
German Jewish musical culture (i.e. (1) music made by Jews,(2) music in Jewish style, (3) music with Jewish content, etc.) was displaced to Israel in the 5th or German Aliyah represented by musicians such as Paul Ben-Haim, Haim Alexander, Tzvi Avni, Paul Ben-Haim, Yehezkel Braun, Abel Ehrlich, Robert Lachmann, Ben-Zion Orgad, Erich Walter Sternberg, Josef Tal, that drew from Central Europe to build a modern musical culture after 1948, as the result of Nazi persecutions between 1933-1945, an attempt to annihilate (vernichtung) the Jewish cultural presence, known as the Shoah constituting the break-fissure-caesura-rupture between modernity and post-modernity. This transnational dislodgment of émigré musicians also fractured in resettlement in America as represented by the works of discriminated against musicians such as Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, Kurt Weill, etc. This book looks at the role of music to Jewish life in postwar Germany tracing the phenomena we identify today as its “represence” of Jewish musical culture (Bildung), in post-Holocaust Germany. The book disproves that Jewish culture ceased to exist in postwar Germany and chronicles a variety of cultural activities connected to Jewish music in Germany beyond the hybrid folk genre of Klezmer. The book documents a German Jewish musical dynamism or a range of musics including folk, popular, classical, and modernist. The book highlights the plurality of musical experiences in the post-Holocaust era by avoiding clichés and one-dimensional (Marcuse) readings of a complicated time, topic, and history. The book documents not only the klezmer revival in Europe today, but also the continuing interest in liturgical music, cabaret music, music in the DP camps, and compositions conceived in response to the Holocaust.

Four essays stand out as particularly excellent. Fruehauf’s chapter in part treats Kristallnacht commemorations of 1988 in both Germanys and their impact on and within musicology although the pioneering work of Lammel and Wulf set the stage. Lily Hirsch’s excellent essay of the Juedischer Kulturbund further treats the politics of displacement in musical commemoration and as a psychological reconstruction of identity after trauma. Joy Calico who addresses the reception of Schoenberg’s A Survivor, in East Germany, and David Shneer, who treats Dutch-born interpreter of Yiddish song and dance- Lin Jaldati, both similarly reflect on displacement in their examination of how politics shaped music’s connection to Jewishness and dislocation.

However for the skeptical reader, the phenomena of the popularity of klezmer folk fests in Europe, Jewish musical festivals as a part of the annual concert season, and that Jewish Cantors can study in German music academies does not mean reconciliation (versunhung) nor does it suggest the Hegelian end of history as Olivier Messiaen’s “Quartet for the end of time” or the German cultural metaphor of “stunde null” (zero hour), nor the Jewish Museum of Berlin’s name for its theme “Der Anfang vom Ende” (the beginning of the End). While it can be agreed that the end was the 1933 seizure to power of the Nazi party it is unclear if the final end (Endlosung) is the represence or even wished for revitalization and revival of Jewish music in Europe. The “end of history” was theme in the writing of Hegel and its influence was seen as late as the Weimar writer Friedrich Gogarten (1887-1968) who expressed this
mood in an essay titled polemically “Zwischen den Zeiten” (between the times) which voiced a perceived disjunction between the world before World War I and after. Gogarten was not alone in his sweeping terms to claim the entire “world of yesterday” whereby the times were felt to have fallen asunder. Some Rabbinic exegesis regarded WWI as the onset of Gog and Magog that would mark the end of history and usher us into a new era post-history which Emil Fackenheim later argued it was the Holocaust that constitutes the turning point or rupture/fissure/break/caesura/novum that separates modernity from post-modernity which is after history as understood before. One of the few Jewish members of the Stefan George (1868-1933) circle was Friederich Gundolf who applied the psychological Gestalt-ideal to analysis of literature. The Stefan George circle published in a periodically called Blaetter fuer die Kunst. There anti-historicist views were expressed whereby literary texts were reduced to their Romantic ability to produce aesthetic pleasure outside of “history” or after history.

It is the Shoah which constituted the break-fissure-caesura-rupture between modernity and post-modernity. The Shoah is the unconscious of all of Strauss and Arendt’s thought and viewed as a novum in history. This does not mean that Arendt and Strauss subscribed to the Frankfurt School understanding of the Hegelian end of history as Olivier Messiaen’s “Quartet for the end of time” or the German cultural metaphor of “stunde null” (zero hour), or the Jewish Museum of Berlin’s recent exhibit name for its theme “Der Anfang vom Ende” (the beginning of the End). In fact Strauss and Arendt resisted and rejected Hegelian analysis of history based on thesis, anti-thesis, and aufhebung that so essentially influences a Marxist reading of history whereby the French Revolution that beheaded the Aristocrats of Versaille represented the bourgeois revolution that was later superceded by the 3rd Estate of the proletariat in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia that trumped the bourgeoisie themselves. In this Hegelian reading of history and Marx’s communist manifesto the 3rd revolution of the proletariat will not become complete until all bourgeois values are overturned in favor of a classless society. Arendt and Strauss’ anti-liberalism, whereby rewards are based on merit, rather than blanket egalitarianism, turns to historical facts such as all classes (upper, middle, proletariat) in Nazi Europe were implicated in Nazi Judeocide. Not just Wagner’s proletariat “band” wind instrument music was celebrated by the Nazis at Beuyyreuth but Richard Strauss the perfect bourgeois was a Nazi supporter. While the Nazis celebrated Wagnerian return to Volkish codes and made the Volkswagen representing the proletariat their poster-child vehicle of the power of the Volk... the Hegelian-Marxist reading of “the end of history” to usher in the reich of the proletariat contradicts historical facts that upper, middle, and proletariat classes conspired and participated in Nazi Judeocide.

While it can be agreed amongst Arendt and Strauss that the end of history “in some sense” occurred in the 1933 seizure to power of the Nazi party it is unclear if the final end (Endloesung) of Hegelian history represents a Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung (coming to terms with the past) via an economic classless culture of radical egalitarianism. Strauss and Arendt’s emphasis on historical remembrance beyond mere cultural remembrance (Erinnerungskultur) recognized that not all ideas are equal and not all books for that matter are of equal importance. For both Strauss and Arendt, remembrance of the Holocaust and learning its lessons involves understanding through philosophic thinking what went wrong in modernity and modernities limits. Totalitarianism represented a failure in thinking. It represented a
man made form of poesis. Although Theodor Adorno asserted in 1951 that, 'to write poetry after
Auschwitz is barbaric,' two years later he praised the Jewish composer Arnold Schoenberg for his
courage in addressing artistically the Holocaust in “A Survivor from Warsaw.” The cantata became a
model for other German composers who wished to compose a Holocaust memorial, including Gunther
Kochan’s cantata, Die Asche von Birkenau (1965) and the collaborative cantata Jüdische Chronik, which
premiered in 1966. Other Holocaust 1960s music orchestral memorials include Dmitri Shostakovich’s
Symphony No. 13 and Krzysztof Penderecki’s Dies Irae, using carefully selected poems such as Evgeny
Evtushenko’s Babi Yar. For Arendt and Strauss such memorialization in music may represent a
consciousness of the Holocaust as the break separating modernity from post-modernity, but much more
is needed to transcend the limits of memorialization. Rather we must return to the root of the problems
that led to totalitarianism in Nazi Europe and Stalinist Russia. For that only a thinking that clears a way,
and unveils, the fatal assumptions of Western modernity enmeshed in the crisis of German historicism,
will suffice. If we are to learn the lessons of the Shoah as this rupture in history, history itself must be
transcended as philosophically conceived and thought. The Holocaust must become a clarion call for all
of humanity to return to a pre-modern ethical horizon unless the world is doomed to repeat the failures
of the past as noted by Santayana, “those who do not learn the lessons of the past are doomed to
repeat it.” For Strauss and Arendt not merely learning the history of the events that led up to the
Holocaust is necessary, but also cognitive understanding of the Shoah’s uniqueness. Those who wish to
learn more “about” Nazi Judeocide, cannot be the last step in preventing it from happening again but
rather it is ethical thinkers who work to learn moral lessons “from” the Shoah, that we dare not forget,
lest as Georg Santiyana noted, “those who forget the past, are doomed to repeat it.”

All essays in Dislocated Memories, show how musicological understanding of the Jewish musical
represe of Jewish culture in post-Holocaust Germany perhaps represents a
Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung (coming to terms with the past) via a culture of remembrance
(Erinnerungskultur). This is contrary to historians who view the Holocaust as untranscendable.

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This inter-disciplinary book will be interest to Cold War Studies, cultural history, German studies, Yiddish
studies, Holocaust studies, Jewish studies, memory studies, musicology and music studies, and
sociology.

Although this reviewer would like to have seen essays solicited from scholars of German Jewish culture
including Leon Botstein, Sander Gilman, Paul Mendes-Flohr, etc. Summing up: This fresh, original, well-
written, and substantive research by scholars in music, history, and Jewish studies makes a most positive
contribution as an essential documentation of the attempted re-construction of the post-Holocaust
aftermath of a transnational, multilingual, diverse cultured Jewish musical praxis of the German-Jewish
encounter. Recommended. Includes excellent bibliography and index.

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