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Musique et camps de concentration

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Introduction

Phénomène aujourd'hui largement connu, l'existence et la place de la musique dans les camps nazis ne furent admises comme réalité qu'à partir des années 1980, tant la relation entre l'art et le contexte particulier de son exercice semblait auparavant dépasser les limites de l'entendement. La multiplication des témoignages - dont certains parurent dès 1946 - permit d'en confirmer la réalité.

Mais au fond, le phénomène n'a rien d'étonnant ni de nouveau. La pratique musicale est présente dans tout regroupement humain, à quelque époque que ce soit, et en quelque circonstance que ce soit. Le Psaume 137 en est probablement le premier témoignage d'activité musicale chez un peuple déporté, le peuple juif, après la prise de Jérusalem par Nabuchodonosor en 586 avant J.C. : «Au bord des fleuves de Babylone, c'est là que nous étions assis et nous pleurions, en nous souvenant de Sion. Aux peupliers qui s'y trouvent nous avions suspendu nos harpes. C'est alors que ceux qui nous firent prisonniers nous demandèrent les paroles d'une chanson... ».

Plus près de nous, on se souviendra par exemple que le chef d'orchestre et compositeur Hermann Scherchen écrivit son *Quatuor à cordes n°1* lors de sa captivité dans un camp de prisonniers de guerre en Russie pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Pendant le même conflit, le compositeur français Pierre Camus, fait prisonnier par les Allemands en 1915 et futur directeur du Conservatoire d'Amiens, composa pendant sa captivité ses *Impressions d'Exil*, évoquant la vie du camp silésien où il était retenu.

Mais la musique dans les systèmes concentrationnaires massifiés que sont ceux issus des totalitarismes du XXème siècle n'est pas seulement matière de musiciens professionnels, et encore moins des seuls compositeurs. Elle est instrumentalisée à des fins de domination des détenus, de propagande,

voire d'amélioration des rendements de l'économie de guerre. Elle est une sociologie qui interroge sur ses acteurs, les rôles qu'elle remplit, sa production, son fonctionnement.

Si l'on se limite à l'histoire des déportations nazies toutes confondues et de l'Holocauste pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, la vie musicale de Theresienstadt est devenue aujourd'hui l'arbre qui cache la forêt. Sous couvert d'un devoir de mémoire qui finit par avoir bon dos, il tient dans la conscience publique un rôle complètement surévalué, et maintient dans l'oubli des pans entiers de l'histoire des destructions culturelles du nazisme, notamment dans le domaine musical. Le compassionnel l'emporte au détriment de l'analyse historique qui doit guider le chercheur, qu'il soit historien, sociologue, ou professionnel de la musique, ce dernier ayant souvent tendance à mélanger les genres et à entretenir de dangereuses confusions. Mélanger au sein d'un même concert et sous le titre générique « Musique des camps » comme cela se fait de plus en plus souvent, en jouant en même temps des œuvres de Ullmann, Klein, Krasa, avec le *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* d'Olivier Messiaen, met en parallèle des victimes de la violence illégitime d'un totalitarisme, assassinées dans des camps d'extermination, et un compositeur prisonnier de guerre, protégé par la Convention de Genève de 1929, et qui fut libéré dès 1942. Sous couvert de mémoire, on prive en réalité la Shoah de son unicité, on en relativise le poids historique et humain, confinant ainsi à une forme de révisionnisme inacceptable.

La présence de la musique dans les camps nazis n'est cependant pas liée uniquement au génocide commis contre les Juifs d'Europe, et dans le Porajmos des Roms et des Sintis. On la retrouve ainsi dans les camps d'extermination comme dans les autres camps de concentration. Elle n'est pas non plus propre au système concentrationnaire nazi, puisqu'elle fait partie intégrante de la vie des camps mis en place par tous les régimes totalitaires, du goulag aux prisons chiliennes. Mais le développement exceptionnel de la vie musicale allemande, le rôle personnel qu'y jouèrent les bourreaux pris à titre individuel, et non comme représentants du pouvoir, sont symptomatiques d'une culture dans laquelle la musique joue un rôle central.

Le colloque organisé par le Forum Voix Etouffées les 7 et 8 novembre 2013 au Conseil de l'Europe voulait apporter des réponses scientifiques et pluridisciplinaires à ces problématiques.

Searching for Lost Music

Francesco Lotoro

Abstract

Concentrationary music is the whole music production (lyric, symphonic, chamber music from duo to nonet, instrumental solo, vocal and choral) of various genres (classical, cabaret, jazz, religious, folk and traditional, parody, comrade music, entertainment and variety, operetta and music for children, fragmented and incomplete works, music written by order of German commanders or Kapos, works reconstructed after the War) written in transit, forced labour, concentration, extermination, military prisons, POW Camps, Stalag, Oflag, Dulag Camps open from Third Reich, Italy, Japan, Republic of Salò, Vichy regìme and other Axis countries as well as from Great Britain, France, Soviet Union and other Allies countries in Europe, northern and colonial Africa, Asia and Oceania 1933 (when Dachau and Börgermoor open) to 1945 (end of the War in 1945, May on the European side and in August on the Pacific one) by musicians from boths professional or artistic training as well as belonging to any national, social and religious background (Jews, Christians, Sinti and Roma, Euskaldunak or Basque people, Sufi, Quakers, Jehova Witnesses, Communists, disables, homosexuals, civilian and military deportees,) that have been discriminated, persecuted, imprisoned, deported, killed or survived.

Concentrationary music is that one conceived in captivity or in conditions of extreme deprivation of fundamental human rights, one of the most important legacies of the History from the phenomenology of deportations and Holocaust; it has an high historical, documentary, scientific and artistic value.

The discrimination, persecution, imprisonment, deportation and killing of musicians during World War II for pseudo racial, political or social reasons connected to war or any other status, has been a tragedy for culture, art and civilization; in a few years, a whole generation of composers, conductors, quartet members, soloists and virtuosos, jazz musicians, showmen and entertainers disappeared.

The artistic and musical activity in Camps is considered as a cornerstone of XX century culture and literature, as is widely acknowledged at international level.

In Theresienstadt great musicians reached the top of musical creativity; regardless of what and how much music they wrote, they forged a musical thought, outlined brand new ways and languages that turned Theresienstadt into the crossroads of contemporary music.

They were Viktor Ullmann, Pavel Haas, Gideon Klein and Hans Krása, not to mention Karel Berman (who composed *Poupata* for baritone and piano, *Slavnostní pochod* and *Terezín suite* for piano), František Domažlický (who composed *Pisen máje* for male choir, *Píseň beze slov* for string quartet and the *Ouverture Petriana* for orchestra, lost and recovered after the War), Siegmund Schul (who composed *Schicksal* for alto, flute, viola and cello, *Mogen Owaus* for soprano, baritone, mixed choir and organ), Heinz Alt (who composed *Sechs Miniaturen* for piano, lost), Franz Eugen Klein (who composed the one-act comic opera *Der gläserne Berg* on a libretto by Otto Brod, of which just the piano score of the Introduction is left), Carlo Sigmund Taube (who composed *Ein Judisches Kind* for soprano and piano, *Techesaknah and Hachašmonaim* for male choir and *Theresienstadt–Symphonie*, lost), Hugo Löwenthal (who arranged for violin and accordion *Traditionelle Weisen für Pesach, Schwuos und Sukkot*), Viktor Kohn, Egon Ledeč up to the authors of *Schlager, i.e. parodies from operettas and cabaret*, Otto Skutecky, Adolf Strauss, Ewald Weiss, Walter Lindenbaum, Felix Porges, Karel Švenk.

It must also be mentioned the musical corpus of Bergen Belsen (*Parpar and Shabath ha–Malka* for choir and two recorders by Józef Zvi Pinkhof, Muziekboekje

by Robert Emanuel Heilbut), the wide production of Józef Kropiński between *Auschwitz I* and *Buchenwald*, the music for the Szopka Polska, Polish Christmas operas for marionettes at Dachau and Stutthof (there, Waleria Felchnerovska composed several Songs and female choruses), *Tangos for piano* and *Songs* written by Zygfryd Maciej Strjiecky at Kriegsgefangenenlager Hoffnungsthal and by Leon Kaczmarek at Dachau, the Sonata for violin and piano (unfinished) written by Hermann Gürtler in Bolzano Gries, the works by the Quaker William Hilsley in Kreuzburg (who wrote a *Missa* for his Catholic fellows interned, *Songs* for male voice and piano, the suite *The Turning World* for four hands piano, incidental music for several pièces), *the Schlager* created in Grini (Norway) by Otto Nielesen, the *Hymns by the Bibelforscher* in Sachsenhausen and Channel Islands, the *Songs* created in the fortress of Ilava and in the Zigeunerlager Auschwitz by Sinti, Burgenland Roma, Lovara and other Romanès groups, the *Songs of Emslandlagern*, the *Songs* for female choir by Ludmila Kadlecova Peškařová in Ravensbrück and by the Presbyterian missionary Margaret Dryburgh in the Japanese Camps of Muntok and Belalau, which inspired the film *Paradise Road* by Bruce Beresford (notably *The Captive's Hymn*, the arrangements of works by A. Dvořák, J.S. Bach, M. Ravel, and others), the imposing *Nenia pro Judaeis qui in haec aetate perierunt* for cello and piano written by Eric Itor Kahn in *Les Milles* (there, in 1939, Max Schlesinger wrote the Camp hymn on the soundtrack of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* by Walt Disney) and the *Sonata* for violin written in Sachsenhausen/Oranienburg by Marius Flothuis (among the most prolific, he wrote, moreover, *Sonata da camera op.17* for flute and piano, *Aria op.18* for trumpet and piano, *Bicinia op.20* for female chorus, *Valses sentimentales* op.21 for four hands piano, *Twee stukken op.22* for guitar, *Duettino pastorale op.23 nr. 2* for two violins), *La Favola di Natale* for speaker, male choir and orchestra by Giovannino Guareschi and Arturo Coppola and *Cantico delle Creature* for soli, male chorus and orchestra by Pietro Maggioli (written at the Stalag XB Sandbostel), but also *Concerto spirituale* for cello and orchestra by Giuseppe Selmi (written in Tarnopol) and *Lagerlieder* for four hands piano by Gino Marinuzzi jr. (written in Ludwigshafen am Rhein), music and pièce by Italian civilians interned by the Reich at Ivánc (Hungary) and by Italian soldiers in the French Camps in Algeria, in the British Camps in South Africa, Kenya and Yol on Kashmir.

The Italian officer Berto Boccosi, interned in the French Camps of Gabès and Saïda (colonial Tunisia and Algeria), wrote the trilogy *Nell'Uadi Saida* for cello and piano, the *Songs La mia compagna and Mia stella appari anche tu* for tenor and piano and his masterpiece, the three-act opera *La lettera scarlatta*, inspired by

the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne on a libretto by Umberto Pavia; survived, he used a rubber for colors to erase any reference to the place of creation, Gabès, from the score of his *Rapsodia* for piano.

In April 1939, France opened a refugee Camp for Basque and Republican fighters of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War in the Pyrenean town of Gurs, but under the Vichy regime it became a concentration Camp for German Jews; there, the German pianist and composer Wally Loewenthal Karveno (who later moved to France) composed *Concertino op.58* for piano and chamber orchestra in 1941, while the Basque Regino Sorozábal from San Sebastián composed and conducted his *Euskalduna Orkestra*.

Years ago, the German musicologist Eleonore Philipp came into possession of Catholic religious music composed at the Pfarrer Block, the Block 26 of Dachau, by Pfarrer Gregor (born Theodor) Schwake O.S.B. (who wrote *Dachauer Messe* for male choir, brass quartet and organ, *In viam pacis* and *Regina Pacis* for male choir, *Trio über O du fröliche, o du selige* for flute, violin and viola, *Ostertrio* for violin, viola and cello, etc.), Pfarrer Joseph Moosbauer (who wrote *O esca viatorum* for male voices and organ, *Graduale für den 10. Sonntag nach Pfingsten* for male choir and other), Pfarrer Anton Kraehenheide M.S.C. (who wrote *Dachauer Singmesse* for male choir and organ), Pfarrer Karl Schrammel, who was hanged in Buchenwald in 1944 (who wrote the *Gradual Locus iste* for male choir) and other priests or Benedictine and Franciscan monks.

During the Christian Easter of 1942, the French choir and orchestra at the Stalag IVE Altenburg performed the *Messe de la Consolation et de l'Espoir* written by Jean Lashermes, while in the Roman prison of Regina Coeli the military chaplain Giuseppe Morosini wrote a poignant *Ninna Nanna* for soprano and piano dedicated to the son of his cellmate Epimenio Liberi, later killed at the Fosse Ardeatine on March 24th, 1944 (unfortunately the wife of Liberi, shocked, lost the son) and *Fantasia campestre* for orchestra; tortured and prosecuted, Morosini was sentenced to death and shot at Forte Bravetta in Rome on April 3rd, 1944.

At the Dulag in Westerbork (Drenthe, The Netherlands), there was an intense musical activity ranging from symphonic music to cabaret; every Tuesday, the *Bunter Abend* were held with such musicians and artists as Willy Rosen (Rosenbaum) and Max Michaelis Ehrlich (both died in Auschwitz), Erich Ziegler, Kurt Gerron and Martin Roman, later taken to Theresienstadt (they survived); there, Jacques Henri (Hans) van Collem wrote *Psalm 100* and *Wiegenlied* for male

chorus on toilet paper.

A few tapes with Songs by the duo Johnny & Jones (stage names of Nol van Wesel and Max Kannewasser) are left, which were recorded at the studios Nekos in Amsterdam in August 1944; Johnny and Jones were escorted from Westerbork to the recording studios, the original recordings are lost but the sound engineer of the Nekos, H. Luder, kept copies of them.

In April 1942, the colonel of the 57th Infantry Regiment Philippine, Edmund Jones Lilly jr., Charles Gurdon Sage and other U.S. officers, surrendered with their troops to the Japanese army; they survived the Bataan Death March and were later taken to the military internment Camps in Karenko and Shirakawa (Taiwan) and, finally, to Mukden (now Shenyang, capital of Liaoning Province, Republic of China), in the occupied Chinese Manchuria.

During the several internments, they wrote *Songs*, *Double vocal Quartets* and *Arrangements of American successful Songs* (we also keep *The Hill on Taiwan and other Songs* by the trumpeter Arthur Smith, written in the Taiwanese Camp of Kinkaseki as well as the *Bolero* by Norman Smith written in Chungkai, Thailand) and some Songs dating to the last days of August 1945; the War ended in the Old Continent in May 1945, but it went on in the Far East, and, after Hiroshima and Nagasaki (6 9.8.1945), weeks passed before the Japanese Camps were reached and their prisoners released.

In early February 1942, Singapore fell into Japanese hands and the British troops of the 5th Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery were transferred to Changi prison, then to Taiwan, along with 1,100 war prisoners and, from 17.11.1943, to Ōmori; Henry William (Harry) Berry wrote *Songs and lyrics for some theater plays* in collaboration with the Sergeant Derek Clarke.

Survived, in 1987 he recorded his *Songs*, playing an electric organ, on a tape entitled Songs from FEPOW [Far East Prisoners of War] Shows 1942 1945.

In the aftermath of the Nuremberg Laws (15.9.1935), musicians with a German or Austrian passport, such as Berthold Goldschmidt, Franz Reizenstein, Mátyás Seiber, Leopold Spinner, Vilém Tauský, Egon Wellesz and others, obtained political asylum in Britain but, when the War began, they were interned; conventionally called Emigrè, according to wartime laws, they formally belonged to a belligerent State (for similar reasons, U.S.S.R. deported to Siberia the Jew Yiddish speaking musician Leibu Levin from Romania, i.e. a country charged with collaborationism

with the Reich).

In Huyton, the German pianist and composer Freddie Grant alias Fritz Grundland wrote the famous *Song You'll Get Used to It* on a text by Victor Gordon, before being transferred to the Camp of Farnham, Quèbec, while, on the Isle of Man, Hans Gál wrote the operetta *What a Life*, Peter Gellhorn wrote *2 Studies* for violin and *The Cats* for strings without bass, and the German pianists Helmut Blume (a former pupil of Hindemith) and John Newmark alias Hans Joseph Neumark (later transferred to the Camp of Sherbrooke, Québec) held concerts, the latter also forming a duo with the German violinist Gerhard Kander.

Thousands of the so-called Enemy Aliens were taken onboard the ships Queen Mary and Dunera at the Australian Camps of Hay (New South Wales) and Tatura (near Shepparton, Victoria); among them, such musicians as Werner Baer, the rabbi of Berlin's Reform synagogue Boaz Bischofswerder (who wrote *Phantasia Judaica* for 4 tenors on the Dunera and then arranged it for violin and piano at Tatura) and his son Felix Werder, who wrote *Symphony nr.1 op.6*, *Off and Running* and *Psalm 127* at Tatura, with a style that, in 1944, went beyond Anton Webern's pointillism.

Humanitarian organizations of neutral countries, such as Sweden, had access to the detention and civil internment Camps of the Reich and there are recital recordings, audio and video tapes containing Songs and instrumental pieces that some surviving musicians remember by heart; with the support of the European Union, from March to July 2007, I traveled through many European countries and Israel to meet those survivors, in order to study such processes of creativity in captivity.

Essential to the phenomenology of music developed in concentration Camps and to the transmission of artistic memory to next generations are the interviews with the musicians' relatives; I recorded 50 hours of interviews, Songs and unrehearsed performances of Songs created in the Camps and remembered by heart.

Concentration Camp music is also the music written in prisons under occupying authorities, from *Stella del Porto*, created in the Roman prison of Regina Coeli, to *Canto d'amore*, written in the prison S. Vittore, Milan, by the Sufi Gabriele Mandel Khan, up to the music by the political prisoner Rudolf Karel, who was arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned in the Vazební věznice in Praha Pankrác.

Tortured, hit by severe dysentery and prevented from writing, Karel composed a Nonet and the opera *Tři Zlate Vlasy Děda Vševěda* on piano score, writing with vegetable charcoal on stuck sheets of toilet paper, which the jailer Müller sent out of the prison; once discovered, Karel was transferred to the Kleine Festung in Theresienstadt, where he died on March 6th, 1945, a few days after writing a *Pochod Höftlinku* for piano.

Concentration camp music is, finally, the music written or performed under compulsion at the behest of German authorities; enough thinking of *Fester Schritt* on a text by Walter Hirsz and music by Artur Gold (imposed by the commandant of Treblinka Kurt Hubert Franz), of Belzéc musicians who had to entertain the German officers on Sunday morning, of the *Moorsoldaten* written by Rudy Goguel during the Spanish Civil War and rescored at Börgemoor, of the *Buchenwalder Lagerlied* by Fritz Löhner Beda and Hermann Leopoldi alias Hersch Kohn, that the Kapo Fritz Grübau attributed to himself, of *Wie lustig ist da unser Leben* improvised in Sobibòr by Shaul Flajszhakier (called der Neger for his tanned skin) and to be sung in chorus by heart after the roll call by order of the SS-Oberscharführer Gustav Franz Wagner, of the *Trois Polonaises Varsoviennes*, arranged by Szimon Laks and written by order of a Kapo in Auschwitz.

The music by Wehrmacht officers in POW Camps opened by the Allies in North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and in France, Great Britain, America, Canada and U.S.S.R. must be included in concentration Camp music.

It deserves the same intellectual respect as the whole music production in the Camps; this is the privilege of Music, that of being universal, since such is creativity, and it must be studied and performed regardless of biography, thought and other elements related to the Author.

Concentration Camp music is deeply transversal and able to involve men, contexts and situations that are historically and geographically distant from each other.

In general, no one forced the deported musicians to perform or write music; with some exceptions, musicians composed regardless of the human and physical environment, and their music was the result of free, not hindered creative expression, since making music caused psychological relaxation, smoothed creeping frictions and tensions between deportees and superiors, gave energies that would otherwise implode in deportees or would be turned into attempts at escaping or rebelling.

As for the artistic and musical activity of Jews in the Reich, the provisions of the Minister of Propaganda Joseph Paul Goebbels about the general guidelines of Art and Music regulated and controlled by the *Reichmusikkammer*, prevented Jewish musicians from doing any kind of artistic and professional activity, from conducting orchestras and directing theaters to filling roles in public education and as orchestra members; insult was added to injury with the *Jüdische Kulturbund*, a puppet association created and controlled by the same *Reichmusikkammer*, which gathered Jewish musicians, kept away from the musical life of the *Reich*, who, in the *Jüdische Kulturbund*, could hold concerts for Jews only (the *Jüdische Kulturbund* was dissolved after the so-called *Kristallnacht* when its members were killed or interned in Camps).

In the *Reich*, Jewish composers had no possibility to create and perform their works in public (the provisions of *Reichmusikkammer* were retroactively applied even to Alban Berg (deceased in 1935) and to the music of the baptized Jew Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy), but one of the existential paradoxes of Camps was that, there, amateur or professional musicians could play, join up with other musicians, conducting, organizing concerts, composing, making music with an intellectual and manual effort as well as a clarity of mind and technique even more admirable, given the context; on the side of the occupying authority, favouring musical activity could play an important role in concealing the real situation in concentration Camps in cases of inspections by the Red Cross.

Except for extermination Camps, the Camp offered, in the short or medium term, the opportunity to give vent to the intellectual tensions of the deportees, beyond theatrical and musical activity; it could be mentioned university courses or Talmudic studies in Theresienstadt, school teaching, boxing and football championships, library activities and more.

It is necessary to separate the physical coercion of deportation from the recreational music activity allowed in the Camps, with all its limitations and variations: very few instruments at Mauthausen, a lot of paper music and instruments in Theresienstadt, an orchestra of 84 elements, brass bands and choral ensembles at Buchenwald, Lichtenburg, Sachsenhausen/Oranienburg (there, Rosebery d'Arguto alias Martin Rozenberg organized a male choir of about 30 members at the Block 39 of the Camp and wrote several choral pieces, among which the *Jüdischer Todessang*), a harmonium and four violins in Saïda, a flute and two violins in Huyton (for a similar set of instruments Hans Gál wrote the *Huyton Suite*).

A total of seven orchestras were organized in the huge complex of Camps of Auschwitz, among which the orchestra of the Poles conducted by Franciszek Nierychło (later ethnically classified as German and conscripted in the *Wehrmacht*) and later by Adam Kopyciński at Auschwitz, the Romanès orchestra at the Zigeunerlager, a jazz band (which included, for a short time, the jazz guitarist Heinz Jakob "Coco" Schumann, who had joined the Ghetto-Swingers at Theresienstadt) and a female orchestra of 54 elements conducted by Alma Rosé (Rosenblum), the daughter of Arnold Josef Rosé (Konzertmeister of the Wiener Philarmoniker) and Justine Mahler (Gustav Mahler's younger sister); after the death of Alma Rosé at Auschwitz in April 1944, the entire orchestra was transferred to Bergen-Belsen and survived.

Beyond the historical and humanitarian tragedy, the War has deprived posterity of an artistic and musical intelligentsia that today it's hard but not impossible to specify and quantify.

Enough thinking of *Studio für Neue Musik* at Theresienstadt, a true Darmstadt ante litteram, where the most advanced musical languages were experimented with; the *Studio for string orchestra* by Pavel Haas (considered as one of the most difficult pages of the orchestral repertoire) leads to the extreme consequences the orchestral virtuosity experimented with by Béla Bartók in his *Concert for Orchestra*, while the *Madrigals* on texts by François Villon and Friedrich Hölderlin by Gideon Klein paved the way for a new musical Renaissance, of which no traces are left after 1945.

Viktor Ullmann was a musician characterized by unimaginable language horizons; a pupil of Arnold Schönberg and a genius able to foresee the future of music, he wrote at Theresienstadt the one-act opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis oder Die Tod–Verweigerung* on a libretto by Petr Kien, a very modern work just like *Pierrot Lunaire* by Arnold Schönberg and *Histoire du soldat* by Igor Stravinsky, thanks to the presence of multiple musical languages and to the Brechtian use of theater with no symphonic ensembles.

Ullmann embodied the third way of the post-dodecaphony already explored by Eduard Steuermann, he had the ability to influence the language of contemporary music; the technical and aesthetic analysis of contemporary piano sonata, that reaches its top with *Sonata nr. 2* by Pierre Boulez, *Concord Sonata* by Charles Ives and *Sonata* by Henry Dutilleux, cannot prescind from Ullmann's piano *Sonatas* written at Theresienstadt.

The transfer to extermination Camps, opened by the *Reich* in Poland, was planned so as to gather most of the musicians from Theresienstadt on the same train on 16.10.1944; the day after, Pavel Haas, Viktor Ullmann, Bernard Kaff, Hans Kràsa, Viktor Kohn, Egon Ledeč, Carlo Sigmund Taube and others died by gassing at Auschwitz Birkenau.

It was a very sad moment for Central European culture, civilization and art; in a few hours, an entire generation of musicians, composers, famous piano virtuosos, the fifth column of the Jewish musical élite of Central and Eastern Europe disappeared; those who managed to escape that train, equally found death in Theresienstadt for tuberculosis (Siegmund Schul) or after the death marches following the evacuation of Auschwitz (Rafael Schächter, Karel Švenk) or disappeared in the Silesian mines of Fürstengrube (Gideon Klein).

Ervin Schulhoff, a pupil of Max Reger and Claude Debussy, heavily influenced by Communism, Dadaism, American popular music and jazz, was able to save the piano score of the *Symphonie nr. 7* at the outbreak of War, but he was arrested in Prague and transferred to the Ilag XIII Wülzburg; there he wrote the monumental piano score of the *Symphonie nr. 8 WV141 op.99* (to be considered as political music along with his *Das kommunistische Manifest* after Marx and Engels); he died of tuberculosis on 18.10.1942 on the last lines of the fourth movement.

In many Kommandos (Schwarzenborn Kommando 405, Deutz Köln Kommando 1404), Stalag (IXA Ziegenhain, XVIIB Krems Gneixendorf, IXA Spangenburg, IIA Neubrandenburg), Oflag (XB Nienburg am Weser, VID Münster) numerous works were composed (some of which are milestones in the XX century chamber and symphonic production) by the French Jean Martinon (*Sonatine nr. 3* for piano, *Sonatine nr. 4* for brass trio, *Stalag IX* for orchestra, *Absolve Domine* for male choir and orchestra, *Appel de parfums* for speaker, male chorus and orchestra, *Salmo 136 op. 33* for speaker, soli, chorus and orchestra), Robert Lannoy (*2 Virelais du Moyen-Age* for soprano, flute, clarinet and viola, *Cantilène et danse pastorale* for orchestra, the ballet-mime *Pygmalion*, incomplete), Maurice Thiriet (*Œdipe Roi* on a text by Jean Cocteau for speaker, male chorus and orchestra), Marcel Dautremer (*Lorsque je rentrerai* and *Concerto* for clarinet and orchestra), René Herbin (*Album d'images, Préludes Baroques, 2 Divertissements, Sonate* and *Suite fantasque* for piano, *Sonate* for violin and piano, *Préambule pour le "Châpeau chinois"* de Franc Nohain for piano, flute, clarinet and string quintet, *Deïrdre des douleurs* for chamber orchestra), Paul Chenevier (the comic three-act operetta *Ombre en conserve*, the vaudeville militaire *Barnabe, tampon du capiston* and the

Suite for orchestra *Les années noires*), Robert Osmont (*Quatuor for string quartet with additional flute*), Max de Foucaud (*Prélude* for flute, cello and organ, the symphonic poem *Hantise*, the three movements for piano *Solitudes*, the second of which for two pianos), while in Stalag VIIIA Görlitz, Olivier Messiaen wrote the famous *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, in which clarinet and piano never play some notes, due to the lack of the relative keys and strings on the instruments used in Görlitz.

In the Oflag XB Nienburg am Weser, the French Emile Goué was one of the most prolific musicians; a pupil of Charles Koechlin and Albert Roussel and a teacher of Physics at the High School *Louis le Grand* in Paris, he wrote, among the others, *Prélude, Choral et Fugue* and *Prélude, Aria et Final* for piano, a *Sonata* for violin and piano, *Nuits de velours que rehaussent les clairs de lune* for tenor and piano, *Trois Poèmes de Rainer Maria Rilke* for soprano and piano, *Quintette* for piano and strings, *2ème and 3ème Quatuor à cordes, Ballade sur un poème d'Emily Bronté* for soprano, vocal quartet, string quartet and piano, *Concerto* for piano and orchestra, *2ème Symphonie* for principal violin and orchestra, *Esquisse pour un paysage vu du mont Coudreau* for orchestra, *Psaume CXXIII* for tenor, male chorus and orchestra, the mime-opera *Renaissance* (an example of modern instrumentation and stage language, to be staged in two days); he also wrote complex essays on musical aesthetics, harmony and counterpoint.

Goué was released in May 1945 and returned to both composition and high school teaching, but he died at the sanatorium of Neufmoutiers-en-Brie on 10.10.1946, because of a serious infection contracted in the Camp; a great loss for the evolution of contemporary musical language.

The health of Václav Kaprál after his deportation to Svatobořice (there, he wrote *Ledove kvety e Koryčany* for male choir, *Milodejne kviti* for 2 female singers and piano, *Česká mše Svatoboricka* for mixed choir and organ) worsened to the point that he died in Brno in 1947.

The Netherlands paid a huge human, historical, intellectual and artistic toll to the occupation of the *Reich*: Leo Smit (who died at Sobibòr in April 1943), Nico Max Richter (deported to Dachau and soon dead after his release in August 1945), Martin Spanjaard (who died at Auschwitz in October 1942), Daniël Belinfante (deported to Fürstengrube, who died in Mysłowice in January 1945), Sim Gokkes (who died at Auschwitz in February 1943), the pianist and composer Samuel Schuijer (he died at Auschwitz in December 1942), Dick Kattenburg (deported to

Westerbork, died at Auschwitz in May 1944), Bob Hanf (deported to Westerbork, died at Auschwitz in September 1944); many others didn't write works in captivity, but this is irrelevant, considering their significant contribution to creating music before deportation.

No better fate had those Jewish musicians who fought in the Jewish uprising of the Warsaw ghetto, or were killed during the mopping-up operations of the *Einsatzgruppen*, such as Józef Koffler, the vanguard of Polish dodecaphonic music, killed in unclear circumstances with his wife, probably at Krosno after the destruction of the ghetto in Wieliczka.

A similar fate had many hazanim, i.e. Jewish cantors or tenor soloists or conductors of synagogue choirs, some of whom vocally gifted and authors of music and Songs for Jewish worship, among whom the Polish David Eisenstadt, Gershon Sirota (both died during the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto) and Yisroel Sabiner (who died in September 1940, during the fires of the synagogues of Łódź, a few days before Yom Kippur), the Dutch Samuel Henri (Sam) Englander, Israel Eljasz Maroko and Michel (Machiel) Gobets (who died respectively in Sobibòr in June and July 1943 and in Sachsenhausen/Oranienburg in April 1945), the Ruthenian Jakob Jehuda Goldring (who died at Auschwitz in October 1944).

In addition to the aforementioned Jewish musicians, artists, authors of cabaret, operetta and other kinds of light artistic production in Westerbork and Theresienstadt, it is worth mentioning also Paul O'Montis alias Paul Wendel (who died in Sachsenhausen/Oranienburg in July 1940), Fritz Grunbaum (who died in Dachau in January 1941), Bedřich Löwy alias Fritz Löhner Beda (formerly deported to Dachau and Buchenwald, he was beaten to death at the IG Farben Auschwitz III in December 1942), Otto Wallburg, Richard Fall and Guido Gialdini alias Kurt Abramowitsch (who died at Auschwitz Birkenau respectively in October 1944, January 1945 and the last on an unknown date), James Wolf (one of the Gebrüder Wolf along with Leopold and Ludwig, who died in Theresienstadt in 1943), Paul Morgan (who died in Buchenwald in 1938), Charles Amberg (who survived at Neuengamme, but died in April 1946 as his health conditions worsened in the Camp).

The musical language would have been very different or would have explored brand-new paths, if all those musicians and entertainers had survived.

Concentration Camp music is the musical corpus (symphony, opera, theater, oratorio, chamber music from duo to nonet, instrumental solo, vocal and choral;

cabaret, jazz, religious, traditional and popular songs, parody, fragmented and incomplete works, music under compulsion, works reconstructed after the War) created in prison, transit, forced labor, concentration, extermination Camps, military prisons, POW Camps, Stalag, Oflag, Ilag, Dulag opened by both the Third Reich, Italy, Japan, the Italian Social Republic, État français (Vichy regime), other countries of the Axis and Great Britain, France, U.S.S.R. and other countries allied in Europe, colonial Africa, Asia and Oceania from 1933 (when the KZ Dachau and Emslandlagern were opened) to 1945 (when the War ended in the Euro-Mediterranean and Atlantic area on 9.5.1945 and in the Pacific area on 2.9.1945) by musicians characterized by different professional and artistic backgrounds as well as by different national, social and religious contexts, who, in that period, suffered discrimination, persecution, wrongful imprisonment and were deported, killed or survived (Jews, Christians, Sinti and Roma and other groups belonging to Romanès people, Euskaldunak or of the Basque people, Bahai'I, Sufi, Quakers, Bibelforscher, communists, disabled people, homosexuals, civil and military prisoners).

Concentration Camp music is the music created in captivity or in a condition of extreme deprivation of the fundamental human rights; the musical production of each Camp is an indication of the social status of the deportees, of their creative skills and of the possibility to use instruments, compose, arrange and perform their own and others' works; on this basis, it is also possible to define as concentration Camp music also the African-American blues (from which jazz and gospel descend) created during the historical period of slavery in the American plantations until 1865, the repertoire of Neapolitan Songs of the Italian soldiers who were prisoners in Austria during World War I, the vocal repertoire of political dissidents in the Gulags opened by U.S.S.R. in Siberia and the Song of Victor Jara, written in the stadium of Santiago de Chile before the shootings in the days of Augusto Pinochet's coup (1973).

The music written in Camps is not a different music; it is currently defined as concentration Camp music for the sole purposes of intellectual and geographical research, but one day it shall be called just music; mediocre, good, great as music in general, it will no longer need any additional geo-political or historical specification such as World War II, civil and military deportations, Shoah.

Making music is an intellectual and spiritual human need; deportation, captivity, humanitarian and hygiene conditions, torture, forced labor and other forms of physical and psychological coercion did not hinder but rather encouraged

artistic creation and, even after liberation, the most popular recreational and social activity among former deportees and Allied troops in many Camps (while waiting for the fulfillment of the procedures for the repatriation of former civil and military deportees) was concert.

In July 1945, at Bergen-Belsen, the survived cellist Anita Lasker Wallfisch and the singer Eva Steiner, former musicians in the female orchestra of Auschwitz, played in concert with the singer Gerardo Gaudioso, the cellist Giuseppe Selmi and the pianist Giorgio Ferrini, both former Italian military internees at the nearby Stalag 310 Wietzendorf; an example of different deportation flows that met and fraternized under the common denominator of music, and dozens of similar cases could be mentioned.

It took decades of research at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, Památník Terezín, National Library of the Hebrew University and Yad VaShem of Jerusalem, Goetheanum in Stuttgart, Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, Akademie der Künste in Berlin, museums, archives, libraries, Academies of Music, antiquarian bookshops, private collections in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland, Hungary, U.S.A.; the researches took into account the historical, documentary and musicological research carried out by Schmerke Kaczerginski, Bret Werb, Guido Fackler, Jože Karas, David Bloch, Elena Makarova, Ulrike Migdal, Eleonore Philipp, Robert Kolben, Gabriele Knapp, Milan Kuna, Damien Top, Cyril Robinson, Claude Torres, Blanka Červinková.

A special mention deserves Aleksander Tytus Kulisiewicz, a student of Law at the University of Krakow at the time, arrested by the Gestapo in October 1939 and deported to Sachsenhausen/Oranienburg; an amateur singer, he wrote 54 Lieder during the six years of captivity in the Camp, but his merit was to recover and collect, after the liberation, the immense vocal and poetic production of the Polish deportees in all concentration and extermination Camps opened by the *Reich*.

The criteria for filing and cataloguing the Polish Songs composed in concentration Camps by Authors, Camps and alphabetical order, adopted by Kulisiewicz, are scientifically relevant and can be extended to the entire concentration Camp music literature; today, his archive is kept at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.

The material currently acquired and catalogued by the Istituto di Letteratura Musicale Concentrazionaria in Barletta consists of over 4,000 works and 13,000 documents, including microfilms, prison diaries, music notebooks, essays on music, recordings on tapes or video tapes or DVDs, interviews with surviving musicians.

My task has been to unify the concentration Camp music production and give it an encyclopedic and library structure, while also studying and performing such works as well as gradually recording them; thus, after a 10 years work, the 24 CD-volumes of the CD-Encyclopedia KZ Musik (Musikstrasse, Rome) were published in January 2012, it represents one of the greatest historiographical and artistic efforts ever made, the most advanced stage in the research and documentation of concentration Camp music and a big step towards the full publication of the musical production in the Camps.

Thesaurus Musicae Concentrationariae is a 10 volumes&CD Encyclopedia in four languages (Italian, English, French and German) which will be published on next January, 2015 and will contain 420 scores of the works written in the Camps 1933 to 1945, of which the Istituto di Letteratura Musicale Concentrazionaria of Barletta holds the publishing rights; each volume of the Thesaurus Musicae Concentrationariae contains CD with performances of the works contained in the volume, history of Concentration Camp music during the World War II, critical-aesthetic introduction, information on the Camps from which the works published in the Encyclopedia come, composers' biographies, bibliography, discography and filmography, analytical index.

Concentration Camp music is one of the most important legacies of world History and a Mankind Heritage, since it features material of enormous historical, documentary, scientific and artistic value.

It is universal because more than 4,000 works recovered until today are not a mere oddity, but they are Literature and prove that, in the most tragic period in XX century history, the human being used the most advanced preservation mechanisms, thus triggering a huge explosion of creativity and writing in Camps a many-handed Testament of the heart and mind.

Such music keeps the identifying marks of Literature, but it also obliges us to repair the sufferings experienced by the generations of musicians who created that music; Viktor Ullmann felt that momentous achievements would tragically revolutionize the human thought and, with regard to his situation in Theresienstadt, he wrote that:

> "I have bloomed in musical growth and not felt myself at all inhibited: by no means did we sit weeping on the banks of the waters of Babylon, and our endeavor with respect to Arts was commensurate with our will to live. And I am convinced that all who have worked in life and art to wrestle content into its unyielding form will say that I was right..." (Goethe und Ghetto, Theresienstadt 1944).

Filing, performing, promoting the music written in the Camps is an important goal, but efforts must be made so that it can pass from the uniqueness of captivity to the normality of concerts, study, publication and teaching of those works in conservatoires and music academies.

Indeed, that's what the Authors of that music would want most; that one day their works could be performed alongside those by Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler or in normal jazz sessions or on a stage, in a synagogue or in a church.

For survived musicians such as Marius Flothuis, František Domažlický, Marcel Dautremer and others, it was easier to achieve the legitimate international fame, as they successfully recovered their musical career; moreover, many musicians from Theresienstadt were present in theaters and concerts, but for many other Authors, this remains a very distant goal and something must be done so that this music can recover decades of denied life.

It is necessary to recover the music still kept in the memory of the survivors; losing only one of those melodies would be an irreversible damage, since music never comes back.

On the shelves of an imaginary library of the History of Music, the volumes of concentration Camp music were missing; as a consequence, music historiography in general, and that of XX century in particular, must be rewritten and reconsidered due to the chasm created by the recovery of the music composed in the Camps.

After the CD-Encyclopedia KZ Musik, the Thesaurus Musicae Concentrationariae is the second stone of a building; an hypothetical third stone should necessarily be the creation, in a suitable location, of an Institute entirely dedicated to the research, study, preservation, cataloguing, recording and encyclopedic publication of concentration camp music production.

It is a difficult and ambitious project, but we need to start working on it now; the rest will follow.

Alma Rosé and the Lagerkapelle Auschwitz

Dr Milijana Pavlovic

Résumé

Le seul orchestre de femmes dans les camps de concentration nazis lors de la Seconde guerre mondiale a suscité de nombreux récits. La plupart d'entre eux s'intéressaient essentiellement à son chef d'orchestre, Alma Rosé, car elle était issue d'un milieu social élevé où la musique tenait une place importante, la famille Mahler-Rosé. L'histoire de cet orchestre part de l'attention portée par Fania Goldstein, chanteuse et pianiste parisienne, qui publia, sous son pseudonyme Fania Fénélon, son propre récit des événements, ce qui causa une grande controverse. Ses anciens compagnons prisonniers ont fortement contesté les faits exposés dans ce livre. Alma Rosé fut aussi une des « victimes » des mémoires de Goldstein, elle y est décrite comme un tyran sans pitié, narcissique et toujours prête à contenter les Nazis, une image que désapprouvent les autres membres de l'ensemble. La violoncelliste de l'orchestre, Anita Lasker-Wallfish, fait partie de ceux qui, depuis la publication de l'ouvrage de Goldstein, travaille à la réhabilitation de l'orchestre, en donnant un aperçu de la vie quotidienne de ces musiciennes.

Si l'on se réfère à des conditions "normales" de vie, il est impossible de saisir l'horreur de la (non)existence à Auschwitz, ou dans aucun

camp de concentration, ou de comprendre certains comportements dans des situations extrêmes. Un des problèmes est aussi le fait que la plupart des récits ont tendance à se concentrer sur les événements – peut-être parce qu'ils sont trop sombres –, provoquant ainsi l'incompréhension inévitable du lecteur extérieur. Nous sommes face à une période où il n'y aura plus de survivants pour raconter l'histoire et il est important de se rapporter aux faits.

Lors de mon intervention, je m'intéresserai à qui était vraiment Alma Rosé à Auschwitz et comment elle a sauvé les vies et les esprits de ses amies musiciennes du Lagerkapelle.

Music in Nazi death camps has already been topic of many a successful work of research. However, the necessity to deepen our knowledge of this topic is ever more pressing and the responsibility to promote the truth is more important than ever. This is not only due to the growing number of Holocaust deniers, but also to the fact that the number of living survivors has been drastically reduced and setting the record straight is not a question of leaving the matter to them more than anything, it is an obligation to us.

Music in Nazi death camps has already been topic of many a successful work of research. However, the necessity to deepen our knowledge of this topic is ever more pressing and the responsibility to promote the truth is more important than ever. This is not only due to the growing number of Holocaust deniers, but also to the fact that the number of living survivors has been drastically reduced and setting the record straight is not a question of leaving the matter to them - more than anything, it is an obligation to us.

The very experience the survivors went through is itself simply indescribable and proper words for it are yet to be found. One also must not forget that different people have different perceptions of one and the same event and that, along with the known issues of human memory, is an additional problem, because to render everything even more tragic or to give importance to their own roles in a particular event, some people feel the necessity to add spurious details, an action that puts everything else that is true under the shadow of doubt. One adjustment to the truth, no matter how small and insignificant, can jeopardise an entire testimony, thereby seriously harming its credibility. It is therefore of utmost importance to remain faithful to the facts, whatever they may be, in order

to serve the truth and preserve for posterity the way it all really happened. There is no place for manipulation of any kind, or for choosing a version that we might like better only because it suits us. The truth must never be a matter of choice or liking, a servant to particular interests, but the only direction we should follow.

Another significant problem is the tendency to hollywoodise and romanticise (and therefore banalise) what happened to a point that the truth is distorted, inventing heroism where there was none or simply sticking to stereotypes. Thus there is an image of the camp orchestras boosting morale and giving hope to the other inmates as a sort of taking part in the resistance movement through music[1]. Instead, quite a different story took place, as will be pointed out later.

Before tackling the main topic of this paper, a few indications for a better understanding of the context might be helpful. The Nazi machinery used nearly all aspects of life in its attempts to put not only the territories but also the people it managed under its complete control. One of these aspects was also music, whether as a part of a meticulously planned night parade, propaganda broadcasts or for a much more gruesome purpose, inserted into an endless series of absurdities in hundreds of concentration and extermination camps all over Europe. Routine and characteristics varied from camp to camp, according to the wishes of those who commanded them, and sometimes the set of rules that was in use in one camp was not applicable in others for various reasons. One thing, however, all the camps had in common - continuous psychological and physical torture. The role of music within that environment of torture was manifold and also varied from camp to camp. Therefore one cannot establish a universal rule, especially because the SS had total power over prisoners, and individual SS officers established their own regulations. When it comes to the nature of the music played in the camps, a clear distinction must be made between that ordered by the SS and the one initiated by the prisoners themselves, mostly clandestinely[2].

Auschwitz, the most notorious among the Nazi death camps, was a world of its own - with its hierarchy and its own set of rules, in use nowhere else in the known world, defying common sense and playing innumerable games with the

1 This problem is illustrated well by Szymon Laks (Warsaw 1901 Paris 1983), Polish composer and violinist of Jewish origin, in his book *Music of Another World*. Illinois; Northwestern University Press, 1989, pp. 115-119.

2 A thorough account of the use of music in concentration and death camps during the Nazi era can be found in the splendid and extensive study written by Guido Fackler: *"Des Lagers Stimme" – Musik in KZ Alltag und Häftlingskultur in den Konzentrationslagern 1933 bis 1936*. Mit einer Darstellung der weiteren Entwicklung bis 1945 und einer Biblio-/Mediographie, vol. 11 of DIZ-Schriften (Bremen, 2000). In his paper "Music in Concentration Camps 1933-1945", published in Music & Politics, Vol. I, Number I (Winter 2007), URL http://www.music.ucsb.edu/projects/musicandpolitics/archive/2007-1/fackler.pdf, Fackler establishes the following categories of music in the Nazi camps: music on command (singing on command, music relayed from radio or gramophone, music to entertain the guards) and music initiated by the prisoners (spontaneous music, block performances).

human psyche, stretching it to such limits that, to the average person of our time, it borders on the incredible. Any logic that happened to survive previous Nazi actions stopped at the gates of that huge complex, so none should be sought in anything that happened inside the electrically charged double barbed-wire fence of Auschwitz-Birkenau. In that extremely paradoxical community, among many thousands of men and women of various races and nations, with a strong concentration of Jews, it was inevitable that there would be musicians too, both amateurs and professionals. This fact was readily exploited by the Nazis, adding music-making to the category of forced labour. Auschwitz had a few orchestras - practically each camp and subcamp had its ensemble, the very first one formed in the Stammlager (main camp) in 1940, growing from the original seven members to a full symphony orchestra.

As every other Nazi structure, concentration camps were based on the rules of discipline, however absurd, and an integral part of the daily routine inside the camps, as far as the prisoners were concerned, was marching to work in the morning and back to the camp in the evening. The SS insisted this to be performed in harmony and rhythm, and used ensembles made of prisoners to have these dreary routines accompanied by marches. The very idea of music in such a place provokes disbelief, best described in the words of Szymon Laks, deported to Auschwitz in 1942, who would later become one of the conductors of Birkenau´s main male orchestra:

> […] As in a theatre or cinema, there was a radical change of scenery. So radical, that at first I didn´t believe my own eyes. Also moving down the main road, but much closer to the entrance gate, was a small group of prisoners dressed in the same stripes as we, loaded down with strange equipment whose form seemed very familiar to me, but precisely because it was familiar I simply refused to believe that this equipment was what I took it for. Could it be? … No, this was impossible, these were illusions, hallucinations bordering on professional delusion. And yet… […]"
>
> […] The music stands and tables I had seen a moment ago gave me no peace, they transported me to spheres so remote from this nightmare that surrounded me. I concentrated and tried to reason as though reason was

> of any use here. Music stands were for music scores, and scores were music. Who played here? The executioners or their victims? And what did they play here? The dance of skeletons? Nazi hymns? Funeral marches? […][3]

Apart from many other features that render the complex of Auschwitz-Birkenau unique in the system of Nazi death camps, there is one more that makes it stand out – it was the only camp that had a music ensemble made of female prisoners. Vanity and competition were among the important factors in SS life and played one of the key roles in the foundation of the women's orchestra in Auschwitz. It was the wish of Maria Mandl[4], Oberaufseherin and SS-Lagerführerin in command of the women's camp in Birkenau who responded only to the top commandant, to have a band that would be her response to the other similar ensembles in the complex of Auschwitz. She didn´t want to lag behind her male colleagues, who were in command of other parts of the camp, therefore she issued the order to form a band made of female inmates.

The task of organising the ensemble fell upon a Polish woman, Zofia Czajkowska, who was a music teacher, but wasn´t really cut out for the job she was given. The ensemble´s main duty was to play marches at the gate in the morning when the other prisoners would go out to work and do the same in the evening, upon their return. The musicians were given their own space, Block 12, only a few hundred feet away from the Crematorium II and its adjacent gas chamber. It was no special or isolated unit, just another barrack.

There was a very important distinction between the men´s orchestra and that of the women – the members of the women´s ensemble did not go out to work with other prisoners, as was the case of their male colleagues, but remained in the barrack practising the whole day with a noon break. Another characteristic that made them unique in the women's camp was that their barrack housed both Jewish and "Aryan" women. In the beginning, the instruments, as well as the scores, came from the men´s orchestra of Birkenau, which was a full ensemble, including a brass section. However, it was not difficult to find instruments, because the complex of Auschwitz-Birkenau was perhaps the richest part of the Third Reich – one of its structures, called ´Canada´ by the prisoners, contained everything that was taken away from the newcomers, which was then sorted and

3 Laks, *Music of Another World*, pp. 27-28.

4 Mandl was one of the defendants at the Auschwitz trial, at the end of which she was sentenced to death by hanging and executed in 1948 in Krakow, at the age of 36. She was notorious for her sadistic treatment of prisoners, which earned her the nickname "the Beast".

shipped to Berlin. Upon deportation, the victims took with them what best and most valuable things they had before boarding the trains, so many musicians brought their instruments. The music produced by the women's ensemble initially was miserable and hardly had anything in common with the scores it was being played from.

By May 1943, the women's group counted fifteen musicians and the repertoire consisted of a few military marches. Then one day, in July 1943, transport no. 57 from Drancy, France, arrived. Among the women assigned to the infamous Block 10 of the Stammlager, where Dr. Clauberg was performing his sterilisation experiments, there was one with the tattooed number 50381, who was recognised by one of the female inmates, Ima van Esso, as the famous Viennese violinist Alma Rosé[5]. Word quickly reached the camp commandants and soon Alma was given the role of leader of the women's music ensemble of Birkenau, personally ordered by Maria Mandel, who was nothing short of delighted to have such an addition to her pet project.

Before saying any more about what ensued, it is very important to highlight Alma Rosé´s background, in order to facilitate the understanding of how she led her Birkenau ensemble. She was born in Vienna in 1906, as the second child in the family, literally into music aristocracy. Her father, Arnold Rosé[6], born Rosenblum, himself a Romanian Jew, was the concertmaster of the Vienna Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic, as well as the leader of arguably the best string quartet of that time, the Rosé Quartet. Her mother was Justine Mahler, sister of the composer Gustav Mahler[7]. Alma herself was named after Gustav Mahler´s wife. Another Mahler sibling, Emma[8], had previously married Arnold Rosé´s elder brother, Eduard[9], a cellist, whose life later ended in Theresienstadt, after he had got deported there due to his Jewish origin. In the Rosé household, it was a normal occurrence to have a few members of the Philharmonic playing chamber music on Sundays.

Alma Rosé was brought up under rules and obedience, not only because of her

5 Newman, Richard. *Alma Rosé Wien 1906 – Auschwitz 1944. Eine Biographie*. Bonn, Weidle Verlag, 2003, pp. 278-279.

6 Arnold Josef Rosenblum (Rosé after conversion), Jassy (Romania) 1863 London 1946. He studied at the conservatory in Vienna and made his debut in Leipzig, at the Gewandhaus. At the age of 17, he was appointed the concertmaster of both Vienna Hofoper orchestra and the Philharmonic. As a 20-year-old, Rosé founded a string quartet that was to last more than five decades, with the reputation of being the best of the time.

7 Justine Rosé, born Mahler, Jihlava (Bohemia, today Czech Republic, then Austria-Hungary) 1868 Vienna 1938.

8 Emma Rosé, born Mahler, Jihlava 1875 Vienna 1933.

9 Eduard Rosé, Jassy 1859 Terezin (Theresienstadt) 1943.

father, a strict authoritarian, but very much so because of her mother too. Justine had run her brother´s household for years and kept postponing her marriage to Rosé because she didn´t want to give up control over Gustav's life. They finally married one day after Mahler married Alma Schindler, on Justine´s insistence.[10] Iron discipline was all Alma knew. Endless practice hours with her father since a very early age, always in the shadow of her elder brother Alfred[11], debut at the Goldner Saal of the Musikverein at the age of 10, great expectations – excellence was implicit and everything short of that considered failure[12]. Arnold Rosé liked the idea of his daughter marrying a famous violin virtuoso, so he practically arranged Alma´s marriage to Váša Příhoda in 1930. However, the liaison did not take too much time to prove unsuccessful and really ended long before 1935, when the divorce was finalised.

Alma Rosé´s way of fighting for her own place under the sun, out of the shadow of her elder brother Alfred, and her answer to the burden of the name and tradition behind it was forming her Wiener Walzermädeln (Vienna Waltz Girls) orchestra, with which she toured Europe. She was very strict with her musicians, with high standards, demands and discipline, and she would get very frustrated and furious when things went differently than planned – a trait which persisted until the end of her life. The girls had huge respect for her because of her excellence, but were also afraid of provoking her with mistakes.

Until the persecutions started, Alma had lived a glamorous life. However, after the Anschluss[13], her father was shown the door at the Opera and at the Vienna Philharmonic, something he simply could not understand[14]. There was no place for him due to his Jewish origin, although he had converted to a Christian decades before, as had his wife[15], and both children were baptised

10 For details of Justine´s relationship with Gustav and the issue of marriage, see Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler. Vol. 3. Vienna: The Years of Challenge (1897-1904)*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

11 Alfred Rosé, Vienna 1902 – London (Ontario, Canada) 1975, pianist, composer and music pedagogue.

12 Apart from growing up in a well-known musical family, Alma was also a woman, which certainly did not play as an advantage in the world of music soloists. For an overview and analysis of the relationship between Alma and her father, see Gabriele Knapp, *Arnold und Alma Rosé*, in *Musikwelten – Lebenswelten. Jüdische Identitetsuche in der deutschen Musikkultur*. Ed. by Beatrix Borchard and Heidy Zimmerman. Köln: Böhlau, 2009. pp. 287-302.

13 The Nazi annexation of Austria on 12th March 1938.

14 Arnold Rosé´s last appearance at the Opera was on the evening preceding the Anschluß, when he led the orchestra in Tristan and Isolde and played the solo violin part that he was famous for. For more details, see Newman, *Alma Rosé*, chapter *Anschluß*, pp. 101-116.

15 Rosé converted to a Protestant, whereas Justine was baptised a Roman Catholic, in 1897 in Hamburg, the same day as her brother, Gustav Mahler, who did it in order to become eligible for the post of the director of the Hofoper in Vienna. Being Catholic was one of the conditions for getting the tenure and Justine, along with another Mahler sibling, Emma, got baptised the same day in support of Gustav. Arnold Rosé had taken the same path earlier in order to make his life easier at the Vienna Philharmonic.

Protestant while infants. Justine died later that year, in 1938, and the frantic struggle to emigrate began, since the Rosés, as Jews, were stripped of all rights and also of those to perform, especially the music of German composers. Alfred, Alma´s brother, left the country first in late September 1938 with his wife, in direction USA and finally Canada, and Alma eventually succeeded in taking her father to England in 1939, via Berlin and Amsterdam, an event that received press coverage. When the money started reaching the low limit, Alma decided she would go back to the Continent, to the Netherlands, to perform and financially help her father. However, the rope around the necks of the Jews of Europe was tightening and, when Alma finally decided it was time to leave, many, if not all escape routes were closed. Her fictitious marriage to August van Leeuwen Boomkamp, a Dutch engineer, was useless too. She refused to live in hiding, as she simply could not bear living without making music, so she opted for an escape plan that was supposed to bring her to Switzerland, through France. She was arrested by the Gestapo in Dijon, along with the young Jewish man who was travelling with her, both with false papers and most probably betrayed by an agent who had infiltrated the escape network. After some time, she was sent to Drancy and a few months later, in the summer of 1943, to Auschwitz. The list for the transport no. 57 displays Alma under a wrong name, Obna Vanleuween, and a wrong birthdate, 8th November 1906, instead of 3rd November[16].

As stated earlier, upon arrival, Alma found herself in the notorious Block 10 of the Stammlager. She was paralysed by what she was thrown into and it took a while until, having been recognised and identified as Alma Rosé, the famous violinist, she was transferred into the Block 12 of the women´s camp in Birkenau, among the musicians. Upon her transfer and the appointment to the position of the leader of the ensemble and according to the camp hierarchy, Alma was given the rank of a kapo, which, on paper, put her alongside all kinds of opportunists and criminals who filled that position across the camp and were known for cruelty that could put them right by the side of the SS. Needless to say, Alma was not an addition to that category. She used the position that allowed her to have a tiny room in Block 12 to retreat into her inner world and fight, in her own way, against the horror into which she was thrown. She was also slightly better dressed than a regular prisoner.

Maria Mandl´s decision to name Alma the conductor of the ensemble caused stirring antagonism towards Alma among the Polish members, who supported

16 The page of the list with Alma´s data is featured in Newman, *Alma Rosé*, p. 429. Under number 916 the following is stated: "Vanleuween Obna 8.11.1906 Geigenspieler [violinist] 2133".

Czajkowska. However, it all soon calmed down and Alma could deal with what she found upon her transfer, which wasn´t really much – a group of girls and women who played miserably on instruments that would never found their place together in any orchestra. Alma found herself faced with the impossible task of making an orchestra out of such a group. To a top-level professional musician it meant a lot of frustration, added to the already unthinkable situation of being in an extermination camp like no other, surrounded by death every minute of every day.

With Alma´s arrival, the band underwent a significant transformation. The number of members grew. Very few of them were actually proper musicians; others were girls who happened to learn to play an instrument at school. The combination of instruments was unlikely: mostly violins, then guitars, mandolins, accordions, flutes, percussion. The band was complete with a few singers and copyists. There were no proper bass instruments because the only cellist they had, Maria Kröner, died of typhus. Then in the winter of 1943, a prison train brought new inmates to Birkenau, among them the then-18-year-old Anita Lasker, Breslau-born cello student, arrested for forging papers for French prisoners of war and trying to escape to Paris with her elder sister Renate. She was lucky enough to not undergo the selection process, given the fact that she arrived as a convicted criminal directly from prison, but she certainly wasn´t spared the shaving and tattooing. Apart from being totally overwhelmed by the indescribable new surroundings, the surreal continued when – while standing stark naked, in every possible sense of the word, shaved and marked like an animal – she was asked by one of the prisoners what her profession was before coming to Birkenau. As Anita Lasker, today Wallfisch, remarked many times, she didn´t know why she said it, but she said she played the cello. Nothing could have prepared her for what ensued.

> […] The reaction was so much more astonishing, in that it was totally unexpected. She said: "That is fantastic! You will be saved! Stand aside, remain there and wait! You will be saved!"[17]

So Anita waited and waited, all alone, until the door of the Block opened again and in came a woman in a camel-hair coat who looked so elegant that the 18-year-old wasn´t sure if it was a guard or a prisoner. She introduced herself as Alma

17 Lasker-Wallfisch, Anita. *Ihr sollt die Wahrheit erben*. Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 2000, p. 122. The book was originally written in English, with the title „Inherit the Truth", published in 1996 by Giles de la Mare Publishers Ltd., London.

Rosé and, thrilled that Anita was a cellist[18], asked where she studied and with whom. Anita continues:

> The scene was like in a dream. The last thing I was expecting when I arrived to Auschwitz was an interrogation about my cello playing! I was still totally naked with a toothbrush. Alma stated how glad she was that I was there and again I heard the words: "You will be saved."[19]

Anita was transferred to the Quarantine-Block, for many new arrivals the very last station in their lives, but she was later picked out and taken to the music Block. There she played in front of Alma and was subsequently admitted into the orchestra. By that time, Alma had already been half a year at the helm of the ensemble and had no illusions about where she was if there had been any before the arrival to Auschwitz, the process of being stripped naked, shaved, tattooed, sent to the experimental block, together with the horrors she saw in the days she spent there before joining the musicians made sure that these illusions disappeared. Everybody, however, was struck by the elegance and dignity she showed from the early days of her tragedy[20] and never lost, even in the most gruesome moments.

At the end of January in 1944, the ensemble got a new member a French singer and pianist, Fania Goldstein, known as Fénélon. She was arrested in Paris and deported to Auschwitz and was taken into the women´s *Lagerkapelle*, as the ensemble was called. Apart from being a singer, she was a good addition to the group, in that she was a quality orchestrator, a skill helped expand the repertoire. In short, she was one of the few trained musicians in the Kapelle. According to Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, Fénélon was quite agreeable in the camp, talented to invent stories with which she would entertain the fellow musicians and very good in orchestrating Anita particularly remembers one evening, during which the women secretly played Beethoven´s Pathétique, arranged by Fénélon, only for their own pleasure[21]. What came after the war, though, shocked all the surviving members of the

18 The only other bass instrument was the double bass, played by a Greek girl, Yvette Assael, who wasn´t really a bass player, but at some point before her deportation, she had started learning that instrument and in Birkenau occasional lessons for her were organised, given by a male prisoner, so the Kapelle would have some at least some sort of bass sound. When Anita arrived to the camp, Alma was glad to have a cellist, which immediately meant a better sound, wider repertoire and the increase in the importance of the Kapelle.

19 Lasker-Wallfisch, *Ihr sollt die Wahrheit erben*, p. 123.

20 At Drancy as well, in the days awaiting the transport, her courage had significant influence on her cellmates. See Newman, *Alma Rosé*, p. 267.

21 Interview with Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, led by this author.

orchestra. In 1976 Fénélon published a book entitled "Sursis pour l´orchestre"[22], which portrayed her as the hero in the orchestra and painted a very ugly portrait of Alma. Significant portions of the book are simply figments of her imagination, including parts of her own past before Auschwitz. A notorious invention was the whole chapter describing her recollection of a visit by Heinrich Himmler (during which the ensemble supposedly gave a brief performance in his presence) that never happened, since the last time he was there was in 1942, at a point when there was still no women's Kapelle and consequently no chance that the women played in front of him in 1944[23]. In Fénélon´s version of the events, it turned out that Alma was snubbing the other women because she considered herself a German and therefore simply on a higher level, that she was a mechanical, self-absorbed woman, with dubious conducting talents, who did everything to please the SS. Fénélon also claimed that Alma was terrified of the reaction of the SS if the women played badly and beat the musicians in her wild tantrums. To this day, despite the efforts of the other surviving members of the orchestra, Fénélon´s book is accepted by many people as an authentic portrayal of the situation – not least because of the 1980 film, based on it and entitled "Playing for Time", with script by Arthur Miller and Vanessa Redgrave as Fénélon. After the publication of the book, the other survivors cut all contact with their former colleague, deeply offended by the distorted facts. Unfortunately, "Sursis pour l´orchestre" has lived through many editions in many different languages, often published without any editorial note on the controversy regarding its content, and is still the point of departure for anyone who doesn´t bother to dig deeper into the matter, an enormous danger for preserving the memory of these events. The truth, however, resides elsewhere[24].

Alma was not an easy-going person – that much was true. And when it came to music, there was no compromise. She insisted that all women be concentrated on what they were playing and she would get furious when it wouldn´t be the

22 Fénélon, Fania. *Sursis pour l'orchestre*. Editions Stock, 1976.

23 The only high Nazi official who visited the camp at that time was Adolf Eichmann, therefore if such a concert indeed took place, the man in the audience could only have been him and not Himmler.

24 The world renowned biographer of Gustav Mahler, Henry-Louis de La Grange, found the amount of Fénélon´s self-praise to be suspicious to say the least, and he informed the Rosés about the content of the book. Maria, Alfred Rosé´s widow (he died before the publication of the book), decided to open her family documentation and find proof that Alma was nothing like the person Fénélon described. See Newman, *Alma Rosé*, p. 432. Public protest was made by most of the remaining members of the Kapelle, who completely cast away Fénélon´s portrayal of Alma and condemned her version of events. The women had no issues with her until the publication of the book. Apart from Richard Newman´s work and that of Anita Lasker.-Wallfisch, who tirelessly travels and speaks about her experiences, another significant contribution is coming up to help keeping the records straight – the book of Heleną Dunicz Niwińską, entitled *Drogi mojego życia. Wspomnienia skrzypaczki z Birkenau* (could be translated as "Paths of My Life. Memories of a Violinist from Birkenau"), published by in 2013 by the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, is awaiting translation into English language.

case. She would also occasionally punish the women for not playing well[25]. The reasons for Alma´s harshness and discipline are manifold. A significant amount lies in her background, the way she grew up and the heritage she was born into. She was very devoted to her music making, everything had to be right. She was simply giving her whole self to the music and expected no less from those who played with her. Arnold Rosé, her father, stated that she was "possessed of Mahler´s spirit"[26] and, although she was only five years old when her uncle died, this statement was not too far from the truth. She asked no more than what she was giving her commitment was full and she expected the same from her fellow musicians. Such attitude did not win her much popularity, as it didn´t to her uncle either.[27] Like him, Alma worked according to very high standards and she stuck to them, no matter the situation or circumstances, any time, any place, never stepping away. They both owed it to the score, but also and this is a very important detail to themselves. It is a concept not always easy to understand, especially to non-artists, and that is one of the answers to why reactions are always divided, particularly in the context of such an extreme situation like music-making in an extermination camp. For Alma Rosé, music was not merely a profession; it was a way of life. She was stripped of a lot of things in Auschwitz, but no one could have stripped her of music and in it she sought the refuge from the horror that surrounded her. She was sensible enough to realise precisely where she was and that there was no escape from such a place. She also knew that giving in to fear and despair meant dying before death and an episode told by Anita Lasker-Wallfisch illustrates Alma´s attitude to what was going on around her:

> She [Alma] was very cross with one of the people who cried, she was only 16, she saw her aunt passing by to the gas chamber and she cried. And she [Alma] gave her a slap and said: "We don´t cry, here we don´t cry! Here we play music!" And she [the girl] said: "You know, I was

25 Anita Lasker-Wallfisch remembers having to wash the floor of the Block for playing wrong, although she was recovering from typhus and hear hearing was not completely back. See Lasker-Wallfisch, *Ihr sollt die Wahrheit erben*, p. 131.

26 Newman, *Alma Rosé*, p. 432.

27 Mahler´s troubles with his musicians at the Opera in Vienna (and more or less every orchestra he conducted) were quite often related to the fact that he was very passionate and built himself into every performance, something that not really everyone was ready to do. The pampered members of the orchestra did not like anyone to interfere with their usual routine, so Mahler´s devotion and tireless work, along with the demand to the musicians to do the same was met with hostility. Before he resigned as the Director of the Opera in 1907, Mahler wrote a letter to his collaborators and musicians, which contained also this paragraph: "But I have always given everything I had, subordinating myself to the task in hand, my own inclinations to my duty. I did not spare myself, and could therefore call upon others to do their utmost as well." Needless to say, the letter was found torn to pieces, not long after it was hung on the bulletin board at the Opera. For the full text of the letter in English, see de La Grange, *Mahler*, vol. 3, pp- 780-781.

> grateful to her, she made me harder." Yes, you can´t cry, that´s a luxury. She reduced our vision to what was just happening there, in that Block, we must play that stupid piece well[28].

As in everything else, Alma demanded the full commitment and it had as a consequence the fact that the women had little time to dedicate to the smoking chimneys outside they were doing their best to hit the right note. Eventually, this effort, regardless of Alma´s insistence and pushing, helped the women realise that they were not really playing for the Nazis, even when these happened to barge into the music Block and demand a particular piece of music to be played, but for themselves, their own sanity and the hope that perhaps they would survive.

Alma Rosé was such a dignified person that just by her appearance she commanded respect. It was a surreal sight in Birkenau, but she carried her tragedy with so much grace and dignity that nobody remained indifferent. Her talent dazzled the SS, about whose standards she didn´t really care much: she had her own and they were much higher. She managed to make a unit out of a totally unlikely group of people, from completely different cultural backgrounds and with language barriers (German, Polish, Russian, French, Greek…)[29] , and had it perform a wide variety of music pieces. The repertoire was spanning from marches that accompanied the Arbeitkommando (work detail) going to factories for slave labour in the morning and their comeback in the evening, to popular songs of the time and many classical and opera pieces, arranged for the instruments they had at their disposal. The SS were stunned by Alma´s remarkable dignity, so much that they called her "Frau Alma", something unthinkable for a Jew in Birkenau. She was very likely sensible to the point to know how far she could go, being aware that, despite all the respect she enjoyed, she was walking on a thin rope. She used her position very carefully, to protect her Kapelle and make the lives of the members at least a bit more bearable. She convinced the SS that it was not possible to play in harsh winter conditions without some form of heating because also the instruments would suffer and be ruined, so they gave her a sort of a heating device for the music Block, a privilege no other Block of regular prisoners had. Thanks to Alma´s effort, the women were also not forced to endure hours and hours of roll call torture

28 BBC Radio 7 *The Poisoned Angel – The Story of Alma Rosé*, by Alan Shipton., broadcast on 1st March 2011.

29 Although Fania Fénélon insisted on the anti-Semitism of the Polish members of the Kapelle, there was actually a lot of camaraderie in the group and the real problem lay in the languages spoken by the members, like everywhere else in the camp. The language one spoke pretty much determined the part of the group one would communicate with.

in harsh weather: they were allowed to perform that insane duty inside their Block. However, playing for hours and hours with very little to eat and drink was taking its toll, along with typhus and various other sicknesses and debilitating conditions, and Alma performed another miracle she talked the SS into allowing the women a break after their miserable lunch, so they could rest[30].

With the increase of the repertoire, the demand for copyists was also getting higher and Alma did everything to take as many women into the Kapelle as possible, knowing what it meant to all of them. However badly a woman played, she was never thrown out. She was given another task inside the band, but never thrown out. Alma also did everything she could, so the women would not be gassed because of being ill and Violette Jacquet, later Silberstein, a violinist, remembers Alma lying to an SS that she was one of her best violinists, so that she would not be taken away because of being sick with typhus[31].

Many gossips about the Kapelle were circling in the camp the musicians were sarcastically referred to as "the ladies of the orchestra" because they had a sort of uniform for "official concerts", and the fact that they were not going out to factories for slave labour[32] was a motive to scorn them, especially when they had to play in front of an audience comprising the SS. These gossips, many of which had to do with Alma, caused the birth of a lot of myths about the orchestra, which is quite evident in the statement of Dr Lucie Adelberger, an inmate and physician at the Krankenrevier (hospital Block) at Birkenau:

> Music was something like a lapdog of the camp´s administration, and the participants were clearly in its good graces. Their block was even better tended than the clerk´s office or the kitchen. Food was plentiful, and the girls from the orchestra were neatly attired in blue cloth dresses and caps. The musicians were quite busy; they played at the roll call, and the women who were returning from work exhausted had to march to the rhythm of music. Music was ordered for all official occasions:

30 Newman, *Alma Rosé*, p. 317.

31 Ibidem, p. 324.

32 Making music to this day is quite often referred to as "entertainment", therefore automatically an activity that has nothing to do with real labour. It is no surprise that hours and hours a day of playing music, up to the total physical exhaustion all the time including a serious intellectual effort, in the eyes of a common person could not be compared to hours of physical labour in a factory or quarry or anything of the sort.

> the speeches of the SS camp leaders, transports, and hangings. In between, the musicians served to entertain the SS and the inmates at the infirmary. In the women´s camp, the orchestra played in the infirmary every Tuesday and Friday afternoon undisturbed by all the goings-on and selections around it.[33]

Not only wasn´t the food plentiful, the Block so well-tended and the women so insensitive to what was going on around them, but here there´s a mention of another myth that is strongly disputed by many members of orchestra and that is that the Kapelle (both men´s and women´s) played at the selections and executions. To play at a selection and during a selection are two very different things, but unfortunately, too many people tend to see particular events as they please, choosing more notorious or, if one likes, more scandalous interpretations, just for the sake of sensation. In the case of transports and selections, especially during the arrivals of trains with tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews, one thing is a naked fact: music could be heard from the selection point. However and here we come to an extremely important detail the Kapelle, men´s or women´s, was never directly at the ramp and never played to purposely accompany the arrivals of the transports or the selection process. The camp orchestras performed their regular duties outside the Block (playing marches while the inmates were going out or coming back to the camp), which means that the people throughout the camp, including those at the selection ramp, could hear the music. It is enough to look at the aerial images of the camp to realise that the gate, the ramp, the rail tracks, the Blocks, the gas chambers and crematoria were not kilometres apart. Many things were going on in the camp at one given moment and, due to the number of transports arriving especially in 1944, it was inevitable that it happened that music was heard during a selection. The musicians could see the people from the incoming transports, there is no question about that, but they were never forced to stand at the ramp and directly play a part in this horror they had to go about their routine, playing marches.

Alma Rosé did what best she could in the circumstances she was thrown into. The ever more frequent transports and gassings, especially the total extermination of the Theresienstadt Jews from the "family camp" and the endless gassing of the Hungarian Jews, made her go deeper into her music. These events hit her very hard and she completely withdrew into her inner world, isolating herself

33 Langbein, Hermann. *People in Auschwitz*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2004, pp. 127-128.

into the excellence of her music, in which she was looking for the means of survival. She was attached to the members of her Kapelle, a nucleus counting at one point between forty and fifty women, and gave them compliments, when in her opinion they deserved it. Her greatest praise was to tell them that what they had just played would have been good enough for her father[34]. Helena Spitzer Tischauer, known in the camp as Zippy, stated:

> Alma once said, "I will never go back to my Wiener Mädchen (or whatever she called that), I will take you, girls, all over Europe and we are going to play!" You know what that meant to us?[35]

However, although Alma never really abandoned hope of leaving the camp, she wasn´t going to see it happen. On the evening of 2nd April, after a dinner with Frau Schmidt from the clothing department, Alma returned to the music Block not feeling well. Many times before that she had experiences splitting headaches, but this was something much more serious, going downhill very quickly. Alma´s closest friend from the camp, Dr Margita Svalbová, known as "Manci" and "Manca", was with her till the end. The violinist was taken to the hospital Block and various attempts to diagnose her condition were made. The SS feared an epidemic; on 4th April, the notorious Dr Josef Mengele ordered a spinal tap, to check for pneumonia and meningitis[36]. Unfortunately, there was nothing that could have saved Alma and she died later that evening, from still undetermined causes, which has fuelled all kinds of theories ever since, ranging from poison to botulism. Mandel allowed the women of the orchestra to say goodbye to their leader, a gesture without precedence in Auschwitz. It was done, but absolutely not the way Fénélon described it, with flowers and pathetic scenes from the SS.

Alma´s death was a huge blow for the orchestra, not only because no other person could keep up with the standards she had set, but also because of the amount of respect she had been given. She was succeeded by Sonia Vinogradova, but the results were far from what Alma had managed to obtain. The fear of being gassed grew, especially when the SS started losing interest in the orchestra with the advance of the Soviet troops. In late 1944, the Nazis started evacuating Auschwitz and taking measures to leave as little evidence as possible about the mass murders

34 Lasker-Wallfisch, *Ihr sollt die Wahrheit erben*, p. 131.

35 BBC Radio 7, *The Poisoned Angel*.

36 The lab order is reproduced in Newman, *Alma Rosé*, p.430.

they had been committing. The Jewish members of the women's Lagerkapelle from Birkenau were transported to Belsen. The last music they played was in Birkenau, in Belsen there was none. The women stuck together and kept encouraging each other in the horrible Belsen months, and all except two of them lived to see the entrance of British troops into the camp on 15th April 1945.

The SS had created the orchestra for their own deranged purposes, but in so doing they inadvertently gave its members a mode of survival. While most of the prisoners who were not part of the orchestra did not look to its members with approval, often accusing them of collaborating with the SS, being a part of the Lagerkapelle gave these women an identity back and helped them hold on in the battle to survive, both physical and mental. Alma's attitude and standards helped them to realise that, regardless of the fact that their audience was frequently the SS, they did not play for their potential executioners, but for themselves. Alma Rosé literally saved their lives by taking them into the Lagerkapelle, and saved their minds by forcing them to think about the notes and not look through the window and see the chimneys of the incessantly working crematoria. Although during the time in Auschwitz-Birkenau they did not really love that harsh and disciplined woman (they were often angry with her, but nonetheless always nurtured respect towards her), in retrospect the great majority of the women from the Lagerkapelle led by Alma Rosé came to understand her and feel deeply grateful and indebted to her. Asking any of the survivors today the question what they think about Alma, the answer would always be:

"She saved us."

Music within the Nazi Genocide System in Occupied Poland: Facts and Testimonies

Dr Katarzyna Naliwajek-Mazurek

Abstract

Functions of music in Nazi sites of genocide were diametrically opposed for the oppressors and for the oppressed, just as the roles of the two groups were opposed themselves. For the Nazi perpetrators music was one more means of psychological torture, debasement, manipulation and victimization of 'their' prisoners. Secondly, they made use of music for their personal enjoyment and recreation after performing genocidal acts, which was often combined with physical torture of the victims. Numerous examples confirm such persecutors' intentions. On the other hand, for the oppressed, music performed for the camp authorities often constituted a means to survive. Finally, the intimate music-making represented some of the fundamental values that prisoners were deprived of. Such music was their solace, their expression of freedom and opposition to imposed rules, a method to deal with the overwhelming suffering. The article focuses on analysis of these four aspects of music in Nazi camps: 1) its criminal use as the tool of degradation of prisoners; 2) its "recreational" and ceremonial uses; 3) its potency as the means of survival, 4) its ethical power for the camp prisoners. This investigation will be based among others on

the evidence from testimonies of former camps prisoners recorded by the author.

Introduction

As stated elsewhere, music in Nazi-occupied Poland became one of the tools used for the control of the cultural activity of the population in the cities and for various propagandistic goals. Music also had various other functions in the Nazi genocide system.[37]

1939. The Aftermath of the Ribbentropp-Molotov Pact: Division of Poland into three parts: (1) the USSR-annexed territories; (2) the Reich-annexed territories; (3) the Generalgouvernement (translated as the 'General Government'). Fragment of the original German map of the time.

Former Polish territories were divided into three parts: the *Generalgouvernement für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete*, the Third Reich-annexed territories and the USSR-annexed territories, and thoroughly controlled by the occupying

37 See e.g. articles by K. Naliwajek-Mazurek: *The Racialization and Ghettoization of Music in the General Government in: Twentieth-Century Music and Politics*, Pauline Fairclough (ed.), Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, p. 191-210; *The Use of Polish Musical Tradition in the Nazi Propaganda*, „Musicology Today" 2010, Vol. 7, p. 243-259.

forces and their administrations. The segregation and racialization of the local population constituted a crucial part of Nazi policy and propaganda. In the Reich-annexed territories, "[t]he ultimate objective was the 'utter removal of everything Polish'; that is, in the long term, the deportation of all Poles and the final incorporation of these territories into the German state".[38] In the General Government, "[t]he methods and intensity of the treatment of the local population needed for this predatory administration differed depending on whether Poles or other 'non-Germans' were involved or Poles of Jewish extraction. […] Jews […] were barely regarded by the administration any more as persons (legal entities) or groups but rather as troublesome 'parasites' […]. In all, four phases of anti-Jewish legislation can be identified. The first was segregation and *discrimination* compared with the rest of the population (forced labor, compulsory wearing of badges, etc.). The second phase involved *extension* of the isolation measures […]. The third phase was the *total isolation* of the Jews from their environment. […] Ghettoization was the preliminary to the fourth phase, the resettlement or evacuation of the Jews to the extermination camps in the process of the Final Solution, for which the SS and the police were responsible, collaborating closely with the administrative authorities. The treatment of the Poles followed different rules."[39] The goal was "the extermination of the economic, political, and cultural lives of the Poles then their greatest possible isolation from the German 'ruling class', and finally the reduction in the Polish standard of living […]."[40] As Dietmut Majer further explains, "Polish cultural life was regarded as the 'main enemy of *Deutschtum*,' to be destroyed "as soon as possible," as Poles were to be prepared "for the status of leaderless laborers".[41] He stated that the special Nazi 'legal' system introduced there resulted in the situation, where " once in the clutches of the police or the judiciary, innumerable 'non-German' individuals or groups could never hope to see freedom again. The major question was whether they would be sent to a regular prison or a police prison, prison camp, work training camp, or concentration camp, for on this their chances of survival depended."[42]

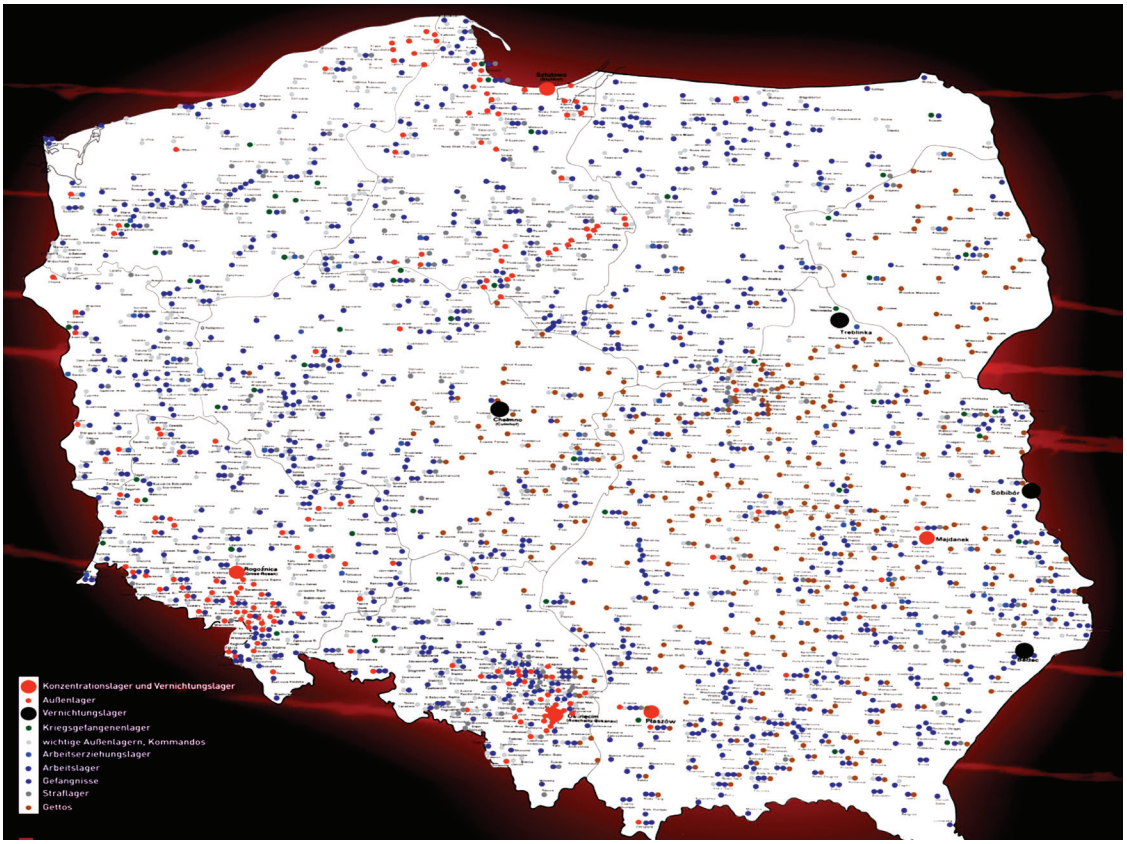
38 Dietmut Majer, *"Non Germans" under the Third Reich. The Nazi Judicial and Administrative System in Germany and Occupied Eastern Europe, with Special Regard to Occupied Poland, 1939-1945*. Trans. By P. T. Hill, E.V. Humphrey, B. Levin. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press (Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) 2003, p. 195.

39 Ibidem, p. 284-286.

40 Ibidem.

41 Ibidem, p. 289.

42 Ibidem, p. 529.



Map representing different types of German camps and prisons established on the territories of occupied Poland, marked within its post-war frontiers. Map prepared by Studio 27 (Warsaw) and the author of the article, based on research by the Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce (Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland). The map was prepared for the exhibition *Music in occupied Poland* according to a map published in: Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939-1945. Informator encyklopedyczny, Warsaw (PWN) 1979.

Thus, an incredibly dense net of different types of camps and prisons was established to ensure terror and control of the population. Early transports sent to Auschwitz in May 1940 were mainly composed of lawyers from Warsaw. This constituted only a part of a broader extermination plan directed against the Polish intelligentsia ("Polnische Intelligenz" or more inclusively "Führerschicht")[43], already planned before September 1939. A special section under cryptonym "P" ("Polen") created in May 1939 established proscriptions

43 According to the following definition of November 25th 1939 formulated by officials of NSDAP Central Advisory Office on Questions of Racial Policy, Dr. Erhard Wetzel and Gerhard Hecht in their memorandum concerning „the approach towards the population of former Polish territories from the racial-political point of view": „The notion of Polish intelligentsia encompasses, first of all, Polish clergy, teachers (teachers at colleges and universities included), doctors, dentists, veterinarians, officers, higher-ranking officials, editors, as well as every person, who received higher or secondary education" Quoted after: Adam Basak, *Eksterminacja inteligencji jako metoda ludobójstwa. Polskie doświadczenia a praktyka kodyfikacyjna i orzecznictwo w sprawach zbrodni hitlerowskich* [Extermination of intelligentsia as method of genocide. Polish experiences versus jurisdiction concerning Nazi crimes], „Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Studia nad Faszyzmem i Zbrodniami Hitlerowskimi", Karol Jonca (ed.), Vol. 14, Wrocław 1991, p. 281.

lists (*Sonderfahndungsbuch Polen)* with names of those to be exterminated first, effectively used a few months later by special units of "security police" (*Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei*) and other units of the police. On August 22th 1939 Hitler announced to his generals that after the military action, SS troops should undertake to exterminate Polish "Führerschicht"[44], and later in 1940 he explained that "all representatives of Polish intelligentsia should be extinguished" because "this is the law of life".[45]

Arrests of university professors, other intellectuals, artists or eminent personalities were effected already in September 1939 in the region of Łódź, in October and November in Poznań, Warsaw and other cities, towns, villages. The arrested were either executed (with their families, as in Lvov in July 1941)[46] or transported to concentration camps (for example professors from Jagiellonian University in Cracow). Very often the dates and circumstances of their death remain unknown; only in rare cases were they released. This action was systematically continued under the term *Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion* (*AB-Aktion*, "special pacificational action"), ideologically linked to *Generalplan Ost*, the plan of "ethnic cleansing" through extinction of Slavic nations (considered *Untermenschen*) by means of direct extermination, Germanisation, *Aussiedlung* and dispersion to territories of Siberia.[47] The incarceration and extermination of the intelligentsia as a social group never reached comparable dimensions in other Nazi-occupied countries[48], which can be only partially explained by

44 According to the account given by General Fedor von Bock. According to General Wilhelm Keitl (chief of Oberkommando der Wehrmacht) Hitler named the liquidation of Polish intelligentsia as "politische Flurbereinigung". F. v. Schlebrendorf. *Offiziere gegen Hitler*. Frankfurt am Main und Hamburg 1959, p. 47-48; K. H. Abshagen, *Canaris – Patriot und Weltbürger*, Stuttgart 1957, p. 207 ff.

45 Hilter's speech on October 24th 1940 in Berlin. Quoted after: A. Basak, op. cit., p. 285.

46 Zygmunt Albert (ed.), *Kaźń profesorów lwowskich, lipiec 1941: studia oraz relacje i dokumenty* [Execution of Lvov Professors, July 1941: studies, accounts and documents], Wrocław, Uniwersytet Wrocławski 1989. This author quotes the speech held by Frank to representatives of the SS and police on May 30, 1940: «The fuss made about the Cracow professors was indescribable and inconvenient for German Reich. The whole affair would have taken a different course if we had settled the matter on the spot, i.e. liquidate the Cracow professors. I must insist, therefore, that from now on no one will be sent to concentration camps in the Reich but liquidated then and there or 'punished according to the law'. Any other procedure will encumber the Reich and create additional difficulties for us. Different methods are required here and must be employed henceforth» (English version quoted here is available under http://www.lwow.com.pl/Lwow_profs.html).

47 See Norman Davies, *God's Playground. A History of Poland, Vol. 2, 1785 to the Present*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1981, p. 441-454, on p. 453-454: „In Berlin, the Nazi leaders began to sketch out the details of their Generalplan-Ost, whereby, in the coming decades, the whole Slav population from the Oder to the Dniepr was to be replaced by German settlers. Within the over-all scheme, they imagined that some twenty-million Poles could be resettled in Western Syberia; some three to four million were suitable for re-Germanization; the rest were to be eliminated. In the first stage, all human and material resources were to be devoted to the war effort- all resistance was to be ruthlessly suppressed; all inferior and useless human beings Jews, Gypsies, Soviet prisoners-of-war, unfit to work were to be exterminated".

48 C. Madajczyk (ed.), *Inter arma non silent musae. Wojna i kultura 1939-1945*, Warszawa 1982, p. 245-246; Richard C. Lukas, p. 103-112; *The Polish Experience during the Holocaust*; in: *A Moisaic of Victims. Non-Jews persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis*, ed. by Michael Berenbaum, New York University Press, New York and London 1990, p. 88-95. N. Davis, op. cit., p.

the conviction that Polish leaderless population would become docile and more easily manipulated. Maybe this ghettoization of former Polish citizens of Jewish origin resulted in the extreme pauperisation of the intelligentsia, which could not earn their living in the ghettos. Musicians were part of this group. A few of them survived hidden "on the Aryan side" by their Polish friends (in Warsaw cases of Władysław Szpilman, conductor Zdzisław Górzyński, cellist Halina Kowalska and others could be mentioned), although both the rescuers and the rescued faced the death sentence in case of being discovered by the Nazi authorities. The "resettlement" to the camps of those who had no possibility to escape the ghetto, and the extermination of the majority of those imprisoned in the ghettos, led to almost total eradication of Jewish music and musicians. The enormous genocidal system established by the Third Reich in the territories of occupied Poland contained however thousands of musicians held prisoners. Most of them, even when they survived initial stages of their imprisonment or managed to survive even a longer time, became victims of either final extermination at the camp (also through hunger and emaciation, planned by the authorities) or the death marches of prisoners in first months of 1945. Some of the musicians and other witnesses, both Jewish and non-Jewish, managed to survive and to give their testimonies regarding the place of music in the camps.

Music and Nazi Genocide System Facts and Testimonies

Due to the considerable number of musicians in the camps and because of the astonishing presence of music in virtually all concentration camps and death camps such as Treblinka and Sobibor, preliminary analysis of the roles of music in genocidal circumstances has become the subject of recent research. [49]

The historical facts and documentation of music's functions within the context of Nazi genocide systems are gradually being explained and published. The ground-breaking and carefully documented text on orchestras at the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp by Jacek Lachendro, published in "Auschwitz Studies" 27 (2012 ; 2014 in English), has recently brought detailed information on the functioning

444: „The NKVD and Gestapo worked in close collaboration [...] Both sides looked on Poles and Jews with undisguised contempt. The 'racial enemy' of the one was virtually indistinguishable form the 'class enemy' of the other".

49 Apart for an already well known book by Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust. Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2005), see for example K. Naliwajek-Mazurek, *Music and Torture in Nazi Sites of Persecution and Genocide in Occupied Poland 1939-1945*, "the world of music (new series)", Vol. 2, Issue 1 (2013), *Music and Torture | Music and Punishment*, published by Department of Music at Georg August University Göttingen: 31-50.

of all musical ensembles in Auschwitz, describing their chronology, different meanings of music in the camp both for prisoners and musicians, and opposing points of view on music played in gruesome conditions. [50]

Publications based on the analysis of survivors' testimonies bring a different type of information, both facts, as remembered by the witnesses, concerning such topics as the repertoire played in the camps, as the description of conditions in which musical ensembles functioned, the behaviour of guards and prisoners, the functions of music for both groups etc., and also the evocation of emotions and individual insights into the roles of music in the camps, and personal judgments and opinions.[51] Not only scholarly works by historians, but also recently published testimonies are the source of the growing database of evidence, knowledge and views on music in concentration camps. One such recent example is the book by Helena Dunicz-Niwińska, *One of the Girls in the Band. The Memoirs of a Violinist from Birkenau.*[52] This violinist from Lvov, imprisoned and sent with her mother to Auschwitz, survived the camp, saved by Alma Rosé, who selected her to play in the orchestra. After the war she became music editor at the Polish Music Publishing House PWM. She states, "in the circles of former prisoners or even among people who had never experienced anything of the kind, we were frequently confronted after the war with unmasked opprobrium for having played in the orchestra. Aside from the general inhibition in speaking about those times that lasted for many years, we never expressed ourselves in public or had any desire to write down our recollections, except for accounts we submitted for the need of the Museum Archive."[53] She also adds: "The first author of 'memoirs' was Fania Fénelon, a singer and member of the band, who published her highly controversial book *Sursis pour l'orchestre* in 1976. Only after it came out did the subject of the women's orchestra become a sensation and the basis for films, plays, and musicological studies."[54] She further strongly addresses Fénelon's accusations of the alleged anti-Semitism of Polish non-Jewish prisoners: "I think that seeing anti-Semitism in the attitude of us Poles towards the Jews is a stereotype, appearing repeatedly in the memoirs

50 Jacek Lachendro, *Orkiestry w KL Auschwitz*, „Zeszyty Oświęcimskie" 27, 2012: 7-148; *The orchestras in KL Auschwitz*, "Auschwitz Studies" 27, 2014.

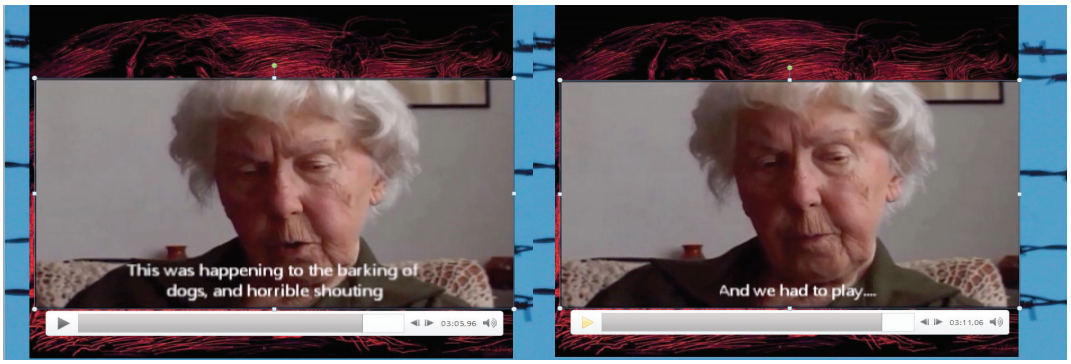
51 Cf. e.g. Barbara Milewski, *Remembering the Concentration Camps: Aleksander Kulisiewicz and his Concerts of Prisoners' Songs in the Federal Republic of Germany*," in *Dislocated Memories: Jews, Music, and Postwar German Culture*, ed. Tina Frühauf and Lily Hirsch, Oxford University Press, 2014; B. Milewski, Bret Werb, *From Madagascar to Sachsenhausen: Singing about 'Race' in a Nazi Camp*, in "Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry" 16 (2003): 269-78; K. Naliwajek-Mazurek, *The Functions of Music within the Nazi System of Genocide in Occupied Poland*, in: Wojciech Klimczyk, Agata Świerchowsska (eds.), *Music and Genocide*, "Studies in Social Sciences, Philosophy and History of Ideas", Vo. 9, Peter Lang Edition, 83-103.

52 H. Dunicz-Niwińska, One of the Girls in the Band. The Memoirs of a Violinist from Birkenau. Transcribed by Maria Szewczyk, translated from the Polish by William Brand, Oświęcim, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum 2014.

53 Ibidem, 84-85.

54 Ibidem.

of Fania Fénelon, that was picked by other, but not all, of the Jewish women. […] She was also slandering us Poles as anti-Semites. […] Fania published her camp memoirs in 1978. Two years later the book was adapted as an American TV movie. In these memoirs she made use of her anti-Polish rhetoric and depicted the Polish women in an offensively aggressive way. She even wrote that I refused to play in the quartet mentioned earlier out of anti-Semitic motives, egged on by my equally anti-Semitic friends. Unfortunately, I read Fania's book only after her death in 1983 and therefore had no occasion to confront her over this and the other lies that her memoirs teem with. After the political changes in Poland it became possible to travel and correspond freely, and I met with some Jewish members of the orchestra who were also outraged over Fania's slanderous opinions about Czajkowska, Alma Rosé, and other girls in the band. The charitable image of the SS men and *SS-Aufseherinnen* in her book is equally incomprehensible."[55]



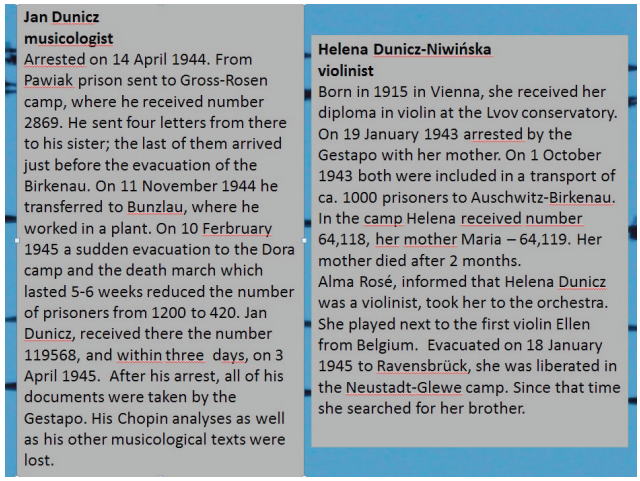
Fragments of an interview with Helena Dunicz-Niwińska recorded by the author of the article and Łukasz Korwin, Cracow, 2010

It seems that this slanderous image of Polish prisoners has added up to her sufferings and those of her fellow-inmates, especially Zofia Czajkowska, who suffered from depression during her incarceration at Auschwitz and after the war.

In her book, Helena Dunicz-Niwińska not only establishes the roster of the women's orchestra in Birkenau between October 1943 and the autumn of 1944, providing information on fellow prisoners, with her characteristic modesty adding "as remembered by", but also described her own and other prisoners' suffering in the camp. After describing the death of her mother, she wrote: "The Germans pursued their national interest through lawlessness, bloody violence, and unprecedented fear. Mama was just one of the millions of victims of that

55 Ibidem, 104-105.
59bis : Cf. e.g. testimonies from Gestapo prisons in Warsaw quoted in K. Naliwajek-Mazurek, *Music and Torture...*, op. cit., 42-43.

policy, but to me she was the dearest. Almost everyone in the camp had one thing in common: the loss of someone they loved. On December 3, 1943, I joined that tragic community."[56]



The importance of music for the members of the orchestra is clearly described in these memoirs. She remembers "preparing and playing the melody of Chopin's *Tristesse I* (Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E major) as arranged for voice and orchestra by Alma. We could not, of course perform that work publicly at any of the Sunday concerts, because the playing of Chopin was forbidden under the Third Reich. We played it for ourselves and for women prisoners who sneaked in to listen to something special, something that expressed through music our resistance to the German oppressors."[57]

On the other hand, she also noted, that "Making music was a typical occurrence in various camps, and not only here. For the majority of prisoners in in Birkenau, however, music had a significance that was not only, for instance, artistic or psychological – that is, a way of lifting spirits. There was something infernal about the music we played. We quickly began to realize this, and we therefore went through moral dilemmas and spiritual conflicts about whether we should play or not […]."[58]

Providing detailed factual evidence on music in Nazi camps is beyond the scope

56 Ibidem, 91.
57 Ibidem, 84.
58 Ibidem, 61.

of a short article. It is certain while reading the testimonies of musicians and those who witnessed music played in the camps, that music was used by the Nazi guards in mostly sadistic ways, just as they used other methods of physical and psychological abuse, that were inflicted on the victims by the camp guards.

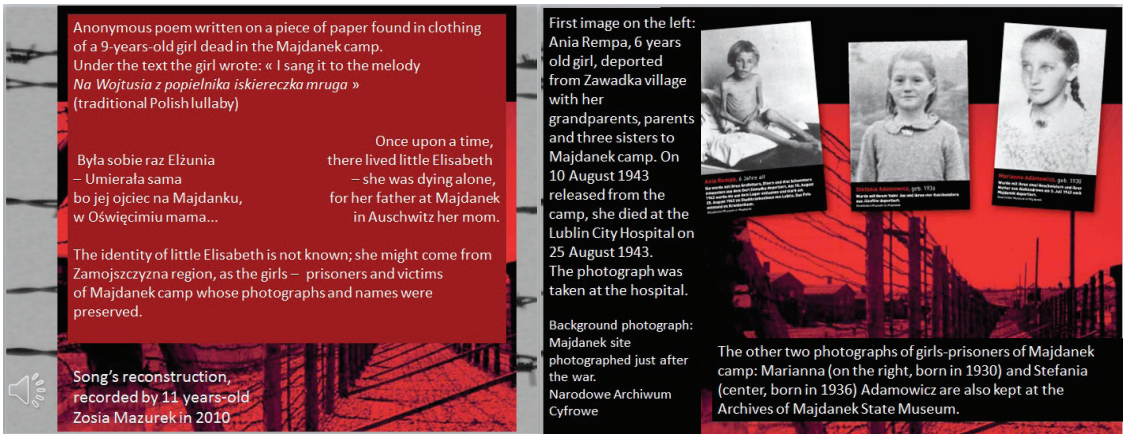
When we read through dozens of testimonies and listen to those witnesses who are still alive, it seems certain that the reason for employing music in the camps for Nazi guards except for their musical sympathies, often concerning Gershwin and music by other musicians of Jewish descent was the need to win total control over the prisoners. The sadistic need to make prisoners lose their identity, to annihilate them psychologically before exterminating them physically, seems prevalent in the use of music in Nazi genocide camps. Music was an important part of the strategy of terror and torture, used elsewhere (e.g. during cruel interrogations combined with torture of the future concentration camps prisoners). [59bis] Helena Dunicz-Niwińska also wrote about her fellow-musicians: "Rachela was a Polish Jew who came from Będzin. She and Zosia [Czajkowska] obsessively mulled over the question of whether surviving in a death camps because of playing in the band was a sign of a loss of humanity. They both went through spiritual torments and even thought of throwing themselves on the wire. When Rache's brother died during the *Sonderommando* mutiny, Zosia tried to console her by reminding her of the heroism of his act, and that she should be proud of her brother for dying in combat. We were full of admiration for those who took part in that one-of-a-kind armed uprising."[59]

It should be remembered that music used in its army-like, "decorative" or ceremonial aspect, strengthening the authoritarian roles of the oppressors, was a particularly useful and powerful means of such empowerment, modelled his on the Nazi mass meetings so popular in Nazi Germany after 1933. As is proved elsewhere, to the camp commandant, who modelled image according to the example provided by the Führer, the feeling of a mass feast glorifying the leader was provided by music in the camps, played during roll calls. In the extermination camps, such as Treblinka, the typically sadistic sense of satisfaction was achieved by domination and humiliation of the other, and was considerably enhanced by the sight of degraded prisoners, who would be forced to play music for the guards, or sing a "joyful" march on their orders the same guards, whom the prisoners knew were responsible for the murder of their children, their sisters, brothers, parents and wives.

59 H. Dunicz-Niwińska, op. cit.,105.

For the Nazi perpetrators the roles of music in the genocidal system, which they built mainly within the borders of the General Government, ranged from one more means of psychological torture, debasement, manipulation and victimization of 'their' prisoners to the use of music for their personal enjoyment and recreation during or after performing genocidal acts, often combined with physical torture of the victims.

Yet as is made evident by the enormous camps and prisons musical repertoire of the time a different kind of music was at the same time, and in the same spaces, the method of keeping and/or regaining prisoners' identity by referring to the profoundly ethical, lyrical or to the more superficial but nevertheless powerful satirical facets of music. Not surprisingly, this type of music was illegal and repressed by the Nazi authorities as a threat to their dominance.



Material presented at the exhibition *Music in Occupied Poland 1939-1945* co-curated by the author of the article and Frank Harders-Wuthenow. Material courtesy of Majdanek Camp Museum and NAC (National Audiovisual Archive of Poland).

Within and around these two apparently contrasting aspects of music, a much more complex net of mechanisms operated within the relations between and among the persecuted and the persecutors. Thus, functions of music at sites of genocide seem, at first glance, diametrically opposed for the oppressors and for the oppressed, just as the roles of the two groups were themselves in opposition. However, the reality is decidedly more complex and it is only through a careful and balanced further analysis of facts and testimonies that a more accurate and complete image of the uses of music in Nazi camps could be acquired.

Photograph taken at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp Museum, 2010.

Hermann Leopoldi (1888 - 1959) -and The Buchenwald Song

Résumé

Ronald Leopoldi Hermann Leopoldi (1888-1959), l'un des plus populaires chansonniers autrichiens de son temps, enchanta son public qui le décrivait comme un « pianiste humoriste ». Par leur esprit et leur humour incisifs, ses chansons reflètaient la situation politique et sociale de son époque. Il les a chantées dans des cadres contrastés, des cafés viennois des années 1920 et 1930 jusqu'au camp de concentration de Buchenwald et sur la scène d'un club à Manhattan pendant son exil.

Pendant les 9 mois que dura son emprisonnement au camp de concentration de Buchenwald, un grand concours de composition fut lancée au sein du camp afin d'écrire une marche à propos de Buchenwald. Herrmann Leopoldi écrivit avec le Dr. Löhner-Breda[60] la marche de Buchenwald que le commandant apprécia beaucoup. Cette marche leur permit de gagner le concours, mais ils ne reçurent jamais le prix promis, 10 marks.

He described himself as a "piano humorist", who understood to enthrall his audience. Besides wit and satire Hermann Leopoldi's songs mirror the political and social upheavals of his time.

His work evolved from an astonishing range of environments, from the Vienna coffee houses of the 1920's and 30's through the concentration camp at Buchenwald to the club scene in Manhattan during his exile.

60 L'auteur autrichien Fritz Löhner-Breda (1883- assassiné en 1942 à Monowitz-Buna) était parolier, écrivain et librettiste autrichien, notamment de Franz Lehár. (N.d.E.)

What's the story behind the Buchenwald march?

All began after the annexation of Austria to the German Third Reich. From one day to another, celebrity, esteem, and merit no longer existed. As a Jew, my father was from now on among those proscribed by the National Socialist Regime. Blinded by hatred the Nazis emphasized the persecution of Jews and other races, and blamed them for exploitation and repression of the Aryan race. In March 1938 my father tried to flee to Czechoslovakia and obtain an exit visa, but instead he encountered the new regime and failed to leave Austria. Shortly after he was taken from his apartment at 6 o'clock in the morning to an inquiry at the police station from where he never came back.

The following part is taken of my father's memoires, describing his time in the concentration camps Dachau and Buchenwald.

Passage of the memoires:

Then followed the murderous ride to Dachau. What took place on this trip, the sorts of tortures, is, in its inhumanity, indescribable but nevertheless the following incidents should make clear to you just how favored I was by good fortune in everything I undertook. Jammed into a compartment with closed windows, drawn curtains and no air to breathe we had to sit for hours there, continuously staring into the light. Anyone whose eyes fell closed from exhaustion was simply beaten bloody. Later on, each of us were interrogated: "What are you in civilian life?" If you said "merchant", you were brutalized as a swindler, and if you were a doctor, the worst thing of all, you quite simply got all your teeth bashed out. When they came to me, I spontaneously said "Volkssänger", whereupon they left me unmolested. That was my first stroke of luck on this trip.

Despite everything, the singing continued and became a permanent arrangement in Dachau. Together with Fritz Grünbaum, Paul Morgan and Dr. Beda he went from block to block to enterain his companions on their days off of work.

Singing, was an integral part of marching in the Third Reich and was not merely tolerated by the SS but commanded.

After Hiltler's invasion in Czechoslovakia he was to be moved to another camp on September 22, 1938 he and many others were shipped to Buchenwald. Already

in his first night he had to look helplessly, how, a large number of prisoners were bound together by their hands in a circle - so that the dogs could be set on them. That night 70 prisoners went mad, bearing the torturing of the Nazi Regime, then were thrown into a woodshed, where they were slain by SS leader Sommer personally.

For sure my father has seen unbelievable horror, more than he writes in his memoires or could ever bring himself to write about. He also neglects to report that he and Fritz Grünbaum carried his dead friend Paul Morgen from the sickbay to the camp gates.

Again a few words out of my father's memoires:

There was no norm or reference point for the way one should conduct oneself because in Buchenwald it was boundless caprice alone that ruled. Commandant Koch, who ran the camp, rarely made an appearance, delegating his authority to his deputy Rödl, a Bavarian with an unparalleled lack of intelligence. He had his quirks and pet peeves, traits you could characterize as naive in a certain sense but which in a given moment could erupt into blatant sadism as it is the rule with ambitious types. So anyway, one of his favorite pastimes was to have the camp prisoners sing folk tunes and children's lullabies for his personal pleasure. After a while, our childrens' songs must have gotten on his nerves because one day he roared roaring being his natural mode of expression "Write something about Buchenwald! A march! Ten marks for the best one! Something fine! Go on, get to it! Dismissed!"

We couldn't believe our ears. Once over our astonishment, we engaged in a camp-wide competition that was without parallel. Among other things, I wrote, together with Dr. Beda, the Buchenwald march which the commandant liked best and which he accepted. No doubt that won us the competition, but we never did get the promised prize of 10 marks. This march now became his favorite song so that we had to sing it at all times and on all occasions. Naturally, my comrades and I sang the song with tremendous enthusiasm, feeling the revolutionary spirit within it.

Unfortunately there does not exist a recording of the Buchenwald March with my father, therefore I have chosen one with Boris Eder, a young Leopoldi interpret, accompanied by Florian Schäfer on the piano.

It is the surest sign of the commandant's low intelligence that he himself

noticed nothing of the unbelievably revolutionary spirit of this song and could wax so enthusiastic over it. That he was extremely fond of the song is clear, because he said to his underlings: "I can't tell them this, but that is one helluva march!"

"Helluva" was the highest praise he could bestow with his very modest vocabulary. Whenever I tell about the song, I always see before my eyes the scene that once unfolded at a muster in Buchenwald. All the prisoners were lined up at a large site. On the left side, close to a hundred prisoners were stretched out on the sawbuck and lashed, while the prison band on the right played the Buchenwald march. The crowning glory of this spectacle one absolutely worthy of the Third Reich was Commandant Rödl, who watched the whole affair stinking drunk and visibly enthusiastic, gesturing like a lunatic. That was what this nation of poets and thinkers called "discipline". The song was rehearsed in all the blocks and the prison band had to play it eighty to a hundred times a day. Even the block I was in rehearsed it. We stood in rows before the SS-people. The last word of the song, "frei" (free), was supposed to be sung quite tersely and clipped, in German military style. At the first command-performance of the song I sang along myself and held the last note as long as the melody actually required. But since the others without exception, had cut off the last syllabel very abruptly, my voice continued ringing out as a solo. So this livid SS-man, descends on me shouting: "You idiot! Can't you sing? Who are you?"

In strict military posture I inform him, "I am the composer of this song!" Whereupon followed something unimaginable an explosion of laughter in this horrible setting!

His friend and lyric-writer of the Buchenwald-March Dr. Löhna-Beda died in Auschwitz in 1942. My father left Buchenwald after 9 months on the 21 of February 1939. On 20th of March he arrived in New York and his first gesture as a free man, he fell down to his knees and kissed American soil, the soil of the country that had restored his faith in humanity and in freedom.

Interned musicians

Dr Suzanne Snizek

Abstract

This essay first summarizes the political issues and context of the WWII British internment, and explores how that context affected music making and interned musicians during that specific internment period. Many refugee musicians were interned, including Hans Gál, Peter Gellhorn, Robert Muller-Hartmann, Wolfgang Lesser, Karl Rankl, Ferdinand Rauter, Franz Reizenstein, and Egon Wellesz. Their musical activities within the various camps are explored.

There were many talented émigré musicians interned in Britain during WW II. Some of these included young men who had not yet become household names in music but would eventually emerge as key figures in the post-war British cultural establishment. These include Hans Keller, who was interned in Huyton and would eventually become a leading music critic (Keller preferred the moniker, "anti-critic"). Other promising young performers included three eventual members of the famed Amadeus Quartet: Sigmund Nissel, Peter Schidlof and Norbert Brainin, who were encouraged by the older interned musicians to develop their talent during their time in internment. Likewise, a young pianist named Erwin Weiss was 'discovered' in the camp by a delighted Hans Gál who immediately enlisted Weiss for a collaborative camp concert. While interned in Hutchinson Camp, pianist Hans G. Furth studied

piano with Richard Glas, an older musician, and the two frequently performed together as a piano duo.

There were also many composers interned, including Hans Gál, Peter Gellhorn, Robert Muller-Hartmann, Wolfgang Lesser, Karl Rankl, Ferdinand Rauter, Franz Reizenstein and Egon Wellesz. Of these, Franz Reizenstein, Hans Gál and Peter Gellhorn are known to have continued to compose during the internment period. In September 1940, Peter Gellhorn composed a solo violin work simply titled *Two Studies*. Two months later, another short work had been completed, titled *The Cats*, written for string quartet or string orchestra (without double-bass).[61]

Reizenstein completed at least one work in internment, the *Ballet Suite for Small Orchestra*, while Gál composed two new works: a trio for flute and two violins called the *Huyton Suite,* and the music for a revue titled *What a Life!*

Context

The central question behind the British mass internment of German and Austrian "enemy aliens" during WWII is "Why was this policy undertaken in the first place?" This loaded question will probably never result in a conclusive answer, despite its important ramifications.[62] Unlike the German administered concentration camps on the Continent, however, it is generally agreed that the resulting human costs wreaked by WWII British internment were nearly always unintentional, and stemmed from neglect or apathy rather than outright malice. As historians Tony Kushner and David Cesarani have observed, the British internment of German and Austrian refugees during WWII can only be properly understood within its own particular national context. However, the historical proximity of internment camps to concentration camps tends to prompt imagined alternative possibilities (i.e., what *might* have happened, on the Continent?). This unfortunately tends to render any criticism of the British internment undignified, even unjustified.[63]

Physical and psychological conditions at the British internment camps varied widely. Some camps, such as Wharf Mills at Bury, were horrendous. The physical

61 International Suppressed Music List serve, 8 January 2014 email from Geraldine Auerbach.

62 These issues will be explored briefly in this paper, especially as they relate to selected interned musician's experiences and attitudes towards internment.

63 David Cesarani and Tony Kushner. *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain.* Routledge: New York, 1993.

condition of this particular camp prompted an experienced Quaker relief worker named William R. Hughes to comment "…this camp is certainly worse than any I have seen. I feel pretty sure that any responsible person visiting it at this time would share my conviction that it should be closed at once."[64] At the end of this same report, made in July 1940, Hughes relates a surreal anecdote:

"An interesting incident occurred when a man stopped me and said 'I saw you at Sachsenburg Camp.' This was true…Many of these men have been in German Camps. Several said to me that the physical conditions in Dachau were better than in Bury. Having seen both I agreed, but we also agreed that "*Die Leute sind ganz anders. Gott sei dank!*"[65]

This illustrates both the degree of extreme squalor in the camp at Bury, which lacked any sort of lavatories, running water, furniture, barracks (or, for that matter, an intact roof), and the key difference, overall, between the German and British camps: the intention and ideology behind them. From the very first meeting of the Internment Camps Committee, held between representatives of the Home Office and the War Office in 1939, there was an overtly stated intention to do "everything possible to alleviate the monotony of camp life and to make conditions as pleasant as possible for the internees."[66] However, Commandants had considerable discretion in their interpretation of this directive, and conditions in camps depended largely on individual sympathies or lack thereof, as will be explored below. Although conditions could be (and often were) miserable, the British camps were not equivalent to German concentration camps.

Hutchinson: The 'Best' Camp

Just as the Captain in Central Camp could make life miserable for 2000 internees, one man could make the best of a bad situation. Captain H. O. Daniel was in charge of Hutchinson Camp, which was located in the town of Douglas on the Isle of Man. Daniel, who is consistently described in first hand internee accounts as a decent man, seemed to do everything he could to assist the internees under

64 10 July 1940 unpublished Friends report by William Hughes on WWII internment conditions. Friends House Library, Box 25. London, England.

65 Ibid.

66 Minutes form the first meeting of the Internment Camps Committee held at Home Office on 20/10/39. National Archives, UK.

his charge. More cynical artists believed that the motivation behind this effort was to keep the internees happy and complacent so they could be more easily controlled. Notwithstanding potential ulterior motives, Daniel's approach did mean generally better conditions for internees under his charge. For the artists, this translated to space to create art, materials including paper and pencils, musical instruments and so on.

The task of supporting culture in the camps was coloured by one's perception of what constituted culture in the first place, and this perception is strongly shaped by class and cultural identity. As a former artist and internee Klaus Hinrichsen recalled:

"There was a music critic, a very well known elderly man, Professor Kastner… (Captain Daniels) asked him to come see him and he said, I hear you are a musicologist and you are famous in music. Could you form a band? So he said, Yes, I already have found out that there are very good violinists and if only we could have a piano and if we could have instruments we can certainly form a chamber orchestra. (But Daniels said) A chamber orchestra? What's a chamber orchestra? No, I want a brass band! (Hinrichsen observed) But of course, these were not the types who will come around with a brass band."[67]

It was at Hutchinson, which was widely considered "the best" internment camp, that young pianist Hans G. Furth was held. Furth recalled his internment period positively, as a wonderful chamber music laboratory. He studied piano, gave frequent concerts and reported that it was "like a University."[68]

Although Hutchinson is better known as a camp of visual artists, including the likes of Kurt Schwitters, Siegfried Charoux and Hellmuth Weissenborn, there was also an active musical culture. The popular pianists Maryan Ravitz (1899-1970) and Walter Landauer (1911-1983) were amongst the more famous musicians in Hutchinson. By 1940, the two had already established a successful career as the popular Ravitz and Landauer duo. Ironically enough the two men were initially placed into different camps. An internee named Dr. Fritz Hallgarten would recall a special concert given in Hutchinson by this duo:

"We had the pleasure of having Mr. Ravicz (sic) in our camp who had been

67 Klaus E. Hinrichsen BBC interview, Imperial War Museum (London, UK) Department of Sound records.

68 Hans G. Furth video memoir, Furth family private collection.

brought by the Prince of Wales, later King Edward III, from Vienna. And on account of the activity of our Commander (Daniel) they were brought into our camp and we had an open air concert for which, as a matter of fact, they had hired two small pianos to bring into the camp so they could give a real first class concert."[69]

Another internee recalled a podium that was specially built for this Ravitz and Landauer concert:

"There were plenty of pianos in the boarding houses of Hutchinson Camp but none were good enough for Ravitz and Landauer. Everybody enjoyed it, as a matter of fact the Commander had invited a lot of VIP people of the Isle of Man to hear these important, and at the time, already famous concert pianists in the Hutchinson Camp."[70]

This anecdote also alludes to Daniel's pride in relation to 'his' talented internees. Some internees felt that Daniels was intensely competitive when it came to the cultural life within the camp: he wanted his camp to be recognized as the 'best camp' of all.

Attitudes towards Internment

It is important to note that younger refugees often recalled their internment in more positive terms than men who were older when interned. Younger men had less to disrupt (or lose entirely), by virtue of not yet having established careers or families.

Another factor in attitude lies in how recently the internment experience has taken place. The fresher the account, the more critical the account typically is. Walter Igersheimer's account in *Blatant Injustice: The Story Of A Jewish Refugee From Nazi Germany Imprisoned In Britain And Canada During World War II* is a case in point: written immediately after the experience, the overall tone could be fairly described as indignant. By contrast, *Deemed Suspect* by Erich Koch, is fairly representative of a less heated retrospective account.

Despite many complex variables, one fact remains consistent, quite independent of the age of the internee or how recent their internment. This internment episode was, and remains, seemingly incompatible with

69 Fritz Hallgarten interview, Imperial War Museum (London, UK), Department of Sound Records.

70 Klaus Hinrichsen interview, Imperial War Museum (London, UK) Department of Sound Records, accession number 003967/06.

the British mythologizing of this time period coinciding with the 'Blitz.'[71] For these and many other complex reasons, the discussion of British internment remains relatively less explored than many other WWII related subjects. However, this is not because the episode is trivial: indeed, the impact of this policy was often felt long after surviving internees were finally released.

Interpreting the Internment

A number of musicians, such as Rankl, Wellesz and Gál, viewed their internment as arguably the worst periods of their lives[72]. Given the sort of sustained injustices this population typically endured, this critical perspective is sobering. It is factually correct to observe, as Michael Haas does in his 2013 book *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* that 'internment was standard in times of war and carried out by all sides, often with tragic consequences.[73] However, assessing the impact of historical episodes of internment policy requires that we attempt to address the particular aspects of each internment on a case by case basis. This particular internment was an especially difficult pill to swallow. There are complex yet identifiable reasons for this, and they are wrapped up in the particular circumstances of this internment.

At the very least, these 'C cases' (individuals who had been screened by tribunals in 1939 by the British authorities and found to be harmless; the vast majority were Jewish refugees) should never have been interned in the first place. That this decision was nevertheless made, at a high cost of wasted labour and time, prompted many contemporary observers to suspect xenophobia, and/or antisemitism, or even pro-fascist sympathies within the British establishment, to be underlying factors in the decision to mass intern.[74] Unfortunately, given the absence of crucial information (much documentation was later lost or destroyed accidentally) this key issue is impossible to ascertain. In any case, this possibility was not lost on Hans Gál who was painfully aware of

71 Agnus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Pimlico, 1991).

72 Paul Conway's 12 July 1999 interview of Mrs. Kristine Rankl (Karl Rankl's widow) located at http://www.musicweb-international.com/rankl/ (accessed 7 March 2014); Caroline Cepin Benser's Egon Wellesz (1885-1974): *Chronicles of a Twentieth Century Musician* (New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 1985; and Eva Fox- Gál comments in April 2008 Roundtable discussion at International conference (The Impact of Nazism on the Development of Twentieth Century Music) held at the University of London.

73 Michael Haas, Forbidden Music: *The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2013.

74 For a full discussion of these issues, please refer to my doctoral thesis located at https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/24/browse?value=Snizek,+Suzanne&type=author

the campaign that had raged in sections of the British press against the Refugee community ("We have enemies in this country, that much is without doubt")[75]. He questioned, as did others, whether there might be an *actual* 'fifth column' hiding behind the internment of the *suspected* 'fifth column' of refugees.[76]

Another astute observer likewise made the following comment in a 1940 newspaper editorial:

> In the latter part of 1938 I filled up the naturalization papers for a very fine German writer. I knew all that was necessary about him. Mindful of my experiences in the Propaganda department at Crewe House, I recommended him very warmly. I said he was exactly the sort of man to whom we could turn with confidence for propaganda work in Germany. I now find that his naturalization has never been completed, no use is being made of him, and he is now interned with the rest of the C.I class. I suggest that this is due to either deliberate treason or gross slovenliness and stupidity on the part of some official who ought to be traced and who could be traced. I do not expect anything will be done in this matter. I merely note it as a particularly glaring instance of the crippling of our propaganda by the deliberate or unconscious allies of the enemy in official positions here.
>
> Sincerely yours,
>
> H. G Wells[77]

Camp (dis)organisation

Camp statistical details are not possible to confidently reconstruct (record keeping was understandably not a British priority at this time of potential German invasion). As camps were closed, the remaining internees were transferred. Populations were extremely transient, and internees typically found themselves in several camps before they were finally released. Camp records were notoriously imprecise.[77] According to interned composer Hans Gál, "the authorities are only interested

75 Hans Gál, *Musik hinter Stacheldraht: Tagebuchblatter aus dem Sommer 1940*, hearausgegeben von Eva Fox-Gál und Richard Dove (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 7.

76 Ibid.

77 In fact, by early July 1940, the internees at Central Camp themselves, desperate for some sense of organisation, began to work out a simple but effective index card system, with one box listing current internees and their "house" numbers, and another box containing release information.

in how many total internees were in the camp and whether the addition or subtraction caused by the most recent arriving or departing transports is correct."[78] At the height of internment, there were about 25,000 individuals interned in the UK. The majority were held on the Isle of Man, a sparsely populated island located in the Irish Sea. There were four relatively "large camps" in or near the town of Douglas, on the Isle of Man: Hutchinson, Central, Palace and Onchan[79]. There were also two smaller camps in Douglas: Sefton and Granville[80], and four additional camps elsewhere on the same island: one each at Peel and Ramsey, and two camps at Rushen.[81] Widespread physical deprivations were common in these camps. Lack of access to water, poor nutrition and poor medical attention were typical, especially in the early days of the internment. Gál, for example, had his first bath in internment only after three (hot summer) months, when he was issued the doctor's note that was necessary to obtain a bath in Central. Food was often limited in these camps, and overcrowding and lack of privacy were serious health issues. Men were typically forced, from lack of space, to also share two to a bed.

Huyton Camp

An important internment camp was Huyton Camp, located on the mainland near Liverpool. This large camp was essentially a transit camp, chosen for its proximity to Liverpool's ports that led to the Isle of Man, as well as its plentiful rail connections on the mainland. Often internees were first sent to Huyton and then shipped to other more remote destinations (this was Gál's experience). The rail connections facilitated frequent internee transfers, and therefore the population was constantly shifting.

Huyton had a reputation as one of the worst places to be interned, and conditions were particularly dismal, particularly in its early days and weeks.[82] As one internee recalled:

> "The whole impression which I got from Huyton when I arrived was most depressing. The internees

78 Gál diary, 8 July 1940.

79 Connery Chappell, *Island of Barbed Wire: The Remarkable Story of World War Two Internment on the Isle of Man* (London: Robert Hale, Ltd., 1984), 44.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 By October, this camp appears to have been in the process of being dismantled, and by March 1941 was closed.

> we met looked not like human beings. They were not shaved, dirty, their suits neglected and filthy. They were pale and thin and had a hopeless look in their eyes."[83]

Identity

Any discussion of collective identity must necessarily rely on a plentiful, though chaotic and disorganised, anecdotal history. A substantial number of German and Austrian internees appear to have been established professionals and academics, and many were thoroughly assimilated middle-class German and Austrian Jews. For many of these 'assimilated' Jewish refugees, religious observance was often relegated to lesser (or non-existent) importance.

In addition to this demographic, there was a sizeable minority of internees who had been long-time residents of London's east side. These internees were typically observant (often Orthodox) and less affluent; many had come to Britain as a result of earlier Eastern pogroms. It is highly questionable that any of these individuals could seriously be considered potential allies of Hitler or internal security risks, which again raises the question: what was really motivating this internment?

Arrests

Hans G. Furth was, in the spring of 1940, a promising young refugee pianist from Vienna.[84] His account of his arrest is fairly typical in its seeming randomness.

> "It wasn't done very decisively. If you got out of your house by 7 o'clock in the morning, you were safe they would come between 7 and 8 in the morning, you knew this. So my piano teacher said, "Come to me and have breakfast," so I left every morning at half past 6 and had breakfast there. I could have avoided it. But after some time, I got tired, and I thought, "well, why shouldn't they look after me?" [...] And there was one day a note, "Will you please

83 Testimony of "Dr. M. T.," as recounted by William Ravenscroft Hughes, GEC report, 7 September 1940, Friends House Library unpublished archives (London, UK), Box 25.

84 Furth was interned in Hutchinson, a camp on the Isle Of Man. Hans Furth, VHS tape, recorded 31 December 1990. Furth family collection, generously provided by children of Hans Furth. Special thanks to Peter Furth and David Walker for providing access to this videotape.

stay in, so we can get you?" [He laughs] They were polite. So I stayed in, and they got me."[85]

Many refugees simply stayed out during the day, as it soon became obvious that those responsible for making the arrests worked regular office hours. In addition, the authorities did not seem particularly motivated to locate particular individuals, rather there seemed to be an effort to merely reach a quota. Therefore, if an internee were not at home during the day, he (or she) could often avoid being arrested. This reality often led to very crowded corner cafes and public libraries, as many refugees flocked to safe places during the day and returned home in the evenings.

Central Camp

'Central Promenade Camp,' or 'Central Camp' as it was also known, was comprised of thirty-four extremely overcrowded boarding houses that held approximately two thousand internees. This is where many of the musicians were interned.

Hughes, the aforementioned relief worker, reports that nearly all the internees at this camp were "friendly aliens of Class C ranging from boy scouts of 16 to elderly Oxford professors and well known men such as Rudolf Olden."[86]

The camp was located on a thin strip of beachfront property, a location that led to overcrowding. To make matters worse, the administration was chronically disorganized, sometimes hostile, and largely apathetic.[87] This includes the Camp Captain of Central Camp who was less than sympathetic and at times, less than sober, according to Hans Gál's internment diary account. As Gál bitterly observes, this official suddenly confiscated internee's musical instruments, and then for good measure, snatched away an umbrella from an internee (it was raining at the time).

All attempts the internees initially made to establish a cultural life were thwarted by British officials, who devised seemingly endless lists of forbidden activities and objects: no meetings of more than 10

85 Ibid.

86 Friends House Library unpublished document, box 25, London UK.

87 William Ravenscroft Hughes, report dated 2 October 1940, Friends House Library unpublished archives (London, UK).

internees were allowed, no pencils, no paper, no chalk, no classes.[88] Fortunately, these restrictions eventually relaxed over time.

Psychological Stressors

Internees typically regarded the psychological aspects of this internment as most difficult. These aspects included an inherent lack of agency, the sheer injustice of mass internment and the lack of British comprehension of the Continental political reality. In retrospect, the internment of Jewish refugees seems bizarre and obviously wrongheaded, but in the spring of 1940 there appeared to be little contextual understanding of this conflict amongst the general public and the average British soldier. That this was actually a war of opposing ideologies, and not a traditional war fought by clearly demarcated nation state opponents, was not commonly understood. As one observer commented:

> "Presumably men and women with knowledge (or more accurate understanding) of Continental politics and ideologies are found to be more useful elsewhere than on the island (the Isle of Man) with the result that almost without exception the men and women in authority there have, in fact, no knowledge of Continental politics, and the effect this ignorance and misunderstanding has on the men and women under their charge, who have endured so much and so long for conscience sake, is embittering and deeply depressing."[89]

While the refugees were amongst the earliest and "best enemies" of Hitler, they were looked upon as suspect by the very country that had offered them refuge. Furthermore, forced separation from family members, often after recent and considerable insecurity, trauma and separations on the Continent, increased despair. The constant sight of barbed wire, which contributed to what was known as "barbed wire sickness," only added to that despair.[90]

88 It is possible that the reason meetings of ten people were permitted was to allow religious services: by Jewish law, ten adults are required to form a *minyan* (required for certain communal prayers).

89 M. Corbett Ashby. Friends 6 March 1941 report on visit to the Isle of Man internment camps. Friends House library, box 25.

90 Panikos Panayi, "Prisoners of Britain: German Civilian, Military and Naval Internees during the First World War," in *'Totally Un-English?,' Britain's Internment of 'Enemy Aliens' in Two World Wars*, ed. Richard Dove (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 37.

The illogic of and waste of war resources caused by mass internment was exasperating to many internees. Their relative security threat levels had all been assessed by nation wide tribunals in 1939, so why, after the considerable expense and effort, was that assessment disregarded? Self-avowed Nazis were not separated from refugees in these camps, despite the 1939 tribunal classifications. In fact, there were between 5 and 15 percent Nazis, and about 150 Nazi concentration camp survivors, in Central Camp[91]. One of these survivors was the cellist and lawyer, Fritz Ball. According to Gál, Ball was:

> "A distinguished law officer and must have been an excellent cellist. His right hand became almost useless in a German concentration camp through frost bite, the fingers are crooked and incapable of gripping anything. It is a mystery how he can use the bow, but he manages it, although he is restricted and technical things can easily go wrong."

Despite this injury, Ball had relearned how to play his cello after his release from Sachsenhausen.[92]

Taken together, the oppressing psychological conditions were a recipe for catastrophe. Gerald M. Friedman's internment diary demonstrates the desperate psychological climate. He bluntly writes, "Friday 5 July 1940. Two people hung themselves, one on Wednesday and then one today. Very bad lavatories."[93] Three days later he writes, "One boy who was supposed to be sent overseas poisoned himself today, but he did not die. On Sunday one person cut his throat. Nobody takes any notice of that."[94]

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91 Hansard report, House of Lords Debate, 6 August 1940, vol. 117 col. 123, http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1940/aug/06/internment-of-aliens (accessed 9 December 2013).

92 Unpublished memoir, "Dreimal interniert 1933 1948 in Deutschland und England" which was given to Ball's granddaughter Ms. Sandra Ball in 2009, along with the cello that Ball played in Central. After internment Dr. Fritz Ball and his family immigrated to the United States. Special thanks to Ms. Ball for allowing access to quotes from that memoir, and for all of her assistance.

93 Gerald M. Friedman, "'You Bloody Alien!' Part One: A Diary of a German Jewish Survivor in British Custody in World War II," 5 July 1940 diary entry. http://www.geraldfriedman.com/ (accessed 2 August 2010), hereafter identified as "Friedman diary."

94 Ibid. Both depression and suicide were serious problems in all of these internment camps, including the women's camps, such as Port Erin on the Isle of Man. The first suicide case of 1941 in Port Erin was a 48-year old female German internee who took her own life. See Chappell, *Island of Barbed Wire*, 86.

Effect of Music

Music, however, seemed to improve mental resilience for interned audience members and performers alike. Considering the very real risks posed by depression, it is not an overstatement to claim that music may have saved lives.

The aforementioned cellist Fritz Ball describes how playing music could be deeply rejuvenating:

> "In the camp I met a man, with whom I had played chamber music for many years in Berlin. He was, through this internment and other blows of fate, so broken that he had not played a note in years. I asked him if he would play with me but he refused, until the evening of the first concert, when all the inmates were in the theatre and the camp was empty, that he finally gave in to my prodding. And from that day we played together daily, and he was my best accompanist. I could see that the music was freeing him from his depression."[95]

Commenting on the significance of the concerts to the internee audience, Gál recounted that he and a young talented violinist (identified only by the last name of "Kauffman") played their House Concert programme four times:

> "And we would not lack an audience if we did it twice as often. But the artists would go on strike and I would not make an exception in this case. The people are starved of music. When I play Bach or Beethoven there is a reverence such as I have rarely experienced in music making."[96]

British internment often intensified a natural inclination for musical mentoring. Being torn from families and educational settings left many young internee musicians isolated and emotionally adrift, while older musicians, having recently lost their own families and positions of professional esteem, naturally were often

95 Fritz Ball, "Dreimal interniert" (op. cit.). The original German text reads as follows: "Ich traf im Lager einen Herren, mit dem ich früher vor vielen Jahren in Berlin einige Male Kammermusik gespielt hatte. Er war damals ein ausgezeichneter Pianist. Aber er war durch seine Internierung und andere Schicksalsschläge so gebrochen, dass er seit Jahren keine Note mehr angerührt hätte. Ich bat ihm immer wieder mit mir zu spielen, aber er war nicht dazu zu bewegen, bis am Abend des ersten Konzertes, als fast alle Insassen im Theater waren und das Lager fast leer war, er endlich mein Drängen nachgab. Und von da an spielten wir täglich zusammen, und er wurde mein bester Begleiter. Ich konnte sehen, wie die Musik ihn aus seiner Depression befreite." This quote translated by Alexander Fisher.

96 Gál diary, 27 June 1940.

drawn towards mentoring young musicians. These mentoring relationships were commonplace and not surprisingly seem to have had a positive psychological effect on both the mentor and mentored.

Huyton Suite

Gál's *Huyton Suite* trio was written in Huyton Camp, and later successfully premiered in Central Camp. Unlike the *What a Life!* revue, which included amateurs in its production, the *Huyton Suite* was intended for technically skilled players. Its polyphonic nature, rhythmiccomplexity and technical requirements make evident the musical ability and commitment of all three premiere performers. Amongst these was flutist Nicolo Draber, who premiered both this trio and the *What a Life!* Revue. Gál thought very highly of Draber's playing, dubbing him "our excellent flutist."

Nicolo Draber, credit photo: Christopher Draber

Huyton Suite is atypically scored for two violins and a flute instruments chosen because they were available in the camp. Both the neurotic activities of the Camp Captain and the camp "roll call" are reflected in the music.

Although the overall tenor of the work is cheerful, the third movement is deeply melancholic. The haunting primary theme, so reminiscent of a Jewish folk song in its simplicity and g harmonic minor key, seems to capture the deep loss that these refugees had so recently experienced.

It has sometimes been observed that the art produced within internment is not of the same artistic quality or musical importance as works produced outside of internment. This is akin to noticing that most meals on a lifeboat are not quite as good, or as elaborate, as those at a four star restaurant. Although it might be factually true in many instances, it is not very meaningful. It would be more useful to take into account the artist's own estimation of the particular work, and also consider its reception, particularly within internment. There is often cultural worth in addition to the notes on the page.

Gál was quite pleased with the Huyton Suite trio (and, in this flutist-author's estimation, quite deservedly so). Although it is admittedly a 'small' chamber work, both in terms of duration and instrumentation, and totally unlike large scale

works such as his *Cantata Profundis*, this trio is beautifully crafted, aesthetically effective and musically significant when compared to any other trio in the flutist's repertoire.

In addition, Gál felt a special affinity for the trio form itself. After internment, he wrote about this preference, saying:

> "Chamber music, as the most intimate expression, is the realm to which the musician always returns, in order to retain the connection with its essence. In a duo, a trio or quartet, independent individuals speak out together, cooperatively. The musical symbol for this process is Polyphony: the most complete, most transparent form of polyphony is for three voices, and I have therefore always had a fondness for the trio, the finest medium of polyphony […]."[97]

This attraction to the trio format is not surprising, given Gál's overall musical language: spare, direct and economical. It is understandable that Gál preferred a form that was inherently suited to his aesthetic.

Scholar Michael Haas has written that "(t)he music that Gál composed in camps at Huyton (outside Liverpool) and Douglas (Isle of Man) does not reflect his mood of desperation. On the contrary, (Gál) wrote pieces to take people's minds away from the situation."[98] It is true that the music that Gál wrote while he was interned does not openly reveal his desperate mood. For a man who was deeply private and kept his emotional cards close to his chest, this is actually unsurprising. In addition, optimism is characteristic of Gál's music in general; cheerful themes and major keys persistently reassert themselves. But it is important to recognize that both *What a Life!* and the *Huyton Suite* offers more than cheerful diversion.

The revue did have a surface level function of entertainment. However, it was also a serious exploration of a serious collective condition. This is most obvious in two songs included within the revue, titled 'Ballade of the German Refugee' and the 'Ballade of Poor Jakob'. This serious quality led one audience member to report to Gál the next morning how 'he had thoroughly

97 Gál, "Vorliebe fuer das Trio" (article for a chamber music concert in Wiesbaden), 25 September 1948, Gál family private collection. Translated by the author, with thanks to Eva Fox-Gál and Tony Fox for generously providing this material.

98 Michael Haas, *Forbidden Music: the Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2013.

enjoyed himself, and then he cried half the night because it was so dreadful.'[99] Gál likewise commented that although this music provided an entertaining evening, for the creating participants, it was 'much more than that.'[100]

Gál similarly realised the Huyton Suite trio spoke to his fellow sufferers, reflecting their common experience more eloquently than mere words could.[101] For these reasons, it seems unlikely this music was intended simply as a distraction from their troubles, nor does it seem to have been necessarily received that way by the internees themselves.

House Concerts and the Music Committee in Central Camp

The *Huyton Suite* trio concerts were just one series of many so-called 'House Concerts.' These intimate concerts had historically been a feature of Germanic musical culture and naturally became a standard musical feature in these camps. Rehearsals were normally held in the mornings, with concerts in the afternoons or evenings. The rooms could usually hold only about fifty people, so tickets were made to ensure seating and programmes were repeated to meet demand.

Ball's diary reveals Gál's characteristic determination to continue making music, despite the circumstances. Ball routinely refers to Gál as simply 'the composer' or 'the famous composer:' he seems rather in awe of his stature, writing:

> "My cello arrives in its case on the 15th of July, but I still have no sheet music. The composer asked me to play with him, and we began to make music together, some pieces from the cello literature and of chamber music, and the next day the Beethoven Sonata and other small pieces, letting me have no rest and announcing an evening concert for us. I ask if I could please have some time to practice, but he waves this off, he thought not, as we did not know how long we would be here together before being transported out [of the camp]..."[102]

99 Gál diary, 3 September 1940.

100 Gál diary, 22 September 1940.

101 Gál diary, 1 August 1940.

102 Ball, "Dreimal interniert." The original text is as follows: "Am 15. Juli erhalte ich mein Cello im Kasten zugesandt, aber ich habe noch keine Noten. Sofort drängt der Komponist mich mit ihm zu spielen, und wir intonieren von begeisterten Zuhörern umgeben, viele Motive aus der Celloliteratur und der Kammermusik, und als ich am nächsten Tage die Beethoven Sonaten und andere Kleinigkeiten erhalte, lässt er mir keine Ruhe und annonciert einen Abend

A musical fragment, which served as a memento of another *Hausmusik* event, was given as a gift to a British officer. The music is lifted from the opening bars of the last movement (titled 'Jig') from Reizenstein's *Partita for flute and piano*, and in the composer's hand. This fragment is currently housed in the Manx Heritage Museum in Douglas on the Isle of Man. This contrapuntal flashy piece was used as an encore selection in a house concert in October 1940, and was probably performed by either Nicolo Draber or Walter Bergmann on flute, accompanied by the composer on piano.

The "Central Music Committee," comprised of several senior professional musicians, was responsible for determining programming of the House Concerts in Central.[103] In September 1940, the members of this committee were composer Hans Gål, musicologist Otto Erich Deutsch (the creator of the famous 'D' cataloguing system for Schubert's works) and music editor and critic Hermann Ulrich. The German cellist Fritz Ball expresses some bitterness about this Committee:

> "A musical committee is formed, which no one has chosen, composed, of course, of only Viennese musicians. The committee determines who can take part in the official concerts and who is allowed to use the pianos. I can only use the piano when the rest are taking their walks."[104]

Two additional Central Camp musician-internees who helped with these House Concerts, but did not serve on the Music Committee itself, were Erwin Stein (1885 1958) and Alfred Rosenzweig (1897 1948). Stein, a former student of Arnold Schoenberg, had been a music editor with Universal Edition in Vienna.[105]

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für uns. Ich bitte ihn mir etwas Zeit zu gewähren, dass ich mich erst einspielen kann. Er winkt aber ab, er weiss nicht, wie lange wir hier bleiben, wann man auch uns abtransportieren wird. So bringen wir unser erstes Konzert. Im Lager sind nur drei Klaviersonaten von Beethoven und drei Stücke aus dem wohltemperierten Klavier von Bach, Beethoven's A-Dur sonate, das Kol Nidrei von Bruch und zwei Schubert Lieder. Der Raum ist bis zum letzten Platz gefüllt. Billets wurden zu den Konzerten ausgegeben, und wir müssen den Abend dreimal wiederholen. Beim letzten Abend ist es so voll in dem Raum, dass ich Mühe habe in den Raum zu gelangen und auszustreichen." Translated by author.

103 The members of the Committee, at least in the fall of 1940, were Otto Erich Deutsch, Hans Gál, and Dr. Hermann Ulrich. Ulrich (1888 1982) was trained in both law and music, and worked as a lawyer, writer, music editor and music critic. He immigrated to Britain in 1939 but returned to Austria in 1946. It is unclear how long this music committee remained intact after Gál's release.

104 Ibid. The original text is as follows: "Es bildet sich ein Musikkommittee, das niemand gewählt hat, und dieses natürlich nu aus wienern bestehende committee regelt jetzt das öffentliche Musikleben im Lager, indem es vor allen Dingen eigenmächtig entschied, wer an den Öffentlichen Konzerten teil zunehmen habe, und wer an die Berechtigung besitze die Klaviere zu benutzen. Der Komponist, der auch im Committee Mitglied war, erkrankte leider bald. So übten die beiden anderen Mitglieder unbeschrankte Macht aus."

105 Stein immigrated to London in 1938, where he resumed working in the music editing and publishing business. At the time of his arrest, he was an editor at Boosey and Hawkes in London. Stein would eventually become "the midwife to (the) entire body of works" by composer Benjamin Britten. See Michael Haas, "The Musical Exiles from Nazi Europe in Great Britain," *Brio: International Association of Music Libraries* 41, no. 2 (2004): 44 57.

Rosenzweig, musicologist and former music critic for *Der Wiener Tag*, had studied at both the Universities of Budapest and Vienna; apparently he had once been a former Gál student, possibly a private composition pupil.[106]

The Central Camp Orchestra

By November there had been a chamber orchestra formed in Central. Gál had been released by the end of September. Reizenstein and Bergmann seem to have stepped forward as leaders in Central Camp's musical life, as suggested by extant Camp concert programmes and Bergmann's internment diary.[107]

Bergmann would eventually become both a music editor at Schott in London, and a leading figure in Britain's post-war early music movement. Bergmann's interest in Baroque music is clearly reflected in his internment concerts.

The second page of the 8 December programme also reveals this was the premiere of Reizenstein's *Ballet Suite for Chamber Orchestra*, which had been specially scored by the composer for the available players in the camp. Intended for performance by the Arts Theatre of London, the finale movement was finished in internment.

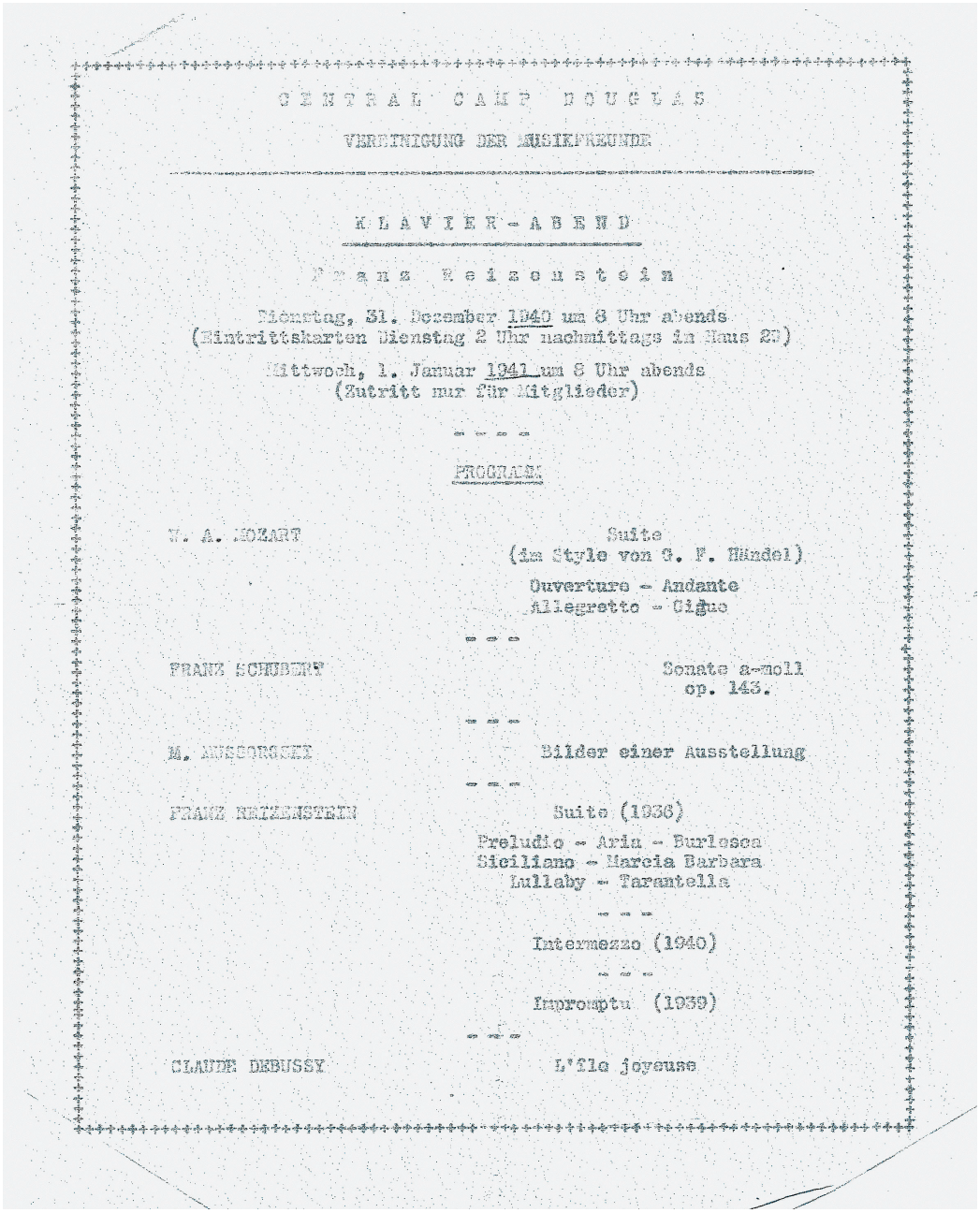
Another concert series, marking Christmas Day and Boxing Day of 1940, also demonstrates Bergmann's prominence and versatility. The final piece in this series was the second movement of the popular *Concerto for Two Violins* by Johann Sebastian Bach, which featured a then eighteen-year old named Sigmund Nissel (1922 2008), who would later study with Max Rostal and become a member of the famed Amadeus Quartet. Of young Nissel, Bergmann correctly predicted he "would make a fine violinist one day."[108]

Reizenstein's virtuosic piano playing is evident in several ambitious solo recitals. Also evident is his wry sense of humour, which comes across in his choice for his last work in his very last internment concert: *L'isle Joyeuse* by Debussy.

106 Gál diary, 11 July 1940. Rosenzweig would later produce a comprehensive monograph on Mahler, which would only see posthumous publication in June 2007 in a translated and edited form: see Alfred Mathis-Rosenzweig, *Gustav Mahler: New Insights into his Life and Work*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007).

107 Central Camp orchestra programmes dating from 1940-41, Reizenstein unpublished family papers. For profile of Bergmann's internment period, see Anne Martin, *Musician for a While: A Biography of Walter Bergmann* (West Yorkshire: Peacock Press, 2002), 42-45.

108 Martin, *Musician for a While*, 45.



C E N T R A L C A M P D O U G L A S

VEREINIGUNG DER MUSIKFREUNDE

K L A V I E R - A B E N D

F r a n z R e i z e n s t e i n

Dienstag, 31. Dezember 1940 um 8 Uhr abends
(Eintrittskarten Dienstag 2 Uhr nachmittags in Haus 23)

Mittwoch, 1. Januar 1941 um 8 Uhr abends
(Zutritt nur für Mitglieder)

PROGRAMM

W. A. MOZART — Suite (im Style von G. F. Händel)
Ouverture - Andante
Allegretto - Gigue

FRANZ SCHUBERT — Sonate a-moll op. 143.

M. MUSSORGSKI — Bilder einer Ausstellung

FRANZ REITZENSTEIN — Suite (1936)
Preludio - Aria - Burlesca
Siciliano - Marcia Barbara
Lullaby - Tarantella

Intermezzo (1940)

Impromptu (1939)

CLAUDE DEBUSSY — L'Ile joyeuse

Programm of one of Reizenstein's concerts in Central Camp.

The Politics and Mechanisms of Release

Internees were released via government documents known as "White Papers." There were three formal White Papers issued in the same year that dealt with releases: the first in July, the second in August, and the third in October 1940.[109]

Many musicians were finally released with the last of these.[110] Vaughan Williams was very active as a refugee advocate and served as the head of the musician's release committee. On 6 December 1940 Vaughn Williams wrote to the camp administration regarding his former pupil, Reizenstein.[111]

Reizenstein's reluctance in joining the Pioneer Corps (a civilian volunteer defense organization), Vaughan Williams writes, stems from a "reason with which I entirely sympathise." Vaughan Williams explains:

> "[Reizenstein] is a first rate pianist. If he undertakes hard manual labour he will almost certainly ruin his hands for playing, and on this his livelihood depends. Would it not be possible to reserve him for musical or clerical work for which he would be admirably fitted?"[112]

Only two days later, Vaughan Williams tactfully raises the issue of enlistment with the camp administration.[113]

> "I believe that enlistment is voluntary but Mr. Reizenstein is under the impression that his chances of naturalization will be impaired if he does not join the Corps. *I feel sure that he is mistaken in this and that no such pressure will be put on him* [emphasis mine]."[114]

Interestingly, Gerald Friedman's internment diary sheds light on Reizenstein's "mistaken" impression. Friedman was a teenager also interned in Central Camp;

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109 In November 1941 the release categories were expanded even further without issuing a formal White Paper. Stent, 208-211.

110 Stent, *A BeSpattered Page?*, 211.

111 This letter lacks a year, but it is almost certainly from 1940. Reizenstein family private collection.

112 Vaughan Williams to camp administrator (very likely Captain Davidson, though it is only addressed "Dear Sir"), 6 December 1940, Reizenstein family private collection.

113 In his 8 December letter, Vaughan Williams writes again, this time a very short letter addressed to Reizenstein himself, merely stating "I have written a letter to Capt. Davidson saying that you will ask for an appointment when you go to see him take the enclosed letter with you." It seems likely that the letter he refers to is the letter dated 6 December. It seems nearly identical, being written with what appears to be the same pen, and in the same hand.

114 Ralph Vaughan Williams to unnamed camp official, 6 December 1940, Reizenstein family private collection.

incidentally, he made the copies of the programme for the *What a Life!* revue in late September 1940. Friedman describes the speech that Captain Davidson made after the *What a Life!* revue performance. Friedman writes:

> "Captain Davidson stated among other things: You might not get British passports after the war, nor might not be allowed to remain in this country after the war is over *even though having served with the Pioneers, but your case will be reconsidered then* (emphasis mine). Every man who serves England truly and loyally will find the rest that "Poor Jacob" has been looking for and could not find.[115] […] Many people registered their names when Davidson ceased speaking."[116]

The veiled threat is obvious: if you do not serve in the Pioneer Corps, your chances of staying in Britain after the war are that much more unlikely. Sadly, there were many such examples of subtle coercion and misleading information given to the internees. In any case, a very high proportion of German-born Jews would ultimately join the British army in order to fight Fascism; some sources claim that as many as 10,000, or about one out of every seven refugees in Britain, would fight with the British armed forces during World War II.[117] Of the eight ensemble musicians involved with the *What a Life!* revue, for example, it is known that at least three (flutist Draber, clarinetist Lesser and singer Karg- Bebenburg) joined.

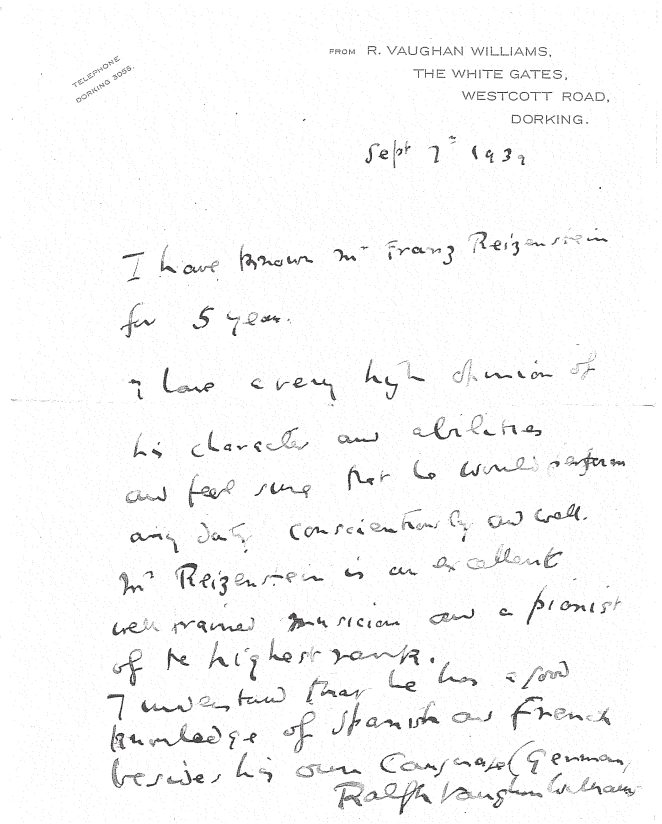
Reizenstein, had as early as August 1940, a letter written by Vaughn Williams endorsing his release.[118]
Many letters strategizing aspects of Reizenstein's release were exchanged between the two men, who before internment had worked together as pupil and teacher, respectively. Despite his powerful ally, Reizenstein was not actually freed until 3 January 1941.

115 Here Davidson makes a direct reference to the revue performance of the previous evening.

116 Friedman diary, 27 September 1940.

117 These numbers refer to the total numbers of refugees in Britain. Approximately 25, 000 refugees were interned, however the total number of refugees in Britain numbered around 70,000. National Geographic, "Churchill's German Army," http://natgeotv.com/uk/churchills-german-army/about (accessed 13 August 2010).

118 Vaughan Williams to unnamed government official, August 1940. Reizenstein family private papers.



TELEPHONE DORKING 3098.

FROM R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS,
THE WHITE GATES,
WESTCOTT ROAD,
DORKING.

Sept 7th 1939

I have known Mr Franz Reizenstein
for 5 years.
I have a very high opinion of
his character and abilities
and feel sure that he would perform
any duty conscientiously and well.
Mr Reizenstein is an excellent
well trained musician and a pianist
of the higher rank.
I understand that he has a good
knowledge of Spanish and French
besides his own language German.

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Letter of reference from Vaughn Williams

Gál was released early (late September 1940) under a medical hardship category. He had been suffering from an extreme dermatological condition. As a result, he had written all the music for the Camp Revue *What a Life!* from his camp hospital bed. As discussed above, Gál regarded his internment as "the worst period of his life."[119] However, his commitment to the production of this collaborative revue prompted him to ask to remain in the camp an additional day beyond his official release. This gesture impressed the British officers as 'very sportive.' Therefore, with official permission granted, Gál gave his final performance in internment: the last performance of the popular Camp revue, *What a Life!*.

119 Eva Fox-Gál (daughter of composer), personal statement in roundtable discussion, The Impact of Nazism on the Development of Twentieth Century Music, conference at the University of London, April 2008.

Musical Activity of Gulag Prisoners from the 1920s to 1950s

Dr Inna Klause

Abstract

The musical activity of Gulag prisoners from the 1920s to 1950s, including many who were wrongly convicted, can generally be divided into two categories: music making which was officially organized, and that which was independent. Official music making was built on the idea of re-educating prisoners, which the camp's head office in Moscow professedly wanted to realize in the Gulag. According to this ideology, musical practice belonged to a set of measures that were realized in the context of the so-called work of 'cultural education'. There were music ensembles, orchestras, choirs and even theatrical groups who performed operas or operettas in many camps. The independent music making of the prisoners consisted mainly of singing, since it was difficult to obtain or maintain an instrument under the living conditions in the Gulag. There were arrested composers, several of which also composed in the Gulag, leaving testaments to human strength under inhumane living conditions.

The musical activity of Gulag prisoners can be demonstrated in both official and unofficial contexts, which will be presented in more detail in the following. In the first part, examples of general developments will

be primarily shown at the camp Sevvostlag, which extended over the Kolïma in extreme eastern Russia, and had an administrative centre in the city of Magadan at the Sea of Okhotsk. Sevvostlag (*Severo-vostochnïy ispravitel'no-trudovoy lager'* Northeastern Corrective Labour Camp) was established in 1932.[120] It provided labour for the trust *Dal'stroy*, which was entrusted with developing the Kolïma and mining the mineral deposits (mostly gold) occurring there. According to official statistics, 809,601 people were imprisoned in Sevvostlag from 1932 to 1953; of that number, 119,647 died there.[121]

I.

Before describing the official music activities, I wish to emphasise that their existence should not be abused in order to whitewash the daily life in the Gulag. The prisoners taking part in it constituted a small percentage of all inmates, and lived in a state of constant uncertainty, since they could be removed from their position and reassigned to hard manual labour at any time. According to statistics of the camp's central administration, only between 1 and 5 percent of prisoners actively participated in the cultural work in the Gulag.[122]

In the first years after the Soviet state was founded, those responsible for its criminal policy already advocated re-educating the prisoners as a goal of their captivity, through both physical work and so-called cultural education in the camps. At first, cultural education was controlled by "Educational Services" (UVCh *uchebno-vospitatel'naya chast'*), which were to be set up in each camp. These were later replaced by "Cultural Education Services" (KVCh *kul'turno-vospitatel'naya chast'*) through the Council of People's Commissars' Corrective Labour Camps Act of 1930. It was initially subordinate to a central "Cultural Education Service" of the OGPU (*Ob"yedinyonnoye Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoye Upravleniye* – Unified State Political administration), and as of 1934 to the department for cultural education of the camp administration centre GULAG (*Glavnoye upravleniye ispravitel'no-trudovïkh lagerey i koloniy* Headquarters of the Labour Camps and Colonies).[123]

120 Kokurin A, Morukov Yu, editors. Stalinskiye stroyki GULAGa. 1930 1953, Moskva: Mezhdunarodnïy Fond "Demokratiya"; 2005:422 3.

121 Ibid., p. 537.

122 This was shown by the investigations of the author during research for her dissertation.

123 The term "GULAG", in capital letters, stands for the camp headquarters in both the following and in the documents of the authority to which it refers; the term "The Gulag" means the entire Soviet camp system.

These institutions, which were responsible for implementing official cultural measures, were to organise the following activities for times when the prisoners were not working: alphabetising, occupational counselling, building and operating a library, political education, publishing newspapers and wall newspapers, hygiene education, and anti-religious propaganda, as well as circles for music, literature, sports, chess, theatre etc. Comparable work, which was called "cultural enlightenment", was also performed among civilians in the Soviet Union until the decay of that state and therefore it was nothing typical for the labour camps.

My closely observations of the camp administration centre's internal instructions and the internal reports from individual camps, primarily from Sevvostlag, have shown that cultural education, and hence musical life, was always subordinate to the working process, which is not surprising. Cultural work was to contribute primarily to increase prisoner productivity, and secondarily to their discipline, and was instrumentalised toward these ends.

The people in the camps responsible for the cultural work, who were called educators, were badly paid compared with other employees in the Gulag. This explains the lack of educators that the Gulag experienced during its entire existence. Since too few civilians could be recruited for this work, prisoners had to be used. The camps also had a constantly inadequate supply of musical instruments and performance material.

Besides music groups and choirs, whose members usually rehearsed after gruelling work with the general prisoners, larger camps typically contained so-called culture or agitation brigades, which were formed from members of music and theatre groups, such as the 1942 culture brigade from a department of Sevvostlag shown in figure 1. Camp inmates in such brigades were exempt from other work, had to prepare concerts and travel to different camps. In Magadan, there was a Central Culture Brigade that was re-organised into the MÈT (*Magadansky èstradnïy teatr*), the Magadan Revue Theatre, in 1948, and in which the famous jazz trumpeter Eddie Rosner, who spent seven years of his life in the Gulag, played from 1952 to 1954.[124] The Revue Theatre, comprised of only prisoners, performed for both prisoners and civilians (figure 2).

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124 Kozlov A. Teatr na severnoy zemle, Magadan: Magadanskaya oblastnaya universal'naya nauchnaya biblioteka im. A. S. Pushkina; 1992:88. Eddie Rosner (1910 1976) jazz trumpeter, arrested in November, 1946, convicted by the Special Board of the MGB because of "treason" to 10 years in a camp, 7 years and 8 months in detention.

Figure 1. Culture brigade from the department YuGPU (Yuglag) of Sevvostlag, Settlement Orotukan, September 1942.

Figure 2. A performance by the MÈT (*Magadansky èstradniy teatr* Magadan Revue Theater) in 1948 49.

Furthermore, artistically active prisoners in Magadan were employed at the urban Gorky Theatre (figure 3), where they worked alongside civilians. This theatre had a symphony orchestra, as well as other musical offerings. Musical theatres in which camp inmates performed (and for which I suggest the term camp theatres) existed in many places besides Magadan. Examples include

the Solovetsky Islands, Medvezh'yegorsk, Dmitrov, Vorkuta, Ukhta, Dolinka, Noril'sk, Pot'ma, Pechora, Inta and Abez'. Many prisoners taking part in the camp theatres had been active at renowned music institutions before their arrests, such as the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, where at least eighteen singers and instrumental musicians were arrested during the Great Terror of 1937–38, including opera soloists.[125]

Figure 3. Gorky Theater in Magadan in the year 2006; prisoners from Sevvostlag were involved in its construction, completed in 1941.

I could detect a degree of pretension and fraud in the Gulag's musical activities. For example, in order to give the impression of successfully re-educating "opportunity" criminals, a number of songs awarded in the composition competition in Dmitlag in 1936 were ascribed to prisoners without professional musical training, although they were actually written by the imprisoned composers Sergey Protopopov[126] and Aleksandr Rozanov.[127]

The prisoners' views on using music for blatantly exploitive purposes, such as during the roll call, has been mostly reported as negative. Such uses of music infuriated them, and were seen as incongruent with the camp's everyday life. This did not result in an elevation of the work morale and compliance with commands, but disapprobation, grief and rage. A lyric text written by Yelena Vladimirova in Sevvostlag between 1945 and 1952 can be quoted as an example:

125 RGALI (Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennïy arkhiv literaturï i iskusstva – Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts): F. 648 (GABT), op. 8, ed. 53, l. 1–2.

126 Sergey Protopopov (1893–1954) – composer, arrested on 4 March 1934 in Moscow, condemned by a Special Board of the OGPU to 3 years in a camp, 2 years and 3 months in detention.

127 Aleksandr Rozanov (1910–1994) – composer, pianist, musicologist, arrested in 1933 in Leningrad, sentenced to 5 years in a camp, 4.5 years in detention.

Вокруг стояла тишина –
та, что пристала только смерти,
полярным льдам, провалам сна
и горю. Даже не заметив,
как тихо тронулся развод,
Матвей, в раздумье погруженный,
шагнул со всеми из ворот
и обернулся, пораженный.
Почти немыслимая здесь,
фальшиво, дико, сухо, резко,
как жесть, гремящая о жесть,
звучала музыка оркестра.
[...]
Оркестр старался, как умел,
жестоким холодом затравлен,
и барабан его гремел,
и сухо щелкали литавры.
Над жалким скопищем людей,
желавших отдыха и хлеба,
в циничной наглости своей
бравурный марш вздымался к небу.
[...]
Ни в ком ответа не родив,
он симулировал свободу,
отвергнут мертвою природой
и полумертвыми людьми...[128]

Around us it was quiet,
as after death,
in the pack ice, in the gaps of the dream
or in misfortune. Without noticing,
as the convoy slowly began to move,
Matvey walked thoughtfully
through the gate with everyone
and looked around astonished.
Almost inconceivable in this place,
fake, wild, garish, barren,
like sheet metal banging together,
an orchestra rang out there.
[…]
The orchestra did the best they could,
exhausted by the cruel cold,
and its drum boomed,
and the tympani clattered dryly.
Above the miserable crowd,
which longed for rest and bread,
a snappy march rose in
cynical insolence up to the sky.
[…]
It could not move anyone to compassion,
simulated freedom,
but was rejected by the dead nature
and half-dead men…

In contrast, mostly positive opinions have been reported concerning concerts given as part of cultural education. These took place in the evening, and were not connected with the working process in an obvious way.

According to the prisoners' own accounts, these concerts, operettas and opera performances in the camp gave the listeners an outlet from the camp's daily life, a break, and a cause for joy. Their memories reveal that during these performances they felt like free citizens indeed even those of another, free society and could become aware of their human

128 * RGALI: F. 1702 (Glavnaya redaktsiya zhurnala "Noviy mir"), op. 9, ed. 89, l. 28 9.

dignity, if only for a moment. Music could help the inmates to overcome the darkness and despair of camp existence. It provided a spark of hope.

The camps' head office continually urged camp leaders and employees to initiate and promote musical activities, since the absence of cultural measures in a camp would draw disciplinary warnings. However, the camp leaders were also motivated by more selfish reasons. Theatres were status symbols of which they could boast before their colleagues. The camp leaders could celebrate themselves through the concerts of the prisoners, thereby emphasising their position of power. Moreover, music functioned as an outlet for them as well, helping them escape the camps' daily monotony as well as the sadness pervading their remote locations, with their often inhospitable climates and poor infrastructure. Former prisoners report how the guards "unrestrainedly" applauded prisoners, whom they were prepared to kill during the day. Besides serving as distractions, concerts also offered an opportunity to experience suppressed emotions, such as compassion or mourning.

Regarding Sevvostlag, I could determine in my dissertation work that most of the cultural institutions, these exceptional camp areas, existed in the parts of the camp which accommodated the administration, and not the majority of the heavily toiling prisoners. For these inmates, event venues were lacking up until Sevvostlag was dissolved. I spoke with several former Sevvostlag prisoners who did not see one cultural event during their entire detention, even if statistically, for example, each Sevvostlag prisoner was supposed to have attended five or six concerts in 1943.[129] Apart from the camp personnel, those who profited the most from cultural events were the prisoners who had to work within the zone, and not perform hard labour in mines, in construction or as lumberjacks.

The significance of the officially prescribed music ensembles for the survival of those actively taking part in them, and as a refuge for some of the imprisoned professional musicians, cannot be overestimated. In many camps, they enjoyed such advantages as mitigation in the working process,[130] better accommodation and meals, civilian clothes, not being forced to shave their bodies, a certain freedom of movement[131] and sometimes even premature dismissal. In some camps, they were allowed to write more letters than the other inmates, or could

129 See footnote 123.

130 E.g. exemption from other work, reduction in working hours, or replacement of hard physical labour by lighter work within the zone.

131 Some had permission to leave the camp without guards.

hope for better medical treatment. During rehearsals, the prisoners found themselves once more in spaces that, unlike the barracks, were not overcrowded and constricted, in which they had room to breathe. Working alongside prisoners of the opposite sex should also not be underestimated, because such contact was strictly forbidden in the daily life of the camps.

A prisoner's transfer to a theatre or music circle often meant his rescue frequently from potentially life-threatening situations. However, such artistic work also had a psychological dimension apart from its physical significance: former prisoners testify that it had a meaningful effect, because it offered professional artists the possibility of working in their chosen profession. According to contemporary witnesses, it protected them from mental atrophy and let them forget their imprisonment for a while. Some reports indicate that artistically active prisoners felt treated as equal citizens if relatives of the camp personnel or other civilians acted together with them on the stage. There was even the chance for further development in captivity, because the inmates included experienced singers, musicians and actors from the Moscow and Leningrad theatres, from whom the less experienced prisoners could learn. Vital, autonomous acting on the stage helped the artists keep or regain their identity and humanity.

The Kolïma exhibition of the Magadan museum of local history in 2007 included a letter from Muscovite director Leonid Varpakhovsky,[132] who wrote to his family at the beginning of the 1940s from Sevvostlag. In it, he reports that although the winters could be difficult to endure, he had fared well, because the training he received at the Moscow conservatory in his youth allowed him to play in the wind orchestra. "My comfort is the music into which I immerse myself, so that I forget the world", the director wrote. Handel's Concerto No. 6[133] lay under his pillow; he could not understand how it got to the Kolïma. He often studied it in private, and all his difficulties then seemed miniscule and fleeting.

However, participation in official music activities was not always positive for the prisoners. Some of them even deliberately refused to participate, including Semyon Vilensky,[134] who served his detention in Sevvostlag, and with whom I was

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132 Leonid Varpakhovsky (1908–1976) – director, secretary of Vsevolod Meyerhold, sent to exile to Kazakhstan in April 1936, re-arrested on 18 November 1937, sentenced to 10 years in a camp for "counterrevolutionary agitation", 9.5 years in detention.

133 The source does not identify the specific concerto concerned. Judging by the date of origin Varpakhovsky indicated, it was probably either the Concerto Grosso Op. 6, No. 6, or the organ transcription of this concerto, HWV 300.

134 Semyon Vilensky (*1928) – writer, editor, arrested in 1948, convicted by the Special Board of the MGB to 10

able to conduct several interviews. These prisoners felt that theatre performances and concerts under camp conditions were inappropriate, and avoided them. The performances made them more aware of their hopeless situation, memories of their earlier life arose that were difficult to bear, and they viewed the musical activity of their fellow prisoners as a kind of servitude for supporting the system.

Neither was artistic activity a thoroughly positive experience for prisoners participating in official musical events, since it meant a painful existence between two worlds: on the one hand, the illusory world of the stage, and on the other, the brutal world of the camp. On the stage, they were allowed and expected to portray different personalities, but in their other lives they were forced to live among the mass of prisoners. Walking this tightrope proved to be too much for some of them, and is cited by contemporary witnesses (such as Semyon Vilensky) as contributing to suicides among artists in the camps. Thus, prisoners have reported two completely opposing aspects of official musical life.

On the surface, for example, musical practice in the Gulag served to deceive foreign visitors. In May 1944, the American Vice President Henry A. Wallace travelled to the Kolïma and attended an elaborate three-part concert given for him at the Magadan Theatre, in which prisoners participated. Wallace wrote about the Magadan concert in his book "Special Mission in Soviet Asia and China":

> I don't believe I have ever found so many good voices in one city without the addition of singers recruited from the outside.[135]

The Magadan Theatre troupes were sent on tours within Sevvostlag, as well as into civilian villages. This allowed the camp administration to make money from the appearances of the prisoners, with which their activity was abused in support of the repressive system.

The repertoire chosen for the Gulag concerts was varied, and did not always match the official camp authorities' preconceptions; sometimes it even included pieces that were not allowed to be performed outside the camp. For example, it has been reported that pieces by Sergey Rakhmaninov that were ostracized in free society were nevertheless programmed in the camp on the Solovetsky Islands. In the field of popular music, Foxtrots and pre-revolutionary Tangos

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years in a camp for "counterrevolutionary activities", 7 years in detention.

135 Wallace H. A. Sondermission in Sowjet-Asien und China, Zürich: Steinberg; 1947:32.

were played, which were also ostracized outside the camps. In the 1930s, pre-revolutionary sentimental songs called *romansi* were sung in concerts in the camp Belbaltlag. Examples from the 1940s and 1950s include songs by the enormously popular singer Vadim Kozin[136] (figure 4) and pieces by the already mentioned jazz trumpeter Eddie Rosner. Both musicians served their detention in Sevvostlag and continued presenting their usual repertoire there, while their records were removed from circulation outside the camp.

Figure 4. Vadim Kozin on the stage of the Magadan Theatre as a prisoner in the late 1940s.

We can only speculate why, ironically, there was more musical freedom in the Gulag than in free society, and why another musical world was allowed to develop within the totalitarian state. Reasons for this may include: 1. the insufficient training of the person in charge of censoring cultural work, who, for example, might not recognise a piece by Rakhmaninov as such; 2. their personal preferences for certain ostracized music; 3. their need for music as pure entertainment, regardless of its origin, and 4. the fact that these people did not totally believe in the concept of re-education, and therefore deemed music repertoire solely aimed at agitation to be unnecessary, as a prisoner from the Solovetsky Islands suspected.[137]

136 Vadim Kozin (1905 1994) chansonnier, arrested on 16 May 1944, convicted by the Special Board of the NKVD to 8 years in a camp, 6 years and 4 months in detention for "anti-Soviet agitation" and homosexuality.

137 Shiryayev B. Neugasimaya lampada, Moskva: Tovarishchestvo Russkikh khudozhnikov; 1991:5,134.

II.

In addition to the Gulag prisoners' official musical activities, numerous examples of unofficial musical and cultural activity have been reported. Their independent music making was primarily expressed in singing, since this did not require any external equipment. Instrumental music was typically reserved for official concerts, since it was difficult to procure an instrument outside of officially sanctioned musical activities and protect it against robbery or confiscation, as the title of one drawing by Aleksey Merekov emphasises (figure 5). Since the prisoner population was richly varied, and represented all layers of the Soviet population,[138] the song repertoire sung in the Gulag was also heterogeneous and varied.

Figure 5. Aleksey Merekov: A rarity in the camp. Kolïma, between 1937 and 1946. Ink drawing on paper. Memorial Museum Moscow.

I consider the writing of poems in the Gulag to be comparable to singing. Numerous former prisoners report that they needed diversions from the daily routine of the camps, and achieved this by telling stories or giving lectures to each other, or working with crafts, for example. They also wrote poems that not only served as diversions, but helped them reprocess their situations, stabilise individuality and recall detention experiences.

As Semyon Vilensky emphasises, prisoners' poems represent an authentic source for the history of the Gulag from the prisoners' points of view, because their letters were censored and interrogation records compiled at the discretion of the investigation leaders.[139] The significance given here to poems, and with which

138 It is notable that far fewer women were represented in the makeup of the prisoner population in the camps than in free society.

139 Vilensky S, editor. Poëziya uznikov GULAGa. Antologiya, Moskva: Materik; 2005:5.

I wholeheartedly agree, should also be accorded to camp songs.

The prisoners had to memorise the poems they wrote, because it was too dangerous to write them down and keep them. Melodies could help them to remember the poems more securely. The former prisoner and ethnographer Nina Gagen-Torn reports that poems and songs had a similar function:

> Pain expressed in words or song diminished somehow.
> That was the case with many people.[140]

When writing songs, the prisoners sometimes availed themselves of pre-existing melodies. As described in Georgy Demidov's narrative "The Duet" or in Evgeniya Ginzburg's "Journey into the Whirlwind", singing in prisons enabled communication with inmates in other cells.[141] Well-known tunes were sung with new texts, which might ask, for example, the name of the prisoner in the adjoining cell. Music thereby served to camouflage the forbidden exchange of information. However, it could never have the same significance as a means for the prisoners to communicate as tapping or knocking on their cells did.

Music was also able to express an attitude of protest: It has been reported from the Lubyanka Prison in Moscow that in 1925 two young female social revolutionaries protested there by singing loudly against the regulation allowing them to converse only by whispering.[142] In 1948, Semyon Vilensky did likewise in the Sukhanovka prison near Moscow, in order to protest against the fact that his hunger strike had gone unnoticed.

Singing in prisons could help to save the prisoners' lives, if they sang to themselves in extreme situations, such as in the lockup or during months to years of solitary confinement, in order to keep from going insane. This often had to be done silently, due to prohibitions on speaking.[143]

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140 Gagen-Torn N. Memoria, Moskva: Vozvrashcheniye; 1994:244.

141 Demidov G. Chudnaya planeta. Rasskazy, Moskva: Vozvrashcheniye; 2008:224 57; Ginzburg Ye. Krutoy marshrut, in 2 Volumes, New York: Possev; Vol. 1, 1985:116 8.

142 Solzhenitsïn A. Arkhipelag GULag. 1918 1956. Opyt khudozhestvennogo issledovaniya, parts I II, Paris: YMCA-Press; 1973:464. Religious kulaks offered resistance against the camp system during the building of the White Sea-Baltic Sea-Canal, by refusing to work and singing Psalms and prayers. Gor'kiy M (ed.). Belomorsko-Baltiysky kanal imeni tov. Stalina. Istoriya stroitel'stva 1931 1934 gg., Moskva: OGIZ, Gosudarstvennoye izdatel'stvo "Istoriya fabrik i zavodov"; 1934, Reprint 1998:252.

143 Boris Chetverikov reports that he was only able to survive sixteen months of solitary confinement by singing opera arias and songs, among other things. Chetverikov B. Vsego bïvalo na veku, Leningrad: LIO "Redaktor"; 1991:35. Tat'yana Okunevskaya spent thirteen months in solitary confinement. She claims she was able to maintain her sanity during this time by reciting Anna Akhmatova's poetry and singing old *romansï*, albeit mutely since she was forbidden to sing or speak. Epshteyn Ye. Gor'kiy put' poznaniya. Muzykal'naya zhizn' 1991; 17 8:25. And Ursula Rumin, who sat in remand from 1952 to 1955, sang and remembered pieces of music in order to protect herself "from going crazy" during solitary confinement. Rumin U. Im Frauen-GULag am Eismeer, München: Herbig; 2005:47.

And, after all, prisoners' songs could be considered the perfect medium to express their inner life in the face of death. The violinist Veniamin Bromberg wrote a song in his death cell in May June 1939 to Pushkin's 1828 poem "Vospominaniye" [Memory], which he dedicated to his wife and three-year-old son (figure 6). Later, after his death penalty was replaced by camp detention following a nearly three-month waiting period,[144] he wrote that he had felt Pushkin's poem to be a concentration of his feelings when he believed he would be executed. Bromberg told his wife he had treasured the song, regardless of its imperfections.[145]

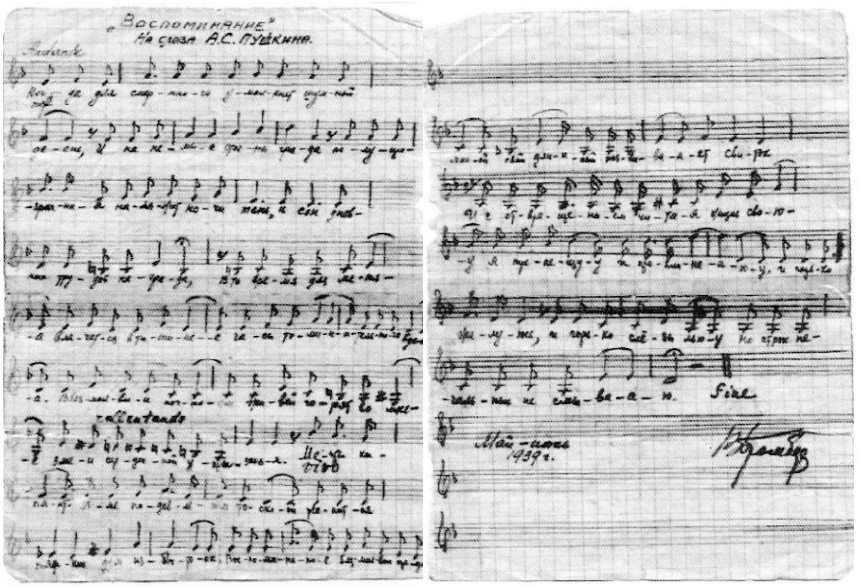

Figure 6. Veniamin Bromberg (1904 1942): "Vospominaniye", May June 1939, death cell.

Singing in prisons was the exception, however, because the prisoners were forbidden to speak loudly, let alone sing. It is a peculiarity of the Gulag that this prohibition was not observed everywhere, in that probably not one single regulation could be implemented across the board. When the prisoners were transported, their pent-up songs apparently streamed out of them, because numerous testimonies recount singing on prisoner transportation, and not only of pre-existing songs, but also new ones.

Transporting prisoners by rail could take months. Some prisoners got sick and died before reaching the camp, due to meagre food supplies, lack of space, heat in

144 http://lists.memo.ru/d5/f290.htm (access on 5 June 2011).

145 Bromberg G. Svet ubitoy zvezdï, Moskva 1998:28 9.

the summer and cold weather in the winter. In 1989, the mezzo-soprano Regina Gurevich related that a song had been composed and sung on a female transport from Moscow to Siberia at the end of 1937, and recalled its first strophe as follows:

Это мы – ваши жены, подруги,	It's us your wives, girlfriends,
Это мы нашу песню поем.	And we sing our song.
От Москвы по сибирской дороге	From Moscow across Siberia
Вслед за вами этапом идем …[146]	We're following your path…

In this song, the arrested women addressed their husbands, who were already in detention, since the women who wrote this song were the so-called *ChSIR* (*chlen sem'i izmennika Rodini*), "relatives of a traitor". They were all sentenced to prison, therefore, solely because their husbands had already been arrested and pronounced guilty. A manuscript from Evgeniya Grosblat in the Gulag History Museum in Moscow (ul. Petrovka 16) contains the entire text of this song.[147]

Regina Gurevich recalls that this song annoyed the guards and was hated by the transport leader: if the women began singing it when the train stopped, the guards would immediately pound on the railroad cars with their rifles. But if the train started up again, the women sang on.[148] Apparently, the guards tried to prevent the prisoners from acting independently, but by singing this song, the women acted subversively against the Gulag system. This was not an isolated case of guards trying to keep prisoners from singing when being transported. For example, Ukrainian prisoners were not allowed to sing folk tunes on a transport through the Ukraine in 1935.[149] Many former prisoners recall members of certain nationalities singing folk tunes to strengthen their group identity.

The musical notation of "It's us your wives" is kept in the archives of the Memorial Society in Saint Petersburg as a manuscript in Kseniya Medvedskaya's recollections "Vsyudu zhizn'" [Life is everywhere] from 1975 (figure 7).[150]

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146 Glushnev S. "S nebes v preispodnyuyu". Muzykal'naya zhizn' 1989; 10:28.

147 It can also be viewed in the virtual Gulag-Museum: http://gulagmuseum.org/showObject.do?object=29890971 (last access 1 June 2011).

148 Glushnev S. "S nebes v preispodnyuyu". Muzykal'naya zhizn' 1989; 10:28.

149 Sandler A, Ėtlis M. Sovremenniki GULAGa. Kniga vospominaniy i razmïshleniy, Magadan: Knizhnoye izdatel'stvo; 1991:109 10.

150 Archives of the Memorial Society in Saint Petersburg, without signature.

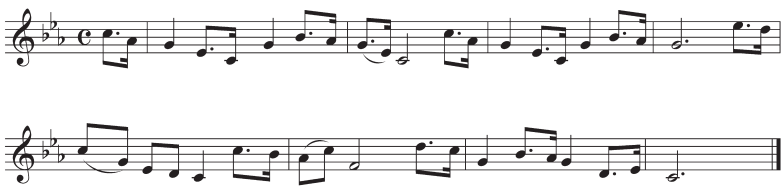


Figure 7. The melody of "It's us your wives", passed down in a manuscript from Kseniya Medvedskaya in the archives of the Memorial Society in Saint Petersburg, 1975.

A typical part of the Gulag songs were the songs of the *blatnïe*, the professional criminals, which I like to call *blatnïe*-songs. According to many former prisoners, the world of professional criminals in the Soviet Union existed outside of typical social affiliations and beyond good and evil, and functioned by its own rules, with its own morals, legality, and conception of honour.[151] For professional criminals, the lives of those not belonging to them counted for nothing. Varlam Shalamov's work quite impressively describes the world of professional criminals as an anti-world.[152] The *blatnïe*-songs saw to it that they did not remain isolated from society at large, but affected the cultures of both the political prisoners and the civilian population. The two most famous examples are "Gop so smïkom"[153] and "Murka"[154] [a pet name of a woman] and tell, like many others, of the criminals' lives; they are still sung in Russian penal colonies today.[155] But some *blatnïye*-songs harshly and unabashedly criticised the Soviet regime, in a manner with which other prisoners and civilians could identify. And thus, an adoption of the *blatnïye*-songs by other groups of prisoners can be observed, despite the professional criminals' brutality. Examples of *blatnïye*-songs, in which the Soviet regime was criticised, include the following:

151 Vayskopf Ya. Blatnaya lira. Sbornik tyuremnïkh i lagernïkh pesen, Iyerusalim 1981:8. The author was imprisoned from 1937 till 1942 in Russia, the Komi ASSR and Mordovia. Songs that he remembers are incorporated into his publication.

152 Shalamov V. Kolïmskiye tetradi, Moskva: Ėksmo; 2005:15 51.

153 The correct translation of this title is disputed. It could refer to a sudden robbery and the robber's quick getaway. In fact, the song also deals with a robber and his life. Neklyudov S. "Gop so smïkom" ėto vsem izvestno… Baiburin A, editor. Fol'klor, postfol'klor, bït, literatura. Sbornik statey k 60-letiyu Aleksandra Fyodorovicha Belousova, Sankt-Peterburg: SPbGUKI; 2006:65 85. Zhiganets F. Blatnaya lirika, Rostov-na-Donu: Feniks; 2001:62 3. Audio example: http://www.russian-records.com/details.php?image_id=13404&l=russian (last access 17 January 2012).

154 Audio example: http://www.russian-records.com/details.php?image_id=13445&l=russian (last access 17 January 2012).

155 Bronnikov A. Ne zabudu mat' rodnuyu. Pesni, stikhi, basni, pogovorki, "krïlatïye slova", bïtuyushchiye sredi zaklyuchyonnïkh tyurem, koloniy i lagerey. Sovetskiy period, Perm' 2000:190.

Проклятый начальник первого отдела	The damned leader of the first brigade
Палкою по пяткам колотил.	Struck me on the heels with a stick.
Пришивал, терзатель, мне чужое дело.	This slave-driver wanted to hold a strange crime against me.
Злился, что не всех еще на свете загубил.	He was annoyed that he hadn't done away with everyone yet.[156]

Это Ленин им дорожку указал.	It was Lenin who showed them the way.
Это Сталин нас с котомочкой послал.	It was Stalin who sent us away with a little sack.
Эта партия к погибели ведет.	It is the party who leads to death.
Все, что есть у человека, – отберет.	They take away everything a man has.
Нет у нас теперь ни жёнок, ни сынов,	We now have no more wives, no more sons.
И лишили нас всех жизненных основ.	And we've been robbed of all our livelihood.
Это Ленин им дорожку указал.	It was Lenin who showed them the way.
Это Сталин нас с котомочкой послал.	It was Stalin who sent us away with a little sack.[157]

Мать от голода помёрла,	The mother is dead from hunger,
Батя сгинул на войне,	The father disappeared in the war,
А меня конвои возят	And I am driven through this tormented land
По замученной стране.	Under surveillance.
Бей! Режь! Рви! Жги!	Strike! Slaughter! Fight! Light the fire!
За мамашу отомсти!	Avenge your mother!
За сестренок не прости!	Don't forgive those who made your sisters suffer!
Бей! Режь! Рви! Жги![158]	Strike! Slaughter! Fight! Light the fire!

The following are examples of political prisoners' songs which were developed in the Gulag, and whose author is known. There are songs of Svetlana Shilova (1929 1992), a sculptress who had to perform hard manual labour as a young woman in the camp Temlag near Pot'ma from 1950 to 1953. The songs she developed at that time impressively show how prisoners were able to express their feelings and thoughts through this genre.[159] One can hear intense pain in these songs, but also occasionally sense a gallows humour that played an important role for Gulag prisoners. In 1952 she composed this love song entitled "Bezïmyannaya mogila" [Grave Without a Name]:

156 Vardi A. Podkonvoynïy mir, Frankfurt am Main: Possev; 1971:252.

157 Ibid., p. 251.

158 Ibid., p. 27.

159 During the Perestroika, she performed the songs publicly with guitar accompaniment. Shilova S. Moy lyubimïy shest'sot tridtsat' dva (= Poėtï uzniki GULAGa. Malaya seriya 32), Moskva: Vozvrashcheniye; 2000:2. Shilova S. "Starcheskiy barak". Murav'yov V, editor. Kitezh. Proza, poėziya, dramaturgiya, vospominaniya, Moskva: Vozvrashcheniye; 2006:90.

Укатала особая тройка,
Закатила в свои лагеря,
И заочно меня окрестила:
Вместо имени номер дала.

И ходила я там, стоная,
Ах, за что мне такая судьба?
Я совсем ведь еще молодая,
А на воле бушует весна…

Но любовь тоже ходит по тюрьмам,
Зажигая собою сердца,
И я – двести тридцать четыре –
Полюбила шестьсот тридцать два.

А кругом лишь одни сторожа,
Целоваться с любимым нельзя.
Мы дарили улыбки свои…
И писали стихи о любви.

Припев:
А любовь в тюрьме – нежней,
А любовь в тюрьме – светлей,
Потому что там ей больней…
Потому что там ей трудней…

Мы искали на небе звезду,
Обращали свою к ней мольбу:
Не угнали бы нас на этап,
Не расстаться б внезапно вот так!

Но звезда та была холодна…
Раскрутились тюрьмы жернова,
Он истаял, сгинул, мой милый,
Не дождался свободного дня.

Литургию пропела тайга,
И апрель совершил там помин,
И горела свечою звезда…
Потихоньку сказала – аминь!

А любовь я свою затаила,
Золотым я ключом заперла…
И лежит в безымянной могиле
Мой любимый – шестьсот тридцать два.

Припев.

The NKVD-Troika has rolled me flat
And brought me into their camps,
And has christened me in my absence:
With a number instead of a name.

And so I went around there moaning;
Why do I have such a fate?
I'm still quite young,
And in freedom, spring frolics…

But love also peers into prisons,
Igniting hearts,
And I, number 234,
Have fallen in love with number 632.

But around us are only watchmen,
I cannot kiss my beloved.
We sent each other our smiles…
And wrote love poems.

Refrain:
Love is sweeter in prisons,
Love is brighter in prisons,
Since it's more painful for it there…
Since it's more difficult for it there…

We sought a star in heaven,
And aimed our pleas at it:
Please don't let us be transported away,
So that we become separated!

But the star was cold…
The millstone of the prison began to roll.
He has gone, has disappeared, my beloved,
He no longer experiences freedom.

The Taiga sang the liturgy,
And April held the funeral feast,
And the star burns like a candle…
I softly said "Amen"!

And I have hidden my love,
Locked it with a golden key…
And my beloved, number 632
Lies in a grave without a name.

Refrain.

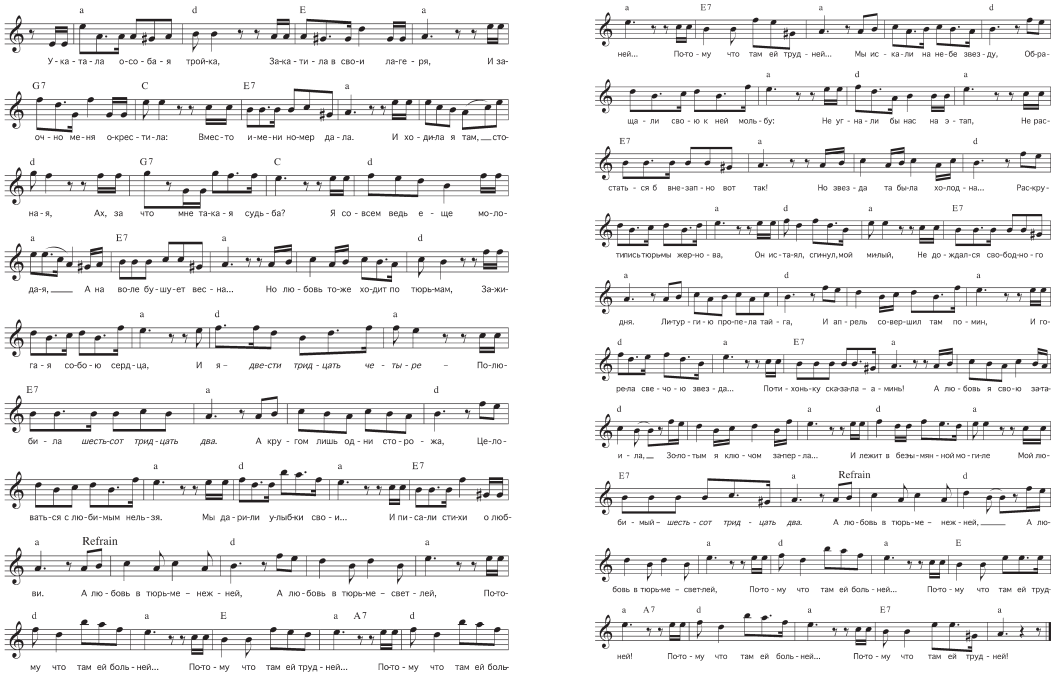


Figure 8. Svetlana Shilova's "Bezïmyannaya mogila" in the lore of Valentina Popova.

Two further examples come from the camp Noril'lag: After Stalin's death in March 1953, prisoners formed resistance movements in several camps. From the special camp No. 2 Gorlag in Noril'sk, where a rebellion broke out in May 1953 lasting for more than a month, two songs have been passed down that may have helped the prisoners to come to terms with the counterinsurgency,[160] including a hymn in Latvian.[161]

The most well-known Gulag song, which was sung equally by all groups of prisoners, is "Vaninsky port" [The port Vanino], often correctly called the Gulag hymn. The writer and former Kolïma prisoner Anatoly Zhigulin called "Vaninsky port" "one of the strongest and most expressive prison and camp song".[162] The familiar version of his text reads:

160 Around one thousand prisoners were shot during this rebellion, although the camp leadership felt obligated to make some concessions. Klimovich G. "Soprotivleniye v GULAGe (zametki bïvshego uznika)" Kalikh A, Obukhov V, Shmïrov V, editors. Totalitarizm v Rossii (SSSR) 1917–1991, Perm': Memorial; 1998:66.

161 The hymn can be viewed in the virtual Gulag-Museum: http://gulagmuseum.org/showObject.do?object=54570 (last access 25 May 2011).

162 Zhigulin A. Chyornïye kamni, Moskva: Sovremennik; 1990:179.
** This formulation could refer to the fact that the telegraphic code of Sevvostlag was called "Planeta". Smirnow M, editor.* Das System der Besserungsar-beitslager in der Sowjetunion 1923–1960. Ein Handbuch, *Berlin: Schletzer; 2003:129+*

Я помню тот Ванинский порт
И вид парохода угрюмый,
Как шли мы по трапу на борт
В холодные мрачные трюмы.

На море спускался туман,
Ревела стихия морская.
Лежал впереди Магадан,
Столица Колымского края.

Не песня, а жалобный крик
Из каждой груди вырывался.
„Прощай навсегда, материк!“ –
Хрипел пароход, надрывался.

От качки стонали зека,
Обнявшись, как родные братья,
И только порой с языка
Срывались глухие проклятья.

Будь проклята ты, Колыма,
Что названа чудной планетой.
Сойдешь поневоле с ума,
Отсюда возврата уж нету.

Пятьсот километров – тайга.
В тайге этой дикие звери.
Машины не ходят туда.
Бредут, спотыкаясь, олени.

Там смерть подружилась с цингой,
Набиты битком лазареты.
Напрасно и этой весной
Я жду от любимой ответа.

Не пишет она и не ждет
И в светлые двери вокзала –
Я знаю – встречать не придет,
Как это она обещала.

Прощай, моя мать и жена!
Прощайте вы, милые дети.
Знать, горькую чашу до дна
Придется мне выпить на свете!

I remember the port Vanino
And the sight of its dreary steamboat,
How we went on board over the gangway,
In the cold and dark hold of the ship.

The fog sank on the sea,
The sea was raging.
Magadan lay before us,
The capital of Kolïma.

No song, but a lamenting cry
Escaped from every bosom.
“Farewell forever, mainland”!
The overstrained steamboat gasped.

The prisoners groaned as they shovelled,
Embracing each other like blood brothers,
And only occasionally did muffled curses
Escape their lips.

Curse you, Kolïma,
Described as a wonderful planet.*
Here one goes crazy against his will,
And there’s no return.

Five hundred kilometers wide Taiga.
Wild animals live in Taiga.
No cars travel there.
Stags drag themselves along stumbling.

There death has made friends with scurvy,
The hospitals are overflowing.
In vain would I await my sweetheart’s
Answer this spring.

She doesn’t write and doesn’t wait,
And will not come through the bright gates
Of the train station to greet me,
As she promised.

Live well, my mother and wife!
Live well, dear children.
It seems that I must drink the bitter cup
To the bottom!

The question of "Vaninsky port"'s authorship has often given rise to speculation (I have encountered eight names in this regard). In this way, a song has been preserved that can be correctly called a "modern folk song",[163] since its authors are no longer determinable, and it has widely appeared in numerous textual and melodic variants, due to its being passed down orally.[164]

Prisoners' recollections prove that Soviet songs were often performed in the Gulag in both official and unofficial contexts. This can only be explained by the fact that some of the prisoners believed in the ideals of communism, despite their detention. On the other hand, prisoners sometimes used official songs subversively against the regime by rewriting the text. Mikhail Nikonov-Smorodin reports that in the late 1920s he could read an alternate text to "The Internationale" on the wall of the Butïrka prison in Moscow. It illustrates the exaggerated irony of the camp songs with a bitter undertone:[165]

Вставай[,] полфунтом накормленный,	Stand up, you who have eaten half a pound,
Иди в деревню за мукой.	Go fetch flour from the village.
Снимай последнюю рубашку,	Take off your last shirt
Своею собственной рукой.	With your own hands.
Лишь мы – работники всемирной	Only we, the members of the great
Великой армии труда,	Global worker's army
Владеть землей имеем право,	Have the right to own land,
А урожаем никогда.	But not to the harvest.

War songs were also occasionally rewritten using different texts. Thus, for example, an obscene variant of the famous "Katyusha" [a pet name of a woman] of Matvey Blanter was circulated.[166] There also existed a reworking of Vasily Lebedev-Kumach's famous song "Pesnya o Rodine" [Song about the Homeland], from the 1936 film "Tsirk" [Circus]:

Original:	
Широка страна моя родная,	Great is my homeland.
Много в ней лесов, полей и рек.	It has many forests, fields and streams.
Я другой такой страны не знаю,	I know of no other land like it,
Где так вольно дышит человек.	In which men can breathe so freely.

163 Sedov V. "Ya pomnyu tot Vaninsky port…" Severnïye prostorï (Moskva) February 1991; 38:38.

164 Zhigulin A. Chyornïye kamni, Moskva: Sovremennik; 1990:179 80.

165 Nikonov-Smorodin M. Krasnaya katorga. Zapiski solovchanina, Sofia: Izdatel'stvo N. T. S. N. P.; 1938:77.

166 Telephone interview of the author with Yury Fidel'gol'ts in Moscow on 12 November 2007.

Rewriting:

Широка страна моя родная,	Great is my homeland.
Много тюрем в ней и лагерей.	It has many prisons and camps.
Я другой такой страны не знаю,	I know of no other land like it,
Где так много мучают людей.[167]	In which so many men are tormented.

Chastushki, joking songs, which were very popular in civilian society, were also widespread in the Gulag. The most well-known *chastushka* about the Kolïma, which appears in numerous recollections, reads:

Колыма ты, Колыма,	Kolïma, you Kolïma,
дивная планета,	a wondrous planet,
десять месяцев зима,	ten months of winter,
остальное – лето.	the rest summer.

The following *chastushka* has been passed down from the Solovetsky Islands:

Соловки на Белом море,	Solovki in the White sea,
Пароход, Нева.	A steamer, the Neva.
Там грузят одни баланы	Trunks are loaded there
И пилят дрова.	And wood is sawed.
Музыка и спорт.	Music und sports.
Чем же не курорт?	What's missing to make it a spa?

One can conclude that the prisoners' self-determined singing met an existential need. It could help the prisoners to endure difficult situations in various stations of their existence. We can conclude that this singing functioned as a sign of protest and subversion against the camp system, a means of communication, a means to foster self-assurance and stabilise one's identity, a reflection of one's own situation, a diversion and way to pass the time, and a means to save one's life.

Professional composers were also creatively active in the Gulag to some extent; I currently know of seventy imprisoned composers, including Zinovy Binkin (1913 1985), Mikhail Chernyak (1906 ?), Alfrēds Feils (1902 1942), Jēkabs Graubiņš (1886 1961), Sergey Kaydan-Dyoshkin (1901 1972), Al'fred Karindi (1901 1969), Al'bert Keshe (1889 1961), Georgy Kirkor (1910 1980), Vladimir Mikosho (1897 1991), Aleksandr Mosolov (1900 1973), Mikhail Nosïrev (1924 1981), Matvey Pavlov-Azancheyev (1888 1963), Paul Marcel Rusakov (1908 1973), Taisiya Shutenko (1905 1975), Genrikh Terpilovsky (1908 1988), Pavel Valdgardt

167 Reported by the former prisoner Gerd Utech, recorded by Viktoria Mironova in 2003.

(1904 1978), Aleksandr Varlamov (1904 1990), Pavel Veys (1905 ?), Aleksandr Veprik (1899 1958), Tuudur Vettik (1898 1982), Nikolay Vïgodsky (1890 1939).

Several of them, such as Aleksandr Kenel' (1898 1970) and Vsevolod Zaderatsky (1891 1953), also composed in the Gulag, thus attesting to human strength under inhumane living conditions. For example, Aleksandr Kenel' composed dramatic music for the theatre on the Solovetsky Islands in the late 1920s (figure 9). And Vsevolod Zaderatsky wrote on the Kolïma in 1937 24 Preludes and Fugues for piano with a total duration of ca. 2.5 hours. The prisoners were indeed forbidden from owning paper and pencils, but apparently an exception was made for Zaderatsky; according to reports by his family, this was possible because he wanted to use them to write notes instead of words. There was no piano available in the remote northern camp location where he was imprisoned. The manuscript preserved by Zaderatsky's son is on telegram forms, a narrow block and a few chequered single sheets of paper. This work represents an example for human greatness under inhuman conditions, and is also a work or art that still awaits a proper reception (figure 10).

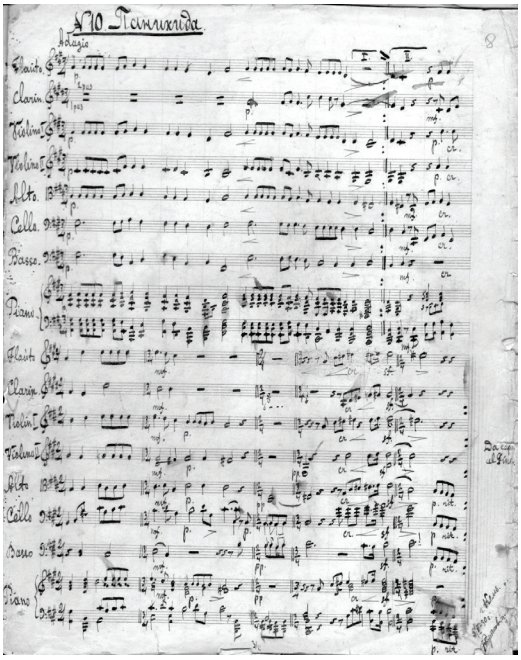


Figure 9. Last part of Aleksandr Kenel's dramatic music to Lermontov's "Maskarad" (Masked Ball); "Panichida" (Funeral).

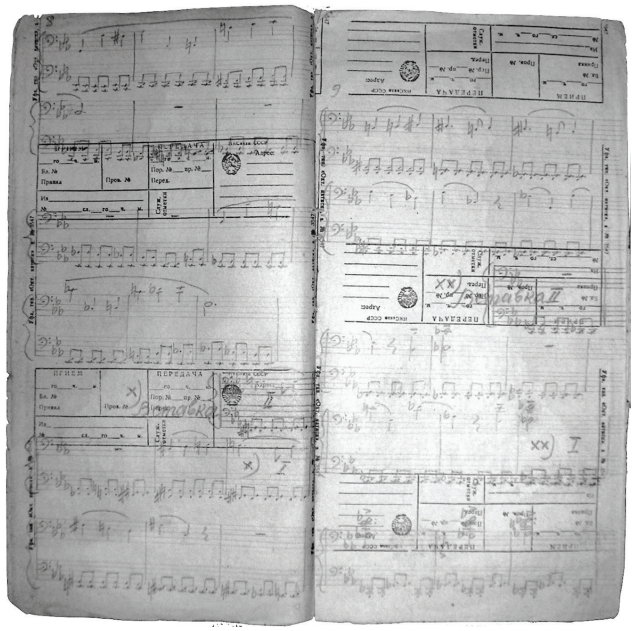


Figure 10. Manuscript of two pages from the 24 Preludes and Fugues by Vsevolod Zaderatsky.

After their dismissal, professional musicians were often forced to live in the province, and fostered a local blossoming of musical life and high-quality musical training. This remains underappreciated in musicological practice.

Translated from German by Dr. Andrew Hudson

Mieczysław Weinberg: Lines that have escaped destruction

Daniel Elphick

Abstract

Mieczysław Weinberg (1919-96) is a unique figure in Soviet music. A Jewish-Polish composer, he was born in Warsaw, but fled to the Soviet Union following the outbreak of WWII. He made a name for himself as a composer, establishing a close friendship with none other than Dmitri Shostakovich. Weinberg was arrested and imprisoned for several months in 1953. Much of Weinberg's music was commemorative in nature, culminating in his 1967-8 opera The Passenger. The opera is unique for directly dealing with the Holocaust, with on-stage action set in Auschwitz itself. In this article, I explore how Weinberg portrayed such hardships through his music; how he dealt with exile, imprisonment and with the effects of the Holocaust, and how he maintained a humanistic idiom throughout all of his works.

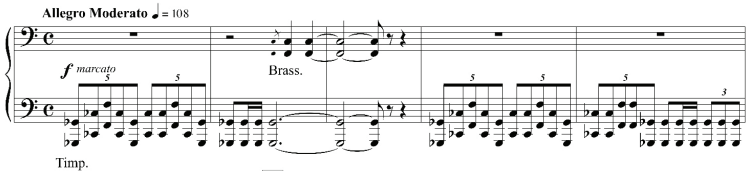
As recently as five years ago, Weinberg's name was known only to a handful of specialists. But following the 2010 premiere of his first opera, *The Passenger*, his music has been attracting

strong reactions from audiences and critics alike[168]. Reviews of the opera have ranged from praise as 'a close encounter with great art'[169] to dismissal as 'unsatisfying [and] disingenuous'.[170]

Miecyslaw Weinberg

The main reason for such polarised responses is self-evident; *The Passenger* deals directly with the Holocaust, with a large proportion of the staged drama set in Auschwitz itself. The plot gives the perspectives of both prisoners and guards, as well as a Greek-style chorus. However, Weinberg's music is markedly different from the repertoire that Western audiences may be familiar with as Holocaust commemoration, in works ranging from anti-sentimental twelve-note pieces to the overtly emotional language of Hollywood film scores.[171]

The Passenger begins onboard a ship sailing across the Atlantic, 1960. En route are a couple leaving for a new life in Brazil, Walter and Liese. Walter is due to take up an ambassadorial post there, and the two enthuse about their new life. Suddenly, Liese is startled by a mysterious female passenger, and she is forced to confront her own past in a confession to Walter. It emerges that Liese was a guard at Auschwitz in her early twenties, and the lady she saw bears a striking resemblance to a Polish woman, Marta, who was in her charge. The opening prologue hints at the menace to come in the opera, with a quintuplet timpani motif (see Ex. 1, below).

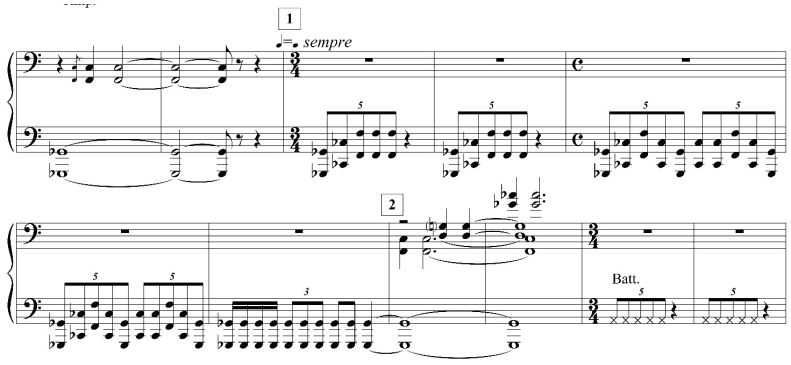


168 All music examples © Copyright Peermusic Classical GmbH Hamburg, reproduced by kind permission of the publishers.

169 Martin Anderson, 'First Performances - Bregenz: Festival 'In der Fremde' - music of Mieczyslaw Weinberg', in Tempo, 65 (2011) 55.

170 Alexandra Coghlan, 'Review: "The Passenger", English National Opera' in The New Statesman (3 October 2011) 70.

171 For an exploration of attitudes to 'Holocaust works', see: Matthew Boswell, Holocaust Impiety in Literature, Popular Music and Film (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 1-34.



Ex. 1, *The Passenger,* Act One, Scene One, opening.

Striking and threatening, this motif comes to be associated with the setting of Auschwitz itself, marked by reprises at important dramatic moments. Such an opening quickly establishes the mood for the opera and sets the tone for much of the music that follows. Weinberg scores more intimate scenes with greater sensitivity, but the use of twelve-note effects as suggested from this opening is a defining aspect of much of the music that follows in *The Passenger*.

Life on board the ship is illustrated through jazz-like passages, and an ascending line accompanies the couple's hopes for the future a line that will also be expanded later in the opera. With Liese's confession to her husband, the onstage setting shifts in flashback to the horror of Auschwitz itself. Here, the two-level design of the staging comes into its own, with the sleek deck of the passenger liner above, and the macabre darkness of Auschwitz below. For the rest of the lengthy first act, the action is set in Auschwitz, complete with roll-calls, beatings and the torment of everyday life for prisoners.

Such literal depiction of life in a concentration camp immediately invites criticism. Detractors have disparaged such representation as 'mining the Shoah for artistic or entertainment material'.[172] The big question that arises from *The Passenger* is one of appropriateness - can it ever be appropriate to depict the suffering of concentration camps on stage? To understand Weinberg's motivations for writing the opera, I will briefly summarise his biography. Whether or not this can serve as a defence for *The Passenger* will be explored below.

172 Gerald Jacobs, 'Editorial: Artists shouldn't be passengers when it comes to the Holocaust', *The Jewish Chronicle (online edition)*, 14 November 2011: http://www.thejc.com/comment-and-debate/comment/58279/artists-shouldnt-be-passengers-when-it-comes-holocaust, accessed 20/09/13.

As with so many of his contemporaries, Weinberg's life was replete with tragedy.[173] He was born in Warsaw in 1919, the first child of a Jewish family. His father, Shmuel, played violin in the local Jewish theatre orchestra. Young Mieczysław (or Metek, as his friends knew him) started taking piano lessons and joined his father in the orchestra from the age of ten. He studied at the Warsaw Conservatoire with Josef Turczynski, a famed pianist and co-editor of the first complete Chopin edition. To all appearances, the family lived a happy life, and the young Weinberg had a promising career in prospect.

All this abruptly changed with the German advance into Poland in September 1939. It was evident that with a German occupation, a Jewish family would not remain safe. Weinberg and his sister, Ester, made preparations to flee. They chose to head east, hoping for sanctuary in the Soviet Union. Ester turned back soon afterwards, as her feet were sore from walking. Now on his own, Weinberg set out on the perilous migration of several hundred miles. He would never see his family again.

After a harrowing journey with little food and the constant threat of death, Weinberg reached the Belorussian border and was granted entry. He enjoyed the support of the Soviet state; he was allowed to continue his studies fully funded at the Minsk Conservatoire, now in composition, under the tutelage of Vasily Zolotaryov. Weinberg quickly made a name for himself as a composer and a performer. Yet, he was forced to flee again with the German advance into the USSR in 1941. This time, he packed himself onto a train to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which had become something of a beacon for Soviet artists seeking refuge.

There Weinberg continued to write, and he became a prominent member of the arts community. In 1942, he married his first wife, Nataliya, the daughter of the world-famous Jewish actor Solomon Mikhoels, then president of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. It was through Mikhoels that Weinberg first made contact with Shostakovich and sent him the score of his First Symphony. Shostakovich was so impressed that he arranged for a permit for Weinberg and his family to relocate to Moscow, which they did in 1943. The two composers became firm friends, enjoying a close relationship that lasted for over thirty years.

It was at this time that Weinberg began to hear rumours about the fate of his family. They had been sent to the Warsaw ghetto, and from there to the Trawniki labour camp in 1942. On 3 November 1943, as part of the infamous Operation

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173 Much of the following biography is summarised from David Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg: In Search of Freedom*, (Hofheim: Wolke, 2010).

Harvest Festival, all Jewish inmates were rounded up, walked outside and shot. Weinberg's parents and sister were among them. It took Weinberg many years to fully confirm these reports. He only knew for sure during the 1960s – just as he began work on *The Passenger*.[174]

Having been scarred by the Holocaust, Weinberg would go on to experience anti-semitism sanctioned by the Soviet state. In January 1948, Mikhoels was murdered on Stalin's orders and his death covered up to look like a car accident. In an act of callous hypocrisy, he received a State funeral. Weinberg himself was imprisoned for several months in 1953, as part of the anti-semitic campaign undertaken during the last years of Stalin's life.

Having lost his close family to the Nazis and his father-in-law to Stalin, and having been persecuted himself, Weinberg was changed for life. He summed up his guilt about survival to his first wife:

> If I consider myself marked out by the preservation of my life, then that gives me a kind of feeling that it is impossible to repay the debt, that no 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week creativehard labour would take me even an inch towards paying it off.[175]

Weinberg set about trying to commemorate the victims through his music, a mission he would obsess over for the rest of his career.

It is against this background that Weinberg came to write *The Passenger* in 1967. In the second act of the opera, Liese's flashback to Auschwitz continues, showing her relationship with the prisoner Marta. The focus of the drama is very much on the innocence and victimhood of the inmates, as opposed to the illustration of Nazi cruelty. Marta is strong and defiant amongst the prisoners, irritating Liese, who dubs her 'the Madonna of the camp' and resolves to break her spirit. She discovers that Marta's fiancé, Tadeusz, is also an inmate as she interrupts a meeting between them. Tadeusz is scheduled to perform the Commandant's favourite waltz on the violin before an assembly of the camp's guards. Liese offers to help the couple to meet in secret, but both of them refuse. They would rather be alone than be indebted to one of their captors. Their refusal makes Liese furious, and she arranges for them to be punished – Tadeusz sent to his

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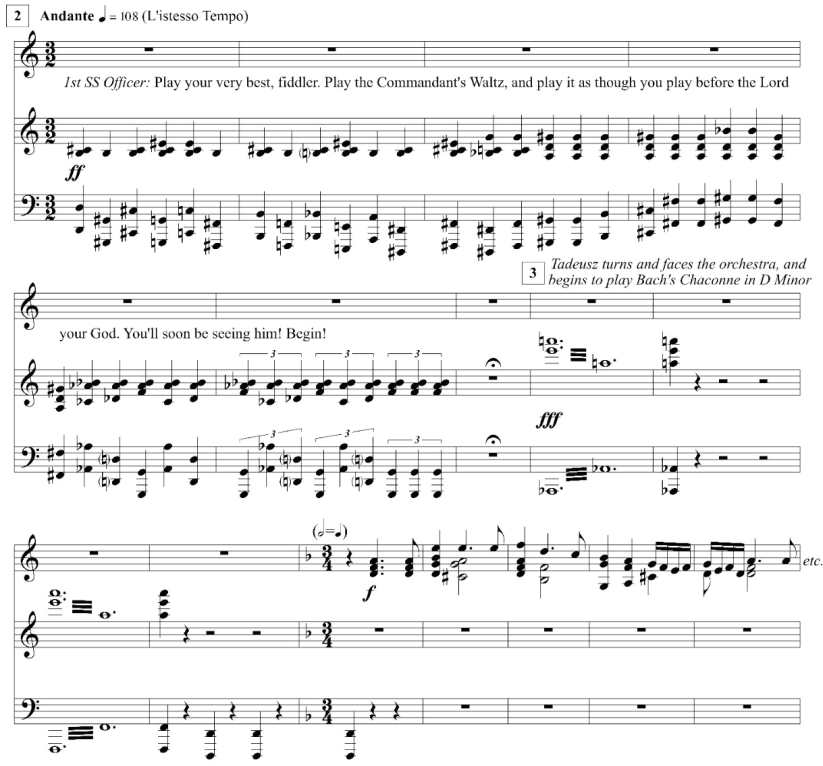
174 From Nataliya Vovsi-Mikhoels, telephone conversation with Per Skans, 20 October 2006, quoted in Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg*, 36.

175 From: Anon., 'Pis'ma o lyubvi' [Love Letters], *Muzikal'naya zhizn'*, 2 (2000), p. 19, quoted in Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg*, 15.

death and Marta to the punishment block. The setting returns to the passenger ship as Liese has finished her tale. She and Walter resolve to put the past behind them, and ignore the mysterious passenger onboard, even if it should prove to be Marta. Her identity becomes clear during a dance, however, when Marta requests the band to play the Auschwitz Commandant's favourite waltz. Liese, near-delirious, goes to confront Marta. The sight of her face forces her to remember Tadeusz's concert at Auschwitz, and the stage setting returns. At the climax of the opera, the guards gather to hear the violinist. He refuses to play the Commandant's waltz, but strikes up Bach's Chaconne in D minor instead, throwing German high culture back in the faces of his captors (see Ex. 2, below, for the build-up to this moment of intense drama).



Ex. 2, *The Passenger*, Scene 8, from fig. 2

As Tadeusz plays, the first violins join him, making for a moving depiction of defiance in the face of authority. The rest of the orchestra builds a chord of the verticalised note-row featured in much of the twelve-note writing throughout the opera. The German officers angrily interrupt Tadeusz's playing and he is led away to be killed, his violin smashed onstage. The opera ends on an epilogue

set by a river, as Marta promises never to forget her fellow inmates.

Overall, *The Passenger*, is a work of intense drama, suited to operatic treatment. There are also tender moments, in scenes illustrating the solidarity between the female prisoners in their barracks. In one intimate scene, Marta sings of her ideal birthday present: being able to choose which way to die, either as a proud warrior in battle, or to die tranquil and free.

The opera is based on a book by Auschwitz survivor Zofia Posmysz, and was adapted into a libretto by Alexander Medvedev. The work does not portray an exclusively Jewish experience in Auschwitz, but instead depicts an international array of identities; the prisoners' nationalities include French, Polish, Russian, Greek and Czech, Christian and Jewish. Weinberg's music employs no specifically Jewish themes, though the use of Polish and Russian folk idioms is apparent. Musical quotation highlights the perversion of German culture. Such quotes include the folk song 'Ach, du lieber Augustin' and Schubert's 'Marche Militaire', as well as the Bach Chaconne.

Weinberg did not live to hear *The Passenger* performed. It was given a semi-staged premiere in 2006, on 25 December in Moscow.[176] The fully-staged premiere had to wait until 2010, at the Bregenz festival, under the direction of David Pountney. Critical reactions have varied from production to production. For instance, the 2006 premiere received unanimous praise, as did the Bregenz staging. This is not to say that Pountney's staging is without its flaws; for instance, for the Bach Chaconne scene, he has Tadeusz with his back to the audience, playing his solo while the German Kommandant falls asleep. This goes against the stage directions, which clearly mark the poignancy of the action the whole violin section is instructed to play for the entire solo, implicitly calling for a 'freeze-frame', outside of the onstage action. Pountney's production, for all its ground-breaking work, falls short in this vital scene.

When Pountney's production opened in London in 2011, reception was mixed. This was, in part, due to a lacklustre performance in comparison to the previous year's staging, but can also be put down to the predisposition of London critics. The London opera scene has in recent years witnessed several productions claiming new levels of mastery, and this has likely rendered writers wary of new or newly discovered works with similar claims, along with an entirely different

176 For an article detailing *The Passenger*'s rocky performance history (or lack thereof), see: Sergey Yakovenko, 'Mirovaya prem'era cherez desyatiletiya' [A world premiere after decades], *Muzïkal'naya akademiya*, 1 (2007) 62.

set of attitudes to the Holocaust compared to that of Austrians and Germans. Pountney's production premiered before American audiences in Houston in January 2014 and met with unanimous praise from critics. A separate production opened in Karlsruhe in 2013 with a more abstract design concept compared to Johann Engels's split-set design for the Bregenz premiere.

Reactions to Holocaust commemoration

Critical reactions to the opera have sometimes reflected on more fundamental issues with the depiction of genocide in art. Perhaps the most oft-repeated quote from twentieth-century philosophy is Adorno's famous line 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric'.[177] For critics, it serves as a useful tool for the dismissal of commemorative works. Examining the context of Adorno's point is revealing, however. The full passage reads:

> Neutralized and ready-made, traditional culture has become worthless today. The more total society becomes, the greater the reification on its own. Even the most extreme consciousness of doom threatens to degenerate into idle chatter. Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today.[178]

The quote can only be fully understood in its context, in which Adorno emphasises the death of what he understands as culture.[179] Tellingly, it appears that Adorno himself later considered the passage to be over-exaggerated. He returned to the claim twenty years later:

> Just as I said that after Auschwitz one *could not* write poems... it could equally well be said, on the other hand, that one *must* write poems, in keeping with Hegel's

177 Theodor W. Adorno, 'Cultural Criticism and Society' in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981) 34.

178 Ibid.

179 Even a scholar as prestigious as Richard Taruskin has taken Adorno out of context on this quote. See: Richard Taruskin, 'A Sturdy Bridge to the 21st Century' *New York Times,* 24 August 1997.

> statement in his *Aesthetics* that as long as there is an awareness of suffering among human beings there must also be art as the objective form of that awareness.[180]

Adorno transforms his original assertion into a Kafka-esque reading of the phenomenon of 'Survivor's Guilt' in the following passage from *Negative Dialectics* that provides an even more relevant perspective on Weinberg's motives for composing commemorative works:

> Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems. But it is not wrong to raise the less cultural question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living especially whether one who escaped by accident, one who by rights should have been killed, may go on living. His mere survival calls for the coldness, the basic principle of bourgeois subjectivity, without which there could have been no Auschwitz; this is the drastic guilt of him who was spared. By way of atonement he will be plagued by dreams such as that he is no longer living at all, that he was sent to the ovens in 1944 and his whole existence since has been imaginary, an emanation of the insane wish of a man killed twenty years earlier.[181]

By elaborating on his earlier work, Adorno sheds light on the deeply personal and painful topic, similar to Freud's 'Death Drive'.[182] Adorno's drastic reading sheds light on artists' search to represent and memorialise the Holocaust.[183]

Another important bone of contention is whether biographical details can be used to defend a work such as *The Passenger*, or whether they function as

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180 Theodor W. Adorno, *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*, Ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000) 110.

181 Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973) 362-63.

182 See: Sigmund Freud, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' in *Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Angela Richards, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1984) 269-338. This has subsequently been dubbed 'Thanatos', in opposition to Freud's 'Eros' instinct, see: J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books, 1988) 447.

183 For further study of Adorno's famous Holocaust quote, see: Anthony Rowland 'Re-reading 'Impossibility' and 'Barbarism': Adorno and Post-Holocaust Poetics', *Critical Survey*, 9 (1997) 57-69.

emotional blackmail. Gillian Rose coined the term 'Holocaust piety', in reference to Stephen Spielberg's *Schindler's List,* critiquing sentimentalised approaches to the depiction of genocide. The use of background biography to support a work is the sentimental fallacy *par excellence*. With biographical knowledge, emotional impact is heightened, but it does not follow that a work with extraordinary origins must be a masterpiece. For validation of claims to mastery, we must look elsewhere.

The question of 'ineffability' is sometimes raised in response to accusations of 'Holocaust piety', adequately summed up in a quote from Samuel Beckett, featured in Art Spiegelman's visual novel 'Maus': 'Every word is like an unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness'.[184] Rose dismantles such dismissive attitudes in the following passage:

> To argue for silence, prayer, the banishment equally of poetry and knowledge, in short, the witness of 'ineffability', that is, non-representability, is *to mystify something we dare not understand,* because we fear that it may be all too understandable, all too continuous with what we are human, all too human.[185]

The Passenger confronts head-on the issue of 'all too human'. The exploration of the psychological make-up of the tormented guard Liese is one of the main threads of the drama. Framed within Weinberg's masterful score, it is this confrontation of humanity vs. inhumanity that prevents *The Passenger* from being interpreted as a work of 'piety'. It is a fictional narrative and therein lies its Adornian 'coldness'; it makes no claims to represent *the* narrative of the Holocaust. In this way, *The Passenger* stands as a work that demands to be addressed.

Weinberg's commemorative works

Recent years have seen the emergence of a new musical sub-genre, one that has attracted as much criticism as it has fascination, namely, art music written in commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust.

Within this genre, a piece can be viewed one of four ways: A) it features a text that

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184 Samuel Beckett, 'Samuel Beckett talks about Beckett', interview with John Gruen, *Vogue* (December 1969) 210, quoted in Art Spiegelman, *Maus II, A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began* (New York: Pantheon, 1991) 45.

185 Gillian Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 43.

explicitly deals with the Holocaust; B) the work is abstract, but bears a dedication specifically about victims of the Holocaust; C) it employs musical materials seen to be related to the Holocaust such as melodies from the ghettos; D) the work has come to be strongly associated with the Holocaust through regular use in film or television soundtracks. The majority of works that we may class in this genre come from Western countries and Israel, as opposed to Eastern Europe. This is perfectly understandable, owing to the vast emigration from Europe of Holocaust survivors and their families. Many important composers have written commemorative works, including figures as diverse as Schoenberg, Stockhausen, Ligeti, Górecki and Reich. Ben Arnold's breakthrough study 'Art Music and the Holocaust' provides a list of works up to 1988, which I reproduce here in full.[186] A quick glance reveals several common threads.

Fig. 1, Table of commemorative works, from Ben Arnold's 'Art Music and the Holocaust'

Composer	Title	Date
Partos	Yizkor (In Memoriam)	1947
Edel	Suite In Memoriam	1947
Schoenberg	A Survivor from Warsaw	1947
Frankel	Violin Concerto	1951
Podešva	Kounicovy Kolejie (Kounir College)	1956
Mácha	Night and Hope (Noc a Naděje)	1959
Šesták	Auschwitz	1959
Reiner	Butterflies Do Not Live Here Anymore	1960
Hartig	Mass after a Holocaust	1960
White	The Diary of Anne Frank	1960
Zeljenka	Oswieczym	1960
Flosman	Butterflies Do Not Live Here	1961
Josephs	Requiescant pro defunctis iudaies	1961
Křivinka	Butterflies Do Not Live Here	1962
Shostakovich	Symphony No. 13, 'Babi Yar'	1962
Kolman	Requiem	1963
Rayki	Elegaic Variations	c. 1964
Amram	The Final Ingredient	1965

186 Ben Arnold, 'Art Music and the Holocaust', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 6 (1991) 335-49.

Fig. 1, Table of commemorative works, from Ben Arnold's 'Art Music and the Holocaust'

Composer	Title	Date
Finko	Holocaust: An uprising in the Ghetto	1965
Nono	Ricorda cosa ti hanno fatto in Auschwitz	1965
Waxman	Song of Terezín	1965
Rideout	In Memoriam Anne Frank	c. 1965
Derr	I Never Saw Another Butterfly	1966
Hamilton	Threnos In Time of War	1966
Penderecki	Dies Irae	1967
Glick	I Never Saw Another Butterfly	1968
Schwartz	Auschwitz	1968
Frid	Anne Frank's Diary	1969
Adomlan	Auschwitz	1970
Morawetz	From the Diary of Anne Frank	1970
Morawetz	Who Has Allowed Us To Suffer?	1972
Mitrea-Celarianu	Piano de matin 'Ecouté pour Anne Frank'	1972
Davidson	I Never Saw Another Butterfly	c. 1974
Schwartz	Caligula	1975
Górecki	Symphony No. 3, 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs'	1977
Gelbrun	Holocaust & Revival	1978
Blitentajl	Lament for the Holocaust	1978
Gould	Holocaust Suite	1978
Steinberg	Echoes of Children	1978
Hardyk	I Never Saw Another Butterfly	c. 1980
Halpern	Music for the Holocaust Day	1982
Halpern	To Remember It All: Prayer for Holocaust Day	1982
Marez Oyens	Charon's Gift	1982
Tarski	Five Songs for the Holocaust	1982
Katzer	Aide Memoire	1983
Martland	Babi Yar	1983
Schwartz	Grimaces	1984
Kox	Child of Light: Anne Frank Cantata	1985

Fig. 1, Table of commemorative works, from Ben Arnold's 'Art Music and the Holocaust'

Composer	Title	Date
Lees	Symphony No. 4, 'Memorial Candles'	1985
Rosner	From the Diaries of Adam Czerniakow	1986
Reich	Different Trains	1988

Frequently composers have sought to commemorate in a dehumanised context, through the medium of twelve-note composition.[187] Not only does this technique evoke different semantics from traditional tonal music, it was also outlawed by the Nazis themselves. Twelve-note examples in this table include Schoenberg and Penderecki. Other composers, such as Górecki, opt for a neo-tonal idiom, slow and sorrowful in its repetition. Wholly distinct is Steve Reich's *Different Trains*, combining taped testimony with live minimalist loops to create a work as moving in its social resonance as it is personal to Reich's own experiences. One of the few Russian works on the list is Shostakovich's Thirteenth Symphony, *Babi Yar*. An examination of this work gives us more background of the context and attitudes that surrounded Weinberg in the USSR.

In his Thirteenth Symphony, Shostakovich sets poems by Yevtushenko, and the first movement describes the murder of Jews in Kiev by German troops, beginning with the damning line 'there is no memorial above Babi Yar'.[188] Leading up to the premiere of the work, Yevtushenko was pressured to alter the text, in order to fit the official line.[189] The Soviet government always remained uneasy about commemorations for the Holocaust. They believed that such memorials did a dis-service to the suffering endured by the Soviet people as a whole during the war, both civilian and military.[190] As such, Shostakovich's 13th Symphony was daring for its time. Considering this official line, it is little surprise that *The Passenger* was not performed during Weinberg's lifetime.[191] Several potential

187 Of course, Arnold's survey now appears severely incomplete. Antonina Klokova, in her article '"Meine Moralische Pflicht" Mieczysław Weinberg und der Holocaust', goes some way to address this, with several Polish commemorative works, see: Antonina Klokova, '"Meine Moralische Pflicht" Mieczysław Weinberg und der Holocaust' in Manfred Sapper and Volker Weichsel (eds.) *Die Macht der Musik, Mieczysław Weinberg: Eine Chronik in Tönen Osteuropa,* 60 (2010) 173-82. Arnold, writing in 1991, can perhaps be forgiven for being unaware of Weinberg's extensive output of commemorative works. An updated catalogue of Holocaust-commemorative works is beyond the scope of this paper; indeed, such an extensive list would arguably warrant a book-length study in itself.

188 Dmitri Shostakovich, *Symphony No. 13: Babi Yar, Op. 113* (Hamburg: Sikorski, 1971).

189 Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (London: Faber, 2006) 410.

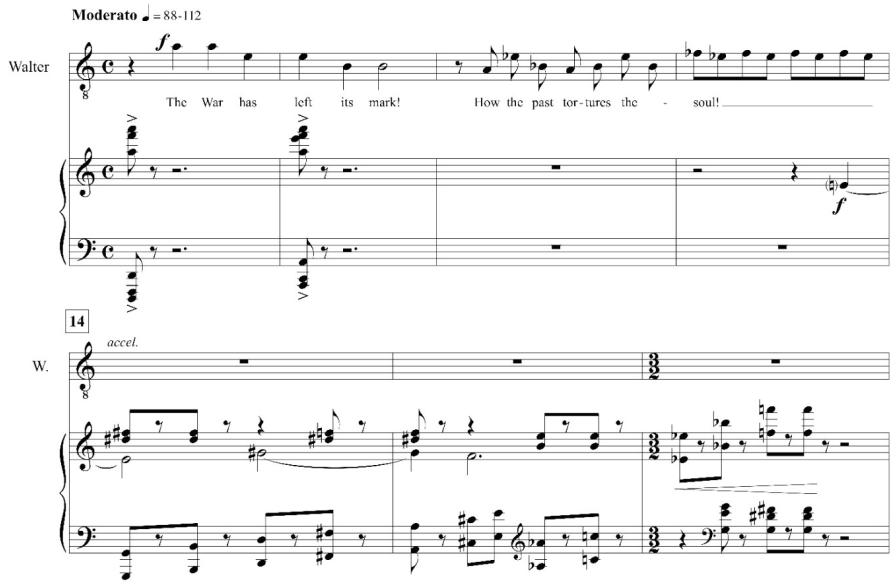
190 Ibid., 400.

191 See: Sergey Yakovenko, 'Mirovaya prem'era cherez desyatiletiya' [A world premiere after decades], Muzïkal'naya akademiya, 1 (2007) 60-5.

productions were discussed, but none materialised.[192] Nevertheless, a piano/vocal score was published in 1974, and Shostakovich provided the foreword, in which he wrote:

> I shall never tire of taking delight in Weinberg's opera *The Passenger*… It is a masterful work, perfect in form and style… The music of the opera is shattering in its dramatic impact… I perceive this opera as a hymn to mankind, a hymn to the international solidarity of people who oppose the most terrible evil in the world, the name of which is fascism.[193]

The musical content of *The Passenger* fits within several trends of commemorative works, as noted above. For example, Weinberg makes occasional use of a twelve-note row throughout the opera. It is first heard in the opening scene, accompanying Walther's words 'How the past tortures the soul'. In this initial statement, its meaning is fairly innocent, as Walther laments his increasing age, including the loss of his hair (see Ex. 3, below).



Ex.3, *The Passenger*, Scene one, four bars before rehearsal mark 14.

192 A Bolshoi Theatre production was arranged for 1968 but was cancelled before preparations began.

193 Dmitri Shostakovich, *Foreword to 'The Passenger'*, trans. David Fanning, in programme for *The Passenger,* (London: English National Opera, 2011) 28-9.

Its full power is unleashed as the underpinning to Tadeusz's Bach Chaconne, where the orchestra plays the row in verticalised form slowly, confirming the stage directions that he should 'play as if before the whole world'.[194] Weinberg's use of a 12-note row fits within its 'dehumanized' symbolism in works noted above, while also exploiting its semantic associations with brutishness and horror, deriving specifically from Allan Berg's *Wozzeck,* particularly when juxtaposed against the purity of Bach.

Elsewhere, Weinberg's use of folk-like idioms in the opera is comparable to the neo-tonal music of several works from Arnold's study. These include passages such as Marta's birthday song, mentioned above. In scene 3, an elderly Polish woman sings a prayer, to the melody of an anonymous 15th century Polish chorale, accompanied by dirge-like strings. In scene 6, a Russian prisoner sings a folk-song from her childhood; the text is authentic, but the melody is of Weinberg's own devising. It is performed *a cappella*, in a passage that would appear to have been deployed as an attempt to appease the Soviet authorities by its appeal to patriotic sentiment. In sum, *The Passenger* holds its own against the notable works listed above. It was, however, not Weinberg's first attempt to address the Holocaust in his work, nor would it be the last.

Building on Antonina Klokova's work to supplement Arnold's list, Weinberg's output constitutes almost certainly the largest commemorative project by a single composer.[195] The following works deal with the Holocaust directly in their subject matter:

Fig. 2, Weinberg's Holocaust commemoration works

Title	Year	Ded.	Details
Reminiscences, Op. 62	1958		Tuwim texts, incorporated into Symphony No. 8
Symphony No. 6, Op. 79	1962-3	Weinberg's daughter, Victoria	References to Babi Yar massacre
Symphony No. 8, Op. 83	1964		Texts about the Warsaw ghetto

194 Mieczysław Weinberg, *Passazhirka [The Passenger] Piano/Vocal score,* (Moscow: Sovetskiy Kompozitor, 1974).

195 See: Klokova, '"Meine Moralische Pflicht" Mieczysław Weinberg und der Holocaust'.

A Diary of Love, Op. 87	1965	To the children who died in Auschwitz	Cantata with texts about the grief felt by a Holocaust survivor
Profile, Romances, Op. 88	1965	Weinberg's first wife, Nataliya Vovsi-Mikhoels	Song cycle, with texts about purges and pogroms
Symphony No. 9, *Lines that have escaped Destruction*, Op. 93	1967		Texts addressing the liberation of Warsaw
The Passenger, Op. 97	1967-8	The victims of Auschwitz	Opera on the novel *Pasażerka* by Zofia Posmyz, partly set in Auschwitz
Symphony No. 21, Op. 152	1991	In memory of those who died in the Warsaw Ghetto	Subtitle *Kaddish*

In addition to these, there are also works dedicated to the composer's parents and sister, often expanding themes explored in works from the above table. For instance, Weinberg's 13th Symphony, dedicated to his Mother, quotes from Marta's aria about death from *The Passenger*.

Fig 3, Works dedicated to Weinberg's family

Title	Year	Ded.	Details
Symphony No. 13, Op. 115	1976	In memory of the composer's mother	Incorporates passages from *The Passenger*, relating to female camp inmates
Sonata No. 3 for Violin solo, Op. 126	1979	In memory of the composer's father	
String Quartet No. 16, Op. 130	1981	In memory of the composer's sister	1981 would have been his sister's sixtieth birthday
Symphony No. 16, Op. 131	1981	In memory of the composer's mother	
Memorial, Op. 132	1981	In memory of the composer's mother	Song
Sonata No. 6 for Violin and Piano, Op. 136bis	1983	In memory of the composer's mother	The work was discovered recently, Weinberg appears to have cast it aside

In addition to these, we can also include works more generally in commemoration of the victims of war, including several with a Jewish frame of reference:

Fig. 4, Weinberg's works in commemoration of war

Title	Year	Ded.	Details
Jewish Songs, Op. 13	1943		
Jewish Songs, Op. 17	1944		
Sinfonietta No. 1, Op. 41	1948	Friendship of the Nations of the USSR	Allegedly featured a Mikhoels quote in protest at his murder (though this is unverified)
The White Chrysanthemum, Op. 64 (Ballet)	1958		Ballet set during WWII.
Written in Blood, Op. 90	1966		Julian Tuwim texts on war and fate
Hiroshima Stanzas, Op. 92	1966	The victims of Hiroshima	Deals with Hiroshima in its texts
Requiem, Op. 96	1965-6		In a similar vein to Britten's *War Requiem*, reworks *Hiroshima Stanzas*
Madonna and Soldier, Op. 105 (Opera)	1970-1		Opera set during WWII, including patriotic choruses and triumphant ending
Symphony No. 17, *Memory*, Op. 137, Symphony No. 18, *War - there is no word more cruel*, Op. 139, and Symphony No. 19, *Bright May*, Op. 142	1982-5	In memory of the fallen in the Great Patriotic War	Commemorative symphonic trilogy, collectively entitled *Having Crossed the Threshold of War*; all three feature texts by Anna Akhmatova marked in the score

Weinberg's approach in these works is highly personal. His lyrical persona and frequent use of choral forces are both reminiscent of late Shostakovich, while his chosen texts are frequently more dignified than denunciatory in tone, promising to remember the victims of atrocities. It is apparent that Weinberg's life-long mission to commemorate the victims of war spanned many years. In a revealing interview from the time of the premiere of his Eighth Symphony, he summed up his motivation in a statement that could broadly apply to all of these works, especially *The Passenger*:

> In the war my entire family was murdered by Hitler's executioners. For many years I wanted to write a work in which all the events would be reflected on which the

poem was founded the social contrasts in Poland before the war, the horrors of war, and at the same time the deep faith of the poet in the victory of freedom, justice and humanism.[196]

196 M. Vaynberg [sic], 'Tsvetï Pol'shi' [Flowers of Poland], *Sovetskaya kul'tura*, (23 March 1965), cited in Lyudmila Nikitina, *Simfoniï M. Vaynberga* [The Symphonies of Weinberg], (Moscow: Muzïka, 1972), 117, trans. Fanning, see: Fanning, *Mieczysław Weinberg*, 111.

Positioning Gideon Klein

Dr David Fligg

Abstract

Along with many other artists imprisoned in the Terezín (Theresienstadt) concentration camp and ghetto, composer and pianist Gideon Klein has been almost totally referenced by this internment when he made a significant impact on the camp's cultural activities. Using his final composition, the String Trio, this paper explores how we might explore Klein in a more nuanced way, not only by acknowledging him as an important musician in his own right within the Terezín environment, but by examining his involvement in music before the Holocaust, his Jewish background, and what is possibly his final engagement with music during the final weeks before his murder in an Auschwitz sub-camp.

This paper uses Gideon Klein's *String Trio* for violin, viola and cello as a means of reconciling what I consider to be great music in its own right, on the one hand, with the circumstances of its composition in a prison camp, in this case Terezín (Theresienstadt), on the other. I will also discuss written archival testimony which sheds light on Klein's emotional state towards the end of his Terezín internment. Furthermore, I will be deliberating on my recently-discovered information about Klein's final imprisonment in an Auschwitz sub-camp, and there, most importantly for the purposes of this colloquy, what might possibly have been the last music he heard and even

participated in.

There are inevitable complications with researching Klein. Part of this complexity is due to the fact that suffering and victimhood have often been seen as ennobling in general, but in particular, I would say, with regard to artists. In the case of the many musicians who were imprisoned in Terezín, some people have, for better or for worse, validated this musical talent and activity through the lens of oppression and persecution, approaching the music differently and iconically because of its specific situation, so that hitherto, Klein's musical activities have been almost entirely referenced by his imprisonment.

His internment is the most researched period of his life, but it covers only a short period of his musical activities. There has been little investigation on the periods either side of Terezín, and even the Terezín period has largely, though not exclusively, been portrayed with rather broad brush-strokes. On the other hand, my discoveries about Klein's life have brought to light an immense amount of material not previously known or evaluated, and this is now allowing us a far more gradated evaluation and understanding of him.

Terezín is notorious as the Nazi camp where most of the Czech Jews, and more or less all of Prague's large, artistically-inclined and intellectual Jewish community, were imprisoned during the Holocaust. Essentially, it was a holding prison and ghetto, in that the majority of the prisoners were later transported to the extermination camps, mainly Auschwitz-Birkenau, where many were murdered. This was also Klein's fate. He was taken there in October 1944 and killed by the German SS in January 1945 on the very day that Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated. The point about Terezín is that the SS who ran the camp allowed the Jews, for various and complex reasons which are outside the scope of this paper, to run their own programme of musical, theatrical and other cultural events, and Klein was at the heart of this activity.

But in addition to Klein, Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krása and Pavel Haas were amongst the important composers who wrote works whilst imprisoned in Terezín. They were also killed in Auschwitz. When their Terezín works *are* performed, it is almost always within the context of creativity within adversity. This skews how we position their music, because it is not seen as part of the established musical canon *per se*, but part of a specific Holocaust canon of music by those who did not survive. In positioning Gideon Klein, it would be ingenuous to allow oppression to be the main validifier of the music.

Equally, we cannot ignore the fact that the music was written by a prisoner whose incarceration was part of a planned genocide and ethnic cleansing, and evidence presented below suggests that Klein was well aware of his fate. Hence, as much as we might wish to view the music as absolute music, the reality is that the Holocaust informs the composer's narrative, and accepting Klein's status as an imprisoned composer in no way empowers the Nazi cause.

According to the fair-copy manuscript, Klein completed his *Trio* on 7th October 1944, nine days before he was transported to Auschwitz. He composed it a few yards from a railway siding used exclusively for the death-trains. Milan Slavický reminds us that, by early autumn 1944, many of his musician colleagues, with whom he performed chamber music, had now been deported to Auschwitz. This is reflected by the fact that the *Trio* is a trio, rather than a string quartet, and that the level of technical proficiency amongst the string-players left in the camp was not as high as that of the musicians who had left (Slavický, 1995). Thus we are immediately challenged as to whether we can, or even should, divorce the work from its compositional environment.

Michael Beckerman (New York University) puts forward the intriguing proposition that Klein's *String Trio* can be viewed as documentary evidence as to what was taking place in Terezín. Beckerman's absorbing and ground-breaking argument asks us to consider whether, looking at various pieces of information, Klein's work contains hidden messages, ciphers to the outside world, about what was actually taking place in the camp. Beckerman puts forward the fascinating idea that by incorporating various musical quotations, the *Trio* conceals a world of chaos (Beckerman, 2010).

We know that the Germans wanted Terezín to be a type of Potemkin village, a sham which would show the world, and in particular the International Red Cross, that concentration camps were innocuous affairs. In reality, 33,000 prisoners were to die there. Beckerman compellingly proposes that the folky outer movements of Klein's *Trio* conceal a world of turmoil in the middle movement, and he draws our attention to Klein's apparent references to other music, including Schubert's song *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. Beckerman, then, asks the inevitable question as to whether the *Trio* is a type of eye-witness account, where the message is within the medium.

I support Beckerman's notion, and I want to discuss some of my own beliefs on the Schubert quotation within the *Trio*. In the third and final movement of the

Trio, the metre alternates between 4/8 and 5/8. Then Klein throws in a curious 6/8 bar (bar 128). He anticipates the semiquavers beforehand, yet it is the only 6/8 bar in the movement. Beckerman reminds us that the words of Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, from Goethe's *Faust*, open with "Meine ruh ist hin, mein Herz ist schwer" ("My calm [or peace] is gone, my heart is heavy.") Klein's apparent paraphrase of the Schubert is within the only 6/8 bar in the entire *Trio*, and it seems to me that Klein underlines his Schubert quotation we can refer to it as the Gretchen bar - with trills in the cello. There is only one other trill in the movement, in the second bar (though employed again in the reprise), used essentially as a curtain-raiser for the first main theme. For Klein, steeped in the Classical tradition, I put forward that the trill at the Gretchen bar is a way of underlining the statement. And it is a curious statement, because one notices that in performance it really produces something of a hiccup in the rhythmic and metrical scheme of things; it is a one-off event in this movement. As the only 6/8 bar in the piece, with the trill underneath it in the cello, it is, quite clearly, a highly gestural moment in the movement. Charles Rosen suggests that the trill was reinvented by Beethoven to become integral to texture generally, and melody specifically (Rosen, 1971). We know that Klein had intimate knowledge of mature and late Beethoven. I would certainly say, therefore, that Klein's use of the trill in this Beethovenian sense helps the Gretchen bar to hover, to use an image that Rosen uses in the context of Beethoven's trills (*ibid.*).

The emotional weight of the *Trio* is in the middle movement, which is an arch-shaped set of variations, framed by the theme and a coda, a movement which is longer than the combined durations of the movements flanking it. The theme of the variations is based on a Moravian folksong, *The Kněždub Tower*, and the words are about a wild goose flying up to the tower, though there are variants on this text. It would have had resonance for Klein, himself born in Moravia, and an understandable reverberation, crucially at that time, of Czech identity.

In the fourth variation, the tempo changes to an *Andantino*, the dynamic goes down to *p* and *pp* with *espressivo* markings, and a 5/8 metre, with duplet crotchets within it producing a type of notated rubato. And a curious thing seems to occur at bar 62, where there is another variant on the Gretchen bar. The trills leading up to this (bars 56-59) are Klein's way of underlining, or drawing our attention to, a musical event. Though at first glance the trill does not seem to be apparent in the fourth variation, the alternating E to F# quavers in the viola is the slowed-down cello trill, on the same notes, in the Gretchen bar of the last movement. The start of this fourth variation is durationally half-way through

the movement, depending on the performance variants of course. The Gretchen bar in the last movement is also durationally in the middle, and so it really is the heart of the movement - in fact, of the whole work. It is the only variation where Klein uses traditional Classical-type repeat marks, and compared with the other variations, there is a clear sense of Classical poise. Whilst, then, the variations are based on the folk-song image of a wild goose flying up to a tower - and it is tempting to project imagery and sub-text into this - the movement's heart perhaps reminds us again of Goethe's words of a heavy heart and a lost peace. Indeed, the variation which follows is marked *mesto* - sad or mournful - with marks of *sospirando*, sighing.

It is in this next variation (bar 78) that we get an extraordinary passage - Beckerman writes with great insight about it - of recitative-like writing in the cello marked *con gran espressione*, with great expression (bar 87), a passage which is heavily littered with performance markings, more so than any other passage in the work. And once more, this is prefaced by a *szforzando* trill on, again, E to F# in the viola, drawing our attention to an important musical event (bar 85).

Beckerman puts forward the possibility that Klein's ciphers are messages to the outside world, that Klein's reference to Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* ('Songs on the Death of Children') could, he says, be "...a statement by Klein to the effect that 'this place is not what it seems: there are dead children here'" (Beckerman, 2010). Perhaps the *Trio* is a double hidden message. If Klein was, in fact, saying that things in Terezín are not what they seem bearing in mind that this Potemkin village, full of disease, death and transports to the death camps, successfully duped the International Red Cross then the *Trio* itself is not all that it seems. On the face of it, it is a charming 12-minute work, with energetic outer movements flanking a set of variations on a folksong. But at the heart of these folk-song-inspired variations lies this Beethovenian middle movement, this wonderfully-proportioned set of variations demonstrating a maturity of compositional skill which few 24 year olds possess. Perhaps this was Klein's way of recapturing the very highest of musical values in a horrific environment.

I think it is fair to say, and it is all too easy to forget, that most of the Terezín prisoners expected the war to eventually end, and that they would return home. The Council of Elders, those Jews who were tasked by the Nazis to run many of the day-to-day operational aspects of the prisoners' lives, knew full well the true meaning of the transports to the east. Klein was, as we say, 'well in' with members of this Council. He knew. Received opinion of Klein's activities in

Terezín correctly confirms that he was immensely active and influential as a pianist, composer, educator and, towards the end of his incarceration, conductor, and that he galvanised other musicians into activity. In other words, he was energetic and optimistic. Surely, however, the reality of his imprisonment would suggest otherwise.

What we did not know until I came across testimony from Klein's girlfriend in Terezín, Irma Semecká, is that in the weeks leading up to Klein's own deportation to Auschwitz, he was thoroughly depressed. In this document from Semecká to Klein's sister Lisa (Eliška) Kleinová, Semecká quotes Klein as saying: "I have been here for three years, and I am so destroyed that I think I will never be normal again. I will never be able to wipe these years away from my life and it´s not the end yet. And I don´t even know if I'll ever get back.... If only you knew how well I know it all. The pain, the poverty, everything. I was one of the first to come here. There was nothing here, but perhaps it was better in the beginning.... I know what it´s all about. I know and I can estimate anything that´s going to happen here. Nothing can take me by surprise" (JMP EK).

Klein's words certainly suggest that prior to his deportation to Auschwitz, he was emotionally depressed. This is further evidenced in another document, this time a letter, also of 1945, again from Semecká to Lisa Kleinová. Klein's sister and mother, Ilona, were transported from Terezín four days before Klein. Lisa survived Auschwitz, but Ilona was murdered on arrival. Semecká writes about the period between the deportation to Auschwitz of Klein's mother and sister, and his own. She says: "When you left he was very sad and apathetic towards almost everything…" (*ibid.*).

Compared to other prisoners, Klein had certain privileges. Yet the word privilege is relative. Semecká tells us that his tiny workroom, which he grandly, and perhaps ironically, called his studio, "was a dark squalid cubbyhole with a window and bars, an old mattress replacing the window glass. The studio was next to a privy which stank so bad that sitting there was pure torture. However, Gideon would spend several hours a day in that cubbyhole, in which the only piece of furniture was an upright piano, if we do not count the chair in" (*ibid.*).

After Klein left Terezín for Auschwitz on 16th October 1944, he was in the Birkenau part of the camp just a couple of days before being taken to Fürstengrube, essentially a slave-labour coal mine, some 15 miles away. Fürstengrube was one of over 40 Auschwitz sub-camps, and itself consisted of a number of smaller

camps in close proximity to each other. Lager Sud was the one where the Jews were imprisoned and, like so many of the sub-camps, it is not particularly easy to find today; little of it remains. On 19th January 1945, as the Red Army approached, the camp was evacuated, and most of the prisoners embarked on one of the infamous death marches. Along with over 200 who were too infirm to leave, or chose not to leave, Klein remained in the camp, along with his friend from Terezín, the theatre director Gustav Schorsch. On 27th January, a group of SS returned to the camp and shot and incinerated the bodies of the remaining prisoners, Klein amongst them.

From accessing primary sources in the Auschwitz-Birkenau archive, and with the help of an amateur historian Jacek Zając, who lives close to what remains of Fürstengrube, I have been able to determine the exact location of this awful event, and the mass grave in a nearby forest where the bodies were buried. We can now trace Klein's arrival in Birkenau, to his death in Fürstengrube. In April 2013, visiting the site of the massacre and the mass grave, I recited Jewish memorial prayers for Klein and his comrades.

Fürstengrube was run by the SS as a slave-labour camp for the IG Farben coal mine a short distance away. The prisoners, including Klein, were sent down the mine, and the conditions below and above ground were cruel and appalling in equal measure. The entrance to Lager Sud had over it the traditional German miners' good-luck motto, Glück Auf. Former Fürstengrube prisoner, the eminent linguist Haim-Vidal Sephiha, now in his 90s, recalls that the prisoners used to sing their own version of the traditional miners' song, *Glück Auf*, as they entered the camp after their mine shift. In an e-mail to me, Professor Sephiha wrote: "I…remember that we had a Czech Jewish choir master whose name I've forgotten, but who substituted the text of the German miners' song with alternative text which talks of the prisoners going home. The song *Glück Auf* has never been recorded, and I'm prepared to sing it to you. It's a very rare piece whose historic interest, had any interviewer understood, would have recorded it" (e-mail, 2/5/13). And in a telephone call to his Paris home in May 2013, Professor Sephiha sang me the song, which I recorded. Undoubtedly, then, Klein, who worked down the mines, would have sung it, or at least heard it, surely the last music he encountered. Here are the words which Professor Sephiha gave me:

> Glück auf! Glück auf! Wir sind die bergwerksleute.
> Wir fahren hinab und hinauf und bringen reiche beute.
> Die kohle wird zu licht, zu wärme und benzin.

Wenn uns die arbeit frei gemacht,
Werden wir nach hause ziehn!
Wenn uns die arbeit frei gemacht,
Werden wir nach hause ziehn!

Good luck! Good luck! We are the mine people.
We move closer look up and take rich and booty.
The coal is to light, to heat and fuel.
If we made the work-free,
We will go home!
If we made the work-free,
We will go home!

I come back to Klein's final composition, the *String Trio*. At the end of the work, it could be that Klein was taking himself back to what was an intensely happy childhood in Moravia, so different from his current imprisonment. Thirteen bars before the end, there is no doubt what is happening, as the violin, in octaves, states the folk-song theme clearly and affirmatively. Suppression – a word I do not here use casually – and concealment are abandoned, as a crescendo takes Gideon Klein's wild goose flying up to its Moravian tower.

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La vie musicale dans le Ghetto de Vilne[197] : un essai de reconstitution

Dr h.c. Philippe Olivier

Résumé

Le présent texte traite de la musique telle qu'elle était pratiquée à l'intérieur du Ghetto de Vilne (Vilnius, actuelle capitale de la Lituanie) à partir de sa création en septembre 1941. Il constitue un fragment d'un travail détaillé de comparaison; c'est un essai, une tentative historiographique ayant pour objectif de procéder à la reconstitution parcellaire de moments où, face à la mort, l'espoir en la vie a demeuré. Le texte s'appuie sur le journal tenu dans le ghetto par le poète d'expression yiddish Avrom Sutzkever.

Le 10 décembre 2013 s'est ouverte à Orléans dans les locaux du Centre d'étude et de recherche sur les camps d'internement du Loiret une exposition intitulée *La musique internée dans les camps de Beaune-la-Rolande et de Pithiviers*[198]. Une telle manifestation faisait suite, en quelque sorte, au colloque international voué à la musique dans les camps de concentration

197 Le mot yiddish Vilne, désignant l'actuelle capitale de la Lituanie nommée Vilnius, sera utilisé de manière systématique dans le présent texte.

198 Entre mai 1941 et les premières déportations vers les camps de la mort, trente-sept mille Juifs furent internés dans ces lieux. Parmi ceux-ci se trouvaient des instrumentistes, des chanteurs, des compositeurs et des chefs d'orchestre. Ils organisèrent pour les autres internés diverses activités musicales.

et d'extermination, s'étant tenu au Conseil de l'Europe les 7 et 8 novembre de la même année. Le présent texte, reprenant l'essentiel de la communication effectuée au cours de cette rencontre strasbourgeoise, traite évidemment de la musique. Mais telle qu'elle était pratiquée à l'intérieur de l'un des ghettos mis en place dans une partie de la zone baltique envahie par le régime national-socialiste à partir de 1940.

Le ghetto constitue le premier cercle — si l'on peut dire — de l'Enfer. Nombre de ses résidents quittaient son *Umschlagplatz* pour Auschwitz ou Sobibor. Une fois sa liquidation accomplie, certains de ses survivants prenaient la même destination. Il se distingue, de ce fait, des camps d'internement dont les captifs tentaient — dans la mesure du possible — de faire contre mauvaise fortune bon cœur. Dès lors, il ne régnait pas dans les ghettos une atmosphère propice à la comédie musicale et aux spectacles légers, comme au camp de Westerbork[199] aux Pays-Bas. Ni aux revues présentées, en Grande-Bretagne, parmi les camps d'internement où se trouvaient rassemblés des individus d'origine allemande, autrichienne ou encore tchécoslovaque.

Cette contribution est dédiée à la mémoire des grands-parents de l'une des amies de l'auteur, Mme Irène Froger née Kacas. Soit Katz en lituanien. Ses grands-parents paternels étaient Moïse Ruben et Chana Esther Kacas, originaires de Kaunas. Comme le philosophe Emmanuel Levinas et le pianiste Vlado Perlemuter, éminent interprète des œuvres de Ravel[200] ou encore l'écrivain Joseph Kessel, dont le père[201] venait de la même région de Lituanie. Les grands-parents maternels de Mme Irène Froger se nommaient Abraham et Bluma Aronovskis. Ils étaient originaires de Vilkija, une bourgade des environs de Vilne. Ils disparurent dans l'Holocauste. Comme la date et les circonstances de leur mort ne sont pas connus, on célébrera leur mémoire autant que celle de millions de malheureux en citant la prière prononcée — le 13 septembre 1941 — dans le Ghetto de Varsovie par Isaac Meir Weissenberg : « Aujourd'hui règne la mort dans toute sa majesté,

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199 Amaury du Closel : *La musique dans le système concentrationnaire nazi*, Voix étouffées, Strasbourg, 2013, pp. 17-18.

200 Elève du problématique Alfred Cortot — il eut rang de ministre sous le régime de Pétain — au Conservatoire de Paris, Vlado Perlemuter (1904-2002) était également réputé pour ses interprétations de certaines grandes pages de Chopin. Fils d'un rabbin, il échappa à l'Holocauste en se réfugiant en Suisse.

201 Il s'agit de Chmouel — Samuel — Kessel, originaire du Ghetto de Schawli, se trouvant dans le gouvernement de Kaunas. Victime de l'antisémitisme russe, il partit pour la France après en avoir appris la langue en lisant les œuvres de Victor Hugo. Ayant d'abord envisagé de se consacrer au rabbinat, le père du futur Académicien français devint médecin. (Joseph Kessel : *Reportages et romans*, Gallimard Quarto, Paris, 2010, p. 35).

tandis que la vie rougeoie encore à peine sous une épaisse couche de cendres»[202].

Voici soixante-quinze ans — le 9 novembre 1938 — se déroulait un événement de sinistre mémoire embrasant toute l'Allemagne comme la synagogue de la petite ville allemande de Kehl située à trois kilomètres de Strasbourg : la Nuit de Cristal. Les valeurs humanistes européennes y furent sauvagement transgressées, tout comme y fut profanée l'une des références suprêmes d'un judaïsme s'étant rêvé comme une alliance entre la Torah et Goethe au travers du phénomène de la *deutsch-jüdisch-bürgerliche Hochkultur* : la musique. Ainsi, lors du pogrom mené à Cologne par des bandes de SA déchaînés, un piano fut jeté dans la rue depuis les étages d'un immeuble où résidait une famille juive. Il sera, par la suite, question du piano dans le Ghetto de Vilne. Par l'évocation de l'enseignement de cet instrument, en évoquant un embryon de récital ou encore — hélas — en associant le piano à un épisode de tuerie.

La mort régna dans le Ghetto de Vilne, où entre sa création remontant à septembre 1941 et à sa liquidation effectuée en septembre 1943, elle détruisit une identité composite, forgée dans une cité et une nation à l'histoire complexe. Selon que l'on emploie les noms de Vilnius, de Wilno, de Vilna ou de Vilne, leur dimension lituanienne, polonaise, russe[203] et yiddish s'impose. Au cours du quart de siècle ayant précédé les événements dont il est ici question et à la suite de la proclamation de son indépendance en 1918, la Lituanie connut les régimes polonais et soviétique avant d'accéder à l'indépendance. Elle vécut les systèmes capitaliste et communiste. Autant qu'une politique étatique violemment antisémite, et ce après la proclamation de la Seconde République polonaise survenue en 1921. Pour ce qui se rapporte aux années proches de la fin de la Première Guerre mondiale, elles furent décrites dans un ouvrage intitulé *Sous le ciel pâle de Lituanie* et paru en 1926. Ce volume fut l'œuvre de Jean Mauclère (1887-1951), un auteur s'étant pris de passion pour ce pays. Il devait en être de même pour Joseph Roth quand, en 1938, il séjourna à Vilne afin d'y donner plusieurs conférences à l'invitation du Pen Club polonais.

Notre guide dans la vie musicale du Ghetto de Vilne sera l'excellent poète d'expression yiddish Avrom Sutzkever ayant tenu un journal dans ce cadre

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202 Cité par Samuel D. Kassow dans *Ringelblums Vermächtnis - Das geheime Archiv des Warschauer Ghettos*, Rowohlt, Reinbek, 2010.

203 On connaît les liens anciens entre la Lituanie et la Russie. Ils remontent à l'époque médiévale. Ainsi, le Roi Mindaugas de Lituanie avait-il cherché à mettre en place « un État russo-lituanien doté d'une culture et d'une administration influencées par la Russie, et ce en dehors du royaume mongol » (Michael Prawdin : *Russland*, DVA, Stuttgart, 1951, p. 70).

terrifiant, ayant survécu à celui-ci, ayant émigré en Israël et étant disparu en 2010. Un témoin majeur de la liquidation d'une culture précieuse. Cette culture prit, entre autres, la substance d'une école de musique, d'un projet d'opéra et d'un orchestre symphonique. Les trois fonctionnant au milieu d'un dénuement extrême, d'une communauté où le suicide n'était pas exceptionnel et où le coucher du soleil intensifiait la terreur. « La première nuit au ghetto », écrivait Avrom Sutzkever, « *est comme la première nuit au tombeau* »[204].

Trois précisions terminologiques s'imposent. *Primo* : la présente contribution constitue un fragment d'un travail détaillé de comparaison. *Secundo* : elle est un essai, une tentative historiographiques. *Tertio* : elle a pour objectif de procéder à une reconstitution parcellaire. Celle de moments où, face à la mort, l'espoir en la vie a demeuré. Comme il a demeuré à Varsovie, à Lodz, à Buchenwald ou dans l'ancienne citadelle autrichienne de Theresienstadt, devenue Terezín en tchèque. Un tel espoir — la *hatikva* en hébreu — a duré jusqu'au moment où l'on quittait le Ghetto de Vilne pour les fosses de Ponar, localité des environs. Écoutons, à ce sujet, un autre poète litvak, Abba Kovner : « Ponar, c'est la mort. Tous ceux qui ont été amenés à Ponar ont été fusillés ». Pour sa part, le Ghetto de Vilnius fut — on le sait — entièrement liquidé le 23 septembre 1943. Avrom Sutzkever : « On expédia la plupart des femmes et des enfants vers les crématoires de Madjanek, et les hommes furent dirigés vers les camps d'Estonie »[205].

L'une des manières de défier la mort en quêtant un statut d'immortalité a toujours été de valoriser la culture et, à l'intérieur de celle-ci, la musique. La tâche était — à Vilne comme en Lituanie — aisée. D'abord parce que l'histoire intellectuelle du judaïsme vernaculaire était vivace et que celui-ci représentait « une civilisation de l'intériorité »[206]. En vertu d'une intéressante bipolarité, représentée — entre autres — par certains des ancêtres de l'écrivain israélien Amos Oz ; ces derniers avaient vécu non loin de Vilne. D'une part, la présence d'un jansénisme talmudique se cristallisant dans la figure sévère du Gaon de Vilne, symbole d'un courant orthodoxe ayant valu à cette ville le surnom de Jérusalem du Nord. D'autre part, bien après l'époque de l'illustre rabbin décisionnaire, par la création du *Bund* en 1897 et l'apparition de mouvements ouvriers israélites

204 Avrom Sutzkever : *Le Ghetto de Wilno – 1941-1944*, Denoël, Paris, 2013, p. 29.

205 Avrom Sutzkever : *Le Ghetto de Wilno – 1941-1944*, Denoël, Paris, 2013, p. 319.

206 Henri Minczeles, Yves Plasseraud et Suzanne Pourchier : *Les Litvaks – L'héritage universel d'un monde juif disparu*, La Découverte, Paris, 2008, p. 127.

d'extrême-gauche[207].

La contestation de la culture bourgeoise, relativement peu développée à Vienne ou à Paris, et la critique de l'assimilation l'accompagnant, suscitèrent entre autres en 1925 la fondation du YIVO, le fameux *Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut*. Si Albert Einstein et Sigmund Freud appartinrent à son comité de parrainage, il vit le jour ailleurs qu'à Vilne. À savoir à Berlin, là même où ses créateurs parlaient de l'Est et écrivaient sans cesse pour lui[208]. Contrairement à une légende tenace, le bureau principal du YIVO devait rester dans la capitale allemande. Ses activités en Lituanie étaient, entre autres, consacrées à l'étude de la musique populaire.

La bipolarité expliquée auparavant contribua de manière décisive à façonner la vie musicale juive de Vilne et, ce faisant, celle de son Ghetto. D'un côté, le jansénisme issu de la tradition du Gaon interdisait que l'on acceptât une forme telle que l'opéra[209], illustrée dans le reste de l'Europe par des personnalités comme Meyerbeer, Halévy ou Offenbach. Trois compositeurs juifs ayant choisi la voie de l'assimilation. De l'autre, la forte influence du mouvement ouvrier de l'Europe orientale ne recherchait pas en matière d'activités artistiques la *Leitkultur* à laquelle Gustav Mahler ou Arnold Schönberg avaient adhéré. Le judaïsme vernaculaire se vivait comme une expérimentation, comme un chantier destiné à des masses populaires aux moyens d'existence des plus modestes. À l'inverse de leurs coreligionnaires allemands, autrichiens, hongrois et tchécoslovaques, les travailleurs israélites de Vilne étaient les ressortissants d'un pays dépourvu d'une forte tradition musicale savante. La distance entretenue par nombre d'entre eux à l'égard de la musique liturgique pratiquée, entre autres, dans la Synagogue chorale de Vilne doit aussi être mentionnée ici.

De même que leur détachement face à l'art des *klezmorin*, perçu comme une

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207 Dès ses débuts, le *Bund* n'hésita pas à susciter des actions à caractère terroriste si les circonstances l'exigeaient. Ainsi, « quelques actions spectaculaires, comme l'attentat de Hirsh Leckert contre le gouverneur de Wilno, von Wahl, [en 1902] donnèrent au parti ses premiers martyrs » (Rachel Ertel : *Le Shtetl – La bourgade juive de Pologne*, Payot, Paris, 2011, p. 181). Leckert, devenu un mythe, devint l'objet de plusieurs drames en yiddish et le thème d'un poème de Sutzkever, intitulé *La mira enseignante*.

208 Anne-Christin Saß : *Berliner Luftmenschen – Osteuropäisch-jüdische Migranten in der Weimarer Republik*, Wallstein, Göttingen, 2012, pp. 261-266.

209 Il en allait évidemment de même pour le théâtre. Les mouvements d'émancipation proches du *Bund* ou intégrés à celui-ci ne tinrent pas compte de ces injonctions. D'ailleurs, une riche littérature théâtrale en yiddish s'était développée, comme on le sait, ici et là dès la seconde moitié du 19ème siècle. Elle devait aussi prospérer parmi les communautés installées aux États-Unis. L'auteur de la présente contribution eut le bonheur, alors qu'il se trouvait à Vilnius en décembre 2000, d'assister à la réouverture du Théâtre yiddish de la capitale lituanienne. Fruit de l'action énergique de l'homme politique Emanuelis Zingeris et de l'érudit Dovid Katz, cet événement se déroula dans un froid polaire. Il permit à ses participants de ressentir dans leur corps une partie des conditions de la vie quotidienne d'autrefois en Lituanie.

survivance des temps du *shtetl* et de son isolation du monde extérieur. Entrer dans le *mainstream* de la modernité était, chez les *craignant Dieu*, la marque d'un sacrilège. Ainsi, certain film en yiddish des années 1930 narrant la vie d'un jeune *hazan* ministre-officiant qui abandonnait le répertoire des chants à la gloire de l'Éternel pour devenir ténor d'opéra relatait-il une transgression sacrilège aux yeux des milieux de stricte observance !

Dernier pays d'Europe à avoir été christianisé aux alentours de l'an 1000 et n'ayant pas pour cette raison disposé de références anciennes en matière de musique sacrée et profane, dépourvu d'instruments de musique savante jusqu'au début du 16ème siècle alors que son voisin russe produisait déjà des chefs-d'œuvre sonores, la Lituanie possédait un patrimoine musical commun avec la Pologne. En effet, les deux pays furent unifiés entre le Moyen Âge et l'année 1772. Mais elle n'était ni l'Allemagne, ni l'Empire des Habsbourg, dont la culture musicale prit une envergure d'importance mondiale. Le premier compositeur lituanien bénéficiant d'une réelle audience à l'étranger fut **Čiurlionis**, disparu à l'âge de 36 ans en 1911. Il composa entre autres les poèmes symphoniques *Dans la forêt* et *La Mer*.

Autrement dit, le type social du compositeur et plus encore de la compositrice était encore, à la veille du déchaînement de 1939, une singularité en Lituanie. Il n'était pas une figure portée à la scène, de manière symbolique, par Richard Strauss dans le prologue de son opéra *Ariadne auf Naxos*. On sera d'autant plus sensible, dès lors, à l'histoire d'une certaine Mihal Bernstein, compositrice cachée parmi les égouts du Ghetto de Vilne. Elle passait ses journées à écouter « le clapotis des souris dans l'eau. […] Des bouts de verre, des morceaux de fer et des cailloux charriés par les eaux, joints aux bruits produits par les souris, créaient une harmonie qui inspira un opus à la compositrice »[210]. Nous ne connaîtrons jamais le titre de cette œuvre, comme nous n'en aurons jamais la partition. À l'inverse de pages laissées par Ilse Weber, compositrice ayant créé à Terezín.

Cinq ans avant la mort de **Čiurlionis**, donc en 1906, la vivace musique populaire lituanienne avait connu un moment fort lors de la création d'une chorale importante, toujours en activité aujourd'hui, *Skriaudžių kanklės*. En 1924, le gouvernement lança un Festival nommé **Dainų šventė** ou Fête des chants. Il devait se tenir une fois tous les cinq ans afin de promouvoir les traditions nationales. Ces traditions étaient forcément la marque de la majorité chrétienne,

210 Avrom Sutzkever : *Le Ghetto de Wilno – 1941-1944*, Denoël, Paris, 2013, p. 231.

non celle des Juifs du cru. D'autant que des violences antisémites avaient été perpétrées à Vilne en 1919. Comme nous le savons tous, le chant choral aura été, tant en Lituanie qu'en Estonie et en Lettonie, un moyen puissant de lutte contre l'occupant soviétique lors des événements libérateurs des années s'étant écoulées en 1989 et 1990. Quoi qu'il en soit, le magistère de la chanson populaire fut exercé avec force dans le Ghetto de Vilne.

On évoquera, entre autres, les chants révolutionnaires clamés, à l'occasion de la Fête du 1er mai 1943, dans le Ghetto de Vilne. Avrom Sutzkever et ses compagnons appartenaient à une Gauche de la Gauche, rompue aux principes de l'*agitprop* dont Hanns Eisler avait été, en Allemagne, un expert remarquable tandis que, dans la jeune Union Soviétique, ses homologues avaient déployé des talents analogues. Les manifestations culturelles organisées dans un tel contexte étaient donc très différentes de celles ayant cours — par exemple — dans le Ghetto de Lodz. Comme l'expose Saul Friedländer au long de sa somme *Le 3ème Reich et les Juifs*, des concerts symphoniques y eurent lieu en mars 1941, à l'occasion de la Fête de Pourim. Un pareil contexte n'avait pas autant cours à Vilne. On y avait des pratiques différentes, nées — en partie — dès les années 1870, au moment même où l'intelligentsia juive vernaculaire développe « un courant socialiste dont le berceau est l'École normale de Vilne »[211]

Le programme du 1er mai 1943 dans la cité lituanienne était conçu selon d'autres principes. Comportant également la lecture du poème *Prendre le fer* d'Avrom Sutzkever et une prestation du violoniste Rabinovitch, cette séquence était l'expression d'une forme de culture populaire préférant — comme en Union Soviétique — une succession de moments divers, un programme de variétés — au sens premier du terme — à une séance très élaborée. Une séance à l'allemande, pourrait-on dire. En effet, les Juifs du Ghetto de Vilne n'avaient jamais pu vivre dans l'illusion d'une symbiose forte entre Goethe et la Torah, dont un compositeur comme Franz Schreker avait été l'une des incarnations, symbiose au sujet de laquelle Gershom Scholem et « le très clairvoyant » Leo Baeck[212] avaient exprimé une contestation on ne peut plus légitime en affirmant que « l'histoire millénaire du judaïsme allemand touche [alors] à sa fin »[213].

Les combattants du Ghetto de Vilne étaient foncièrement différents de leurs

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211 Rachel Ertel : *Le Shtetl – La bourgade juive de Pologne*, Payot, Paris, 2011, p. 180.

212 Maurice-Ruben Hayoun : *Martin Buber – Une introduction*, Pocket, Paris, 2013, p. 316.

213 Ibidem.

coreligionnaires de bourgeois allemands jouant les trios avec piano de Brahms dans les *Kulturbünde*. Ils donnèrent, en outre, une incitation déterminée à une Résistance dominée par des valeurs issues du *Bund*. Les chorales et les orchestres constitués dans les camps français de Beaune-la-Rolande et de Pithiviers[214] procédaient, en ayant des Litvaks dans leurs rangs, en partie d'une pédagogie socialiste, d'une méthode d'éducation populaire telle qu'elle avait été aussi notamment appliquée en France durant le Front Populaire. Ou par Emanuel Ringelblum et le groupe *Oneg Shabbath* se réunissant, de ce fait, chaque samedi après-midi au Ghetto de Varsovie.

Autre exemple de contenu d'une manifestation organisée dans le Ghetto de Vilne et relatée par Avrom Sutzkever dans son *Journal* : une série de chansons populaires, un *Nocturne* de Chopin joué par la pianiste Sonia Rechtik et la scénarisation d'une nouvelle de Stefan Zweig intitulée *La Matriarche Rachel*. Il s'agissait, en l'espèce, de l'adaptation en yiddish[215] d'un conte drolatique intitulé *Rahel rechtet mit Gott* datant de 1927. Ici encore, cette succession d'éléments variés au cours d'une même séance ne faisait pas que juxtaposer la musique populaire, le répertoire savant, le piano, la voix chantée et la voix parlée grâce à l'arrangement en yiddish d'un texte écrit en *hochdeutsch* par l'un des plus grands stylistes de la langue allemande[216] de la première moitié du 20ème siècle. Ici encore, la tragédie en cours et une structuration particulière de manifestation artistique comme on en trouve notamment le cas dans des nouvelles d'Isaac Bashevis Singer devenaient une norme. On y retrouvait l'absence de « dichotomie entre le centre et la périphérie », représentative d'une société juive « structurellement pluri-centriste »[217].

En dépit des circonstances – interdiction faite aux Juifs de fréquenter les rues après trois heures de l'après-midi comme de posséder postes de radio et tourne-disques – en les excluant ainsi à la fois de la communauté des vivants et

214 Exemple d'une manifestation présentée à Pithiviers et structurée, si l'on peut dire, à la lituanienne : une première partie intitulée *Le roi des schnorers*, une seconde partie nommée Menachem Mendel à Pithiviers et une troisième partie confiée à la chorale du camp.

215 On ne saurait omettre de préciser, ici, que la presse d'expression yiddish avait été interdite en Russie et en Pologne depuis juillet 1915. Par ailleurs, le Haut Commandement allemand n'hésita pas, durant les opérations de la Première Guerre Mondiale, à faire distribuer des tracts en yiddish affirmant que les Juifs des territoires concernés avaient notamment le droit de publier journaux et revues dans la langue de leur choix. Deux décennies après, une telle attitude aurait été complétement inconcevable …

216 Autre sujet douloureux : la naissance du yiddish résulta de la langue allemande, quand bien même il devait s'agir de l'idiome parlé dans des temps reculés. Cette singularité a été abordée par nombre de commentateurs. On citera, au nombre de ceux-ci, Andreas Nachama et son ouvrage *Jiddisch im Berliner Jargon oder hebräische Sprachelemente im deutschen Wortschatz*, Stapp Verlag, Berlin, 1994, p. 23.

217 Rachel Ertel : *Le Shtetl – La bourgade juive de Pologne*, Payot, Paris, 2011, p. 254.

de la modernité , le besoin fondamental de la transmission du savoir ne fut abandonné à aucun moment. Tant à Vilne que dans d'autres lieux de souffrance et d'inquiétude, tels que parmi les hameaux proches du bourg français du Chambon-sur-Lignon où des enfants réfugiés fréquentaient un *Talmud Torah* clandestin et recevaient une formation générale comme artistique. Les enfermés du Ghetto de Vilne créèrent une école de musique où l'on dispensait des cours de piano, de violon et de chant[218]. Cent élèves la fréquentaient. Des concerts publics étaient organisés par la même école. Quelques éléments remarquables s'y produisaient. Ainsi, « Toybnhoyz, un enfant de 8 ans, et la violoniste Dinye Banyakovski, âgée de 11 ans, se distinguèrent »[219]. Ils incarnèrent le phénomène du *Wunderkind* dans un contexte où l'on était privé de tout et où l'on ne connut jamais l'exil luxueux d'un Erich-Wolfgang Korngold ou d'un Thomas Mann outre Atlantique.

Comment faisait-on pour disposer d'instruments de musique, alors que ceux-ci avaient été saisis par les nazis ? L'ingéniosité des Juifs de Vilne, leur ayant permis entre autres de réussir à fabriquer des médicaments comme de pétrir du pain, put y suppléer. Ainsi, au moment de l'expulsion des propriétaires d'appartements situés dans le périmètre urbain nous intéressant, des instruments avaient été enterrés. Avrom Sutzkever :

> « On put se glisser dans un égout situé sous les rues murées du ghetto pour aller déterrer les instruments et les ramener au ghetto. […] Ces musiciens étaient astreints aux travaux forcés en ville. Ils rapportèrent un piano qu'ils avaient trouvé dans un appartement vide où des Juifs avaient habité. Chaque musicien avait pris clandestinement en charge un morceau du piano. Dans le ghetto, un spécialiste avait reconstitué l'instrument »[220].

Le cas du piano est paradigmatique. D'abord parce qu'il était un symbole à la fois culturel et technique du 19ème siècle, le siècle de l'art et de l'industrie portés à un niveau d'excellence. Ensuite, parce qu'il se substituait au violon,

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218 Comme l'expliquent divers travaux d'érudition, le chant joua un rôle important dans les Ghettos, et plus particulièrement à l'intérieur de celui de Vilne. Chœurs chantant en hébreu ou en yiddish, formations interprétant des chansons hassidiques avec orchestre, la palette des modes d'expression était très étendue. Shmerke Kaczerginsky, ayant réussi à s'enfuir du Ghetto de Vilne pour s'intégrer aux rangs de la Résistance, y recueillit notamment diverses chansons. Il put, à New York et en 1948, publier celles-ci comme d'autres sous le titre de *Chants des ghettos et des camps*. On sait aussi que le plus célèbre chant yiddish du Ghetto de Vilne est l'impérissable *Ne dis jamais que tu prends ce chemin pour la dernière fois*.

219 Avrom Sutzkever : *Le Ghetto de Wilno – 1941-1944*, Denoël, Paris, 2013, p. 175.

220 Avrom Sutzkever : *Le Ghetto de Wilno – 1941-1944*, Denoël, Paris, 2013, p. 180.

l'instrument que l'on pouvait emporter facilement en cas de pogromes, et qui a donné au monde nombre de virtuoses admirables. Enfin, parce que la liste des géants juifs du piano était aussi, dans les années 1940, déjà longue. Les noms de Vladimir Horowitz et d'Arthur Rubinstein, héritiers de figures comme Ignaz Moscheles, Anton Rubinstein ou Félix Blumenfeld œuvrant à la suite de Chopin et de Paderewski, deux emblèmes majeurs de la culture polonaise, le rappellent facilement.

La même ingéniosité permit de procéder, en décembre 1941, à la constitution d'un orchestre symphonique du Ghetto, dont le directeur musical se nommait Wolf Durmashkin. L'un de ses instrumentistes était le violoncelliste Hofmekler, ayant été par ailleurs chef de l'Orchestre de la Radio de Vilne. Cette phalange orchestrale était forte d'une quarantaine de membres lors de la liquidation du Ghetto. Son premier concert eut lieu le 18 janvier 1941 en mémoire des Juifs assassinés, et ce sous la baguette de Yaakov Gerstheyn[221].

Selon Avrom Sutzkever, l'orchestre du Ghetto avait un répertoire varié. Figuraient à celui-ci l'ouverture des *Noces de Figaro* de Mozart ou le *Concerto pour piano et orchestre en mi mineur* de Chopin. Comment avait-on fait pour se procurer le matériel d'orchestre — l'ensemble des partitions nécessaires à l'exécution — de ces œuvres ? S'agissait-il d'arrangements, d'adaptations ? Probablement. À moins qu'une bibliothèque spécialisée ait été mise en sûreté. Cette hypothèse est fiable, si l'on songe au récit de Marcel Reich-Ranicki en ce qui concerne — cependant — le Ghetto de Varsovie dont il parvint à s'échapper en compagnie de sa future épouse.

On en arrive maintenant à une constatation étonnante : selon Sutzkever, l'orchestre symphonique du Ghetto de Vilne jouait par ailleurs des partitions telles que les *Cinquièmes Symphonies* de Dvorak et de Tchaïkovski nécessitant — dans des conditions normales — au moins soixante exécutants. Il mettait aussi la *Neuvième Symphonie* de Beethoven à ses programmes. Même si de pareils effectifs ne correspondaient pas aux usages professionnels adoptés dans les sanctuaires musicaux de la *Mitteleuropa*, ils étaient — en utilisant une comparaison — nettement plus confortables que ceux dont on disposa à Terezín pour une exécution du *Requiem* de Verdi : un seul piano y jouait la réduction — forcément à deux mains — d'un orchestre d'une centaine d'instrumentistes.

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221 Le même Yaakov Gerstheyn reconstitua, par ailleurs, un chœur d'étudiants.

Ceci exposé, le nom de Beethoven pose à lui seul un problème singulier. Les musiciens se produisant dans les *jüdischen Kulturbünde* mis en place dans les grandes villes allemandes avant le début de la Seconde Guerre mondiale n'avaient pas le droit de jouer des partitions de compositeurs allemands tels que le même Beethoven, Brahms ou Wagner. Les nazis considéraient, en effet à l'imitation du même Richard Wagner que « le Juif est le démon plastique de la déchéance de l'humanité ». On leur interdisait, dès lors, de chanter des lieder sur des textes de Goethe et de Schiller, de chanter des cantates de Bach ou encore de jouer des quatuors du même Beethoven. L'ensemble de cette proscription s'étendait forcément à sa musique symphonique. Pour les nazis, les Juifs s'étaient emparés de ce qui n'aurait jamais dû leur appartenir, comme au reste des êtres humains.

D'où la violence s'abattant sur eux, en particulier quand ils s'occupaient de musique. La cantatrice Liouba Levitzki, personnage principal d'un opéra devant être représenté dans le Ghetto de Vilne, fut passée par les armes pour avoir tenté d'y introduire un sachet de petits pois destinés à nourrir sa mère. Son assassinat empêcha la présentation de l'ouvrage lyrique ayant été suscité par son rayonnement artistique. On ne tint pas compte un seul instant qu'elle était diplômée de la prestigieuse Académie de musique de Vienne. Un jeune homme fut tué en pleine rue parce qu'il dérangeait le SS Kittel, le liquidateur du Ghetto de Vilne, tandis que ce dernier était au piano. « Pendant qu'une main abattait le garçon, l'autre ne cessait de jouer »[222]. On retrouvera en cet acte barbare la dimension pour le moins ambigüe de la musique dans l'Allemagne nazie. Au lieu d'être une consolatrice, elle devenait un instrument de torture. Au lieu de rassembler, elle divisait l'humanité. Cet aspect terrifiant, tragique, mortifère et wagnérien devait conduire à ce que dans le Berlin en flammes du début 1945 la scène finale du *Crépuscule des dieux* se substitue aux lumières de l'Allemagne de Weimar, après que la civilisation juive de l'Europe centrale et orientale ait été éradiquée.

222 Avrom Sutzkever : *Le Ghetto de Wilno – 1941-1944*, Denoël, Paris, 2013, p. 236. Le monstrueux Kittel, nous apprend aussi Sutzkever, était diplômé d'une école de théâtre établie à Berlin. Né en 1922, il était alors un jeune tortionnaire. Lors de ses déplacements effectués hors de Vilne dans le but de perpétrer des carnages, il emmenait toujours un saxophone, instrument dont il aimait à jouer le dimanche sur les ondes de la radio nazie. Or, le saxophone n'était pas en odeur de sainteté dans l'Allemagne hitlérienne. Représentatif de la culture américaine et donc du jazz il était considéré comme un instrument lié aux Noirs et, de ce fait, à une prétendue décadence dont Rosenberg, Goebbels et leurs amis ne cessaient de dénoncer les dangers.

Le chant populaire yiddish en Pologne (1920–1943) : des shtetls et cabarets aux ghettos et camps

Lloica Czackis

Résumé

La publication revient sur les origines du chant et de la vie culturelle yiddish, sur leur importance dans la petite ville de Vilne, située au cœur du yiddishland, en comparaison avec d'autres communautés juives comme celle de Varsovie. Dans les ghettos, la musique, comme le théâtre, sont omniprésents malgré la misère, la désolation, la mort des êtres chers, l'incertitude. Dans les camps de concentration et d'extermination, arrachés à leur monde religieux et culturel, les juifs pénètrent pour la première fois l'intimité ancestrale du yiddish, pour se nourrir, physiquement et spirituellement. Dans la Shoah, la chanson yiddish élève les esprits par le biais de l'empathie.

Dans la ville de Vilna, le poète Yosl Kotliar écrivait avant la Shoah :

> Chante pour moi une petite chanson en yiddish, elle éveillera la joie et non pas la misère. Chante pour moi une chanson de paix, d'une paix réelle et non pas illusoire.

> Joue, musicien, tu connais ma pensée, mon espoir joue
> pour moi cette petite chanson pleine de sentiment.[223]

Vilna (Vilnius, aujourd'hui en Lituanie), est une ville située avant la guerre dans la région appelée Lite, ou Litvakie. C'est le cœur du yiddishland. On l'appelle la « Jérusalem de Lite ». Des nombreux intellectuels y nourrissent la florissante littérature yiddish ; un institut scientifique, le YIVO, y est fondé en 1925 avec l'objectif d'étudier et standardiser la langue, pour faciliter son enseignement et pour la préserver. Moins de vingt ans plut tôt, lors de la conférence de Czenowitz de 1908, le yiddish acquiert son statut de « langue nationale du peuple Juif ». Elle n'était considérée jusqu'à là qu'un argot, un dialecte mineur destiné notamment aux femmes.

Des grandes plûmes comme celles de Yitskhok Leibush Peretz, Sholem Ash, Israel Joshua Singer et Sholem Aleichem reprennent la langue vernaculaire des Juifs ashkénazes. C'est la gloire de la littérature yiddish.

Entretemps, le yiddish continue à exister dans la rue, dans le commerce, à l'école… C'est la langue des chansons des mariages, accompagnées de *klezmorim*, de musiciens.

> *Chante pour moi,* nous dit Kotliar, *chante en yiddish : ainsi des*
> *grands et de petits comprendront les paroles de cette chanson,*
> *et la transmettront de bouche à oreille.*

Le poème est mis en musique par le compositeur du théâtre yiddish Henech Kon, devenant une chanson très populaire, non seulement à Vilna mais tout le long de la yiddishkayt, jusqu'à Moscou et Vladivostok. Elle est chantée lors de revues dans de petits théâtres comme l'Azalel de Varsovie et l'Ararat de Lodz, et aussi interprétée par le célèbre duo Dzigan et Szumacher dans le film « Di freylekhe kabtsonim », tourné à Varsovie en 1937[224].

Bientôt la chanson sera reprise au ghetto de Kovno, aujourd'hui Kaunas, aussi en Lituanie. Le journaliste Ruven Tsarfat, qui était impliqué dans la vie littéraire dans le ghetto, adapte les paroles de Kotliar, donnant un nouveau sens à l'esprit déjà présent dans la chanson.Comparons les paroles :

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223 Chanson "*Shpil zhe mir a lidele in yidish" ('Chante pour moi une petite chanson en yiddish')*, Paroles de Yosl Kotliar (1908-1962) ; musique de Henech Kon (1898-1972), composée a Vilnius (Vilna) avant la IIème Guerre Mondiale. Traduit du yiddish par Lloica Czackis.

224 Film « Weseli biedacy » (tr. Française 'Les heureux misérables' ; tr. Anglaise 'Jolly Paupers'), tournée en Pologne en 1937 par le réalisateur Zygmunt Turkow. Stevens, Matthew: « Jewish film directory », Flicks books, 1992.

Shpil zhe mir a lidele in yiddish (Vilna, avant la Seconde Guerre mondiale)

Paroles : Yosl Kotliar (1908-1962) / Musique : Henekh Kon (1898/ 1972)

Shpil zhe mir a lidele in yiddish,
Dervekn zol es freyd un nit keyn khidesh,
Az ale, groys un kleyn,
Zoln kenen dos farshteyn
Fun moyl tsu moyl dos lidele zol geyn!

Play me a little yiddish song
Let it bring joy and no misery
Let everyone - the old and the young
Will understand it
Let it be sung from mouth to mouth

Shpil, shpil, klezmerl, shpil,
Veyst dokh, vos ikh meyn un vos ikh vil;
Shpil, shpil ! Shpil a lidele far mir,
Shpil a lidele mit harts un mit gefil!

Play, little musician/klezmer, play,
You know my thoughts and my wishes
Play a tune for me,
Play a little song with spirit!

A lidele on ziftsn un on trern,
Shpil azoy, az ale zoln hern,
Az ale zoln zen:
ikh leb un zingen ken,
Shener nokh un beser, vi geven !

A little song without sighs or tears,
Sing for everyone to hear it,
And for everyone to see me
still alive and singing,
Singing better than I used to sing

Shpil, shpil, klezmerl, shpil...

Play, little klezmer, play:..

Shpil zhe mir a lidl vegn sholem !
Zol shoyn zayn sholem - nit keyn kholem !
Az felker, groys un kleyn,
Zoln kenen dos farshteyn,
On krign un milkhomes zikh bageyn...

Play me a song about peace
May it be real peace, and not an illusion
May all nations - great and small –
Will understand that -
How to live without wars…

Shpil, shpil, klezmerl, shpil...

Play, little klezmer, play:..

Lomir zingen s'lidele tsuzamen,
Vi gute fraynt, vi kinder fun eyn mamen!
Mayn eyntsiker farlang:
S'zol klingen fray un frank
In alemens gezang - oykh mayn gezang!

Let us sing this little song together,
As good friends, as children of one mother
My only wish is:
May this song be heard
among all other songs in the general chorus!

Shpil, shpil, klezmerl, shpil...

Play, little klezmer, play:..

Shpil zhe mir a tango oys in yiddish (ghetto de Kovno)
Paroles : Ruven Tsarfat (journaliste assassiné pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale), traduction de Bella Szwarzman-Carnota et Lloica Czackis.

Shpil zhe mir a tango oys in yidish, Zol dos zayn misnagdish, oder kh'sidish, Az di bobele aleyn, zol kenen dos farshteyn Un take a tentsele geyn.	*Play for me a tango in Yiddish,* *Let it be Misnagdish or Chassidic,* *So that the grandmother, will understand it,* *And indeed, dance to its tune.*
Shpil, shpil, klezmerl, shpil Vi a yidish harts hot gefil, Shpil, shpil mir a lidele, oy, shpil, Shpil, ikh bet dikh, mit neshome, mit gefil!	*Play, little klezmer, play...* *The way a Jewish heart must feel;* *Play a "little tango" for me, oh play,* *Play, I beg you, with soul and meaning.*
Shpil zhe mir a tango oys fun pleytim, Fun dem folk tsezeytn un tseshpreytn, Az kinder, groys un kleyn, zoln kenen dos farshteyn, Un take a tentsele geyn!	*Play for me a tango about refugees,* *About a people scattered, banished, cast out,* *So that children, big and small, will understand it,* *And indeed, dance to its tune!*
Shpil, shpil, klezmerl, shpil... Shpil zhe mir a tango, nor nisht arish, Zol dos zayn nisht arish, nisht barbarish, Az di sonim zoln zen, az ikh nokh tantsn ken,	*Play, little klezmer, play...* *Play for me a tango, but not an arian one,* *Let it not be arian or barbarian,* *So that our enemies shall see* *that I can still dance;*
Un take a tentsele mit bren!	*And indeed, join the dance with zest!*
Shpil, shpil, klezmerl, shpil... Shpil zhe mir a tango oys fun sholem, Zol dos zayn a sholem nisht keyn kholem, Az Hitler mit zayn raykh, oy di kapore glaykh,	*Play, little klezmer, play...* *Play for me a tango about peace,* *Let it be peace and not a dream,* *That Hitler with his Reich* *[will expiate their sins]*
Oy vey, dos zayn a tentsele far aykh!	*Oh, that will be a little dance for you all!*
Shpil, shpil, klezmerl, shpil...	*Play, little klezmer, play...*

Revenons aux années qui précédent la guerre : qui chante en yiddish ? Certainement la grand-mère de notre chanson, certains artistes et intellectuels impliqués dans leurs communautés et aussi les partisans du Bund, le mouvement politique qui encourageait une réaffirmation de la culture juive locale, contrairement à certaines fractions du sionisme comme le *Poaley Tsion*, qui privilégient l'hébreu.

Mais une très grande partie de Juifs habitant de grandes métropoles comme Varsovie se fondent dans le monde cosmopolite qui les entoure. Ils parlent la langue polonaise, s'habillent selon les codes de la mode, fréquentent et sont perçus comme des Polonais. Ils vivent une identité mixte, polonaise vers

l'extérieur, Juive au foyer. Petit à petit même dans l'intimité familiale on devient assimilé.

En réalité, la communauté juive de Varsovie avant la guerre est tellement large - environ 350 000 Juifs, soit 1/3 de la population qu'elle englobe un grand spectre de niveaux d'assimilation religieuse et culturelle.

Il y existe, d'une part, un grand nombre de petites salles de théâtre destinées au publique yiddishophone, comme l'*Azalel* déjà évoqué, le *Folksteater*, les cabarets *Ararat* et *Di yidishe band*, le théâtre de marionnettes *Khad Gadyo* et de petites troupes de théâtre itinérantes d'avant-garde comme le *Sambatyon* et le *Yung teater*. On y propose des pièces de théâtre, des farces, des revues musicales… Il existe deux écoles et une presse spécialisée en théâtre yiddish, ainsi que des syndicats d'acteurs.

Mais d'autre part Varsovie est aussi témoin d'un nouveau phénomène, le boom de la musique légère qui traverse l'Europe. Quand le swing, le jazz et le tango deviennent le chouchou de Paris, les Polonais, bien informés, souscrits à des magazines criant la dernière mode en France, eux ils n'y manquent pas.

Selon le musicologue Marian Fuks[225], la plupart des musiciens dans la Pologne d'avant guerre, tant dans la musique classique comme dans la légère notamment des orchestres de swing et de tango, étaient des juifs. L'Orchestre Philarmonique de Varsovie, fondée au début du siècle avec presque la moitié de musiciens Juifs, verrait ensuite passer aux pupitres des familles Juives entières comme les Szulc, les Ginsburg, et les Szpilman, dont on connait un peu plus de nos jours. C'est aussi le cas dans ce qu'on appelle « l'industrie du divertissement » : les producteurs dans l'industrie cinématographique, et les compositeurs de musique légère et de films. On peut citer parmi les compositeurs de très grands noms comme Jerzy Petersburski, Henryk Wars, et les frères Henryk et Artur Gold.

Est-ce une coïncidence ? Plusieurs explications seraient possibles l'interdiction aux Juifs d'exercer certains métiers comme la médecine et le droit… Mais si l'on cherche plus loin, il semble clair que la présence des Juifs dans le milieu artistique aurait été plus un choix qu'une obligation.

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225 Fuks, Marian : *Muzyka ocalona. Judaica polskie*. Varsovie, 1989. Traduction en anglais de Maria Pilatowicz (http://www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/PMJ/issue/6.1.03/Fuks.html).

Varsovie, comme d'autres grands centres urbains de l'est européen comme Lwow (Lemberg), Cracovie et Prague, sont baignés dans le monde exotique qui évoquent les rythmes et les paroles du dénommé *shlagier*. On n'hésite pas à parler du désert mexicain, des plages à Rio, de belles femmes tziganes et des oranges andalouses… Le soleil et les couleurs pénètrent la sobriété de l'entre deux guerres.

On vit loin des capitales de la mode comme Paris, Londres ou même de Berlin, mais par la chanson et le film on arrive à s'évader. L'identité urbaine devient plus cosmopolite.

Vivre cette dichotomie est quelque chose de connu pour les Juifs. En participant au phénomène de la musique légère, ils vont socialiser avec des non juifs et parler leur langue, au moins en dehors du foyer familial. C'est pourquoi le yiddish du milieu communautaire et le polonais de la musique populaire, ne se croisent pratiquement pas.

De ce fait, si une grande partie des auteurs et interprètes du tango polonais étaient des Juifs, on ne connait que quelques uns en langue yiddish.

Ce phénomène est spécifique à Varsovie et à la Pologne en général, se détachant des autres deux métropoles dont leurs communautés juives seraient comparables en taille : Buenos Aires et New York. Au sein de ces villes du « nouveau monde » les communautés yiddishophones arrivent plus aisément à concilier tradition et modernité.

Le cabaret « Morskie Oko » de Varsovie, très fréquenté à l'époque, est le foyer artistique des auteurs juifs de tangos polonais célèbres : Jerzy Petersburski, Andrzej Włast et tant d'autres… Le théâtre se trouve ensuite au centre du grand ghetto.

Le ghetto de Varsovie, le plus étendu dans les territoires occupés par les allemands, est néanmoins surpeuplé. Des centaines de musiciens, comme le reste de la population, s'y trouvent renfermés et dépossédés de moyens de survie. Ils jouent dans les rues, dans les quelques salles fonctionnant encore malgré les extrêmes difficultés, et en 1940 et 1941 on crée un Orchestre Symphonique.

Il semble difficile d'imaginer la place de la musique, du chant, de la poésie devant la misère, la désolation, la mort des êtres chers, l'incertitude. Cependant, on sait par des témoignages et des publications d'après guerre que la musique

et le théâtre y sont très présents.

Des camps de concentration et d'extermination comme Auschwitz, Terezín, Janowska, Mauthausen, Dachau et Buchenwald ont formé des orchestres, les *Lagernkapellen*, où des musiciens amateurs jouaient avec des professionnels établis. L'arrivée aléatoire d'instrumentalistes a produit des ensembles musicaux non traditionnels, avec parfois seulement des guitares, des accordéons et des tambourins. Leur répertoire s'étendait de la musique classique et dodécaphonique au jazz et aux danses de salon, y compris le tango.

Des juifs jusqu'à alors assimilés religieusement et culturellement se retrouvent brutalement arrachés de leur monde. L'exotisme disparait : plus de plages brésiliennes associées à la familiarité de l'argot polonais ; le monde se raccourcit. On ne peut que revenir aux sources, à l'essentiel. Se nourrir physiquement et spirituellement. On pénètre pour la première fois l'intimité ancestrale du yiddish.

Dans le camp de Terezienstadt, le compositeur tchèque Victor Ullmann, né de parents juifs convertis au catholicisme avant sa naissance, compose pour la première fois des arrangements musicaux des airs en yiddish et en hébreux, allant du folklore jusqu'à la musique Hassidique. C'est dans l'enfermement, aux portes d'une fin qu'il soupçonne probablement, qu'il se rapproche du monde juif.

En contrepartie, le Juifs yiddishophones se rapprochent, eux, de la musique qu'ils connaissent d'avant la guerre. Les chants des prisonniers dans des ghettos et camps reproduisent le style musical du pays d'origine des prisonniers, mélangés aux rythmes à la mode comme le jazz et le tango. Leurs paroles écrites généralement dans la langue commune de la majorité d'entre eux, le yiddish, mais aussi en hébreu, en russe, en polonais, en français, en roumain, en hongrois et en allemand décrivent les quartiers surpeuplés, le manque d'alimentation, les persécutions et la dégradation de conditions de vie des prisonniers.

De nombreuses chansons sont des chansons de contrefactum : le contrefactum est une pratique familière depuis le Moyen Âge, particulièrement en temps de guerre ou lors de manifestations populaires. Une chanson populaire, c'est-à-dire dont sa musique et ses paroles sont faciles à retenir et connues par un grand nombre de personnes, est reprise, les paroles transformées et chantées

dans un contexte différent de l'original. Il n'est pas rare d'en écouter de nos jours aux stades de football, dans les publicités…

A Vilna, la célèbre chanson de théâtre yiddish *Papirosn* de Herman Yabokloff a été adapté par une fillette nommée Rikle Glezer, qui a survécu à la guerre, pour décrire le magnifique mais terrible jour d'été quand le ghetto a été créé.

Es iz geven a zumer-tog / It was a summer day[226]

Es iz geven a zumer-tog	It was a summer day,
Vi shtendik zunik-sheyn,	As always full of sun,
Un di natur hot dan gehat	And nature was then
In zikh azoyfil kheyn,	So full of charm.
Es hobn feygelekh gezungen,	Birds were singing,
Freylekh zikh arumgeshprungen,	Cheerfully and hopping around,
In geto hot men undz geheysn geyn.	And we were ordered into the ghetto.
Okh shtelt zikh far vos s'iz fun undz gevorn!	*Oh, imagine what became of us!*
Farshtanen hobn mir: s'iz alts farloyrn.	*We understood: all was lost,*
Nisht geholfn undzer betn,	*Of no help were our pleas*
Az s'zol emitser undz retn-	*For rescue,*
Farlozn hobn mir dokh undzer heym.	*We took leave of our home.*
[...] Gevezn zaynen mir tsufil	[...] We were too many,
Bafoyln hot der har	So the master commanded
Tsu brengen yidn fun arum	Jews to be brought from the vicinity,
Un shisn oyf Ponar.	And be shot at Ponar.
Pust zaynen gevorn shtiber,	The homes became empty,
Ober ful derfar di griber.	But the ditches, therefore, became full,
Der soyne hot dergreykht zayn groysn tsil.	The enemy had reached his great goal.
Oyf Ponar itst zet men oyf di vegn	*At Ponar one now sees on the roads*
Zakhn, hitlen durkhgenetst fun regn,	*Things, hats, soaked through the rain.*
Dos zaynen zakhn fun karbones,	*These are things of the victims.*
Fun di heylike neshomes,	*Of the holy souls,*
Di erd hot zey oyf eybik tsugedrekt.	*The earth has covered them forever.*

226 Shmerke Kaczerginsky: *Lider fin di getos un lagern*, New York 1948. Traduction de Bella Szwarzman-Carnota et de Lloica Czackis

Un itst iz vider zunik-sheyn,	And now it's sunnily beautiful once more,
Shmekt prakhtful alts arum,	Everything around here smells splendid.
Un mir zaynen farpaynikte	And we are tortured ones,
Un laydn ale shtum.	And all suffer in silence.
Opgeshnitn fun der velt,	Cut off from the world,
Mit hoykhe moyern farshtelt,	Hidden behind high walls,
A shtral fun hofnung dervekt zikh koym.	A ray of hope barely stirs.

Texte publié dans Kaczerginsky, Shmerke : *Lider fin di getos un lagern*, New York 1948. Traduction de Bella Szwarzman-Carnota et de Lloica Czackis.

Un autre texte qui ose l'espoir est celui du « Tango d'Auschwitz ». Selon Shmerke Kaczerginsky, ancien partisan de Vilna et auteur du livre « Chants des ghettos et des camps de concentration », ce serait aussi un chant de contrefactum. Kaczerginsky publie en 1948 sa traduction en yiddish du texte adapté à Auschwitz du tango polonais de pré-guerre *Niewolnicze tango* ('Tango d'esclave')[227]. L'auteur de cette adaptation qui a été transmise à Kaczerginsky par Irke Yanovsky, une survivante du ghetto de Vilna aurait été une fille de 12 ans morte ensuite dans le camp :

Der tango fun Oshvientshim / The tango from Auschwitz[228]

Mir hobn tangos, fokstrotn, un melodyes	We were singing and dancing tangos, foxtrots
Gezungen un getantst nokh far dem krig.	And melodies already before the war.
Di tsarte lider, tseklungene, farbenkte,	The tender songs, resonant and with longing,
Hobn mit libe undz dem kop farvigt.	Were swaying our heads with love.
Un itst milkhome, keyner shaft keyn lider	And now in war nobody creates any songs
Fun yene yunge yorn in der shtot.	Of those young years in the city.
Zing oyf, o meydl, an ander lidl,	Sing, oh girl, another little song
Fun teg un nekht in lager hinter drot.	About days and nights in the camp behind the wires.
Undzer shklafn-tango - unter knut fun shleger,	*Our slave tango – under the whip of the beater,*
O der shklafn-tango fun dem Oshvientshimer lager.	*Our slave tango from the Auschwitz camp.*
Shtolene shpizn fun di vekhter khayes -	*Spears of steel from the guards, these animals,*
O, es rufn di frayhayt un di tsayt di fraye.	*Oh, freedom and free time are calling out.*

227 Michal M. Borwicz (comp.): *Pieśń ujdzie cało ('Les chant survivera')*. Cracovie, Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna w Polsce, 1948, p. 262

228 Shmerke Kaczerginsky: *Lider fin di getos un lagern*, New York 1948. Traduction de Bella Szwarzman-Carnota et de Lloica Czackis

Der neger nemt bald aher zayn mandoline,	The black man soon takes up his mandoline,
Un vet bald oyfdrimplen zayn lidl do,	And will soon start to play his little song here,
Un der englender, frantsoyz zingen a nign,	And the Englishman and Frenchman sing a melody,
Vet fun troyer vern a trio.	So a trio will arise out of this sadness.
Un oykh der polak a nem tut bald zayn fayfl	And also the Pole soon takes up his whistle
Un er vet gebn filn gor der velt, -	And he will fill the world.
Vet dos gezang dan ontsindn di hertser,	The song will light up the hearts,
Vos lekhtsn nokh der frayhayt vos zey felt.	Which are longing for freedom, for those who lack it.
Undzer shklafn-tango - unter knut fun shleger…	*Our slave tango – under the whip of the beater…*

L'art et la musique ont une présence permanente au sein du peuple Juif. Ils aident à s'exprimer, à se comprendre, à transmettre. La musique figure dans chaque fête religieuse, dans chaque événement de la vie d'un homme, elle est un métier, un moyen d'adaptation à un nouveau pays ou milieu... Le chant devient la parole d'un peuple en constante évolution.

Pendant la Shoah, la musique et en particulier le chant sont encore plus présents. Le chant yiddish devient un moyen de résistance spirituelle, un rappel de temps « normaux », une source de courage.

Si l'existence de musique « savante » dans des ghettos et des camps de concentration est aujourd'hui connue, si elle peut être étudiée et interprétée tout en restant fidèle à l'intention artistique des auteurs, c'est surtout grâce à l'existence de partitions. Mais la musique populaire, les chansons yiddish en particulier, ont rarement été notées pendant la Shoah. Nos sources sont des témoignages, des enregistrements et des publications d'après-guerre. Il est triste de constater qu'un très grand nombre de chansons ont péri avec leurs auteurs.

La chanson yiddish pendant la Shoah n'a pas les mêmes objectifs ou fonctions que la musique savante. Elle n'est pas conçue ou chantée avec une recherche esthétique. Elle n'élève pas les esprits par le biais de l'art, sinon de l'empathie.

Cabaret and the Art of Survival at the Transit Camp Westerbork

Dr Edward Hafer

Abstract

From July 1943 to June 1944, the Dutch transit camp Westerbork hosted one of the finest cabarets in Europe. The Gruppe Bühne, as it came to be known, featured celebrated performers from the Berlin cabaret scene who fled to the Netherlands when anti-Jewish legislation effectively banned them from the German stage. Pianist Erich Ziegler's unpublished, postwar report on the camp's theatrical activities chronicles the origins of this group and suggests that the productions were skillfully designed to curry favor with the camp leadership in hopes that their success might ensure the safety and survival of the participants. This essay offers an overview of the performances, considers contemporary reactions, and examines the oddly symbiotic relationship between the performers and the camp commandant, who viewed the productions as a status symbol that earned him prestige in the eyes of Nazi officials in the Hague.

From July 1943 to June 1944, the transit camp Westerbork in the northeastern Netherlands hosted one of the finest cabarets in Europe.[229] The *Gruppe Bühne*, as it came to be known, featured celebrated performers from the

229 I would like to thank Claude Ringer, Mimi Adam, and Alan Ehrlich for leading me to some of the primary source material referenced here. I am also grateful for the generous assistance I received at the NIOD Instituut voor

Berlin cabaret scene who fled to the Netherlands when anti-Jewish legislation effectively banned them from the German stage. Pianist Erich Ziegler's unpublished, postwar report on the camp's theatrical activities chronicles the origins of this group and suggests that the productions provided much more than recreation. At Westerbork, performing literally became a matter of life and death.[230]

Contemporary documents paint a curiously close relationship between the artists and their captors. Camp leadership was so enamored with the initial performances that it gave the revue stars bountiful resources to mount a series of lavish productions shows the prisoners conceived and created, in part, out of a quest for survival. As the cabarets expanded, the artists used their success to curry favor with the commandant, and, in turn, they were granted more privileges. The relationship between the revue stars and their fellow prisoners was understandably more complicated. The performances provided a welcomed respite from the terror of daily life, but making merriment amidst pervasive misery led to ambivalent feelings among prisoners who were faced with the prospect of enjoying a lively show at the precise moments that friends and family members rolled eastward to their death. Personal accounts of the revue participants and contemporary observers illuminate a complex web of emotions and calculations that placed cabaret at the center of camp consciousness. For some in attendance, the revues represented a brief escape from grim reality; for the camp's upper administration, they were a point of pride that earned bragging rights with SS officials in the Hague. For the performers themselves, their art provided the only glimmer of hope that they might be spared from the weekly transports.

The Dutch government opened Camp Westerbork in 1939 in the sparsely-populated province of Drenthe to house the large influx of German Jews seeking refuge after Kristallnacht. For three years, camp administrative duties fell to Dutch authorities, but on July 1, 1942, the German military assumed control of daily operations. This change would ultimately spell disaster for nearly 107,000 of the 140,000 Jews residing in the Netherlands who would pass

Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies, the Theater Instituut Nederland, Yad Vashem, and, in particular, from José Martin and Guido Abuys at the Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork. Thanks also to Marion Schmidt and William Odom for their help with some of the German translations.

230 Erich Ziegler, "Bericht über die 'Gruppe Buehne' im Lager Westerbork," July 28, 1946, unpublished document from the collection at the Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork. A scan of the document is available here: http://tinyurl.com/mfgum9q or http://www.wo2muziek.nl/nl/Overzicht%20kampen%20Nederland/Kamp%20Westerbork%2C%20culturele%20leven/Wegwijzer%20Kamp%20Westerbork/Muziek-%20en%20cabaretleven/128.html.

through the camp over the next three years.[231]

Westerbork was designated as a *Judendurchgangslager* (Jewish Transit Camp), a holding facility designed to keep inmates until they could be processed to larger camps in the East. Although no systematic executions were carried out at Westerbork, the specter of death was never far from the prisoners' minds. Two weeks after the German government gained control, they began a series of weekly transports to camps such as Auschwitz, Sobibór, Theresienstadt, Mauthausen, and Bergen-Belsen. Presiding over these deportations from October 1942 was Albert Konrad Gemmeker, an insurance agent turned policeman who was quickly promoted to *Obersturmführer*. According to contemporary accounts, he was a callous, icy bureaucrat who valued order above all else.[232] Far from a micro-manager, his engagement with deportation lists was minimal. He left that responsibility to the German Jews in charge of Westerbork's daily administration, though he reviewed the lists and maintained the right to add or subtract names as he saw fit. According to survivor Jacob Boas, "Anyone who in whatever manner offended him personally would be put on the list. It happened to the gardener who failed to doff his cap to him and to the parent whose child broke a window. It happened to the young woman whom he overheard impugn Germany and to the fifty inmates of one barrack who were seized because a boy in blue pajamas hid himself in a tent in order to escape the train."[233] As long as Gemmeker could fulfill the weekly transportation order from the Hague, he was able to dedicate more attention to leisure activities. While he demonstrated no particular love for the Classical music played by the camp orchestra,[234] his support of cabaret — both personal and financial — led to a remarkable series of six full-scale revues staged between July 1943 and June 1944:[235]

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231 Fewer than 5,000 Westerbork prisoners survived the war, including only nine cast members from the cabarets: Hannelore Cahn (performer, Westerbork Girls), Jetty Cantor (singer, violinist), Maurice Cantor (orchestra), Catherina Frank (performer, Westerbork Girls), Leo Kok (scenery designer, artist), Hans Margules (scenery designer, artist), Camilla Spira (performer), Louis de Wijze (performer), and Alexander Lothar Ringer (performer). Alan Ehrlich, e-mail message to author, January 28, 2011.

232 Jacob Boas, *Boulevard des Misères: The Story of Transit Camp Westerbork* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1985), 16-21.

233 Ibid., 29.

234 Ibid., 149.

235 Among the more notable studies to address the context for these performances are Dirk Mulder and Ben Prinsen, eds., *Lachen in het donker: Amusement in kamp Westerbork* (Hooghalen: Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork, 1996) also published in a German edition as *Lachen im Dunkeln: Amüsement im Lager Westerbork* (Münster: Lit, 1997); Katja B. Zaich, *"Ich bitte dringend um ein Happyend:" Deutsche Bühnenkünstler im niederländischen Exil 1933-1945*

Bunter Abend (premiere: July 1943)
Humor und Melodie (September 4, 1943)
Bravo! Da Capo! (October 16, 1943)
Bunter Abend (March 1944)
Bunter Abend (April 1944)
Total Verrückt (June 1944)

Figure 1. New Cabaret Productions in Westerbork

Erich Ziegler reports that his performing debut at Westerbork came on December 27, 1942, when he joined a group comprised mostly of dilettantes to entertain the camp inmates in the first in a series of *Unterhaltungsabende*.[236] The details of this event remain unknown, but it pleased camp officials enough for them to grant another performance for the following summer. In the meantime, a transport in May 1943 brought a notable group of exile artists to Westerbork, including pianist and composer Willy Rosen, actress Camilla Spira, and singer-violinist Jetty Cantor. Together with comic actor and director Max Ehrlich, they formed the professional core of the camp's Theater Group, whose popularity with Gemmeker ensured a temporary safety net for those associated with the productions.

Under the direction of Max Ehrlich, the first *Bunter Abend* from July 1943 consisted of ten numbers, including comic sketches, songs and dances, and music for two pianos played by Willy Rosen and Erich Ziegler. In all, the program lists six performers, all of whom were professional artists prior to arriving at Westerbork, plus a lighting director and a hall manager.[237] The numbers, drawn largely from the performers' existing repertoire, made such an impression on the commandant that the artists were given great freedom to travel the Netherlands to procure the necessary resources for future productions. They purchased sets, costumes, wigs, velvet, and silk, spending as much as 25,000 guilders on the performances.[238]

Soon, the revues grew to as many as nineteen numbers, many newly-composed

(Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001); H.J.P. Bergmeier, *Chronologie der deutschen Kleinkunst in den Niederlanden 1933-1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Arbeitsstelle für Deutsche Exilliteratur, 1998); Katja B. Zaich, "*Total verrückt*: Eine wiederentdeckte Revue aus dem niederländischen Durchgangslager Westerbork," *Zwischenwelt* 20, no. 1 (May 2003): 56-62, and Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

236 Ziegler, "Bericht."

237 The program and personnel list for this event are available here: http://claude.torres1.perso.sfr.fr/Pays-Bas/Westerbork/BunterAbend1.html.

238 Boas, 119.

in the camp; and the performances became more extravagant. Willy Rosen and Ziegler composed most of the texts and music, and Ehrlich led rehearsals that required great precision and order. The musicians and actors drew in carpenters, painters, tailors, wig makers, costume designers, barbers, and other craftsmen; and an amateur dance troupe and chorus formed to maximize the number of inmates who would either be spared from the transports or sent to Theresienstadt, which was considered a more humane alternative to Auschwitz.[239] The revue *Bravo! Da Capo!* from October 1943 employed over fifty actors, musicians, and production crew members, including the dancers known as the Westerbork Girls.[240]

The need to seek protection from deportation became especially critical when, on September 3, 1943 the eve of the premiere of the third revue, *Humor und Melodie* Gemmeker released a camp order stating that Hitler had ordered Western Europe to be "judenrein" (Free of the Jews) and that Westerbork would be evacuated completely. Amidst this backdrop, a survivor's report signed "H. Unrath" captures the relative importance of the cabaret in Westerbork's daily activities:

"At the end of the fourth year of the war, when all goods were scarce and millions of people could get no clothings [*sic*], when in Germany the population of whole cities lost all their belongings, when in Poland and in other concentration-camps millions of men suffered and died, in this camp everything needed was available in order to have a metropolitan show. Buyers got the permission to travel through the whole country and brought home the best cloth for the costumes, or huge rools [*sic*] of heavy velvets for the stage-curtain. The stage itself was enlarged; the most modern theatre-illumination installed; the workmen had to work night and day to get ready as quickly as possible. The artists were free of all other work and, of course, were not put on transports. They could rehearse the whole day in some of the little flats, the inhabitants of which had to return to one of the 'human storehouses' as the big barracks were called. When the first night took place, everybody was fascinated. The prominents had done their best to recall the by-gone days of their greatest successes. The dialogue was brilliant. The dancing-girls beautiful and the decorations marvellous [*sic*]. The commander was content and happy. Now he could entertain his guests with one of the best shows in Europe and

239 Ziegler, "Bericht."

240 The program and personnel list for this event are available here: http://claude.torres1.perso.sfr.fr/Pays-Bas/Westerbork/BravoDaCapo.html

the costs were paid by the Dutch people. He attended every performance. One evening he ordered the artists to perform a special program for him after midnight. They could produce whatever they liked. The heads of the several services and their wives had to make up the audience. You see: 'le roi s'amuse!' Such a first night, of course, was the social event of Wbk. Nobody who saw so-many well-dressed and well-painted women would believe that these were the inhabitants of a camp in a G[erman]-occupied country. Surely this forces an unbelievable contrast to the weekly misery of the transports…"[241]

This unbelievable contrast was made all the more troubling by Gemmeker's deliberate scheduling of the cabarets on Tuesday evenings, mere hours after the cattle cars began their eastward trek. When Max Ehrlich once asked him to reconsider this schedule, Gemmeker supposedly remarked, "I should never ask you to play the evening before a transport, but the evening after it will be good. It turns the minds upon other things."[242] In some cases, it turned the minds to resentment. Philip Mechanicus and Etty Hillesum, two of Westerbork's more outspoken prisoners, criticized the performers for their apparent lack of respect for the gravity of the transports. Hillesum referred to Ehrlich and Ziegler as *Hofnarren* (Court Jesters);[243] and Mechanicus wrote, "There is something loathsome going on in the background when every transport leaves. This time, while the transport was being got ready and was moving off, people were dancing. Actually dancing. Rehearsals have been going on for some time for a revue. As if Westerbork itself was not rather like a theatrical show."[244]

Mechanicus's ambivalence about the cabarets was shared by the older members of the camp. On September 16, 1943, he reported that "The response of the audience is mixed. There is great admiration for the work of the cast, and people laugh at the jokes and enjoy the words and music of the songs about the camp and the comments of the entertainer, Ehrlich. But the majority of the audience is not at all willing to let themselves go they seem inhibited. The invitation by Camilla Spira to join in and sing the catchy choruses altogether

241 H. Unrath, "The Deportation of the Jews from the Netherlands," typescript. (NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies, c (64) 09). (Available at the Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork archive, V/11) (=Dossier Mathijssen, Do 720).

242 Ibid.

243 Etty Hillesum, *Letters from Westerbork*, trans. Arno Pomerans (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 89, 133. Cited in Rebecca Rovit and Alvin Goldfarb, *Theatrical Performances during the Holocaust* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 159-60.

244 Philip Mechanicus, *Year of Fear: A Prisoner Waits for Auschwitz*, trans. Irene Gibbons (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1964), 144-45, 158-59.

gets a response only from some of the young people. The older generation keeps quiet and cannot relax after all the suffering they have gone through and are still going through daily. Also in the matter of applause the older generation is restrained, but the younger generation is openhearted and bursts out from time to time into rhythmical handclapping. Many adults who go to the revue excuse themselves by explaining that they would rather not have gone, but that later on they will be glad to chat about everything that went on at Westerbork. Of course there is a lot of self-deception in this they do not want to miss the revue, their evening out. At Westerbork they have nothing.

> "Many German and Dutch Jews refuse to go to the revue, the former because they find there is a painful contrast between the 'fun' and the tragedy of the transports, the latter because they cannot enjoy themselves while their relatives, their wives, their husbands, or their children are suffering an unknown fate, joyless, dreary, deprived of everything. But the young people fall over themselves to get tickets for it. They cost only ten cents each. People have never seen a good show so cheaply before, and they will perhaps never see anything as good and as cheap again."[245]

From the performers' perspective, it was impossible to know the tragic fates of many of those who had attended the shows. According to actress Camilla Spira, the cabarets offered the audience a brief opportunity to forget its surroundings.

> "But those sitting in the audience were all people who would be deported the next morning. And in fact they were coming from a camp where their clothes had been taken from them, and they had been dressed in some old rags. And so there they sat, these people who were no longer considered human…Basically, everyone knew well that something terrible was about to happen, however none of us out in Westerbork believed what we had learned through secret messages, that people were being gassed. We thought it was possibly enemy propaganda…
>
> "Consequently it was especially grim in hindsight to know that these people were headed for a fate which on

245 Ibid.

> that evening they were able to forget. That is a sign of human nature, which is always ready to forget, to hope because...an animal that is mistreated turns toward the wall and wants to die. But man lives and hopes, that is, he lives as long as he hopes."246

Hope, in this case, always had to be weighed against the sober realization that anyone could be called to the next train. Indeed, it was precisely the awareness of the looming transports that kept the performers focused on their craft. The very stage on which they performed — made from boards salvaged from the burned synagogue in neighboring Assen — was a symbolic reminder of the tenuousness of their position.[247] As the leader of the troupe, Ehrlich deliberately sought ways to endear the group to Gemmeker; and Gemmeker, in return, rewarded his favorite stars with private housing, freedom from certain camp duties, and post-performance gatherings where he would share drinks and cigars with the stars whose talents brought him prestige in the eyes of SS officials in the Hague. The oddly symbiotic relationship between prisoner and captor was based on a mutual respect that afforded Ehrlich a bit of artistic license to poke light fun at the conditions at the camp. In September 1943, the performers presented Gemmeker with a picture album to thank him for supporting the revues. The book, now housed at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, contains 41 images and caricatures from *Humor und Melodie*, including a sketch which seemingly could only be offered to a camp leader with whom one had built a solid rapport.[248]

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246 "Aber die, die im Zuschauerraum saßen, waren alles Menschen, die am nächsten Morgen abtransportiert wurden. Und zwar kamen die...aus einem Lager, wo man ihnen (die) ihre Kleider schon weggenommen hatte und ihren irgendwelche Lumpen angezogen hatte. Und so saßen diese Menschen, die also gar nicht mehr...als Menschen zählten...Im Grunde wußte wohl jeder,...daß etwas Schreckliches bevorsteht, obgleich...von uns da draußen in Westerbork glaubte keiner,...was wir...durch Kassiber erfuhren, daß man vergast wurde. Wir haben geglaubt, das ist vielleicht Feindpropaganda...
"Infolgedessen war es so besonders grauenvoll im nachhinein, zu wissen, daß diese Menschen...in ein Schicksal gingen..., was sie an diesem Abend vergessen haben. Das ist...Zeichen...der menschlichen Natur, die immer bereit ist zu vergessen, zu hoffen, weil...ein Tier, das...schlecht behandelt wird, das dreht sich zur Wand und will sterben. ... Aber der Mensch lebt und hofft, das heißt: er lebt so lange, wie er hofft." Klaus Budzinski, "Text und Musik — Von Mir: Erinnerungen an den Chanson- und Schlager-Entertainer Willy Rosen," script of unidentified radio program, Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork.

247 Dr. Israel Taubes, "The Persecution of the Jews in Holland 1940-1945, Westerbork and Bergen Belsen," typescript, Jewish Survivors Report, Documents of Nazi Guilt No. 2 (London: Jewish Central Information Office, 1945), 26. Available at the NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies, c. (64) 09 and the Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork, V/10) (=Dossier Mathijssen, Do 720).

248 The images from this collection are accessible from the Yad Vashem website: http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/50885-container.html.

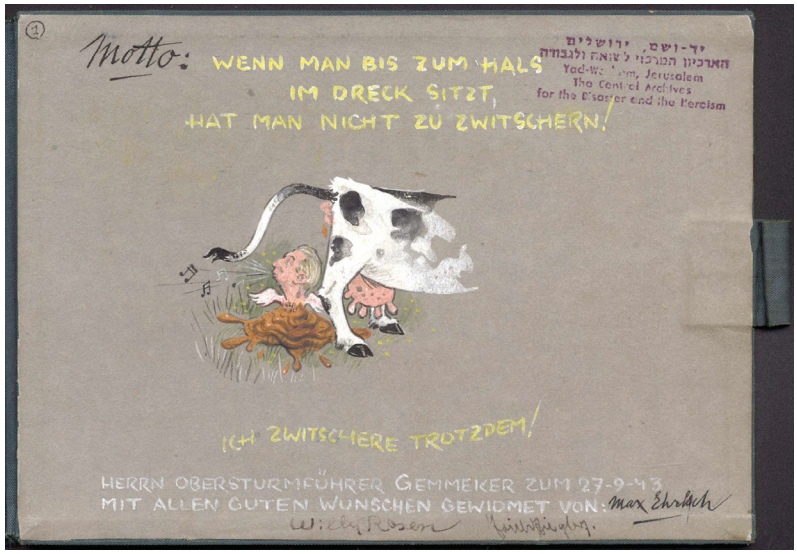

Figure 2. Cabaret Album for A.K. Gemmeker, September 27, 1943. (Reprinted with permission from Yad Vashem.)

The text reads, "When one sits up to his neck in dreck, he has nothing to chirp about. I chirp anyway. Dedicated to Herr Obersturmführer Gemmeker on September 27, '43 with all good wishes. [Signed] Max Ehrlich, Willy Rosen, and Erich Ziegler."[249] Ehrlich's knack for presenting camp life on stage demonstrates his keen ability to acknowledge the bleakness of his situation while manipulating it to the great delight of those who controlled his fate. Nestled between playful skits, love songs, instrumental numbers, and dances were scenes that put a playful spin on the everyday events at Westerbork. *Humor und Melodie*, for example, begins with "Appell! Appell!," an ensemble about the morning roll call, where all prisoners are summoned before their captors:[250]

> Roll call, roll call, whether dark or light, / When the signal sounds, one must get into position. / One rises from his little bed, / then begins the plan for the day:
>
> First wash your face, / and don't forget your teeth. / Then do your hair nicely and manicure your nails. / Then one gets into the fine, warm, wool underwear. / And finally,

249 "Wenn man bis zum Hals im Dreck sitzt, hat man nicht zu zwitchern! Ich zwitschere trotzdem! Herrn Obersturmführer Gemmecker zum 27-9-43 mit allem guten Wunschen gewidmet von: Max Ehrlich, Willy Rosen, Erich Ziegler."

250 A photo of this scene with Max Ehrlich front and center is available here: http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/50885_45524.html

into his nice overalls. / Roll call, roll call! When the signal sounds, one must get into position![251]

Other numbers refer to the joy of receiving packages, to amorous relationships between members of different service groups, and a melancholy reminder that they should enjoy life while they could.[252]

Ehrlich readily celebrated topics that, under the circumstances, might have been considered taboo. Perhaps the most biting critique of camp life came in the sixth and final revue, *Total verrückt* ("Totally Insane"), which had its premiere in June 1944.[253] Many of the numbers included references to madness, death, and cruel psychological games but all presented with a comedic twist. One skit, entitled *Die Guillotine* and subtitled "10 Minutes of Inventor Madness! Not for the faint of heart!,"[254] featured a guillotine inventor seeking a patent for his new creation. While demonstrating the device, he convinced his patent attorney to place his neck inside. The inventor then teased the attorney, convincing him that he would be killed if he said any word that contained the letter "i." Eventually, the attorney realized, to great comedic effect, that he has been duped. His life became a subject of sport, not unlike those in attendance who lived or died at the whims of their captors. Gallows humor is a theme that runs through this revue; Ehrlich made no attempt to sidestep the subjects of madness and death. The second half of *Total verrückt* featured a 45-minute, one-act "parodistic knight-opera" entitled *Ludmilla or Corpses on a Conveyor Belt* on a libretto by Willy Rosen.[255] The work, with music by Rosen and Ziegler, is a parody of operatic traditions, down to the use of chorus, ballet, and the inevitable plea for an incongruously happy ending amidst the love story's many deaths. Katja Zaich has called the entire revue a "humoristic apocalypse," an eerily apt description of an enterprise that would cease altogether on August

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251 "Appell, Appell, obs dunkel oder hell, / wenn das Signal ertönt ist man zur Stell. /Steht man aus dem Bettchen auf, /dann beginnt der Tageslauf: / Wasch zuerst dir dein Gesicht. und vergiß die Zähne nicht. / Dann ein Bißchen schön frisieren und die Nägel manikürен. / Schließlich steigt man in die fesche warme wollene Unterwäsche. / Und zum Schluß auf jeden Fall in den schönen Overall. / Appell, Appell, wenn das Signal ertönt ist man zur Stell." This text is reprinted in Anne Bitterberg and Ben Prinsen, "Humor und Melodie," in *Lachen im Dunkeln: Amüsement im Lager Westerbork*, ed. Dirk Mulder and Ben Prinsen (Münster: Lit, 1997), 70.

252 Bitterberg and Prinen, 67-78 .

253 This is the most thoroughly documented of the revues. The Jetty Cantor Archive housed in the Theater Instituut Nederland (Amsterdam) contains texts and detailed, handwritten stage directions for many of the numbers, in the158 minute show. Zaich, "*Total verrückt*: Eine wiederentdeckte Revue" and Zaich, "Ich bin dringend um ein Happyend," 198-202.

254 „10 Minuten Erfinderirrsinn! Nichts für Nervenschwache!" The programs for all these productions are available at the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, archive wbk-250i-0855.

255 *Ludmilla oder Leichen am laufenden Band*: Parodistische Ritteroper in einem Akt von Willy Rosen. The complete libretto and stage directions for this work are housed in the Cantor Archive at the Theater Instituut Nederland.

3, 1944, when Gemmeker issued the order to end all recreational programs. One month later, the final transports rolled eastward with all those who remained.[256]

In this context, it is all the more tragic to consider a number from *Humor und Melodie* from September 1943, entitled *Immer langsam*. The scene is set in Biedermeier times, here a reference to the "good old days." This "stage coach idyll" featured Max Ehrlich as the coach driver and Mara Rosen and Günther Witepski as a couple. The song is a melancholy reminder to enjoy life, to take it easy, and not to rush.[257]

Immer langsam, immer langsam,	Take it easy, take it easy
Immer mit Gemütlichkeit	Don't rush
Wir haben noch lange Zeit	We still have a lot of time
Es ist noch nicht so weit	It's not time yet
Immer langsam, immer mit Gemütlichkeit	Take it easy, don't rush
Dann den Entschluß gefaßt	Then it's decided
Wir halten erst mal Rast	For now we'll take a rest
Das Hasten ist so unnütz wie ein Karussel sich dreht	Rushing is as futile as a carousel going round.
Man kommt in diesem Leben	Soon enough in this life
Noch früh genug zu spät	We'll have time for being late
Immer langsam, immer langsam	Take it easy, take it easy
Wir haben noch lange Zeit.	We still have a lot of time.
Es ist noch nicht so weit!	It's still not so far away.

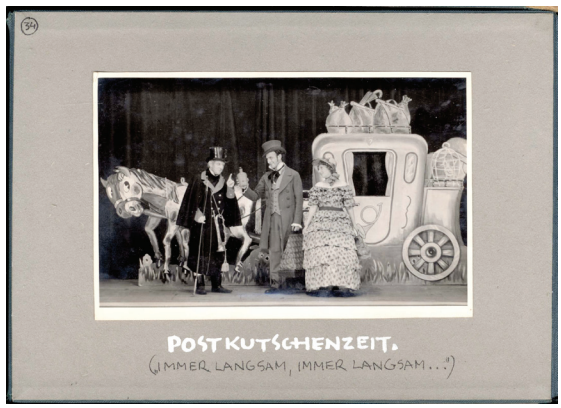

Figure 3. Cabaret Album for A.K. Gemmeker, September 27, 1943. (Reprinted with permission from Yad Vashem.)

256 Zaich, „Ich bin dringend um ein Happyend," 199, 202.

257 A version of the text is reprinted in Bitterberg and Prinsen, 74. The version quoted above follows a performance of the song by Westerbork artist Louis de Wijze, whose recording appears in Volker Kühn, *Totentanz: Kabarett im KZ*, Edition Mnemosyne, 2000, CD and DVD.

Whether the revues turned wistful or satirical, the performers counted on the support of Gemmeker. He was a faithful attendee at all performances where he watched from his armchair in the first row. A formal thank you from the artists to the commandant is captured in the cabaret album, as Gemmeker received the gratitude of Max Ehrlich. The caption reads, "And I thank you, Herr Kommandant, for making this evening possible for us."[258]

Figure 4. Cabaret Album for A.K. Gemmeker, September 27, 1943. (Reprinted with permission from Yad Vashem.)

The Obersturmführer's protection extended at first to most of those involved in the cabarets, but in November 1943, safety from the transports was only assured to the stars.[259] A polio outbreak in the winter of 1943/44 led to a camp quarantine, jeopardizing the revues. Only in March 1944 were they able to mount a new production after a five month absence.[260]

In spite of the fear and tragedy that pervaded the camp, Gemmeker took pride in the conditions and administration of Westerbork, so much so that he commanded prisoner Rudolf Breslauer to produce a film on camp activities. The document is unique in that it is the only such film produced at the behest of an individual camp leader without approval from higher authorities in the

258 "…und ich danke Ihnen, Herr Kommandant, dafür, dass sie uns diesen Abend ermöglicht haben."

259 Zaich, „Ich bin dringend um ein Happyend," 194.

260 Ziegler, „Bericht."

German government.[261] The Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies (NIOD) in Amsterdam holds an archive with sixty pages of documentation on this film, including an outline and texts to accompany the silent action. Among the scenes of everyday camp life is a four-minute segment drawn from productions of *Bunter Abend* from March and April 1944. The column on the left describes the stage action, and the column on the right contains texts that were originally intended to be interspersed between the scenes, but most texts did not make the final cut.[262]

Texte "Bunter Abend." (Texts of "Variety Show.") [Premieres: March and April 1944]
Main Title: Recreational Activities
Subtitle: A "Variety Show" in the Great Hall.

Scene:	Text:
Gong	After their daily work, a band of previously famous cabaret performers prepares a couple of happy hours for the camp inmates.
Rosen and Ziegler at the Piano, Orchestra, Esther Philipse	Esther Philipse introduces the evening. "Are you enjoying the program?"
A row on the floor; Philipse emerges	Dance floor onstage.
Fröhlich and Schön.	"How are you, Herr Fröhlich? (Mr. Cheerful) "How are you, Herr Schön?" (Mr. Handsome)
Solo scene, Jetty Cantor	Max Ehrlich and Franz Engel in a comic duet.

261 A detailed discussion of this film can be found in Koert Broersma, Gerard Rossing, Dirk Mulder, and Ben Prinsen, *Kamp Westerbork gefilmd: het verhaal over een unieke film uit 1944* (Hooghalen: Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork, 1997). The film itself and an accompanying documentary are available commercially as Karel van den Berg and Rob Trip, *Kamp Westerbork: de film* (Hooghalen: Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork; Hilversum: Tijdsbeeld Media, 2011), 2 DVDs.

262 The outline is available in the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, archive wbk-250i-0854.

Scene:	Text:
	Jetty Cantor, formerly of the radio, sings and plays violin.
Closed curtain	
	Now comes the ballet. All the cute girls are.....
Curtain rises. Ballet scenery. Esther Philipse still lifeless.	
	.....made out of cardboard. Only one.....
Esther Philipse comes to life, enters the scene to the ramp.	
	.....is real: Esther Philipse.
Curtain.	
	Lisl Frank and Otto Aurich in a grotesque scene. And the text and the music are by.....
Rosen at the piano.	
	.....Willy Rosen.
The dance pair. Franz Engel peers out of the curtain.	
	".....Well, now you see....."
Engel's face.	
	".....Well, we're bringing now....."
Engel's face.	
	".....and now comes....ah....Would you look at that!"
Beginning of sketch "Tamed beasts"	
	A totally wild affair: Recipes for taming unruly wives.
End of Sketches.	
	Musical finale: A hit is born. At the pianos, the happy parents Willy Rosen and Erich Ziegler.

Figure 5. Director's Outline for Westerbork Film, Cabaret Scene[263]

The film excerpt offers a rare window into the level and quality of the productions. One can observe the grandeur of the staging and costuming,

263 The original German text is given in Appendix

the performing forces in the orchestra, and the precision of the actors all attributes that made them a valuable commodity to camp leadership and kept the performers from the Tuesday morning transports until the very end.[264]

By summer 1944, the Allies were closing in and Germany increased its efforts to liquidate the camp. The final transport to Theresienstadt on September 4, 1944 included Max Ehrlich, Willy Rosen, and nearly all of the remaining revue participants most of whom were later sent to Auschwitz for execution. Ziegler was one of the few survivors.

Literature on artistic activities in concentration camps often discusses the concept of "spiritual resistance," where art is considered an intangible emotional comfort that sees people through the horrors of their situation. That was undoubtedly the case with the cabarets at Westerbork; but more than just an artistic outlet, the performers realized that their art held the key to any hope of survival. Their concerted effort to grow the productions for the sake of protecting their fellow prisoners represented a calculated act that almost succeeded in winning back their lives. But by the end, not even Gemmeker's watchful eye could prevent their tragic fate.

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Appendix
Director's Outline for Westerbork Film, Cabaret Scene

Texte "Bunter Abend"

Haupttitel: Freizeitgestaltung.
Untertitel: Ein "Bunter Abend" im Grossen Saal.

Bild:	Text:
Gong	Eine Schar einstmals bekannter Kleinkunstdarsteller bereitet nach der täglichen Arbeit in den Betrieben den Lagerinsassen ein paar frohe Stunden.
Rosen und Ziegler am Klavier, Orchester, Esther Philipse.	
	Esther Philipse leitet den Abend ein: «Programm gefällig?»
Parkettreihe, Abgang Philipse.	
	Parkett auf der Bühne.
Fröhlich und Schön.	
	«Wie geht's Ihnen, Herr Fröhlich?» «Wie geht's Ihnen, Herr Schön?» Max Ehrlich und Franz Engel in einem komischen Duett.
Soloszene Jetty Cantor.	
	Jetty Cantor, früher beim Rundfunk, singt und geigt.
Geschlossener Vorhang.	

Bild:	Text:
	Jetzt kommt das Ballet. All die hübschen Mädchen sind.....
Aufgehender Vorhang. Die Ballet-Kulisse. Esther Philipse noch leblos.	
	.....aus Pappe. Nur eine.....
Esther Philipse wird lebendig, tritt aus dem Bild zur Rampe.	
	...ist echt: Esther Philipse.
Vorhang.	
	Lisl Frank und Otto Aurich in einer Groteskszene. Und der Text und die Musik sind von.....
Rosen am Klavier	
	.....Willy Rosen.
Das Tanzpaar. Vorhang, aus dem Franz Engel heraussieht.	
	«Also jetzt sehen Sie..... «
Gesicht Engel.	
	«.....also jetzt kommt....äh..... schau'n Sie sich's mal an! «
Anfang Sketch «Gezähmte Bestien»	
	Eine ganz wilde Sache: Rezept für die Zähmung widerspenstiger Ehefrauen.
Schluss des Sketches.	
	Musikalischer Ausklang: ein Schlager wird geboren. Am Flügel die glücklichen Eltern Willy Rosen und Erich Ziegler.

Variations in Terezín

Jory Debenham

Abstract

Between June and October of 1944 a set of musical works were written in the Terezín concentration camp that raise significant questions about how musical meaning is connected to historical events. In the summer of 1944, at the height of the Nazis' propaganda campaign in Terezín, four of the most active and prominent composers in the camp, Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krása, Pavel Haas, and Gideon Klein all wrote compositions containing a variety of extra-musical quotations and references, and that are in general, suggestive of a certain kind of musical coding. Somewhat unexpectedly all of these pieces also make use of some kind of variation techniques, employed in ways that comment on their situation and experience. The close proximity of these composers and the unusual choice of variations form suggest that that the principles inherent in the structure have a specific expressive capacity that was particularly meaningful to them at this time. This paper explores this phenomenon and considers why exactly variations emerged as such an important genre for this group.

Between June and October of 1944 a set of musical works were written in the Terezín concentration camp that raise significant questions about how musical meaning can be connected to historical events. In the summer of 1944, at the height of the Nazis' propaganda campaign in Terezín,

four of the most active and prominent composers in the camp, Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krása, Pavel Haas, and Gideon Klein all wrote compositions that contain a variety of extra-musical quotations and references, and that are in general, suggestive of a certain kind of musical coding. Somewhat unexpectedly all of these pieces also make use of some kind of variation techniques, employed in ways that comment on their situation and experience. The close proximity of these composers and the unusual choice of variations form suggest that that the principles inherent in the structure have a specific expressive capacity that was particularly meaningful to them at this time. One of the chief aims of this paper is to explore this phenomenon and ask why exactly variations emerged as such an important genre for this group.

The summer of 1944 was a highly charged time in Terezín. Although there had been various propaganda campaigns mounted by the Nazis since its inception in 1941, through the first half of 1944, the efforts to present the camp as a "model ghetto" intensified. The "beautification" campaign involved many deceptions, from building a children's playground, assigning the streets idyllic names such as "Seestrasse", and "Badstrasse", implying a view of a sea or a spa,[265] to building an outdoor pavilion for music concerts. The pinnacle of the propaganda campaign took place on June 23, when delegates from the International Red Cross visited the camp and were shown a vibrant, functioning town where healthy Jews engaged in sports, music, and other leisure activities, and where the children received healthy food rations. Many prisoners were distressed when the Red Cross was deceived by the charade, and were highly demoralized by the experience. Shortly after the Red Cross visit, capitalizing on the results of the "beautification" campaign, the Nazis commissioned a film to be shot that represented the camp as a peaceful, pleasant and idyllic environment. Although it was never edited for commercial release, it had a significant impact on the inmates of the camp, many of whom strongly resented the ongoing efforts to disguise the harsh realities of the camp. The third significant event of the summer of 1944 was the discovery and subsequent punishment of several artists in Terezín who attempted to document their personal experiences in addition to the sanitized versions they were to create as part of their official duties. In July, the authorities discovered that a realistic drawing of the camp that incorporated images of skeletal figures and overcrowding had been smuggled to Switzerland. Five of the artists believed to be connected

265 Josef Polák, "History and Data: The Camp," in *Terezín*, ed. František Ehrmann, Otta Heitlinger, and Rudolf Iltis (Prague: Council of Jewish Communities in the Czech lands, 1965), 33.

to the incident were removed from the camp and subsequently tortured or transported to Auschwitz. Particularly within the artistic circles in the camp, this was a traumatic and disturbing incident that reinforced the fearfulness and desperation of their situation.

The art works preserved from this time vividly portray harsh scenes that presumably represent what the artists saw in the camp. Scenes by Bedřich Fritta such as "Makeshift Barracks" (1944), "Life in Theresienstadt" (1943-4), and "Facades for International Commission" (1943-44) depict the emaciated bodies and the cramped quarters, as well as provide a record of camp activities. "Film and Reality" (1944), makes direct reference to the filming of the propaganda movie and comments on the deception and lies inherent in the whole project.[266]

In addition to the art, the stage works provided a creative outlet for the experiences of the prisoners. Popular productions like the children's operetta Brundíbar celebrate the defeat of the nasty villain by a group of children, and the opera *The Emperor of Atlantis* likewise satirizes the political situation, depicting a tyrannical Emperor that is eventually forced to surrender to Death. In addition to representing or satirizing their surroundings, artists created works that allowed them a temporary escape from their situation. As Lisa Peschel argues in her commentary about the stage works, the cultural sphere offered the prisoners a way of confronting their sense of helplessness by offering them some agency. She claims, "In some performances, they exercised this agency by confronting the ghetto, experiencing it in a more psychologically manageable way by bringing it onto the stage and forcing it to behave according to their rules. In others the prisoners shut out the ghetto, escaping into a world of their own creation." She also notes that for many artists, escapism meant an escape into the past, which she argues is also a direct engagement with their imagined future.[267]

Certainly within the musical realm, there were many opportunities for the escapist form of entertainment Peschel describes, which many survivors describe as having been essential to their survival and well being. Recitals of traditional concert repertoire were common and well attended. These four active composers, however seemed to take a less escapist approach, attempting

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266 These and more can be viewed at: "Bedřich Fritta: Drawings from the Theresienstadt Ghetto," *Jewish Museum of Berlin: Exhibition*, accessed January 31, 2014, http://www.jmberlin.de/fritta/en/.

267 Lisa Peschel, *Performing Captivity, Performing Escape : Cabarets and Plays from the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto.* (Seagull Books London Ltd, 2014), 6.

to grapple with the situation in a way more similar to the visual artists. The musical compositions from this time are also extremely rich with allusion and reference to the experiences of the prisoners. Instrumental music, of course, is much more abstract than the visual or stage arts, and therefore it is much more difficult to determine what exactly it represents or communicates. Although it often has several layers of meaning, often simultaneously, there is always an elusive quality. It is possible that the composers in Terezín used that ambiguity to communicate to their comrades but to fall under the radar of the ever changing censorship rules. In his *Passacaille et Fugue,* Hans Krása incorporates a rhythmic passage that suggests the chugging of a train that is followed by the discordant intervals of a train whistle. Considering his surroundings and the fears most prisoners at Terezín had of the train transports to the "East", we can speculate that it is likely a reference to the transports, which has a haunting effect on the listener, but would have difficulty convicting him of depicting that exact scenario. Despite the limitations of the communicative potential of instrumental music, however, it is highly plausible that these artists would have had similar expressive needs to their visual and literary counterparts, and would seek to represent their experiences musically, even if the end result would be imprecise and ambiguous due to the limitations inherent in the medium.

As mentioned earlier, at the height of the propaganda campaign in this fraught environment, four of the major composers in the camp composed instrumental works, all of which contain at least one variations movement. The first of the pieces, Pavel Haas' Song Cycle *Four Songs* was premiered on June 22, the day before the Red Cross visit. Soon after the July "Painter's Affair", Hans Krása completed his work *Passacaille et Fugue;* and shortly after that, Viktor Ullmann completed his last piano sonata, which concludes with *Variations and Fugue on a Hebrew Folk Song.* One month later, on September 22, less than a month before they were all deported to Auschwitz, Gideon Klein completed the second movement of his string trio, *Variations on a Moravian Folk Song*. These works constitute the final compositions for most of these composers and they were written during the highly charged time of the summer of 1944. It seems important to ask why exactly these composers found variations techniques best suited to their artistic needs at this time.

For many artists, writers and musicians, form is critical to the creative process. In his book *The Art of the Novel*, a meditation on compositional process, the Czech writer Milan Kundera asserts that there is a foundational relationship

between the architecture of a work and its fundamental core[268]. For him, the formal structure represents a "deep, unconscious, incomprehensible drive"[269] that allows him to explore and articulate the themes and motifs within his compositions. This exploration allows him to examine the "enigma of the self"[270]. This examination of the self, he argues, is the whole point of composition and forms the foundation of thematic development in his own works.

With a structure in place that allows the articulation of a theme, which Kundera also defines as an "existential inquiry"[271], he is then able to use the process of thematic variation as a means of transforming concepts into categories of existence. His descriptions of that process, and the central concerns in his own writing closely correspond to those of the composer Viktor Ullmann, who wrote about the deep connection between his experience in Terezín and his own compositional process. For Ullmann, Terezín was the ultimate school of Form; it was there that he strove to displace the ephemeral aspects of the spiritual and emotional realm of human existence through the fixed form of musical composition. In one of his few remaining prose writings, Ullmann claimed, "Theresienstadt was and is for me the school of Form. … if one, following Schiller, perceives the secret of every work of art in the endeavour to annihilate matter by the means of form which, presumably is the overall mission of Man, not only of the esthetical man, but of the ethical man as well."[272] Like Kundera, Ullmann conceived of the formal structures of music as a means to transform the conceptual aspects of self and existence into a tangible entity.

For the composers of Terezín, it seems reasonable that that the existential themes that would be important to them would be themes of exile, deception, loneliness and death, all which figure prominently in the melodic references and textual associations incorporated into these works. For example, in Haas's *Four Songs*, based on selections of ancient Chinese poetry, the theme of exile is prominent throughout the entire cycle. From the opening statement, "My home is there, far away, far away, so far away, so far away," the text of the songs explicitly laments the author's separation from home. The poems contain

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268 Milan Kundera, *The Art of the Novel* (New York: Grove Press, 1988), 72.

269 Ibid., 86.

270 Ibid., 23.

271 Kundera, *The Art of the Novel*, 84.

272 Viktor Ullmann, "Goethe and Ghetto," in *Tracks to Viktor Ullmann* (Klagenfurt: Arbos; Edition Selene, 1998).

imagery of home, lost love and nostalgic memories of the sun's rays, joy and magpies. Intertwined with this imagery are evocations of feelings of coldness, darkness, sadness and yearning. The texts themselves are meditations on the theme of exile, with words such as "foreign," "strange," "alone" and "yearning" further illustrating the sentiment of banishment.

Although the semantic context of the text is in itself evocative of exile, Haas explores the theme further by employing music's capacity to be expressive on multiple levels simultaneously. The musical theme is a cantus firmus of four notes that corresponds to the melody associated with the word "Václave" (Wenceslas) in the "St. Wenceslas Chorale" - a work that was firmly entrenched in the Czech nationalist psyche.[273] The chorale's ostinato returns in the third song, connecting it musically to the first song and highlighting the textual references to the yearning for home that is central to both the original hymn and Haas's composition. By using the "Wenceslas Chorale" as the musical motif over which the variations unfold, Haas adds another dimension to the depiction of exile. The nationalist associations of the hymn run deep within the Czech historical narrative, and the use of the hymn as source material is a powerful evocation of Haas's native homeland.

Haas was not the only composer to construct his variations on a melody associated with a far-off homeland. Klein's variations are based on a theme from his birthplace, Moravia, and Viktor Ullmann based his variations on a poem by the Zionist poet Rachel a poem that refers to the biblical figure of Rachel and her exile from home. The explicit references to exile in the texts associated with these melodies vary in degree, but they all refer in some way to a distant homeland. Although it is impossible to decipher specific intentions or statements, the references in this material suggest that these pieces serve in some way as personal meditations on the composers' own experience of exile.

The abundance of references, allusions and pastiche that appear in the variations works also suggest that these composers found variations form well suited for such a compositional end. Viktor Ullmann in particular responded to the situation in Terezín through pastiche, quotation and allusion. In the variations and fugue movement of his last piano sonata, he evokes Bach's B-A-C-H moniker (which in English corresponds to the notes Bb-A-C-B), and he

273 For score examples and further commentary on the history of the Wenceslas chorale, see chapter 4 of Eric Anthony Entwistle, "Martinů in Paris: A Synthesis of Musical Styles and Symbols," PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2002, http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2006/ Martinu_chapter4.htm.

combines several musical motifs, including the Zionist song "Rachel", the Hussite battle hymn "Ye Who Are God's Warriors" and a German Lutheran chorale, often identified as "Nun Danket Alle Gott" a hymn with many points of association including Bach and Mendelssohn. Ullmann's references seem to be some type of nationalist representation of the main groups of people interned in Terezín (Jewish, Czech, and German), although the specific reason or intention for his use of these themes is somewhat unclear. Despite this ambiguity, the musical result is powerful, possibly evoking a picture of the literal situation of the disparate group of prisoners forced to live in close quarters whether or not their traditions were compatible. In addition to Ullmann's references, and the previously mentioned "Václave" reference in Haas' *Four Songs*, Gideon Klein derived his variations movement from a known Moravian folk song, "Tá kněždubská věž" (The Kněždub Tower), a work that explores themes of violence and betrayal, evoking Moravian imagery and containing textual references to a tower, captivity, wild geese, death and farewells; all themes containing poignant associations for the Terezín inmates. The theme sets the tone well, particularly for those familiar with the text, however the variations have their own offerings. Within the variations, Klein incorporates a quote of the line "Meine Ruh ist hin, Mein Herz ist schwer" (My peace is gone, my heart is heavy) from Schubert's song "Gretchen am Spinnrade". He also evokes imagery of death through quotes from Ravel's *Tombeau de Couperin*, Suk's *Asrael* Symphony and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*.[274]

While an absolute, literal translation of these references would be impossible, the imagery of death and the nationalist and political associations of the musical motifs certainly suggest that the composers were expressing the important aspects of their experience that the Nazi propaganda was endeavouring to conceal. Michael Beckerman has written about how composers often hide messages or secrets within their works, particularly in structurally or psycho-acoustically weak passages, where significant or consequential communications would not be expected. He suggests that it was necessary for the Terezín composers to write between the lines and notes that, "In the Potemkin village of Terezín, compositional middles became reverse Potemkin villages, pretending to be nothing and containing everything."[275] The variations works of the Terezín composers would appear to be examples of these compositional middles. The

274 Michael Beckerman, "The Strange Landscapes of Middles," in *The Oxford Handbook of the New Cultural History of Music*, ed. Jane F. Fulcher (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 179.

275 Ibid., 180.

repetitive, cyclical nature of the form and the simplicity of the folk melodies or ground bass themes set up an aesthetic expectation that the works follow traditional variations procedure where the core material is presented in the theme, and that the variations that follow are simply explorations of the harmonic, rhythmic or melodic material. In reality, however, it would appear that the simple folk themes, while not without their own semantic content, could serve as a foil for the more dramatic and serious allusions to death, violence and betrayal, such as those in the Klein *Variations on a Moravian Folk Tune*. In an environment where harsh punishments were meted out for representations or declarations of the realities of harsh and unsavoury treatment in the camp, it would make sense to hide representations of or statements about the camp by couching them in a form ostensibly based on repetition and simplicity. Within its structure, it is possible that the composers could "write between the lines" and send coded messages that would express their true experiences without exposing themselves to censorship and its associated risks.

There is a great deal about life in Terezín that we will never know, but it would appear that there are many layers within this music that have potential to illuminate key issues and concerns of this group of composers. Particularly in the summer of 1944, during the months from the Red Cross visit until the transports in October, the prisoners' need to overcome the sense of powerlessness associated with the trauma of the camp was represented in the cultural sphere either as a means of temporary escape or as an attempt to represent and work through difficult issues but in a contained way. For these musicians, variations form seems to have served as a framework for this process, allowing for both existential meditations and quite possibly for expressions of confessions, secrets, and political statements that were impossible to say in any other way. Milan Kundera's conclusion to his ruminations on compositional process seems particularly appropriate here: "To bring together the extreme gravity of the question and the extreme lightness of the form — that has always been my ambition"[276]. This combination of situational gravity and structural levity seems to have also held significance for the Terezín composers.

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Music and Torture in Chilean Detention Centers : Conversations with an Ex-Agent of Pinochet's Secret Police

Dr Katia Chornik

Abstract

On seizing power on 11 September 1973, General Augusto Pinochet established over a thousand detention centers, from the Atacama Desert to the Magellan Strait. Tens of thousands of prisoners were held in these centers, without recourse to fair trials and lacking elementary judicial guarantees. Most inmates were subjected to serious abuse through physical and psychological torture; many were killed, their bodies "disappeared". Despite the regime of terror, precarious living conditions and censorship, prisoners developed diverse musical activities on their own initiative, including composition, performance and teaching. Pinochet's system also used music to indoctrinate detainees and as a form of and soundtrack to torture. Evidence of the above is fragmented and little known, and has been largely overlooked by critics. This article documents and contextualizes the testimony of a former agent of Pinochet's secret police recently interviewed by the author, discussing the musical landscape of various detention and torture centers in Santiago and the provinces,

including Chacabuco, Londres 38, Villa Grimaldi, Tejas Verdes, Irán 3037 (aka La Discothèque) and José Domingo Cañas 1305. To the present day, this is the most detailed account specifically dealing with forced musical activities in captivity during the Pinochet regime, but also the only one coming from a Chilean ex-agent.

In 1998 the British Metropolitan Police arrested General Pinochet in London after an international warrant was issued for extradition to Spain, indicting him for human rights violations committed during his dictatorship (1973-1990). Pinochet was eventually released by the British government on the grounds of ill health. Back in Chile, he was charged with a number of offenses and placed under house arrest, yet he never faced the courts or was convicted of any crime. Among his regime's measures was the imprisonment of circa 40,000 political prisoners in 1,132 centers throughout the country (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:301), without recourse to fair trials and lacking elementary judicial guarantees. Most inmates were subjected to gruesome physical and psychological torture, thousands were killed or "disappeared"[277].

Despite the regime of terror, precarious living conditions and censorship, inmates developed diverse musical activities on their own initiative, evidence of which is fragmented and little known, and has been largely overlooked by critics[278]. Evidence of music in relation to punishment and torture is even scarcer.

277 According to the first list of victims of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, aka Valech Commission (Comisión Presidencial 2003), 27,153 adults and 102 minors were imprisoned and tortured during the Pinochet regime. A second list (Comisión Presidencial 2011/2) added 9.795 prisoners, bringing the total of victims officially recognized by the State to circa 40,000. Both the Valech lists and its full report are found on http://www.indh.cl/informacion-comision-valech, accessed 30 January 2013. See also the second of three-volume Report of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, aka Rettig Commission (Comisión Nacional 1991). English translations of excerpts of the Rettig Report relating to some of the main detention centers are found on http://www.derechoschile.com/english/stgo.htm, accessed 12 February 2013. All translations in this article are mine.

278 I was the first to study music in captivity during the Pinochet regime. See my BBC radio series and online project "Canto Cautivo" (Chornik 2005). Montealegre's (2010) comparative study of Chacabuco concentration camp (Chile) and Punta de Rieles prison (Uruguay) has a section on prisoners' creative activities (252-359), which discusses crafts, visual arts, theater, literature and music; the chapters on music analyze the testimonies I previously collected, adding significant new information. Recent musicological studies dealing with the Pinochet era, but not specific to captivity, include Jordán (2009), on the relationship between pirate recordings and underground political activity, and Party (2010), on apolitical music genres and the role of movements like *Nueva Canción Chilena* (New Chilean Song) beyond political agendas. Bauer (2009) discusses her music therapy work with survivors of Colonia Dignidad but does not examine the musical effects of the tight collaboration between this organization and Pinochet's secret police. There is significant literary research dealing with captivity under Pinochet, including Lazzara (2006, 2011), on post-dictatorship narratives, memorial sites and visual art representing traumatic memories, and Peris (2005, 2008), on political uses of testimonial literature during the post-dictatorship. The present article is a pilot for a three-year project I am currently developing, which will deal with musical experiences in Pinochet's torture chambers and concentration camps from the perspective of both prisoners and jailers, and with contemporary musical initiatives commemorating violence under dictatorship.

Although the report of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1, aka Valech Report) mentions music being used by agents in various torture centers, it does not contain details about its practices, repertoire and effects. It has been very difficult to compile a repertoire and explore in depth how music was experienced by the inmates under these circumstances: my perception is that victims are far more open to discussing musical activities they initiated. In December 2012, I distributed an email call through networks of survivors of Villa Grimaldi, Estadio Nacional, Cuatro Álamos and José Domingo Cañas 1367 (Santiago), asking for information about compulsory singing and music during interrogation and torture. I received circa 20 replies dealing with music in captivity, of which only four referred to the specific question asked. Former prisoners reported being obliged to sing the national anthem, "Orden y Patria Es Nuestro Lema" and "La Novia Va Prendida en el Avión", and having sung or listened to, during torture, songs by Julio Iglesias, Edith Piaf's "La Vie en Rose", George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord", Félix Luna's "Alfonsina y el Mar", Nino Bravo's "Libre" and Wendy Carlos's soundtrack to Kubrick's film *A Clockwork Orange*.

As someone whose parents suffered political imprisonment and torture under Pinochet, my tendency has been to consider the topic from the point of view of prisoners only. It is now my belief that research on perpetrators allows the possibility of constructing a stronger case against torture and in defense of human rights. With this view, on 26 and 28 December 2012 I interviewed an ex-agent of Pinochet's secret police; for ethical reasons, I will not call him by his real name but by the pseudonym of González. González was doing his military service when Pinochet came to power on 11 September 1973, overthrowing the government of Salvador Allende which represented the coalition of left-wing parties Unidad Popular (Popular Unity). After the coup, González was sent to the Atacama Desert to work at Chacabuco concentration camp and later became a member of Pinochet's secret police, the Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia (DINA National Intelligence Directorate). As a DINA agent with the rank of *Suboficial* (Warrant Officer), he operated primarily in two notorious torture centers in Santiago, Villa Grimaldi (aka Cuartel Terranova) and Londres 38 (London Street). González also worked at the DINA headquarters Rinconada de Maipú (Santiago) and centers Tejas Verdes and Rocas de Santo Domingo (Valparaíso region). In addition, he had contact with personnel from four other Santiago centers- Irán 3037 (aka Venda Sexy and La Discothéque), José Domingo Cañas 1305, Cuatro Álamos and Marcoleta 90 as well as with

Colonia Dignidad (Maule region in the south), a German sect led by the Paul Schäffer, a former colonel of Hitler's army. In 1975 González deserted the DINA and fled to Germany, where he lived for over a decade. He has given evidence for the Rettig and Valech Truth Commissions, and for various criminal court cases in Chile and Europe, in some cases on a voluntary basis. González is one of the 98 former DINA personnel prosecuted in relation to the so-called *Operación Colombo* (part of the multi-national operation *Caranava de la Muerte*), which resulted in the killing and disappearance of 119 opponents (it was the *Operación Colombo* that stripped Pinochet of his parliamentary immunity). Although González is not currently imprisoned in relation to this case, he has to report to the Chilean Supreme Court on a monthly basis.

The present contribution documents and contextualizes González's testimony. With the purpose of keeping the focus on the relationship between music, punishment and torture, and protecting the identity of the interviewee, I have summarized and omitted substantial sections of his oral account, which is circa four hours long. When interviewing González, I used biographical-interpretive techniques developed by Hollway and Jefferson (2000), eliciting stories and avoiding closed and "why" questions. I felt it was inappropriate to tackle issues of personal responsibility and purposely did not pursue questions that he answered with "I don't know" (e.g. "how did music played during torture sessions impact on prisoners and agents?" and "what do you think were the motives for choosing you for the DINA?"), or that he ignored (e.g. "was it your experience in Villa Grimaldi that made you take the decision to leave the DINA?").

An in-depth analysis of this material will follow at a later stage, once I have conducted further interviews that will allow me to fill in gaps in the former agent's account and gain a deeper understanding of the way jailers used and abused music. To test possible overlapping of inmates' and jailers' musical experiences, I asked six ex-prisoners, who were in Chacabuco, Villa Grimaldi and José Domingo Cañas 1305 and have a strong musical background, to confirm if they had been obliged to sing, or listen to any of the pieces mentioned by González during torture sessions. All ex-inmates firmly denied they had come across these pieces while they were detained. On the other hand, former detainees mentioned a number of songs that González did not recall in his account. These discrepancies, which I will examine in a future study, may be due to prisoners being held at various time and dealt with by different staff.

González's Testimony

González was born in La Serena, northern Chile, in 1954. He moved to Santiago with his family aged six. Once he finished school, he entered the Army:

> The military service was compulsory and people who did it were from the middle classes279.So I had to do it. Before joining the Army, I was part of a movement called FER [Frente de Estudiantes Revolucionarios- Revolutionary Students Front]: all students were revolutionized, we were all into that. But in the Army I kept away from this as I was not studying. At that time I liked the music of Inti-Illimani, which was very popular, and Quilapayún.

González's involvement with the FER is significant, for this movement was associated with the radical *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR Revolutionary Left Movement), many members of which were imprisoned, killed and "disappeared" in DINA centers[280]. That González liked Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún, two key bands of the movement *Nueva Canción Chilena* (Chilean New Song), further suggests that his political views (at least until he joined the Army) were closer to those of the prisoners than the ideology promoted by the regime: *Nueve Canción* artists were committed to social reforms and played an active role in Allende's campagn.[281]

González went on:

> As a sqaddie I was sent to Calama [ca. 1,600 kilometers north of Santiago], where I had to the Juramento a la Bandera [Oath to the Flag] that all soldiers do to defend the Homeland against any aggression. That was on 7 or 8 July 1973. Then I came to Santiago and stayed longer than I was supposed to. I was already a deserter. Then

279 González may also be referring here to low-income classes. Wealthy people could "buy" their way out of the army.

280 The FER is still active. See http://www.chile-fer.cl, accessed on 12 February 2013.

281 *Nueva Canción* came to prominence in the 1960s, rooted in the work of artists who revitalized Latin American folk music, especially Violeta Parra (Chilean) and Atahualpa Yupanqui (Argentinean). In 1965, Ángel and Isabel Parra (Violeta Parra's children) founded "La Peña de los Parra," a nightclub that established the sound of *Nueva Canción* and created an audience for luminaries such as Patricio Manns and Víctor Jara. Pinochet's coup badly affected *Nueva Canción* artists, who were forced to go underground. Víctor Jara was killed and many others (including the bands Quilapayún, Inti-Illimani and Illapu) had to go into exile. An urban movement called *Canto Nuevo* emerged after the military government banned traditional Andean instruments. For further information on *Nueva Canción*, see Anonymous n.d./1 and García 2013.

> there was the Tanquemazo282 [The Tank Putsch], before the coup that overthrew Allende.

When he reported to the military quarters in Calama, he was arrested and on the following day was sent to Canteras de Toconao (Quarries of Toconao) in the Atacama Desert ca. 1,400 kilometers north of Santiago), which he described as " very cold, really freezing." He soon learned about Pinochet's coup on the military radio: "we hear they are bombing La Moneda [the Presidential Palace] and shanty towns. As the Army is always at war with the Peruvians and Bolivians, we thought it was the war." He described the negative effects of the coup only in personal and economic terms:

> The coup marked me. It was pure horror. We did not have anything to eat and went out to steal. We robbed trains. Our bosses knew about this and turned a blind eye to it. The Army was extremely poor, we did not even have shoes. They only gave us a kilo of beans, lentils or chickpeas a month. When trucks transporting meat from Argentina passed, we stopped them and took some meat. We stole in our uniforms. We were indigent, the punished ones of the Army.

González was transferred to the former mining of Chacabuco (Atacama Desert), where he planted explosives outside the camp before prisoners arrived. Chacabuco was one of the largest camps in the country, extending to 36 hectares. Guard duty rotated between personnel from the Army, Air Force and Carabineros (Chilean police). Prisoners were routinely threatened and tortured, forced to do military training and spend long hours in the open, suffering the intense climatic conditions of the desert. The camp gradually began to empty out from July 1974, with prisoners being transferred to different camps in Santiago and Valparaíso region (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:324f).

González recalled that prisoners "arrived in Chacabuco in a batch, all singing the national anthem."1They would get up at dawn with the *toque de diana* (cornet call) played by guards called "*estafeta*". Every morning, detainees had to sing the

282 The *Juramento a la Bandera* is not performed on 7 or 8 July, but on 9 and 10 July. This tradition was established in 1882, during the Guerra del Pacífico (War of the Pacific) against Peru and Bolivia. See Anonymous n. d./2. *El Tanquetazo* or *Tancazo* of 29 June, 1973, was a failed coup attempt led by Army Lieutenant Colonel Roberto Souper against the Allende government. It was successfully put down by loyal constitutionalist soldiers led by Army Commander-in-Chief Carlos Prats, who was later killed by the DINA in Buenos Aires in September 1974.

national anthem and perform the *Juramento a la Bandera*, and every evening, to sing the anthem again as well as military marches. "Prisoners sang these songs not because it sprang from them but because they were obliged to. I think the aim was to push them to breaking point." Nervously laughing, he added: "yes, that was the aim. I think this now, having visited Nazi concentration camps in Germany. There they made prisoners sing to re-educate them." Soldiers working in Chacabuco were also required to sing the anthem and marches: "we all had to sing, to imbue patriotism and love for the Homeland. " The most often performed marches were:

- "Los Viejos Estandartes" ("The Old Banners"), lyrics by Jorge Inostroza and music by Willy Bascuñán, member of the vocal quartet Los Cuatro Cuartos. The march honors General Manuel Baquedano, hero of the War of the Pacific. It was popularized through the album *¡Al 7° Linea!* (1966) by Los Cuatro Cuartos. Since 1975, it has been the official anthem[283] of the Chilean Army.

- "Adiós al Séptimo de Línea" ("Farewell to the Seventh of Row"), composed by Gumercindo Ipinza and Luis Mancilla in 1877 as a homage to the military regiment of Carampangue. To the present day, the anthem is always performed during events commemorating the War of the Pacific.

- "Las Glorias del Ejército" ("The Glories of the Army"), brought from Prussia by Captain Emil Körner, who in 1885 settled in the country as Chief of the Prussian Military Mission, and subsequently modernized the Chilean Army and founded the Chilean War Academy.

- "El Himno de Yungay" ("The Anthem of Yungay"), composed by José Zapiola and Ramón Rengifo in 1839, in honor of the victory over the Peru-Bolivia Confederation in the Battle of Yungay during the War of the Pacific.

- "Lili Marlene", lyrics written in 1915 by Hans Leip and music composed in 1939 by Norbert Schultze. The song expresses the anguish of separation of a WWI soldier from his sweetheart. During WWII, the song was played frequently and became popular among both Axis and Allied troops. It has been translated into 48 languages and features in military parades worldwide.

283 Everywhere in the country, the national anthem had to be sung with an additional verse that glorifies the Army. This verse was officially added by Pinochet in 1973 and removed in 1990, when democracy was restored. However, some extreme right-wing sectors of society still sing it in private ceremonies. Neustadt (2011) discusses the changes to the music, text, reception and interpretation of the Chilean and Costa Rican anthems, arguing that these "developed, and continue to develop, changing with, and according to, shifting images of national identity."

González mentioned he heard prisoners singing many songs by Violeta Parra, especially "La Jardinera" ("The Woman Gardener"), "El Casamiento de Negros" ("Wedding of Blacks"), "Run Run Se Fue Pal Norte" ("Run Run Left for the North") and "La Paloma Ausente" ("The Absent Dove"). He did not expand on the details or significance of Parra's music as being sung by the inmates; however, he highlighted that he never heard them attempting her song "La Carta" ("The Letter"), which explicitly deals with imprisonment, social inequality and absence of freedom of opinion and speech.[284]

After Chacabuco, González was sent to the military camp Tejas Verdes, where he became a DINA member:

> It must be September 15 or 20 when the Captain, with all his medals, arrives [to Chacabuco]. He tells us to get ready, showered and shaved. "We are going to the war," we said. When we arrived at the regiment [in Tejas Verdes], the soldiers looked strange. Silence. We did not know what was happening. Then I see some gringos. But now I know they were Germans, because now I know the language. To me they were all gringos, all handsome. They were dressed in the uniform of the Chilean Army. Then the Colonel tells us that among the entire Army we are the chosen ones to defeat Marxism. We have to sign a piece of paper that said "PMNP", that is "Puras Mentiras No Pregunte" ["Only Lies, Don't Ask"]. He asks us if we know what we signed. We tell him we do not. He says we are now in the DINA. We did not know what the DINA did as it did not exist before. We were 600 people from all over the country. Then it started.285

284 Violeta Parra (1917-1967) was a Chilean songwriter, performer, folk-music collector and graphic artist. Her work was inspired by diverse folk music traditions, achieving a great popularity through mass distribution, particularly from the 1950s onwards. In 1957 she founded and managed the Museo de Arte Popular at the University of Concepción in southern Chile. She lived in Paris for several years, performing at the United Nations and UNESCO, and exhibiting her paintings, tapestries and wire sculptures at the Louvre's Musée des Arts Decoratifs. Upon her return to Chile in 1965, she set up a circus tent on the outskirts of Santiago, to promote Chilean popular culture. Parra committed suicide at the age of 49. For a personal account of the significance of Parra's music in two of Pinochet's concentration camps, see Montealegre 2012:76-111. For an analysis of the political content of "La Carta," see Borland 2006.

285 According to the *Rettig Report*, the DINA was organized in November 1973 and officially created in June 1974 (Comisión Nacional 1991 v. I:55). The *Valech Report* confirms that the DINA began operations before its official founding (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1: 358). It is possible that DINA General Director Manuel Contreras had conceived it before the coup. In 1977 the DINA was replaced by the Centro Nacional de Información (CNI-National Information Center).

He recalled that prisoners in Tejas Verdes had to sing the national anthem every morning and afternoon. In the afternoon they also had to sing anthems from various military regiments, evoking traditional values and heroism. González was then sent to the DINA training center in Las Rocas de Santo Domingo (Valparaíso region), where he took an intelligence course for two months. From January to March or April 1974, González operated in the centers of London Street (known to DINA personnel as Londres 90) and Marcoleta 90 in Santiago, sleeping at the headquarters in Rinconada Maipú every night. González did not recall hearing any kind of music in the Londres torture chamber, contradicting the Valech Report (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:529), according to which detainees in this center "estaban expuestos a ruidos molestos durante la noche para imperdirles dormir, especialmente música a todo volumen" ("were exposed to unpleasant noises during the night, especially music at full volume.").

From April 1974 González began working in Villa Grimaldi (known to DINA personnel as Cuartel Terranova), which became the headquarters and operational center of the Brigada de Inteligencia Militar (BIM- Metropolitan Intelligence Brigade): "Before the coup Villa Grimaldi functioned as a disco for the privileged classes. I was one of the first ones to go inside. We went to clean up empty bottles of wine and expensive liquors that were not common in Chile." Villa Grimaldi is located on the outskirts of Santiago, in the borough of La Reina, and occupies a surface of 10,200 square meters. An estimated 5,000 people were imprisoned and tortured there. The most common torture method was known as "*parrilla*" ("barbeque"), whereby naked prisoners were tied to a metal bunk bed and subjected to electric shocks. Other common methods included hanging (often aggravated by electric shocks, beatings and cuts); submerging detainees' heads in containers of dirty water or some other liquid, or placing their heads in plastic bags, almost until the point of asphyxiation; and raping of women, including those who were pregnant. Prisoners were held at the so-called Corvi Houses and Chile Houses (nicknamed after social housing built by previous governments) and the Tower. Corvi Hoosed were small structures of by previous governments) and at the Tower. Corvi Houses were small structures of 80x80 centimeters used for breaking down individual prisoners. Chile Houses measured 1 x 2 meters and accommodated five prisoners undergoing interrogation and torture. The Tower was a six-meter water tank with tiny cubicles to keep prisoners in total isolation (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:531f).[286]

286 The buildings of Villa Grimaldi were demolished by the military in 1989 just before the first democratic

González recalled that among his duties as a DINA employee were the guarding, maintaining and cleaning of the cartel, and registering new detainees who

> […] arrived 24 hours a day, blindfolded. Some came from other DINA centers. We gave each a number, and this was our way to identify them. I would not know what number we reached. I had to write down what happened during the day, anything that was unusual. Later an officer would come, read the book and sign it. Then one could leave. If the officer found something wrong, one had to stay. In a normal day I would start at 8 am and would finish by 6.30 or 7pm. That was the routine every day, unless a General came, in which case one had to stay longer. General Contreras came several times a year. Prisoners were locked up all day. There were some who stayed for six months, a year, and they were sent to other centers like Cuatro Álamos. I mounted guard in the Tower, where torture was inflicted all day and night.

González did not dwell on the subject of torture, however he mentioned a medic nicknamed Doctor Mortis, who "was bad: people said he hypnotized. With some prisoners, he used Pentothal."[287] He mentioned a type of torture whereby prisoners were made to lie down on the grass so that agents could drive a van over their legs. He also recalled he hitting and subsequent killing of a soldier, which he was obliged to watch. When I asked him about sexual torture, he bluntly replied: "there was not any. They just raped women or simply tortured them. One New Year's Eve they were on their own and raped them."

In Villa Grimaldi, recalled González, agents often listened to the "*lora*" ("radio" in DINA slang, literally "female parrot"). He remembered hearing Radio Cooperativa and Radio National de Chile, especially the program "*el Hocicón*" ("the Big-Mouthed") from the latter station, which played Mexican music, mostly *rancheras*, a genre dating from the Mexican Revolution (early twentieth

government took office. Since 1997 it has been a Park for Peace, and since 2004 a National Monument. The Park is currently run by a corporation, which organizes educational programs and holds an oral archive of testimonies. For further information about Villa Grimaldi, see the *Rettig Report* and the website of the Corporación Parque por la Paz, http://villagrimaldi.cl, accessed 2 February 2013. For an analysis of the Park as aesthetic object and memory site, see Lazzara 2006: 127-147.

287 Doctor Mortis was a sinister radio and comic strip character created in the 1940s by the Chilean writer, actor and musician Juan Marino Cabello. Pentothal is used as general aesthetic and to induce coma in euthanasia and as one of the drugs administrated during lethal injections in the USA.

century). (Radio Nacional was the official radio station of the Pinochet regime and broadcast numerous political speeches; interestingly, González did not remember listening to these.). He added:

> We had our own radio to communicate. The radio operator was an agent called Michel Troncoso (alias) who liked singing in French. He always sang the same song: "Aline" [1965, a ballade by French songwriter Christophe], which was in fashion. He would always carry his guitar, he liked music very much. He sang all the time, even in front of prisoners. There was another agent who liked playing the songs "La Vaca Blanca" ("The White Cow") and "La Loca María" ("Crazy Maria") on LP. At that time, people went to quintas de recreo [popular premises with food, drink, music and dance], where that kind of music was played. "La Vaca Blanca" is about a cow looking for a husband. She goes to a party with a bull from the high society. And "La Loca María" is about a perfidious woman looking for a boyfriend. Typical… They played these songs every day and all the time because people liked them. Everybody liked them. Even the guards were singing them. The agent in charge would choose the record that would be played during torture sessions. Officers had a different taste; they didn't like music like "La Vaca Blanca" and "La Loca María." They liked classical music, they were more educated.

On being asked whether he liked "La Vaca Blanca" and "La Loca María", he replied ambiguously: "well, that is what people listened to." He could not remember who wrote or recorded these songs. Following his description above, I identified a *cumbia* (a dance genre originating in Colombia and Panama) called "La Vaca Blanca", by the Peruvian group Los Girasoles, who were active in the 1960s and 70s. It goes like this:

Yo tenía una vaca blanca
que se llamaba Piedad
estaba comprometida
porque ella era de sociedad.

Ella me pidió permiso
pa' contraer matrimonio
con un torito pintado
que lo llamaban Antonio.
Mi vaca blanca se me fugó
ese torito se la llevó
el sinvergüenza se la raptó
mi pobre vaca cuanto sufrió.
Y yo le negué el permiso
pa' contraer matrimonio
porque la gente decía
que ese toro es un demonio.

I had a white cow
that was called Piedad
she was engaged
because she was from the high society.
She asked me permission
to get married to
a suitable little bull
they called Antonio.
My white cow ran away
that little bull took her away
that swine kidnapped her
how much my poor cow suffered.
And I did not give her permission
to get married
because people said
that bull is a devil

I have been unable to establish whether it was Los Girasoles' recording that circulated in Chile: DINA agents could have played one of the many covers of this song. A possible contender is the version by the Chilean tropical bands

Los Vinkings 5. Another candidate is the version by the land Los de Colombia, especially as it was released on the same LP as "La Loca María," also a *cumbia*:[288]

A la vuelta de mi casa
vive la loca María
es una loca elegante
es una loca traviesa
se la pasa todo el día
haciendo de motoneta.
Loca María
Loca María
Loca María
Loca María, adiós mi amor.
Cuando los muchachos
le gritan adiós mi amor
adiós mi loca querida
adiós loca consentida
y ella con suave sonrisa
se pone que es furor.

Round the corner from my house
lives crazy Maria
she is an elegant crazy woman
she is a naughty crazy woman
she spends the whole day
looking for a ride.
Crazy Maria
crazy Maria
crazy Maria

288 The LP recorded by Los de Colombia containing "La Loca María" and "La Vaca Blanca" is titled *Cumbia Colombiana: Clásicos de los 60*. Los de Colombia must not be mistaken for the Colombian band Los Ocho de Colombia, which was active and very popular in that country in the 1970s. I suspect the former band was not from Colombia: it would have been too coincidental that two bands with almost the same name would operate in the same country. I have not been able to find out whether Los de Colombia's version of "La Loca María" is the original. To my knowledge, Los Girasoles did not record this song.

crazy Maria, goodbye my love.
When boys
shout to her goodbye my love
goodbye my dear crazy woman
goodbye spoilt crazy woman
and she, with a soft smile
becomes a fury .

González did not report any compulsory singing in the Villa. He recalled that prisoners "did not do anything on their own initiative. They were locked up all day and had nothing to do. That they would do something creative? No, nothing, nothing. In Chacabuco they did but that was because they had a guide who was from the Army." This statement is certainly contestable: within the tight limitations imposed by the regime, people in different levels of imprisonment managed to pursue a wide range of creative activities by themselves.[289] Later, González did remember prisoners singing on their initiative:

> On Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays we [DINA personnel excluding the commander and officers] were on our own. It was very quiet and we were the authorities. In the summer of 1974 the swimming pool was filled with water. We would swim during the day and opened the door to the prisoners so they could swim at night, to have fun. They would sit on a bench near the pool and in the afternoon would sing songs from the Mexican Revolution, corridos, "El negro José", songs by Víctor Jara like "Juan sin Tierra" and "Joaquín Murieta."290 I remember they sand "Un Millón de Amigos" ["A Million Friends"] by Roberto Carlos [Brazilian pop composer and singer], which deals with kindness, with humility. The lyrics would leave you a message.

On being asked about the torture house Irán 3037 (Santiago), González

289 There are several testimonies in the oral archive in Villa Grimaldi that evidence activities developed by inmates on their own initiative. See also Montealegre (2010: 252-359) and the website *Prisioneros Políticos de Chacabuco*, http://www.prisionerospoliticosdechacabuco.cl/, accessed 2 February 2013.

290 "El Negro José" became an anthem for political prisoners in many detention centers. See "La historia del Negro José" (Chornik 2005). "Juan sin Tierra", an anonymous Mexican *corrido*, was popularized by Víctor Jara. Jara recorded two songs inspired by the nineteenth-century Mexican figure Joaquín Murieta: "Así Como Hoy Matan Negros" (based on the play *Fulgor y Muerte de Joaquín Murieta* by Pablo Neruda and Sergio Ortega), and with Quilapayún, the "Cueca de Joaquín Murieta."

explained that he was not based there but often went to deliver food to the "*paquetes*" ("packages", that is "prisoners" in DINA slang). He had to collect the food from the Diego Portales building, seat of Pinochet's executive power (1973-1981) and legislative power (1973-1990). The house on Irán Street was known as La Venda Sexy due to prisoners remaining blindfolded while they were being regularly subjected to sexual abuse (see Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:529f.). The house was also known as La Discothéque because recorded music was played constantly. González explained from where they obtained equipment and records:

> For example, today I would break into your house and take all that you had, including record players and LPs. Then we would play your music, whatever you had, and what music was featured? Whatever was in fashion, whatever was played on the radio. As simple as that. That happened in Villa Grimaldi too, but not in Londres 38. The agents themselves nicknamed it La Discothéque. They had broken into the house of someone who had a big loudspeaker. They took the equipment and set it up in the room that was used for torture, on the first floor. It was so loud, so very loud. They would put music on to cover the screams of the prisoners, so people walking down the street would not think they were torturing. It was on all day long, at least the times when I went there. That would not have been called sonic torture and I do not know what the prisoners may have thought or felt about it. One could often hear recordings of "La Vaca Blanca," "La Loca María," "La Gallina de los Huevos de Oro" ["The Hen of the Golden Eggs"], Ramón Aguilera, Sandro (especially the song "Rosa, Rosa") and Leonardo Favio.291

González mentioned he would also deliver food to the torture house José Domingo Cañas 1305, known to DINA personnel as Ollahue. In this center, inmates were kept blindfolded, tied up and chained, deprived of food, water and sleep. Common methods or torture included punches, electric shocks,

291 There are many different genres of songs under the title "La Gallina de los Huevos de Oro." I have not been able to identify possible contenders yet. The Chilean singer Ramón Aguilera and Argentine singers Favio and Sandro (also known as Sandro de América and the Argentine Elvis) are associated with the genre *Balada romántica latinoamericana*.

rapes, mock executions, asphyxia and burns (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:530f). González recalled that

> […] in Ollahue they also played recorded music so that the screams of tortured prisoners would not be heard. There they played a cueca from an LP every day.292 I do not remember which one but it was always the same. They broke into someone's house searching for Marxist literature. As they took everything away, they took the record. People were singing along to it. They also had a "lora" ["radio"], which was always on.

As part of his duties, González took a prisoner from the DINA-operated center Cuatro Álamo (Santiago) to Colonia Dignidad (Maule region), and handed him over to the German settlers. He recalled having a superb meal in the company of the top officers including Paul Schäffer. He learnt that the prisoner was dead when Paul Schäffer "made a gesture with his hands and said '*fertig*' ['done (with)']. From then onwards I never forgot that word."

González left the DINA in 1975, "without any explanation, just like this." He fled Chile and settled in Germany, living in Koblenz (a village near the River Rhine) and later in Hamburg. He became involved with Amnesty International's campaign to raise awareness of Colonia Dignidad:

> One day, while walking, I saw a stall of Amnesty International. There was a British woman giving people information about what happened in Chile. I told the gringa: "I was there." She asked for my number and address. They sent me a telegram and then a priest visited me. I told them the story but they did not believe me much because they thought I was an agent, an infiltrator. But finally I started giving names of prisoners I knew and in this they trusted me.

Living in Germany allowed González to generate connections between Nazi concentration camps and his own past a DINA agent:

292 *Cueca* is the most popular traditional music genre and dance of Chile. It is also played in Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Mexico, where it is called *marinera or chilena*. *Cueca* is a mixed partner dance with no body contact. The man follows the woman persistently, imitating a cock courting a hen. The couple pursue and retreat, pass and circle one another in an imaginary ring, twirling handkerchiefs as they dance. *Cueca* is played in most regions of Chile with some variations.

> 60 kilometers from Hamburg there is a Nazi concentration camp. I did not want to go in, I was scared. But one day I went to Dachau and did go in. Not to remember the past, that would have been masochist. I went with a German friend, with whom I had a son. Then I went to almost all other Nazi camps. Chilean camps were bad, bad, but not as bad as the Nazi ones. They were in "Chilean style."

According to him, a key difference between Nazi and DINA centers was that in the latter, orders were not carried out. "Not even the orders of General Manuel Contreras [the founder and Director of the DINA]?" I asked. "Ehhh, well, no, no. Because there were lots of people who I put on the lists to kill and were declared dead, but they are still alive. They were in the Tower of Villa Grimaldi, which was the place to kill people. No, Chilean centers were not like Nazis camps. It was not like we had a … What was the name of the musician adored by Hitler?" Here González was not counting the thousands who did get killed or "disappeared," following the regime's policy of eradicating political opponents. Interestingly, he drew connections with Wagner, even though he could not remember his name, to dismiss a comparison with Nazi camps.

Conclusion

It is a remarkable fact that González, having participated in the setting up and running of some of the most significant torture and concentration centers of Pinochet's regime, and having been indicted for a notorious case of human rights violations, was so open to talk about his past. His recurrent use of the present tense suggests his experience as a DINA agent remains vivid to him. His mixing of the first and third person (e.g. in his description of the raids in which DINA personnel obtained the records that were subsequently played during torture sessions), makes it unclear whether he took on the role of a witness or participant (or both) in episodes involving violence. Whatever his position(s) might have been, and bearing in mind that he spent most of the interview not talking about music (suggesting music had not been particularly relevant to him in general and during his time in detention centers), his references to forced singing and music as a soundtrack to torture are not only the most detailed to the present day but also the only ones coming from a former agent. As mentioned earlier, this article only provides the first reading of González's

account. For a fuller discussion of the system's uses and abuses of music, more interviews with former prisoners and agents will need to be conducted. Possible threads to follow are the repertoire, practices and effects of music constantly played as a background to and as a form of torture in centers such as Londres 38, La Discothéque and La Casa de la Musicá (Concepción), and possible links with CIA interrogation and torture techniques that incorporate sound and music.

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Who's Who

Amaury du Closel

Né en 1956, le chef d'orchestre et compositeur Amaury du Closel a notamment étudié la composition avec Max Deutsch élève de Schoenberg et infatigable défenseur de la musique de ce dernier -, et est diplômé de l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris. Directeur musical de la compagnie lyrique Opéra Nomade, sa carrière internationale l'a conduit à diriger dans l'Europe entière, ainsi qu'en Asie. Avec l'aide du Forum Culturel Autrichien de Paris, il a fondé en 2003 le Forum Voix Etouffées dont le but est de promouvoir la musique des compositeurs persécutés par les totalitarismes et a publié en 2005 *Les Voix étouffées du Troisième Reich : Entartete Musik* chez Actes Sud, Prix du meilleur essai du Syndicat de la critique musicale française.

Amaury du Closel poursuit depuis 2008 avec le soutien de l'Union Européenne un immense projet européen de redécouverte de ces compositeurs, concrétisé notamment par un concert à Auschwitz en avril 2009, qui a donné lieu au documentaire *Elégies d'Auschwitz* du réalisateur Frédéric Cristea. L'une de ses œuvres, *Nahem*, créée en 2008 par le Klangforum de Vienne, rend hommage aux victimes de la Shoah, dont il s'attache à réhabiliter la mémoire dans le domaine musical.

Francesco Lotoro

Après avoir étudié à l'Académie de Musique Franz Liszt à Budapest, Francesco Lotoro s'est spécialisé dans la pratique du piano, étudiant avec Kornel Zempléni, Viktor Merzhanov, Tamas Vasary et Aldo Ciccolini. Il s'est particulièrement

intéressé à Johann Sebastien Bach, il a transcrit *Musikalisches Opfer* pour deux pianos, le *Concerto de Brandenburg*, et beaucoup d'autres. En 1995, Francesco Lotoro a fondé l'orchestre de Musique Juive. Il enregistré les compositions pour piano et la musique de chambre écrites par Alois Pinios, Petre Benand après le printemps de Prague. Après cela, il s'est intéressé à l'enregistrement de toutes les compositions pour piano produites pendant la Seconde guerre mondiale. Il a créé l'encyclopédie sur CD *KZ Musik* (48 CD) qui propose les œuvres composées dans les camps de concentration pendant la Seconde guerre mondiale en Europe, en Afrique du Nord et en Asie. Il a enregistré la *8ème symphonie pour chœur d'hommes et pour piano* d'Erwin Schulhoff. En tant que compositeur, il a écrit l'opéra *Misha e i lupi and Gola*, une suite juive pour chanteur et orchestre. Il a participé à la rédaction du *Dizionario della Letteratura Musicale Concentrazionaria*.

Dr Milijana Pavlovic

Née en 1980 à Mrkonjic Grad en Bosnie Herzégovine, elle est diplômée d'une PhD en Musicologie à l'Università degli Studi di Ferrara en Italie en 2009. Son sujet de thèse s'intéressait à « Mahler et l'Italie. Episodes biographiques et processus créatifs » (*Mahler e l'Italia. Episodi biografici e precesso creativo*). Elle a étudié l'Histoire de la Musique à l'Università degli Studi di Ferrara en Italie, en 2009. En 2013, elle a reçu la bourse Lise Meitner du Austrian Science Fund (Fond zur Förderung und wissenschaftliches Forschung) pour un projet sur la Troisième Symphonie (Malher's III Symphony. Sketches And Compositionnal Process), à la Leopold-Franzens-Universität d'Innsbruck en 2013. Elle a publié de nombreux papiers et a participé à des conférences et festivals à Vienne, Trieste, Padova, Milan, Brescia, Cordina d'Ampezzo, Adria et Banja Luka. Elle aussi publié des études scientifiques et non scientifiques, dont la plus récente est *Lost And Found – Mahler's Fifth in Trieste*, chez Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, Band 57, Vienne 2013, et *The Curious Case of Mahler Reception in Italy* (compte-rendu du Symposium international *Nach Mahlers Tod / After Mahler's Death*, qui s'est tenu au Konserthaus à Vienne en 2011), qui sera publié bientôt. Elle est membre de la *Internationale Gustav Mahler Gesellschaft* et de la *International Musicological Society*. Ses sujets de recherche s'intéressent à Gustav Mahler, la musique dans les camps de concentration, la musique et la propagande, la musique et les régimes totalitaires.

Dr Katarzyna Naliwajek-Mazurek

Maître-assistant à l'Institut de Musicologie de l'Université de Varsovie.

Prix Feicht de la Section de musicologie de l'Association des compositeurs polonais pour sa thèse sur Constanin Regamey (2009). Ses recherches sont consacrées surtout à l'histoire de la musique polonaise pendant la Seconde guerre mondiale, à la musique contemporaine, à l'esthétique musicale et à l'analyse de la musique. Boursière de la Fondation Paul Sacher (2005). Articles publiés dans des revues spécisalisées et participation, avec communications, aux colloques internationaux en Europe et aux Etats-Unis. Editeur de travaux de Constantin Regamey et d'articles de Andrzej Chłopecki. Collaboration avec la Radio polonaise, l'Institut audiovisuel national et le Centre d'information sur la musique polonaise. Textes publiés dans des livrets de CD (Koffler & Regamey. Les chefs-d'œuvre polonais, Ebony Band sous la direction de Werner Herbers, Channel Classics). Prix de l'Université de Lüneburg (Hosenfeld/ Szpilman Gedenkpreis) pour une exposition sur La Musique en Pologne sous l'Occupation, co-organisée avec Frank Harders-Wuthenow (2011). Prix littéraire de la Ville de Varsovie pour Varsovie 1939-1945. La Vie musicale sous l'Occupation, livre publié avec Elżbieta Markowska (2015). Membre de l'Association Witold Lutosławski, membre de l'Association des Compositeurs polonais, membre du Comité de programmation du Festival de la Musique contemporaine, l'Automne de Varsovie.

Ronald Leopoldi

Né en 1955 en Autriche, Ronald Leopoldi a suivi une formation de manager industriel. En 1974, il commence une formation en chant et théâtre au conservatoire de Vienne, avec une spécialité en opérette, musique, et jeu théâtral. De 1965 à 1978, il a donné des représentations dans différents théâtres tels que le Stadthalle de Vienne, le Théâtre Raimund de Vienne, avec quelques apparitions dans des séries TV. Entre 1978 et 1985, il a participé à différentes productions au théâtre, dans des films et à la télévision au « Salzburger Festspiele », au Théâtre Bad Ischl, etc. Il est depuis 1985, il est négociant pour sa propre entreprise. En 1992, il a publié une biographie photographique sur Hermann Leopoldi et Helly Möslein intitulée *In einem kleinen Café in Hernals* aux Editions Trend S. Il a été administrateur de la propriété d'Hermann Leopoldi avec sa mère, Helly Möslein. Il a coédité de nombreux enregistrements sur le travail de ses

parents avec la coopération des *Preiser Records*. Il a participé activement dans des théâtres, la radio et à des productions télévisées sur la vie d'Hermann Leopoldi et Helly Mölsein. Il participe également à des expositions sur leur vie, comme aux musées de Bezirksmuseen, Buchenwald, etc. En 2011, il a publié une collection de deux volumes sur la musique d'Hermann Leopoldi et son frère, Ferdinand, en coopération avec l'Institute of historical intervention de Vienne. Il a aussi publié plusieurs biographies sur Hermann Leopoldi comme *Hermann Leopoldi – Hersch Kohn, et Hermann Leopoldi – The life of viennese piano humourist*, en 2013.

Dr Suzanne Snizek

Suzanne Snizek a obtenu un Bachelor en musique à l'Université Bloomington d'Indiana, un Master de Musique de l'Université des arts de Philadelphia et un doctorat en Arts musicaux de l'UBC-Vancouver. Depuis septembre 2011, Dr Snizek est Professeur assistant invité de musique à l'Université de Victoria, à la British Columbia, au Canada, où elle enseigne la flûte, la musique de chambre, et des cours sur la musique du XXème siècle, dont « la Musique Proscrite », et la « Musique et la Protestation ». Elle a donné des représentations dans un grand nombre d'ensembles aux Etats-Unis, au Canada, en France, en Grande-Bretagne et à Taïwan. Elle a obtenu le premier prix de la Mid South Flute Competition, elle a aussi gagné le concours du concerto de l'Université des Arts, la compétition du magazine Flute Talk et le concours du club de flûte de New York. En tant que spécialiste, elle a participé à l'édition des volumes *La Captivité de Guerre au XXème siècle : Des Archives, Des Histoires, Des Mémoires* (Paris : Armand Colin, 2012), *Cultural Heritage and Prisoners of War : Creativity behind Barbed Wire* (New York : Routledge, 2012), *The Impact of Nazism on the Development of 20th c. Muisc* (Vienna : Bölhau Verlag, 2014) ainsi qu'à des articles sur internet et dans des magazines. Le Dr. Snizek est également une flûtiste reconnue internationalement, professeur.

Dr Inna Klause

Inna Klause a étudié la pédagogie musicale au Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover (HMTM) de 1998 à 2003, avec des études de l'accordéon chromatique avec la Professeur Elsbeth Moser. Elle est diplômée en Enseignement depuis 2003. De 2000 à 2005, elle a aussi étudié la musicologie et la philosophie avec l'obtention d'un master en 2005. Son sujet de thèse

s'intéressait au compositeur russe Vladislav Zolotaryov (1942-1975) à travers sa vie et ses œuvres pour les accordéons chromatiques. En 2012, elle a complété son travail de recherche avec comme titre « Music and Musicians in Soviet Labour Camps from the 1920s to the 1950s » sous la direction du Professeur Stefan Weiss et du Professeur Dr. Arnfried Edler, à la HMTM. Pour cette dissertation, elle a été reçu le prix de la dissertation George R. Schroubek de la fondation Schroubek d'Europe de l'Est à l'Université Ludwig-Maximilians à Munich. Elle a reçu des bourses de Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (1999-2005), de la part du programme de l'ASA du Carl-Duisberg-Gesellschaft (2000), de la German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) pour ses voyages de recherches à Moscou et Magadan (2004 et 2006), l'Institut d'Histoire d'Allemagne à Moscou et de la part du Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur (organisation fondée par le gouvernement pour la recherche et le réexamen de la dictature communiste en Allemagne de l'Est 2007-2008) et de la part du FAZIT Stiftung (2009). En 2007, elle a reçu le Prix de la Musique Gundlach. En Automne 2007, elle a organisé le congrès international du DFG « Vadislav Zolotaryov : His Life and Wor » à la HMTM. En juin 2010, elle a organisé la conférence du DFG « Composers in the Gulag » qui a eu lieu au Département de Musicologie de l'Université de Göttingen. De 2008 à 2013, elle était chercheur associé dans ce département.

Daniel Elphick

Daniel Elphick est en doctorat à l'Université de Manchester. Sa thèse s'intéresse à l'analyse et l'esthétique des quatuors à cordes de Mieczyslaw Weinberg. Sa recherche se base sur une critique théorique, sur une connaissance de la culture soviétique et russe, et sur la musique de chambre du XXème siècle.

Dr David Fligg

Along with many other artists imprisoned in the Terezín (Theresienstadt) concentration camp and ghetto, composer and pianist Gideon Klein has been almost totally referenced by this internment when he made a significant impact on the camp's cultural activities. Using his final composition, the String Trio, this paper explores how we might explore Klein in a more nuanced way, not only by acknowledging him as an important musician in his own right within

the Terezín environment, but by examining his involvement in music before the Holocaust, his Jewish background, and what is possibly his final engagement with music during the final weeks before his murder in an Auschwitz sub-camp.

UK-based musicologist Dr. David Fligg is Project Consultant for the Performing the Jewish Archive initiative (University of Leeds). This international project, established in 2014, is being funded by a £1.8M research grant from the Arts & Humanities Research Council, and is the largest project of its type in the world. Dr. Fligg is also a Tutor in Academic Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music (Manchester), and Visiting Professor at the University of Chester. His research specialism is on music from the Terezín (Theresienstadt) concentration camp and ghetto, specifically the composer and pianist Gideon Klein, one of a number of musicians interned there. Dr. Fligg is writing a critical biography about Klein, and he is the author of A Concise Guide to Orchestral Music (Mel Bay, 2010). Recently, Dr. Fligg has presented research papers at the AMS annual conference (San Francisco, USA), Hebrew University (Jerusalem, Israel), the IAJGS annual conference (Boston, USA), as well as at Council of Europe (Strasbourg, France). In May 2015, he led a guided tour in Prague, Gideon Klein's Prague, for the summer school of the Washington DC based Schächter Institute for Arts and Humanities. He is an alumnus of the University of Leeds, Royal Holloway University of London, and is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Philippe Olivier

Philippe Olivier, né en 1952 est l'auteur de vingt-et-un livres et enseigne notamment à l'Académie supérieure de musique et de théâtre de Rostock(Allemagne). Il a donné également, en novembre 2009, un cours à l'Institut universitaire d'études juives Elie Wiesel de Paris. Il étudie les lettres modernes, l'allemand et l'histoire de la musique à l'université de Strasbourg, ainsi qu'en option l'alsacien dont il est toujours resté proche, l'économie et la psychologie. Philippe Olivier rejoint très tôt les antennes de France Culture et de France Musiques, où il est producteur entre 1979 et 1994. Depuis, il exerce ses activités dans les domaines de l'édition, de l'audiovisuel, de l'action culturelle, et continue à s'investir dans le partage des connaissances qui lui sont acquises, en France et en Europe. Il est aujourd'hui directeur de la collection "Points

d'orgue" aux Editions Hermann (Paris). Philippe Olivier a, dans le domaine audiovisuel, réinvesti son savoir dans la conception de la série "La grande aventure du Festival d'Aix-en-Provence", diffusée par Arte. Il a réfléchi à des documentaires consacrés à Paul Badura-Skoda, Barbara Bonney, Nobuko Imaï, Gundula Janowitz, Richard Arzt et François-René Duchâble. En 2003 et 2004, Philippe Olivier écrit un documentaire sur le festival de Bayreuth, festival qui lui a depuis dédié le poste de secrétaire général des relations internationales des cercles Wagner de France, ainsi qu'un poste de conférencier attitré. Depuis, il a réalisé un documentaire sur l'Ensemble Intercontemporain. Il a aussi produit, en 2008, une série d'émissions pour la Kultur-Radio de Berlin.

Philippe Olivier a, dans le domaine de l'action culturelle, exercé des responsabilités aux Jeunesses Musicales de France et au Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie de Bruxelles, comme à l'Orchestre philharmonique de Strasbourg, et a été le directeur artistique du Sommet Mondial du Yiddish organisé, en 2000, dans la capitale alsacienne.

Philippe Olivier s'est, ces dernières années, particulièrement consacré au sort des compositeurs et des interprètes victimes du national-socialisme. Il a également œuvré à la réhabilitation du compositeur Richard Wagner, développant dans sa thèse *Du nationalisme au nationalsocialisme : évolution et réinterprétation de Richard Wagner de 1848 à 1945*. Cette thèse, soutenue à l'université de Strasbourg devant un jury émérite, analyse le nationalisme présent dans toutes les villes d'Europe au xixe siècle (de Paris à Moscou, en passant par Berlin) et l'interprétation erronée qui en découle au XXe siècle. Il est aujourd'hui associé au Forum Voix Etouffées fondé par Amaury du Closel. Cette structure, soutenue par l'Union Européenne et la République d'Autriche, effectue un travail de pionnier en la matière.

Lloica Czackis

Lloïca Czackis a une formation en chant lyrique à Buenos Aires et au Guildhall School of Music & Drama de Londres. Depuis 1999 elle conçoit des programmes de musique classique, de cabaret et de tango. Elle a notamment créé « Tangele : la pulsation du tango yiddish », qui a été récompensé par une « Millennium award » au Royaume Uni en 2002. Mis en musique par Gustavo Beytelmann, le spectacle est composé de chansons originales du théâtre yiddish de Buenos Aires et de New York dans les années 1930 et 40 et de ghettos et camps de

concentration européens. Elle crée aussi « Terezín Karussel », avec des Lieder et des chansons de cabaret écrites par des compositeurs du camp de Terezín, et « Tango nomade », tangos en yiddish, français, polonais et espagnol, avec le grand accordéoniste de jazz manouche Marcel Loeffler.

En plus de sa carrière musicale, Lloica Czackis poursuit sa recherche sur le tango yiddish, obtenant un DEA à l'EHESS, à Paris, en 2005. Elle a enregistré les albums : « Le Grand Tango », consacré à la musique d'Astor Piazzolla, avec le concours du quintette anglo-argentin El Ultimo Tango, et « Tangele : The Pulse of Yiddish Tango » avec Juan Lucas Aisemberg et Gustavo Beytelmann (Tzadik).

Lloica Czackis est également coresponsable de l'association Valiske (www.valiske.com), dont le but principal est l'organisation de voyages culturels juifs autour du monde.

Dr Edward Hafer

Dr Edward Hafer, Professeur Associé d'Histoire de la Musique à l'University of Southern Mississippi, est diplômé d'un Bachelor of Art en Histoire de la Musique et Littérature de l'Indiana University of Pennsylvania, et d'un Master of Art et d'un doctorat en Musicologie de l'Université d'Illinois au Urbana-Champaign. Il a aussi suivi des cours additionnels à la Millersville University (PA), aux Goethe Institutes de Düsseldorf et Rothenburg ob der Tauber, en Allemagne. Il a aussi participé à un séminaire sur le travail de Richard Wagner à l'Université de Bayreuth.

Son travail de recherche lie la musique du XIXème siècle, la musique et la peinture, et la musique sous l'Holocauste. Il a présenté et publié plusieurs travaux de recherches sur Wagner, Schubert, le Musique et la Peinture, la Musique et la Pédagogie, et sur les spectacles de Cabaret au Camp de Concentration de Westerborck. Chaque été, il dirige une classe dans le cadre d'un « study-abroad » à Vienne en Autriche, intitulée « Vienna, City of Music : 1781-1827 ».

Jory Debenham

Jory Debenham est doctorante à l'Université de Lancaster. Elle est diplômée d'un Master en Musique de l'Université d'Alberta, où elle s'intéressait à l'œuvre

du compositeur Viktor Ullmann, elle a soutenu sa thèse comme une "lecture-recital" en mai 2011. Actuellement, elle fait des recherches sur la musique de Theresienstadt, en explorant le sens musical, ce qui en découle et en le décodant à travers l'étude des partitions et textes qui ont survécu, tout en examinant les problèmes autour des représentations et présentations contemporaines de ces œuvres.

Dr Katia Chornik

Katia Chornik est diplômée d'un Bachelor en musique de l'Université Catholique du Chili, ainsi que d'un Master en représentation musicale de la Royal Academy of Music, et d'un doctorat en Littérature américaine latine et musique de The Open University. Elle a publié des articles et des chapitres sur l'écrivain et musicologue cubain Alejo Carpentier, la musique latino-américaine, la musique dans les camps de concentration chiliens, accompagnés de recherches interdisciplinaires, de l'enseignement.

Katia Chornik travaille en tant que chercheur au département de Musique à l'Université de Manchester. Son projet, "Sounds of Memory : Music and Political Captivity in Pinochet's Chile" (Sons de la mémoire : musique et captivité politique dans le Chili de Pinochet), est financé par le Trust Leverhulme. Son travail de recherche a récemment reçu une grande couverture médiatique en Grande-Bretagne (par BBC News et BBC Radio 5, Channel Four, ITV, The Times, The Independent, The Scotsman, The Dalily Telegraph and The Daily Mail, et beaucoup d'autres) et à l'étranger (par France TV, Le Monde, Deutsche Welle, le Service international de la BBC, ABC, El Mundo, El Mercurio et Univision, et beaucoup d'autres).

Elle a aussi écrit un livre sur Alejo Carpentier, qui relie l'intertextualité et les niveaux intermédiaires à travers l'examen de l'utilisation de la musique jouée, en tant que forme par l'auteur. Son livre sera publié par Legenda (MHRA / Maney) en 2014. En reconnaissance pour son travail sur Carpentier, Katia Chornik a reçu en 2011 le prix annuel de Chercheur de l'Association des Hispanistes de Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande (AHGBI).

Elle a aussi reçu d'autres prix et bourses comme le programme d'étude à plein temps de l'Open University (2006-2010), le prix de l'European String Teachers Association (2002), le prix de la Royal Academy de Musique de Bloch (1999-

2001) et le Cork Axard (1999), etc. En plus de sa carrière académique, Katia Chornik est violoniste à l'Orchestre philharmonique de Santiago (Chili).