists could find support in beneficent patrons like Sigismundo Malatesta. To Pound, Malatesta would have been the perfect sponsor:

But I want it to be quite clear, that until the chapels are ready
 I will arrange for him to paint something else
 So that both he and I shall
 Get as much enjoyment as possible from it,
 And in order that he may enter my service
 And also because you write me that he needs cash,
 I want to arrange with him to give him so much per year
 And to assure him that he will get the sum agreed on.
 You may say that I will deposit security
 For him whenever he likes.
 And let me have a clear answer,
 For I mean to give him good treatment
 So that he may come to live the rest
 Of his life on my lands-
 Unless you put him off it-
 And for this I mean to make due provision,
 So that he can work as he likes,
 Or waste his time as he likes,
 ... never lacking provision.⁴⁰

Malatesta is, as Lawrence Rainey argues, Pound's ideal patron; Pound wrote, "Ma<|>atesta got the goods. And he was enough of an artist himself to know that you can't always tell when an artist is loafing. Real work may be done

on tennis court or in a trolley car, and sham work at a desk” (70). Moreover, Malatesta wanted to provide for artists and let them produce their own art. Unlike the Mrs. Boks of the artistic world, Malatesta, Pound asserts, did not attempt to pressure his painter to conform to his tastes. Instead, he wanted artists to follow their own creative visions.

Perhaps Pound equated Mussolini with Sigismundo Malatesta who took pride in his role as a patron of the arts.⁴¹ Such an equation seems likely not only because they were both Italian, but also because, in Pound’s eyes, both Malatesta and Mussolini truly understood great art and the conditions necessary for its creation. A system like Mussolini’s Italy, led by a man who could realize and value the importance of fine art, might be the last chance for the true artistic genius to survive. Mussolini read Dante. Better yet, he played the violin, and he knew a great deal about music. He even invited Olga Rudge to play for him at his residence in 1933. In the end, perhaps Pound believed Mussolini would provide for the artist, unlike the governments of Britain, France, or the United States.

Ultimately, Antheil's surrender to Hollywood and commercialism reinforced Pound's belief in Mussolini and fascism. Pound could not have been immune to Antheil’s constant setbacks and disappointment. When Antheil finally returned to America in the 1930s in defeat, it is likely that Pound became more determined than ever to secure some sort of economic reform that would break the cycle of the “starving artist” once and for all. Ultimately, however, his turn toward Fascism would have serious and tragic consequences. While most critics condemn Antheil for compromising his artistic standards in Hollywood, he did not forfeit serious music entirely. He composed several more “artistic” works and was able to achieve at least some degree of personal fulfillment. Unlike Pound, determined to fix all of the world’s evils, Antheil was able to live the rest of his life with some degree of financial independence and security.

Endnotes

¹ The author would like to thank the following: Charles Amirhanian, executor, and the estate of George Antheil for permission to include previously unpublished letters from Antheil to Ezra Pound; the librarians and staff at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University for their assistance; Mr. Steve Nelson for his tireless work as research assistant; and Professor Robin Schulze of Pennsylvania State University for her guidance in this project and so much more.

² In his memoir, Antheil belittles his own writings about music. Claiming they were merely “adolescent effervescence . . . how can one explain the writing of one’s youth?” (118). For more information, see *Bad Boy of Music* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Dorian and Co, 1945).

³ In *The Pound Era* Antheil is mentioned only on pages 389-90. Here Kenner writes, “The rumor went about that Pound had abandoned words. He worked at music . . . and welcomed George Antheil as a Vorticist composer come late.” Kenner proceeds to describe Pound’s interest in Antheil, but he provides no real consideration of their professional relationship or recognition of the friendship Pound and Antheil shared.

⁴ Antheil’s explanation of his “lost” paintings can serve as an example of his autobiographical tendency to “bend the truth.” According to *Bad Boy*, Antheil had shipped the paintings back to the United States for storage when he moved to Paris, and then he had forgotten to whom he had sent them. For the next several chapters, finding these missing paintings is a sub-plot to the autobiography. This search serves to connect events and provide humor. In reality, Antheil never forgot where he sent the “lost” paintings. He had shipped the back to the offices of the *Little Review*. A letter to his patron, Mrs. Mary Louise Curtis Bok, reveals the true fate of the artworks; Mrs. Bok paid the shipping charges after Jane Heap forwarded the expense to an impoverished Antheil (Shirley, 8).

⁵ Pound to Antheil, October 27, 1927. This letter is quoted in Linda Whitesitt’s book, *The Life and Music of George Antheil 1900-1959* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983), 41.

⁶ Antheil’s correspondence with Pound is part of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale Collection of American Literature, Ezra Pound Collection (43). Hereafter, letters from this collection will be cited as YCAL.

⁷ Vorticism is an artistic movement that originated in London in 1913 with work of Wyndham Lewis. Ezra Pound, one of Lewis’s close friends, gave the group its name from “vortex” or whirlpool. Vorticism sought to harness the force and energy of the vortex to draw the audience into the dynamics of the work. See volume one of *BLAST: Review of the Great English Vortex* for more information about Vorticism, including the “Long Live the Vortex” and “Vorticist Manifesto” (June 20, 1914, Reprinted Santa Rosa: Back Sparrow Press, 1997).

⁸ Both William Walter Hoffa and Murray Schafer have argued that *Treatise* actually has more to do with Pound’s poetic style in the *Cantos* than Antheil’s actual musical composition theories. Antheil’s accusation that Pound “merely wanted to use [him] . . .” (*Bad Boy*, 119) also supports the notion that the book was more about Pound than Antheil.

⁹ Pound’s “Absolute Rhythm” was a mathematical formula which suggested that music was “pure” rhythm because even the variation in pitch could be reduced to a variation in rhythm of individual notes (their acoustical vibrations and harmonic overtones). Pound goes as far as to state in his introduction to his Cavalcanti translation that the “tempo of every masterpiece is exact and set by some further law of rhythmic accord.”

¹⁰ “Notes Struck in the World of Music: Antheil’s Symphony Gets Ovation From Paris Audience,” *Paris Times*, October 20, 1926.

¹¹ Ezra Pound, *Machine Art and Other Writings: The Lost Thought of the Italian Years*, ed. Maria Luisa Ardizzone (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 72.

¹² Letter, Antheil to Bok, July 1926, Music Division, Library of Congress, George Antheil Correspondence. Also quoted in Whitesitt, 26.

¹³ Samuel Chotzinoff, *St. Louis Dispatch*, April 11, 1927; *New York Herald Tribune*, April 11, 1927.

¹⁴ Pound to Antheil, October 27, 1927, YCAL.

¹⁵ Antheil to Pound, 1925, YCAL.

¹⁶ Roger Fuller, “‘Ballet Mechanique’ to Wipe Out Big Orchestras, and Audiences Too,” *Paris Tribune*, January 21, 1925, reprinted in *The Left Bank Revisited: Selections from the Paris Tribune 1917-1934* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972) 213.

¹⁷ Pound to Mary Louise Curtis Bok, December 15, 1923. Quoted in Whitesitt, 20.

¹⁸ Mary Louise Curtis Bok, Letter to George Antheil, August 1, 1929, quoted in Glenda Dawn Goss, “George Antheil, Carol Robinson and the Moderns,” *American Music* v10, n4 (Winter 1992) 473.

¹⁹ Antheil to Pound, 1927, YCAL.

²⁰ Confirmation that Antheil sent this clipping to Mrs. Bok can be found in Linda Whitesitt’s bibliography: “‘Father of Mechanical Music dislikes being called Jazz Artiste,” *New York Herald Paris Edition* [. . .] enclosed in Letter, Antheil to Bok, October 24, 1927 (p. 318). Unfortunately, Whitesitt makes no other mention of this article in her book.

²¹ “Father of Mechanical Symphonies Dislikes Being Called Jazz Artiste” in *New York Herald*, Paris Ed. October 24, 1927.

²² Antheil to Pound, undated but probably July 1929, YCAL. According to Antheil’s autobiography, he received the letter from Universal Editions at the Hotel Moderne (where he wrote the letter to Pound) on his birthday, July 8, 1929.

²³ Antheil to Pound, Winter 1927, YCAL.

²⁴ Antheil to Pound, August 13, 1926, YCAL.

²⁵ Antheil wrote this sonata for violin, piano and drums. In *Ezra Pound and Music*, Murray Schafer points out that Pound played the drums in several of the performances with Antheil (312). Antheil likely included drums in this piece so that Pound could accompany Olga Rudge and himself in their recitals.

²⁶ Unfortunately, Antheil did not reciprocate his friend's loyalty and stand by the poet when he himself fell upon hard times later on.

²⁷ Antheil to Pound, Spring 1930, YCAL.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Antheil to Pound, May 5, 1930, YCAL.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Antheil to Pound, May 9, 1930 YCAL.

³² Antheil to Pound, 1930 YCAL.

³³ Antheil to Pound, 1930 YCAL.

³⁴ Antheil to Pound, 1930 YCAL.

³⁵ Irving Scherke, "Antheil Given Ovation after Premiere of Opera *Transatlantic* in Frankfurt" *Chicago Tribune*, Paris Edition, May 26, 1930.

³⁶ The plot of *Transatlantic* features Helen of Troy, Ajax, Hector, Jason, and several other characters drawn from Greek antiquity. The characters are placed in modern roles in New York City in the early 1900s. For example, Ajax is a politician, Hector is a Presidential candidate, and Helen, previously married to Jason and becomes Ajax's mistress.

³⁷ Antheil to Pound, June 26, 1934, YCAL.

³⁸ Antheil to Pound, July 7, 1934, YCAL. John Erskine collaborated with Antheil on the libretto for *Helen Retires*, which Antheil composed 1930-32

³⁹ Ezra Pound, "Credit and the Fine Arts," *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose: Contributions to Periodicals*, ed. Lea Baechler, A. Walton Litz, and James Longenbach, v4 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991) 223.

⁴⁰ Excerpt taken from Canto VIII (11. 34-54).

⁴¹ In *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), Lawrence Rainey compares Malatesta with Mussolini. He writes, "In 1922 an analogy between Sigismundo Malatesta and Benito Mussolini had been only one possibility, and at that a remote one, among many; by 1932, however, it would strike Pound as the central axis for the shape of his magnum opus and his understanding of its place in the modern world (74). See also pp. 46-47, 72, 75.

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