

Werner Richard Heymann (1896 - 1961) was the musical godfather of the topical, satirical cabaret during the Weimar Republic. As a pianist, composer and musical director, he helped shape the three influential stages Sound and Smoke (Schall und Rauch), Megalomania (Größenwahn) and especially the Wild Stage (Wilde Bühne). His expressionistically colored settings of texts by Walter Mehring, in particular, reflect the ambiguities and modernity of the metropolis Berlin at the beginning of the twenties. Heymann was the General Musical Director of the film firm Ufa from 1926, and here it was that, together with lyricist Robert Gilbert, he created the genre of the sound film operetta with titles like “Three Guys from the Gas Station” (Die Drei von der Tankstelle) and “Congress Dances” (Der Kongress tanzt). Thanks not least of all to his songs, they were hits at the box office, for, as the songs say, “A friend, a real friend”—“That’s once in a lifetime, it never happens again.”

Werner R. Heymann

“Dear Werner, you left us a bit too early, but your wonderful songs will remain classics as long as there is still a literary cabaret—and long thereafter, I hope.” (Trude Hesterberg)

