

What is exile music?

Slide one

“Exile Music” is a euphemism. Music by composers who were politically or “racially” persecuted by National Socialism extended from 19th century composers such as Felix Mendelssohn to composers murdered in Nazi death camps. “Exile” is clearly inappropriate as a term in both instances. Indeed, the umbrella term used by the Nazis that transcended period and genre was “Entartet”, a word that is often translated as “degenerate”, but is more correctly translated as “deviant” – it means something that has gone out of the established type and accepted norms. Like “deviant”, it has too many negative connotations to be used in today’s vernacular. Being left-handed “deviates” from the norm. Possessing absolute pitch “deviates” from the norm. Nevertheless, the word remains intrinsically negative. The academic disciplines researching writers, artists, intellectuals etc. who were banned during the Nazi years have come to be known as either “Holocaust studies” (equally misleading) or “Exile Studies”. What is understood, however, in the context of music, is an attempt to recover music that was deemed “deviant” from the Nazi norm and thereby led to persecution of the practitioner, whether it be performer, composer or facilitator.

Slide two

A number of inter-connected experiences over the last decades led to the establishment of an exile music archive. The first was when I was acting as initiator and producer of Decca Record’s series unapologetically, and dialectically called “Entartete Musik”. Finding scores, parts and securing rights became a game that required in some cases a good deal of investigation. Examples are too numerous to cite in this limited time, but nearly every composer who had a publisher before 1933 had rights suspended, in abeyance or in question after 1933. Some publishers had gone out of business, others had been merged with scores and access to material lost.

Approaching families was often the only way of acquiring access to material.

Slide three

The second was when I was asked to be Music Curator for Vienna's Jewish Museum, and mounted a series of exhibitions on Austrian composers banned after 1938. I was shocked to discover that composers housed in archives in their countries of exile, were inadequately catalogued, lacking in essential information, or missing numerous items. The reality was that only the legacy that was relevant to somebody's new homeland, or country of exile, (depending on your point of view) was the legacy that was important. If a composer or musician was prominent prior to arrival in their new homeland, pre-emigration legacies were often pushed to one side for lack of personnel who could read the writing, or understand the language or even had the cultural wherewithal to comprehend the historic background.

Slide four

The final revelation that an exile music archive was needed came upon publication of my book, "Forbidden Music – the Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis" by Yale University Press. I set up a facebook page and within a few months, had received half a dozen inquiries about musical estates still in private hands. Families were unwilling to pass this material on to local libraries for the reasons I outlined: their musical contribution was European and not indigenous to their post-immigration homelands. Families believed a local archive would not be able to deal with the mountain of documentation in a language they did not know. It was always clear that the contributions musicians made in their countries of refuge was more important to local historians and archives than any possible significance they may have had on the musical trajectory in their former European homelands.

In addition, the years after the war were dominated by a spirit of re-education in the interest of de-nazification. A self-appointed establishment decided who significant players were and who could be most usefully forgotten. As Berthold Goldschmidt mentioned to me, even composers who always viewed themselves as progressives before Hitler found themselves damned afterwards for being reactionary, or for being the wrong kind of modernist. Goldschmidt is now the central figure in the music festival of Bregenz. So it's clear that nobody is truly competent in assessing who is "worthy" of preservation and who isn't.

Slide five

Gerold Gruber, professor of Theory and Analysis at Vienna's University of Music and Dramatic Arts had started a Society called *exil.arte* in 2006. It was meant to recover Austria's lost musical legacy post 1938. He invited me to co-chair the society in the same year since I was music curator at Vienna's Jewish Museum. With the sheer number of musical estates of former refugees emerging, it was clear that it was more than any of Vienna's prestigious archives could take on: budgets, personnel and time simply weren't available for musical figures deemed insignificant or simply forgotten over too long a period. 10 years later, meaning in January 2016, the society was changed into a center and a budget made available to build up an archive. Its official opening was in May 2017. At this point, we felt we should let go of proprietorial national claims. There is no way of establishing who was Austrian and who wasn't when dealing with musicians, nearly all of whom were born before 1918. Much of the damage done to western music in the 20th century emanated from Austria. It was becoming ever more apparent that we could not, and should not restrict our acquisitions and focus only on Austrian refugees. Indeed, over the last couple decades, other European countries have reluctantly started to admit to cultural losses incurred during the Nazi occupation.

Slide six

To use the mercantile language of today: there was an obvious “market” for taking in the musical estates of victims of political persecution. Another decision we took was to accept every estate that was offered, provided it emanated from a musician who was made to leave after 1933. Every musical estate has a story to tell, and it was obvious that larger archives were not in a position to take what would ordinarily be considered the material of minor figures. I like to use the metaphor of the sunken Spanish Galleon: upon discovering its contents, one rescues everything found on the ocean floor, regardless of whether gold ducats or brass shoe buckles. Every object has a story to tell, and every musical refugee also played a role, even if often, only a very minor one, in the European 20th century cultural narrative. We do not consider ourselves as arbiters of who is worthy of rescue: Instead, we see ourselves as archeologists as eager to acquire the legacies of a provincial operetta composer as we are of more well-known figures. In the year we have been opened, we have a healthy selection of well-known musicians and composers along with individuals about whom we can only say that the most important thing we know about them, is that we don’t know much about them at all.

Slide seven

Mission Statement: Locating material: Until now, we have been passive recipients, but when addressing certain indisputable facts, it would seem obvious that we need to be proactive in our acquisitions. Something like 48% of Europeans fleeing Hitler in 1938 ended up in Latin America – almost as many as went to North America. We still know too little about those who found refuge in non-Anglo-American countries and need to carry out more research. This material, if still in private ownership, is being held by the third generation. It will only be a matter of time that musical estates are simply disposed of if not located.

Preservation: Age, bacteria, lice and mildew all damage paper with time. Some estates have managed to escape even more harmful events, one of which was damaged during the Yugoslavian Civil War in the 1990s; others have simply been exposed to the events of time: flooded basements, damp or general deterioration. It is exil.arte's intention to preserve damaged documentation and manuscripts, also textiles if necessary, digitize and place in optimum environments for preservation.

Publication: exil.arte is investigating cooperation with several music publishers, perhaps even starting its own initiative. It's obvious that music needs to be made accessible and where rights are in need of management, publication is certainly the best recourse.

Accessibility: Through our policy of digitization, we hope to make most of our collections available on-line or where rights permit, downloadable. We've been digitizing to the highest possible resolution so that only in the rarest of circumstances should original manuscripts be retrieved from our vaults. eight

Slide eight

A question of rights and the treatment of research objects at the exil.arte Center in Vienna's University of Music and Performing Arts, (mdw)

It's now nearly 75 years since the end of the war. Musicians who were at the top of their game in 1933 or 1938 would have begun to die out from the 1950s right up to late 1980s. In fact, of the estates we've acquired since opening last year, the earliest death was of Wilhelm Grosz in 1939. Approximately a third of our acquisitions are now in the public domain. This gives us greater freedom in dissemination to musicians and students, and offers wide opportunities at creating new performing editions. When we start to upload digitized material, depending on the rights' situation, we can place entire or partial works on-line for perusal and/or download.

Slide nine

Legal Instruments:

As we have little past history and only our reputation and the generous financing of the University to go on, we have had to offer a number of instruments to families skeptical of handing over material to an untried and untested archive, based in a country from which parents and grandparents had fled persecution.

The renewable loan allows us to renew the agreement after a set period. The material cannot be removed between these agreements. It has the advantage of allowing the family to retrieve control of material after the contractual period is covered. It has the danger of exil.arte investing in dissemination to the extent that the estate becomes more valuable to families to sell or auction off over time. Obviously we would like to see renewable loans converted to bequests after a period of time and with each renewal, try to draw this eventuality one step closer. Until now, all of our renewable loan partners have agreed that the bequest should be the goal of our relationship.

Permanent Loan is the same as a renewable loan, but without a time limit. Again, the danger exists of future generations demanding the material be returned so that it can be auctioned or sold. Again, this is an eventuality we are working to avoid and so far, our “permanent loan” partners have been prepared to work towards an eventual bequest.

Bequests are the most straight forward and are what they say they are: gifts to the archive to preserve, digitize and make available where legally possible.

Purchase is obviously the last resort, but is ultimately an instrument that be implemented when it looks certain that an important estate is going to be broken up and sold. We need to acquire extra funding for purchases. It is, however, our nuclear option.

Slide ten

Open Question:

These are the Open questions we still have: I need not expound on them, but underline that these are processes that are on-going. (read them out!)

Slide eleven

Our preparation of material is hardly different from any other archive. The documentation, photos, audio and manuscripts we receive are organized, catalogued, prioritized for restoration and placed into safe boxes for permanent storage in our light, temperature, humidity controlled and fireproof vaults. This is only the beginning. Material is placed on our Nuxeo database so that scholars and musicians can have easy access for perusal or study of high resolution scans.

Slide twelve

We call ourselves a “Center” with an archive rather than an archive with a center. When the Music Academy became a university, it moved to its own campus leaving its historic building largely to the exil.arte Centre. This has enormous symbolic value as we now hold the musical estates of among others, Wilhelm Grosz, Julius Bürger, Hans Gál, Walter Bricht who either privately, as in the case of Hans Gál, or as regular students, went in and out of the same building as young musicians. Exil.arte needs performers and scholars as partners and stands ready to cooperate fully with any number of appropriate initiatives. Eventually we are intending to expand to study-modules offering credits. We have lecture and recital halls available in addition to our large exhibition space and two 100 sq mt. vaults. Preservation comes first, but dissemination runs a very close second! As a performing arts institution, we have access to 3000 very talented youngsters. Vienna’s Music University stands together with Juilliard as one of the two highest ranking music colleges in the world. As a

result, our student body is very international. Material from our center offers musicians interested in mastering their instruments, access to music that is not central repertoire but hopefully offering new perspectives on music from the previous century.

Slide thirteen

One of the most exciting partnerships has been with a publisher we've encountered quite often during these last few days: Schott. They approached us with the staggering information that Korngold, already purged from their catalogue as early as 1930, was now one of their top earning composers, with the violin concerto being the single highest earning work in the catalogue. We were honoured to be asked by the publishing house, and the Korngold family to take on the production of the Korngold critical edition, which would not only include his output of 42 opus numbers, but his many operetta arrangements, his various Strauss potpourris including *The Great Waltz*, and his film music for Warner Brothers. Indeed, as far as we can ascertain, it would appear to be the first ever critical edition of complete film scores, as opposed to producing film-score concert reductions.

Slide fourteen

Our present exhibition is on the musical purge of our university in 1938, the year of Austria's annexation by Nazi Germany. Next year, we shall focus our next exhibition on several new acquisitions. These exhibitions underline exil.arte's obligation to inform and yes, to lobby and raise awareness. Over the last year we have encountered in German and American libraries musical estates that have effectively been locked away. The estates of composers forced to flee their homelands, with their close family left to be murdered in Nazi camps are held today in jurisdictions that will not release the estates for study or performance without the permission of their next closest relative. It seems criminal that the performance of works by composers made to flee should be made dependent on the

permission of relatives they no longer have, largely thanks to Nazi crimes. This has forced today's musicians into the absurd position of approaching unsuspecting strangers for permission to access musical estates because their parents or grandparents happened to be related by marriage to the composer in question. If this had happened once in the last 12 months, we would have thought it unlucky, but in fact, we've encountered this situation with minor variations three times in the last year with the composers Wolfgang Fraenkel, Otto Jokl and pictured here, Hans Winterberg. Composers who are still in copyright have been legalistically removed from circulation during the years when their works could be performed and income generated, even if only generated for a receptor foundation for lack of heirs. Indeed, as is the case in some jurisdictions, changes should be brought in so that copyright be extended for composers forced into exile, or murdered in camps. As a centre, repatriation and preservation of exiled musical estates is clearly only one part of our remit.

Slide fifteen

Thank you for attention.