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| Ball, Hugo (1886-1927) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Born in Pirmasens on 22 February 1886, the German writer Hugo Ball is best known as the co-founder, with Tristan Tzara, of the Cabaret Voltaire and the Dada movement in Zurich. Active initially as an Expressionist playwright and dramaturge in Munich and as a journalist and literary critic in Berlin in the years leading up to World War I, Ball left Germany with his companion and future wife Emmy Hennings in 1915. They remained in Switzerland for the rest of their lives. Following his period of Dada activities in 1916 and 1917, Ball was a journalist for a center-left newspaper for three years. Reconverting to the Catholic faith of his childhood, Ball spent the remainder of his life in relative seclusion in Ticino, where he wrote a series of religious books and revised his diaries for publication.  Ball’s most influential works stem from his brief Dada period. The best-known of these are his six sound poems of 1916, compositions comprised of apparently meaningless syllables but filled with onomatopoeic effects and occasional allusions to German vocabulary, intended for recitation at the Cabaret Voltaire and similar venues. |
| Born in Pirmasens on 22 February 1886, the German writer Hugo Ball is best known as the co-founder, with Tristan Tzara, of the Cabaret Voltaire and the Dada movement in Zurich. Active initially as an Expressionist playwright and dramaturge in Munich and as a journalist and literary critic in Berlin in the years leading up to World War I, Ball left Germany with his companion and future wife Emmy Hennings in 1915. They remained in Switzerland for the rest of their lives. Following his period of Dada activities in 1916 and 1917, Ball was a journalist for a center-left newspaper for three years. Reconverting to the Catholic faith of his childhood, Ball spent the remainder of his life in relative seclusion in Ticino, where he wrote a series of religious books and revised his diaries for publication.  Ball’s most influential works stem from his brief Dada period. The best-known of these are his six sound poems of 1916, compositions comprised of apparently meaningless syllables but filled with onomatopoeic effects and occasional allusions to German vocabulary, intended for recitation at the Cabaret Voltaire and similar venues.  File: NO IMAGE INCLUDED  Figure 1 Hugo Ball's sound poem 'Karawane' as printed in the *Dada Almanach*, ed. Richard Huelsenbeck (1920).  Source: Copy in the International Dada Archive, Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries.  Ball’s two novels also stem from his Dada period. *Flametti* (1918) is the story of a mildly disreputable group of cabaret performers not unlike the members of the Cabaret Voltaire and its predecessor, the Maxim Ensemble. The posthumously published *Tenderenda der Phantast* [*Tenderenda the Fantast*] (1967) is a fanciful, allegorical reworking of Ball’s experiences from 1914 to 1920; ‘Dada’ appears as a character in the novel.  *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz* [*Critique of the German Intelligentsia*](1919) is a transitional work in which Ball traces Germany’s militaristic culture back to Luther and proposes that Russian anarchism and the French Revolution should serve as models for a postwar culture. His 1924 revision of the work as *Die Folgen der Reformation* eliminates the emphasis on revolution and anarchism and brings it into conformity with conventional Catholic teachings.  Although Ball’s diary *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* [*Flight Out of Time*] (1927) is considered one of the source documents of Zurich Dada, providing first-hand accounts of many of the key events of the initial phase of the movement, it is uncertain how reliable this account is, since the book constitutes the author’s interpretation of his life from the standpoint of his religious conversion. The original diaries on which the book is based have not survived. Key Works: *Tenderenda der Phantast* [*Ball and Hammer: Hugo Ball’s Tenderenda the Fantast*](1967*,* 2002)  *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz* [*Critique of the German Intelligentsia*](1919, 1993)  *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* [*Flight out of Time: A Dada Diary*](1927, 1996)  *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe,* 2003--. Ten volumes planned. |
| Further reading:  (Mann)  (White) |