

A Guide to

Finding a Voice: Musicians in Terezín



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Preface

It is almost incomprehensible that music could be performed, let alone composed, in a Nazi concentration camp. In November 1941, the Nazis converted the small Czech garrison town of Terezín into the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp. Within the first transports, the prisoners smuggled in musical instruments and gave secret performances in the barracks of the camp. Amidst deplorable living conditions, music of an astonishing beauty and power was composed and performed by some of Europe's most gifted musicians and composers. This was one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of Western music and the Holocaust.

One survivor of Terezín described the prisoners' enduring spirit as "a creation from inside to cover up the hunger, the terrible time and the deprivation of our humanity and human dignity. There was a force to create, to do something, and it helped us to forget for several hours what was happening." For the prisoners of Terezín, music played the vital role of voicing resistance and the will to survive and ultimately of giving expression to hope.

Fifty years later, music played similar roles for the besieged community of Sarajevo. Shortly after the Bosnian war, I was in Sarajevo assisting efforts to rebuild the Music Academy. Once again I was amazed by the power of music, when one of the students I coached recalled: "I, my friends, my family risked our lives to go to school, rehearsals, and concerts. Why? Because music was a way to forget, to leave the war—a way to survive another day."

In this study guide you will examine the issues and challenges of "finding a voice" through music during the tyranny of the Third Reich. It is a journey that will no doubt change how you listen to music, especially the music of our time.

For more than a decade I have performed and lectured on the music of Terezín in concert halls and classrooms around the world. Audiences from a variety of ethnic, cultural, and generational backgrounds have been moved and inspired by these voices which were silenced by the Nazis. Through my experiences as a performing artist and Holocaust scholar, I have come to understand that the music and history of Terezín is not just an artistic legacy. It is a poignant and inspiring reminder that each of us has a voice—and how vital it is to find, explore, and nurture that voice.

Mark Ludwig
Director, Terezín Chamber Music Foundation

Foreword

To the Nazis, music was the “most German of the arts.” To the Jewish composers confined in Terezín, a concentration camp in what is now the Czech Republic, it was the most universal. In Terezín, they openly created and played music that was censored in other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe. Through that music, writes historian Ruth Bondy, a survivor of Terezín, they “opened a window into another world, different from the reality of the ghetto. Listening with closed eyes to Bernard Kaff playing Chopin, one knew oneself to be above all the degradation suffered at German hands, to be [human].”

This study guide is designed to help teachers and their students use the CD, *Finding a Voice: Musicians in Terezín*, to explore the role of the arts and artists in that extraordinary place. It is music that deepens our understanding not only of creativity but also of courage, resilience, and resistance. This music is a part of the history of Terezín and of the Holocaust.

Soon after Hitler and his Nazi party took over Germany in 1933, they began to isolate and then eliminate Jews and other “racial enemies.” By the late 1930s, Jews could no longer own radios or record players. They were banned from movie theaters, concert halls, and cabarets. Their music, art, and literature were labeled “degenerate,” even immoral. By the early 1940s, most Jews were in hiding or imprisoned in one of the many ghettos and concentration camps that the Nazis built throughout Europe.

The Nazis turned the town of Terezín into one of those camps. Unlike the others, it was promoted as “a paradise for Jews.” Statistics paint a very different picture of the camp. Of the over 140,000 Jews brought to Terezín between November 1941 and April 1945, 33,000 died in the camp and over 88,000 were transported to Auschwitz and other death camps. By war’s end, only about 19,000 were alive. Almost all were adults. Of the 15,000 children confined in the camp, less than one percent survived. Despite hunger, disease, and the constant threat of transports to the death camps, the arts flourished in Terezín. Composer Viktor Ullmann observed, “Here, where anything connected with the arts is in utter contrast to the surroundings, here is the true school for masters.” In that “school,” he and other Jewish composers wrote the works featured on the CD.

Margot Stern Strom
Executive Director, Facing History and Ourselves

Overview of the CD

Finding a Voice: Musicians in Terezín features the work of four composers who wrote music in Terezín, a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia during World War II. It also includes a historical recording of a piano solo written and performed in 1928 by composer Ervin Schulhoff. He, too, was later imprisoned by the Nazis. The CD is produced by Mark Ludwig, the director of the Terezín Chamber Music Foundation with performances by the Hawthorne String Quartet, and Boston Symphony Orchestra percussionist Will Hudgins.

With the exception of the historical recording, each piece of music begins with selected excerpts that can be used to introduce students to basic musical terms and ideas and ends with a performance of the work as a whole. Each composition is linked to a reading that places the music in an historical and conceptual context. The readings also contain suggestions for critical listening.

Links to Reading 4—Art and Politics

I. Excerpts from *Solo Piano Works*

Written and performed by Ervin Schulhoff in Berlin in 1928.

Rag Music/Partita

1. “Tempo di Fox a la Hawaii” (Track 1-02.00)*
2. “Shimmy-Jazz: “Joli tambour, donne-moi ta rose” [Pretty Tambourine, Give Me Your Rose] (Track 2-01.06)

Links to Reading 6—Terezín: A Paradox

II. Excerpts from *Passacaglia and Fugue for String Trio* by Hans Krasa

1. Opening Ostinato (Track 3-00.22)
2. Folk Dance Motif (Track 4-00.16)
3. Waltz Motif (Track 5-00.18)
4. Folk Dance Motif (Track 6-00.15)
5. Harmonics/Chromaticism (Track 7-00.22)
6. Passacaglia from the *Passacaglia and Fugue for String Trio* (Track 8-06.27)

Links to Reading 8—“A Living Message”

III. Excerpts from *Trio for String Instruments, Movement No. 2*, by

Gideon Klein

1. Theme (Track 9-00.46)
2. Variation—cello with violin/viola pizzicato (Track 10-00.14)
3. Variation—running sixteenth notes (Track 11-00.05)

* Track number and playing time.

4. Variation—lyrical (Track 12-00.18)
5. Variation—pizzicato (Track 13-00.26)
6. Coda (Track 14-00.13)
7. *Trio for String Instruments, Movement No. 2* (Track 15-07.14)

Links to Reading 9—Expressing Outrage

- IV. Excerpts from *String Quartet No. 3* by Viktor Ullmann
 1. First Movement, Opening Theme (Track 16-00.46)
 2. Solo Cello—musical bridge to Second Movement (Track 17-00.24)
 3. Second Movement—waltz motif (Track 18-00.18)
 4. Musical Bridge to Third Movement (Track 19-00.26)
 5. Third Movement—fugue (Track 20-00.52)
 6. Third Movement—ponticello in Violin 1 Part (Track 21-00.13)
 7. Fourth Movement—opening (Track 22-00.13)
 8. Fourth Movement—coda (Track 23-00.25)
 9. *String Quartet No. 3* (Tracks 24 and 25-16.12)

Links to Reading 10—Across Boundaries

- V. Excerpts from *String Quartet No. 2 Opus 7* by Pavel Haas
 1. Opening (Track 26-00.34)
 2. Chinese Folk Motif (Track 27-00.22)
 3. Rumba—with percussion (Track 28-00.50)
 4. *String Quartet No. 2 Opus 7, Movement 4* (Track 29-08.38)

Religion, Race, and Identity

READING 1

In 1933, the year Hitler came to power in Germany, Jews had been living in Europe for over 2000 years. Like members of other religious and ethnic minorities, they were often regarded as outsiders. Outsiders are people who lie beyond our universe of obligation—the circle of individuals and groups for whom we feel responsible, whose rights we seek to protect, and whose injuries call for amends. By the 1500s, except for a few business encounters, most Jews were isolated from their Christian neighbors. In some places, they were confined to a ghetto, a section of a city or town enclosed by high walls and guarded by Christian gatekeepers. With this more rigid separation came new myths and misinformation. The effects lingered long after the ghetto walls began to crumble in the 1700s and Jews were allowed to become citizens of the countries in which they had lived for so many centuries.

In the 1800s, myths about Jews and other minorities took on new life as the idea of “race” captured the imagination of many Europeans and Americans. In the past, many people regarded Jews with suspicion and even fear because Jews’ religious beliefs differed from those of their neighbors. However, they could, at least in theory, achieve acceptance by converting to Christianity. Now, they were often distrusted because some scientists claimed that Jews belonged to a different “race.” They argued that unlike a person’s religion or culture, one’s race was fixed at birth and could not be altered. The word *antisemitism*, which literally means “against ‘Semites,’” described this new racial opposition to Jews.

In 1997, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) summarized the latest scholarship on race. According to its report, scholars have traced the notion that people are divided into fixed races to efforts in the 1700s and 1800s to justify slavery by magnifying the differences between Europeans and Africans and Native Americans. Eventually these racial myths spread to other areas of the world where they “became a strategy for dividing, ranking and controlling colonized people.” But racist thinking was not limited to the “colonial situation.” In its report, the AAA observes:

In the latter part of the 19th century, [race] was employed by Europeans to rank one another and to justify social, economic, and political inequalities among their peoples. During World War II, the Nazis under Adolf Hitler enjoined the expanded ideology of race and racial differences and took them to a logical end: the extermination of 11 million people of “inferior races” . . . and other unspeakable brutalities of the Holocaust.

*Race thus evolved as a world view, a body of prejudgments that distorts our ideas about human differences and group behavior. . . . Racial myths bear no relationship to the reality of human capabilities or behavior. Scientists today find that reliance on such folk beliefs about human difference in research has led to countless errors.**

* From “The American Anthropological Association Statement on ‘Race,’” *Anthropology Newsletter*, April 1997.

In the 1800s, the few scientists who tried to show the flaws in racist thinking were ignored. For example, after studying seven million Jewish and Aryan children, the German Anthropological Society concluded that the two groups were more alike than different. Historian George Mosse writes: “This survey should have ended controversies about the existence of pure Aryans and Jews. However, it seems to have had surprisingly little impact. The idea of race had been infused with myths, stereotypes, and subjectivities long ago, and a scientific survey could change little. The idea of pure, superior races and the concept of a racial enemy solved too many pressing problems to be easily discarded.”*

As race became the distorted lens through which many people viewed the world, anti-semitism and other forms of racism increased sharply. In 1933, a Protestant minister wrote, “In the last 15 years in Germany, the influence of Judaism has strengthened extraordinarily. The number of Jewish judges, Jewish politicians, Jewish civil servants in influential positions has grown noticeably. The voice of the people is turning against this.”

Did Jews really control Germany and its government? Historian Victoria Barnett observes, “Although many Germans blamed the uncertainties of [1919-1933] on too much Jewish influence in the government, for example, only 4 of the 250 government ministers during the entire Weimar Republic were Jewish.” ** The myth of a Germany dominated by Jews was fostered by groups like Adolf Hitler’s National Socialist, or Nazi, party. In speech after speech, they maintained that the Jews were everywhere, controlled everything, and acted so secretly that few could detect their influence. The charge was absurd; but after hearing it again and again, most came to believe it.

The growing antisemitism had a profound effect on German Jews, many of whom saw their nationality as an integral part of their identity. In 1926, for example, Sigmund Freud told an interviewer: “My language is German. My culture, my attainments are German. I considered myself German intellectually, until I noticed the growth of antisemitic prejudice in Germany and German Austria. Since that time, I prefer to call myself a Jew.” It was a telling comment from a man who did not believe in God or organized religion.

Composer Arnold Schoenberg had a similar response. In 1923, when artist Wassily Kandinsky invited him to join the prestigious faculty at the Bauhaus School of Design in Germany, Kandinsky noted that Jews were not normally welcome, but an exception would be made in Schoenberg’s case. The outraged composer replied, “When I walk along the street and each person looks at me to see whether I’m a Jew or a Christian, I can’t very well tell each of them that I’m the one that Kandinsky and some others make an exception of, although of course that man Hitler is not of their opinion. And then even this benevolent view of me wouldn’t be much use to me even if I were, like blind beggars, to write it around my neck for everyone to read.” Schoenberg ends his letter by asking, “But what is anti-semitism to lead to if not to acts of violence?”*** Soon after Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, Schoenberg left the country.

* From *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* by George Mosse. Fertig, 1978.

** From *For the Soul of the People* by Victoria Barnett. Oxford University Press, 1992, 124.

*** Quoted by Frederic V. Grunfeld. *Prophets Without Honour: A Background to Freud, Kafka, Einstein and Their World* by Frederic V. Grunfeld. Holt, 1979, 175-176.

Connections

“When we identify one thing as unlike the others,” writes law professor Martha Minow, “we are dividing the world; we use our language to exclude, to distinguish—to discriminate.” Minow believes that labels can be useful in describing and sorting our perceptions of the world. But she warns that those labels “can carry social and moral consequences while burying the choices and responsibility for those consequences.” What were the labels people attached to one another in the late 1800s and early 1900s? What are the labels people attach to one another today? How do these labels shape the way we see ourselves? The way we view others?

Write a working definition of the word *race*. Explain what the word means to you. Then add the meanings described in this reading. Next create a working definition of the word *racism*. Keep in mind that the ending *ism* refers to a doctrine or principle. Can you be a racist if you do not believe in the concept of “race”? Expand your definitions as you continue reading.

If race is a myth, why is it so central to the way many people see themselves and others?

How do George Mosse’s comments support the view that what people believe is true is more important than the truth? Give an example from your own experiences that supports the idea that what things objectively are is often less significant to human beings than what things mean in everyday life. Give an example that calls this idea into question.

What does Schoenberg mean when he writes, “But what is antisemitism to lead to if not to acts of violence?” How would you answer the question? How are antisemitism and other forms of racism linked to violence?

Building a “Racial State”

READING 2

“Everything we admire on this earth today—science and art, technology and inventions—is only the creative product of a few peoples and originally perhaps one race (the Aryans). On them depends the existence of this whole culture,” wrote Adolf Hitler. “If they perish, the beauty of this earth will sink into the grave with them.” Who threatened that beauty? To Hitler, the answer was clear: inferior races such as Jews, “Gypsies,” and Africans.

Once in power, Hitler tried to turn Germany into a “racial state” by eliminating all opposition to his government. He began by isolating his political opponents—Communists, Social Democrats, and members of trade unions. Next Hitler turned his attention to his “racial enemies”—particularly, the Jews. He proclaimed 42 anti-Jewish measures in 1933 and 19 more in 1934. Each was designed to protect “Aryan blood” from contamination with “Jewish blood.” Then in 1935, Hitler announced three new laws in Nuremberg, Germany: the first two stripped Jews of citizenship, and the third isolated them from other Germans by outlawing marriages between Jews and citizens of Germany.

The “Nuremberg laws” raised an important question: Who is a Jew? On November 14, 1935, the Nazis defined a Jew as a person with two Jewish parents or three Jewish grandparents. Children of intermarriage were considered Jewish if they followed the Jewish religion or were married to a Jew. They were also Jews if they had one parent who was a practicing Jew. Over the next 10 years, the Nazis would create over 400 more “racial laws.” These would apply not only to Jews but also to “Gypsies” and Germans of African descent. Increasingly people were defined solely by their ancestry.

By 1935, at least a quarter of the Jews in Germany “had been deprived of their professional livelihood by boycott, decree, or local pressure,” writes historian Martin Gilbert.

More than ten thousand public health and social workers had been driven out of their posts, four thousand lawyers were without the right to practice, two thousand doctors had been expelled from hospitals and clinics, two thousand actors, singers and musicians had been driven from their orchestras, clubs and cafes. A further twelve hundred editors and journalists had been dismissed, as had eight hundred university professors and lecturers, and eight hundred elementary and secondary school teachers.

*The search for Jews, and for converted Jews, to be driven out of their jobs was continuous. On September 5, 1935, the SS newspaper published the names of eight half-Jews and converted Jews, all of the Evangelical-Lutheran faith, who had been “dismissed without notice” and deprived of any further opportunity “of acting as organists in Christian churches.” From these dismissals, the newspaper commented, “It can be seen that the Reich Chamber of Music is taking steps to protect the church from pernicious influence.”**

* From *The Holocaust* by Martin Gilbert. Holt, 1985, 47.

In 1938, the Nazis added Austria to Hitler's "Third Reich" and took control of part of Czechoslovakia. In March of 1939, they took over the entire country and in September, they invaded Poland. World War II had begun in Europe. In every country the Germans conquered, Hitler applied his ideas about race. Alfred Kantor, then a young art student, describes how they affected him and other Jews in Czechoslovakia:

Mine was rather a happy childhood and adolescence that came to a sudden end in 1938. That fall, . . . an independent, democratic Czechoslovakia practically ceased to exist. Soon thereafter, a pro-Nazi government was formed; antisemitic signs appeared in shop windows overnight; hate for the Jews began to flourish, fanned by an element among the population that had not dared to surface so brazenly before.

It seemed only a question of time before a full-fledged reign of terror would erupt. The words "concentration camp" were now first spoken at our dinner table. Stories of tortures in neighboring Germany were told in hushed tones. My family discussed leaving the country, but my father became gravely ill and no decision could be made. Soon it was too late to leave, for on the morning of March 15, 1939, the Germans had marched into Czechoslovakia. By September, World War II had begun. I had just enrolled at the Rotter School of Advertising Art in Prague, still hoping to complete a two-year course there. But the Germans ordered the expulsion of Jews from all public and private schools in June of 1940, and I was forced to stop my studies.

*The Jewish community of Prague was beset by more and more restrictions. At first one of Prague's most famous cafes was denied them. In a matter of weeks the Germans added movies, the use of parks, and all restaurants. Soon an eight o'clock curfew was imposed and, before long, Jews were just free enough to breathe the air and to shop for leftovers before the stores closed.**

Connections

By 1935 in Germany, being a Jew was no longer a matter of self-definition or self-identification. By that time a person was considered a Jew because of what his or her grandparents had chosen to believe. What does it mean to lose the right to define yourself?

Many Christians in Germany supported the Nuremberg race laws. A Protestant minister explained why to an interviewer after the war:

*The guilt of the Christians and church rests in the fact that the commandment to love your neighbor was interpreted or taken to mean one looked after the Christian brothers and sisters—those who had been baptized. That means that when Christians came into conflict with the state or with the police, the church or the parish took care of them as long as it had to do with the church. . . . When a Christian attended to politics, that was no longer something with which the church concerned itself. . . . In this sense, the responsibility for society, the responsibility for the Jews, Social Democrats, communists, Gypsies, atheists, the responsibility for all these was not a responsibility of the church.**

* From the Introduction to *The Book of Alfred Kantor: An Artist's Journal of the Holocaust* by Alfred Kantor. Schocken, 1987.

Define the word *neighbor*. To what extent are your neighbors a part of your “universe of obligation”? What does it mean to be “isolated” from them? How can isolation lead to being “marginalized”? To becoming “superfluous”?

In 1933, Martin Niemoeller, a Protestant minister, supported the Nazi party. By 1938, he was in a concentration camp for opposing the Nazis’ attempts to take over the nation’s churches. After the war he is believed to have said: “In Germany, the Nazis came for the Communists and I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn’t speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak for me.”

What is the moral of Niemoeller’s words? How did he define his universe of obligation? How did that definition affect the choices he made? What were the consequences of those choices? Find examples of the ways Niemoeller’s remarks relate to the choices people make today. How do those examples support the moral?

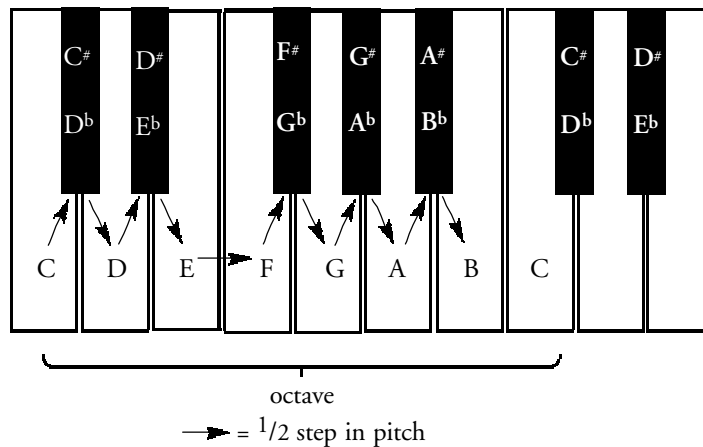
* Quoted in *For the Soul of the People* by Victoria Barnett. Oxford University Press, 1992, 133.

Racial Purity and Degenerate Music

READING 3

The early 1900s were a time of change everywhere in the world. Some changes were the result of technological innovations that were speeded up by World War I. Other changes resulted from the war itself. Many young soldiers returned home bitter and disillusioned by their experiences on the battlefield. Some of them were eager to challenge traditional ideas. Others drew their inspiration from distant cultures. Their ideas were reflected in the music of the time. The new sounds bewildered, troubled, even frightened Germans who had always taken pride in music as “the most German of the arts.”

To many of these Germans, the compositions of Arnold Schoenberg symbolized everything they disliked about modern music and the modern world. In the early 1900s, Schoenberg experimented with a new technique known as the twelve-tone system. Western music is traditionally based on major and minor keys and scales. In his twelve-tone or chromatic scale Schoenberg used all 12 intervals or half steps within the octave (see diagram). He created a tone row in any order but never repeated a tone until the other 11 had appeared. Then he was free to reconfigure the tone row at will, upside down, backwards, or in any number of fragmented variations. The result could be harsh, even jarring. Schoenberg did not see himself as a revolutionary. He saw his system as a logical outgrowth of traditional German music.



Even before he developed his new technique, Schoenberg’s music created a stir whenever it was performed. In describing the 1908 premiere of his *Second String Quartet*, a critic noted that in the final movement a soprano seemed to “soar off” into a melody that defied “the laws of gravity.” At the unaccustomed sound of a singer in a chamber music quartet, “part of the audience first giggled, then laughed and became restless; some shouted to the performers to stop. . . . Marie Gutheil-Schoder, the soprano, stood on the podium exposed to the fury of this scene and went on singing in tears. Afterward the noise-makers demanded that the hall be aired out so that the walls would be worthy of receiving Beethoven’s *Harp Quartet*, which

was next on the program.” Yet another critic claimed that Schoenberg’s “antimusical impertinence contaminates the public taste for art.”*

Although the Nazis singled out Schoenberg and his students, they also attacked Jewish composers whose work was more traditional. Hitler insisted that as Jews they were incapable of producing original music. They could only copy. In a Jewish composer’s work, “genuine German feeling” degenerated into sentimentality. Such charges worried Germans who associated music with the “German essence” and were eager to protect it from “alien” influences. Long before Hitler came to power, some German scholars were labeling new musical styles as “Jewish-communist experimentation.” And they lamented the technological innovations—radio, recordings, even piano rolls—that opened the door to what they saw as the “Negroization” of popular music. In the early 1930s, many of these Germans applauded Nazi efforts to “restore” a healthy German musical culture.

The Nazis began by setting aside March 21 as the “Day of National Revival.” At the first celebration in 1933, Adolf Hitler traveled to a church in Potsdam where he spoke to the German people over the radio. He told them that their days of despair were over; a glorious future was about to unfold. Historian William Sheridan Allen describes how the holiday was observed in a town he calls “Thalburg.” Although he changed the name of the town, the events he describes actually took place.

In Thalburg all public offices were closed for the day. Shops closed early. . . . Radio sets were brought into the schools where the children [were told] by their teachers that “a new epoch in German history was beginning.” Then they were given a holiday for the rest of the day. . . . After dark came a torchlight parade which wound through the whole of Thalburg. . . .

*Led by the town band . . . the parade finally came to a halt in the city park, where [the local leader of the Nazi party] gave a speech in which he praised the new unity of Germany: “The individual is nothing; the Volk is everything. Once we unite internally, then we shall defeat the external foe. Then it will be ‘Germany above all in the world’ [the title of Germany’s national anthem].” Upon this cue the crowd sang Deutschland ueber Alles [the anthem] and then dispersed. ***

The rally took place in the evening, in keeping with Hitler’s warning to party officials: “Never try to convert a crowd to your point of view in the morning sun. Instead dim lights are useful—especially the evening when people are tired, their powers of resistance are low, and their ‘complete emotional capitulation’ is easy to achieve.” To heighten those emotions, the Nazis often played the music of Richard Wagner, a nineteenth-century composer who was an antisemite and a strong German nationalist. His operas, which are based on German legends, portrayed the Germans, as Hitler wanted them shown, as mighty, energetic, and patriotic. He saw Wagner’s music as the epitome of “true German music.”

In early 1933, Hitler’s minister of public enlightenment and propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, ordered the removal of Jewish musicians, composers, and other artists from public life.

* Quoted in *Prophets Without Honour* by Frederic V. Grunfeld. Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1979, 150.

** From *The Nazi Seizure of Power* by William Sheridan Allen. Quadrangle Books, 1965, 199.

Although many Germans applauded his move, a few expressed concern. Soon after the Nazis dismissed two respected Jewish conductors, Bruno Walter and Otto Klemperer, conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler wrote an open letter to Goebbels. It states in part:

*If the fight against Jewry is focused upon those artists who are rootless and destructive . . . the fight is justified. But if this attack is waged against real artists too, it is not in the best interests of our culture. Real artists are very rare . . . and no country can afford to renounce their service without enormous hardship to its culture. Plainly, it must be said that men like Walter, Klemperer . . . and others must be enabled in the future to practice their art in Germany.**

Goebbels replied, “Although we may regret that men like Walter, Klemperer [and others] have been prevented from giving concerts, this is a small matter when weighed against the countless true German musicians who in the past fourteen years have not been allowed the opportunity of having their work appreciated by the people.”** Many German musicians applauded these sentiments. They acted out of a variety of motives, including opportunism. For example, when Bruno Walter was abruptly fired from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra just before a major concert in March of 1933, Richard Strauss, Germany’s leading composer, conducted the orchestra in his place. Strauss, who had long worked with Jewish musicians, claimed that he was simply trying to help the orchestra in an emergency, but he said nothing about the events that precipitated the emergency.



Joseph Goebbels (left) and composer Richard Strauss (right).

Musicians in other countries responded to the firings differently. Conductor Arturo Toscanini along with a number of other musicians sent Hitler a telegram. “The undersigned artists who live and execute their art in the United States of America feel the moral obligation to appeal to your Excellency to put a stop to the persecution of their colleagues in Germany for political or religious reasons.” Toscanini also cancelled his participation in the 1933 Bayreuth Festival held in honor of Richard Wagner. Although Hitler personally asked the conductor to attend, he refused. Strauss took Toscanini’s place at the festival. Later that year, Hitler appointed Strauss president of the Reich Chamber of Music. He eagerly accepted the honor.

That same year, popular violinist Bronislaw Huberman, a Polish Jew, refused to give any more concerts in Germany despite assurances that he and his music would be welcome there. The ban on Jewish musicians, he was told, applied only to German Jews. Huberman explained that “the question is not just of giving violin recitals; it is not a question concerning the Jews as such. No, the issue touches on the elementary preconditions of our European culture, of freedom of personal expression regardless of class or race.”

* Quoted in *Richard Strauss* by Matthew Boyden. Northeastern University Press, 1999, 292.

** Quoted in *Music in the Third Reich* by Erik Levi. St. Martins Press, 1994, 46.

Little by little, year by year, the number of performers with even a hint of Jewish ancestry fell sharply. At the same time, Goebbels made sure that every form of public expression—from music to textbooks, and even sermons—trumpeted the message that Jews were the “racial enemy” of “true Germans.” As part of that campaign, the Nazis sponsored three art exhibitions in 1937. The first featured examples of “true German art” while the second highlighted works labeled “degenerate,” which were grouped into such categories as “Insults to German Womanhood” and “Nature as Seen by Sick Minds.” In the late 1800s, Cesare Lombroso, a noted criminal psychologist, coined the word *degenerate* to describe the “abnormal physical characteristics” that he correlated with criminal behavior. The paintings and drawings in the third exhibition, *Der Ewige Jude* (The Wandering Jew), portrayed Jews as Communists, swindlers, and sex-fiends. The Nazis used *Der Ewige Jude* to teach young children antisemitism.



The exhibitions were so successful that the Nazis arranged a similar one in 1938 featuring “Entartete Musik”—“degenerate music.” It targeted modern music, jazz, swing, and works by composers of Jewish descent. The show was made up of photographs, caricatures, scores, negative reviews, and quotations from Hitler as well as special booths that allowed visitors to actually hear the music of such “degenerate composers” as Igor Stravinsky, Kurt Weill, and Ernst Toch. To the Nazis’ dismay, so many visitors mobbed the booth that played music from Weill’s *The Threepenny Opera* that it had to be closed.

The “Entartete Musik” exhibition catalog features a caricature of a black saxophonist shown against a red background.

Connections

What is “real German music”? How does it differ from other music? Wilhelm Furtwängler tried to distinguish between “real artists” and “those who are rootless and destructive.” What difference did he see between the two? What is the danger in making such distinctions?

How did Furtwängler define the role of the arts in society? The role of a musician? Compare and contrast his stand with those taken by Strauss, Toscanini, and Huberman. What similarities do you notice? What differences seem most striking?

When Hungarian composer Bela Bartok discovered that his portrait was not on display at the degenerate music exhibition, he sent a letter demanding that it be included. What point was he trying to make about his music? About the role of music in a society? How is his stand similar to the one taken by Toscanini? By Huberman?

Propaganda is used to counter the teachings of opponents, shape public opinion, and build loyalty. The cover of the exhibition catalog is an example of propaganda. In studying it or any other piece of propaganda, it is important not to get caught up in the feelings the work is designed to evoke. Begin by describing the cover without interpretation or judgment. Then analyze it. What is the message? Who is sending the message? At whom is the message aimed? Why might the work be attractive to that group or groups? What emotions does it prompt? How does it do so?

The word *irony* describes a contrast between what is stated and what is meant or between what is expected to happen and what really happens. What is the irony in Goebbel's title—minister of public enlightenment and propaganda? What is the irony in the way the Nazis condemned modern technology only to use it for propaganda?

Some scholars believe that fear motivates censorship. If so, what did the Nazis fear? What other emotions might encourage censorship? What kinds of music do some people want to censor today? What kinds of musicians would they like to silence?

Why do you think the Nazis chose *degenerate*—a word with scientific connotations—to describe modern music and art? What other connotations does the word have?

The Nazis publicly burned books and destroyed artwork. They also tried to censor music. Nevertheless, jazz, swing, and other “modern music” continued to be played throughout Nazi-occupied Europe. In Germany, some young people referred to themselves as “swing youth” after their favorite music. Historian Detlev Peukert writes of them:

*Both Nazi slogans and traditional nationalism were of profound indifference to them. They sought their counter-identity in what they saw as the “slovenly” culture of . . . England and America. They accepted Jews and “half-Jews” into their groups—another outrage for the Nazis—and gave ovations to visiting bands from Belgium and Holland. The very disgust shown by the authors of the Nazi reports and their dramatization of events indicate that Nazi officialdom felt attacked at the heart of its concept of itself and of the state. This is the only way, too, to explain the reaction of Heinrich Himmler, who wanted to put the “ringleaders” of the swing movement into concentration camps for at least two or three years of beatings, punitive drill and forced labor.**

How do you account for the way Nazi officials responded to the “swing youth”? What does their response suggest about the way they viewed the role of music in a society? Why do you think they found it harder to destroy a piece of music than a book or a work of art?

Hitler believed that propaganda “must be limited to a very few points and must harp on these in slogans until the last member of the public understands what you want him to understand by your slogan.” What did he want the public to “understand” about Jews? About art and music?

* From *Inside Nazi Germany* by Detlev J. K. Peukert. Yale University Press, 1987, 168.

Art and Politics

READING 4



FOR USE WITH EXCERPTS FROM *SOLO PIANO WORKS* WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY ERVIN SCHULHOFF IN BERLIN IN 1928. The first excerpt (Track 1) is “Temp di Fox a la Hawaii.” The second (Track 2) is “Shimmy-Jazz: Joli tambour, donne-moi ta rose” [Pretty Tambourine, Give Me a Rose]. The fox trot and the shimmy were popular dances in the 1920s that involved shaking the shoulders and/or the body. As you listen, think about why the Nazis may have targeted such music.

Ervin Schulhoff was among the composers whose work the Nazis labeled “unGerman,” “degenerate,” even “decadent.” Schulhoff had a different view of the arts in general and his own music in particular. In the 1920s, he wrote:

*Art is the expression of an ever-increasing human yearning. Absolute art is revolution. It needs broad spaces for its unfolding; it brings a coup in its wake, to open up a new way. [It] is most powerful in music. . . . Every composer strives towards a liberating clarification of his inner self, a crystallization of the “I!”**

Schulhoff was born in 1894 in Prague, then a part of Austria-Hungary. His parents were German Jews who valued German culture. The family spoke German at home. Schulhoff’s grandfather was a concertmaster in Germany and a celebrated violinist. Young Ervin studied the works of German composers such as Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner. As a teenager, he twice won the prestigious Mendelssohn Prize, once for piano and once for composition.

Yet like many young people of his day, Schulhoff was also attracted to modern music. At the age of 10, he heard Richard Strauss’s *Salome* for the first time. It was one of the first modern operas and the boy was so moved by it that he incorporated elements of it into his own early music. Later he also studied Arnold Schoenberg’s twelve-tone compositions, Russian composer Alexander Scriabin’s multi-tonal music, and the impressionistic works of French composers such as Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. And he was inspired by the way Igor Stravinsky and Bela Bartok incorporated folk music into their compositions. He delighted in American jazz as well. Bits of each of these styles found their way into his work.



Ervin Schulhoff in soldier’s uniform, 1917.

Just when Schulhoff was beginning to develop his own unique style, World War I began. At the age of twenty, he served as an officer in the Austrian army, first on the Russian front and then on the Italian. Like many idealistic young men on both sides, he returned home from

* Quoted in “At the Tomb of the Unknown Composer: Ervin Schulhoff 1894-1942” by Keith Botsford. *Bostonia*, Fall 1991, 17.

the war bitter and disillusioned. His feelings were heightened by an incident that took place in Prague while he was still in uniform. A stranger accosted him on the street, arguing that as a Jew he could not have been among the brave soldiers who fought for the empire in Italy.

After the war, Schulhoff moved to Dresden, where his sister was studying art. It was an extraordinary time to be in Germany. During those years, Germany experienced not only several Communist revolts, sparked in part by the Russian Revolution in 1917, but also a flowering of literature, music, and art that challenged traditional ways of looking at the world. Schulhoff met many of the young radicals associated with these political and cultural movements or followed their exploits in avant-garde magazines. In 1919, he wrote his first jazz cycle, *Picturesques for Piano*. He dedicated it to artist George Grosz, who used his own art to criticize German society. In a journal he kept during those years, Schulhoff wrote:

*I have to confess I lead a volatile life. . . . I was once a youth with wide-open, expectant eyes; I have changed. The eyes are no longer so expectant, but within I still feel my whole existence is full of expectation. The leap from sensation to sensation! . . . I still have no continuity. It is not nerves working overtime, such as I brought back from the killing fields, but a sound mind. . . . I grow steely hearted and see things in a cold and passionless light, exactly as they are.**

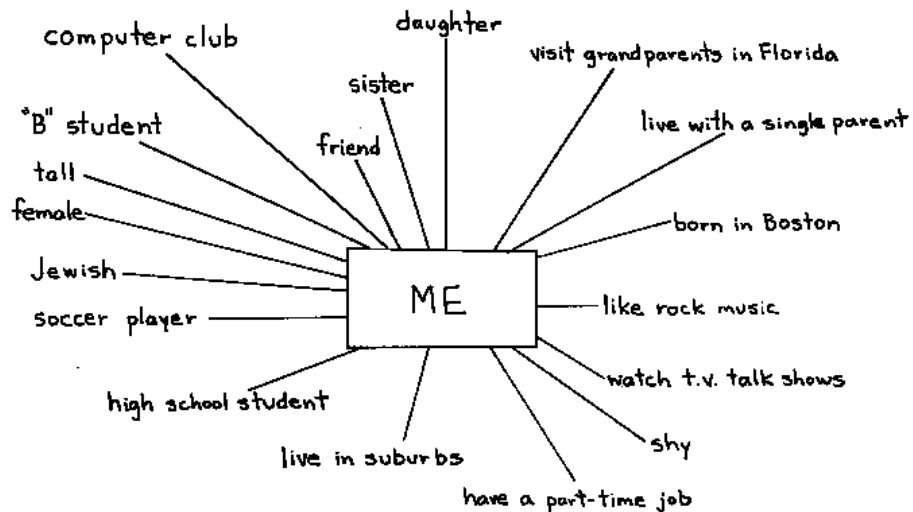
In 1924, Schulhoff returned to Prague, where he formed a chamber music group and later several devoted to jazz. He began to develop a reputation as a musician and a composer. Then in 1939, the Nazis took over Czechoslovakia. Although Schulhoff continued to write music, he could no longer tour, perform publicly, or collect royalties for his recordings. Fearful that his work would be destroyed, he applied for and received a Soviet passport. He had visited the Soviet Union in the 1920s and believed the Communists would provide him with a haven until the war was over. The Nazis arrested him before he reached safety.

The few compositions by Schulhoff that have survived the war suggest that the Nazis' efforts to silence him never succeeded. His *Sixth Symphony*, written after the Germans took over Czechoslovakia, was dedicated to the "Red Army," as the Russian army was known in those days. He sketched out four movements of his *Seventh Symphony* before his arrest in 1941. He started his *Eighth Symphony* while he was a prisoner in Wülzburg, a concentration camp in Bavaria. A critic describes it as "boldly optimistic," even "triumphant." Schulhoff died on May 5, 1942, before it was completed.

Connections

Create an identity chart for Ervin Schulhoff. The diagram on page 16 is an example of such a chart. Begin the chart with the words or phrases Schulhoff might use to describe himself. Use a second color to add the labels that the Nazis might attach to him.

* Quoted in "At the Tomb of the Unknown Composer: Ervin Schulhoff 1894-1942" by Keith Botsford. *Bostonia*, Fall 1991, 17.



Compare and contrast the way the Nazis saw Schulhoff with the way he saw himself. In what respect are the two views similar? What differences seem most striking? How important were those differences to Schulhoff's identity?

Create your own identity chart. How important is music to the way you see yourself? To the way others see you?

After 1939, Schulhoff could write music but could no longer perform publicly. What do you think it means to a musician to be silenced?

Inge Scholl grew up in Nazi Germany with her brother, Hans, and her sister, Sophie. In the beginning, they were enthusiastic about the new regime. But by the 1940s, the Scholls were defying Hitler. The Nazis hung both Hans and Sophie for publishing leaflets protesting the murder of the Jews. Inge believes that the arts played a central role in their change of heart.

*The books we were reading—whether by Thomas Mann, Bernard Shaw, Stefan Zweig, Werner Bergengruen, or Paul Claudel—like modern art—turned into bills of indictment against society. They made us confront National Socialism. They mobilized our defiance. These books, however, were not gifts from heaven—they came from the hands of young friends . . . [We] came to grasp that experience arises not from what you read, but from what you do. Books could stimulate, could impart an insight, could light a candle. But all of this would be relevant to your own life, your true self, only when you put into practice what you had determined was right.**

What does Scholl suggest about the way literature and other art forms can inspire action, even revolution? What does she suggest about the limitations of art in bringing about change? Would Schulhoff agree with her view of the arts? How do you view the arts?

* Quoted in *The Short Life of Sophie Scholl* by Hermann Vinke. Harper & Row, 1980, 61.

Confronting the “Big Lie”

READING 5

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis targeted millions of children, women, and men for destruction solely because of their ancestry. Those murders are collectively known as the *Holocaust*, a Greek word that means “complete destruction by fire.” Auschwitz and other German death camps where the bodies of many victims were burned brought the word to mind. Historian Christopher Browning writes that “at the core of the Holocaust was an intense eleven-month wave of mass murder. The center of gravity of this mass murder was Poland, where in March 1942, despite two and a half years of terrible hardship, deprivation, and persecution, every major Jewish community was still intact; eleven months later, only remnants of Polish Jewry survived.”

Even as the Nazis prepared for that “eleven-month wave of mass murder,” German newspapers were reporting that Hitler had made “an extraordinary gift to the Jewish people.” He had presented them with the town of Terezín in a part of Czechoslovakia known for its luxurious resorts and relaxing spas. All non-Jewish residents were being evacuated; only “privileged Jews” would be allowed to live there—the elderly, war veterans who had been decorated for bravery or had suffered at least a 50 percent disability as a result of their military service, prominent individuals, and Jews in mixed marriages.



Prisoners arriving at Terezín.

In July of 1942, Gerty Spies, a German Jew with two half-Jewish children, arrived in Theresienstadt, the German name for Terezín. She recalls the journey:

From Camp Milbertshofen, where they kept us overnight and where they lightened our luggage by half its weight, a closed furniture truck took us to the train. On a side track, we were loaded onto the train. From the surrounding homes, binoculars were turned on us. The train left. Who of us would ever see Munich again?

And now: Were we going to Poland? Or to Czechoslovakia? The men watched station by station. Theresienstadt, they had told us, was a camp for the privileged. Perhaps it was “only” Theresienstadt we would have to endure? We were an oddly thrown together community, as we sat there, all strangers and yet bound together by the darkness of the future, the fear, and—at this hour—by the threat of being shot, should we put our heads out of the window.

The next day we arrived in Bauschowitz, Czechoslovakia. Light rain falling from low-hanging clouds. In the mud and the rain, old and sick people were lying about, left there from the transport which had arrived ahead of us from who knows where and waited to be called. We went on foot to Theresienstadt. Our luggage was to follow. . . .

After they looted our hand luggage, we were led through the village. Incredible! Where was the senior citizen home, the residence of which they had spoken of to us? Where were the clean houses, where everybody would have their own well-furnished room? Through open doors we saw shapes in rags lying on the floor or on wooden frames. Groups of misery were led to pick up food; each carried his own little container in his hand.

They took us to our quarters.

But we could not live here! It was a shed in the back of a courtyard. In this yard, an ugly-smelling compost heap—high as a hill—stewed in the burning midday sun. There was nothing in the shed. No furniture, no oven, no stove—only the floor, the roof, and rags hanging from the walls. Here our existence in the camp began.

On the first evening, as we were standing around in the empty shed, wondering whether there wasn't another possibility than lying down on the bare floor, apparitions of hunger came to us out of their cavelike doorways. They approached step-by-step and finally they stood before us. “I have not heard for a long time—what's happening in the world. Don't you have a newspaper?” But then came the truth—they begged for bread. We gave these apparitions of hunger whatever we still had. Poor, poor people, we thought—and nothing else. We did not think further: Soon we will be such poor, poor people, too.

The next day we got bread for three days. Two days later we had to throw it away. It was moldy.

Old Neumeier was the first to die. Actually, he had arrived with us almost dead. Someone else followed him, a man in his best years. He had been so vigorous and cheerful, had supervised the distribution of bread with much authority, humor, and experience. He died because he did not get the medicine on which he depended to stay alive. The dying went on.

. . . We got used to it, learned to get our food in the army courtyard, learned to eat it slowly, with deliberation, spoonful by spoonful, so as to value each gram; learned to get along with one another; we, who were so different, learned to support each other, learned to accept that they had even stolen our last bit of luggage—in short, we learned to accept poverty, the limited space, the imprisonment, the not being oneself any longer, learned to recognize death as a common acquaintance. But our thoughts were hidden deeply in our innermost selves. There, something lived that was holy, pure—the dream of another planet. The other planet was home.*

* From *My Years in Theresienstadt* by Gerty Spies. Prometheus Books, 1997. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Connections

Why do you think Hitler and his followers promoted Terezín as a “paradise” at a time when they were shipping thousands of Jews to Auschwitz and other death camps? To what extent did Gerty Spies believe the propaganda? How do you explain why, even after she and the others were confronted with the reality of Terezín, they “did not think further”?

Historian Leni Yahil divides knowledge into three parts: receipt of information, acknowledgment of that information, and action based on the information. What are the differences? How important are those differences? What information would have been hardest for a German Jew like Gerty Spies to accept? What do you think you would have had the most difficulty acknowledging? Laws that set you apart as the “enemy”? The mass deportations? The concentration camps? Rumors of gas chambers? Once Spies and other Jews acknowledged what they knew, what choices did they have?

How does Yahil's division of knowledge apply to the way people today respond to catastrophes? Do people know? To what extent have they acknowledged the information? To what extent have they acted on that knowledge?

Responding to the CD

Finding a Voice: Musicians in Terezín features four works written by Jewish composers in Terezín. Each piece of music begins with selected excerpts that can be used to introduce basic musical terms and ideas before listening to the excerpts in a musical context.

Composers express ideas through a variety of musical forms or “tools,” including articulation (Is the music smooth, abrupt or staccato-machine-gun like?); range (Are the voices deep, high, soaring?); dynamics (Is the music soft or loud?); and rhythmic patterns (What is the pace of the music?). Pay attention to these “tools” as you listen. You will also want to pay careful attention to the theme of the work. A theme is a melody, tune, or other recognizable musical phrase. Listen for it in the opening of the work and then watch for variations on the theme as well as new elements as the music continues. Composers vary a theme by changing the tempo, rhythm, dynamics, harmony, or instrumentation.

In a journal, record what you hear in each work. These questions can be used to help you keep track of the changes from the beginning of the work to the end.

- What mood does this section convey?
- What instrument or instruments are featured in this section?
- How is the music articulated?
- What is the range of voices?
- What are the dynamics of the piece?
- What rhythmic patterns do you hear?
- What sounds familiar?
- What is new or different about the music in this section?

After listening to each excerpt, play the work as a whole.

- Describe the mood or moods of the work as a whole.
- How do the various parts of the work fit together to express the main idea or the message of the work?

Terezín: A Paradox

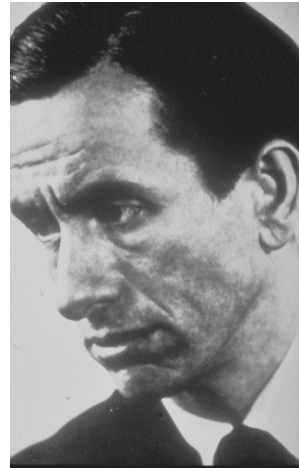
READING 6

FOR USE WITH HANS KRASA'S *PASSACAGLIA AND FUGUE FOR STRING TRIO* (Tracks 3-8). A passacaglia (pronounced "pahssa-cahlya) is a musical form derived from Spanish dances. A passacaglia consists of a set of variations constructed on a continuously repeated harmony or melody appearing in the bass line. As you listen, think about whether the creating of a passacaglia in a concentration camp is a paradox or contradiction.



Born in 1899 in what later became Czechoslovakia, Hans Krasa was only six years old when he began to study piano. He wrote his first composition at the age of 11 and his first symphony at 21. By the 1920s, orchestras in Paris, Zurich, Boston, and Philadelphia were performing his works. In 1933, he was awarded the Czechoslovakia State Prize for Composition. Just five years later, only one part of his identity mattered to authorities: He was a Jew in a Nazi-occupied nation. By 1942, he was a prisoner in Terezín. His only crime was his ancestry.

Krasa was one of hundreds of artists, musicians, entertainers, and actors confined in Terezín. Most imagined, at least for a time, that despite the hardship, life would go on. So they smuggled in such "necessities" as books, pens, paper, even musical instruments. Someone managed to sneak in an accordion, while others hid violins and even a viola in their belongings. One musician dismantled his cello, wrapped the pieces in a blanket along with glue and clamps, and then reassembled the entire instrument at Terezín. There he and others openly played music that was censored in other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe.



Hans Krasa

In Terezín, Krasa revised *Brundibar*, a children's opera he wrote with Czech playwright Adolf Hoffmeister, just before his deportation. He also rewrote some of his other compositions so that they could be performed in the camp despite a shortage of musical instruments and professional musicians. And he created several new works including a dance, an overture, and a number of sketches. They were played secretly at first and later openly in dozens of concerts organized by the prisoners in the camp.

A concert in a concentration camp is hard to imagine. To Alfred Kantor, a prisoner in Terezín, it was one of many unsettling contradictions. He writes:

There were moments that seemed strangely magnified by a feeling of blissful make-believe amidst an otherwise cold reality. I remember how overjoyed we were one day by the music of an accordion that someone had smuggled into the barracks. Everyone huddled together in the poorly lit, freezing room; and for a while we forgot our hurt as we listened to the tunes. Or I remember how we gathered at night in a cramped storage cellar to watch Karel Svenk's Cheers to Life, Terezín's first underground production. This was a

stinging political cabaret, and one of our own men stood guard at the door in case any SS appeared.

And out of small gatherings like these, as the historical record shows, Terezín eventually bloomed (more openly and with little Nazi interference) into a place of recitals, lectures and readings, theatre and jazz, performed by well-known artists, who found themselves here like the rest of us. They all seemed superb to me. No doubt the display of their talents—as long as the Nazis allowed them to perform—eased their own despair and briefly turned Terezín into a small but vigorous cultural center. At the height of its creativity, operas and operatic works were regularly produced, among them Mozart's Magic Flute, Verdi's Requiem, Bizet's Carmen. It was during this period that a remarkable children's opera, Brundibar, . . . had its premiere performance in Terezín. . . . There also were several fine string quartets, as well as scores of musicians, singers, poets, actors, playwrights, and painters.



“Entertainment” by Bedrich Fritta.

On looking back, it still remains somewhat of a mystery to me how it happened that such performances and such works were permitted. Obviously the Germans needed at that time to maintain a showplace for propaganda purposes. Eventually, Hitler ordered a film to be made of life in Terezín. . . . It was entitled The Fuehrer Donates a City to the Jews. At one point, the Germans even agreed to allow the International Red Cross to inspect Terezín. Blatant charade though it was, it meant some additional comforts: real tablecloths appeared in a newly erected dining hall and the quality of food improved. . . .

All this at the very same time that hundreds were dying within Terezín's walls and thousands were being deported at regular intervals to outlying death camps. It was quite possible for a pianist to be performing at Terezín's city hall at the exact moment that a member of his family was being put on a “transport” to Auschwitz. (In 1942 a railway spur, leading to the center of town, was built by the inmates for the sole purpose of such transports—which meant a trainload of deportees, usually one or two thousand at a time. By 1943 Terezín had become a giant way station, and, ultimately, [thousands] were sent from this railroad station to their deaths.) . . .

By far the worst memory is of an incident that took place when Deputy SS Chief Bergel called everyone into a large courtyard. He informed us that mail to the outside had been intercepted. (We were not allowed to send letters home then.) If the men who had sent it would step forward within three minutes, they would escape punishment. Bergel

*fell silent and looked at his watch. Soon nine young men stood there. A week later they were hanged, with the elders of Terezín forced to watch. That night candles were lit in the windows to commemorate the dead and, in some way, as a form of protest. For a time everyone seemed stunned and these deaths became symbolic of Nazi treachery—they had even greater impact than much larger numbers of deaths later on. Even so, life gradually returned to normal, and I suppose this was the great paradox of Terezín—that life could go on after such brutalities, and that the human spirit found a way to fulfill itself again and even to flourish, at least temporarily.**

Before representatives of the Red Cross arrived, the Nazis ordered prisoners to pave streets, repair housing, build a playground, and even plant 1200 rosebushes. They also deported 7500 young men and women to Auschwitz to make the camp seem less crowded and to substantiate their claim that it was a ghetto for old people. The visitors were unaware that “advance men had preceded them every step of the way, giving signals so that young women with rakes over their shoulders would march past, the soccer goal would be kicked, and the finale of *Brundibar* would be sung at just the right time. As Rudolf Franek, the conductor of *Brundibar*, later recalled, ‘I got the first signal when the car entered the street, the second signal meant they were mounting the stairs; and at the third signal, I dropped my arm and the music started.’”** The visitors were suitably impressed.

Flushed with their success, the Nazis decided to create a “documentary-style” film about Terezín in the summer of 1944. Kurt Gerron, an inmate who had been a well-known actor and director, was put in charge of filming *The Fuehrer Donates a City to the Jews*. Thirteen-year-old Herbert Fischl wrote a story about the event for his friends. It appeared in *Vedem*, a secret magazine published by Fischl and the other boys in his barracks. The headline read: “This Is Not a Gag: Or Making a Movie in Our Town (A Comedy in Three Acts).”

“I am told the Jews in Terezín are not feeling too well,” said the director of the Department of Jewish Problems to his assistant one fine day. “What is more,” he continued indignantly, “I hear that reports have been appearing in the foreign press about the wretched state of these Jews. This can’t go on. It could become an international scandal and it will make things quite impossible for us, not to mention put our people on the spot. You know how it is.”

“But what steps would you like to take to counteract this?” After all, we can’t possibly give them more food or improve their living conditions. That would be against our antisemitic principles.”

“Hm, a difficult problem,” replied Mr. X regretfully, “but I don’t think there’s anything else we can do.”

“Wait a minute—yes that’s it! We’ll make a movie (surely you must know something about trick films) and we’ll send copies to all those inquisitive countries that are sticking their noses into what does not concern them.”

“I’ve always said I had a first-class assistant. I shall recommend a promotion for you,

* From the Introduction to *The Book of Alfred Kantor: An Artist's Journal of the Holocaust* by Alfred Kantor. Schocken Books, 1987.

** From “*Brundibar*” by Rudolf Franek in *Terezín. Council of Jewish Communities in the Czech Lands*, 1965, 256-7.

and a medal for your clearheaded ideas.”

That was the prologue.

And then matters proceeded very quickly.

Newsreel directors Precenks, Fric, etc. “Now then, gentlemen, you with the long nose, you Fatso, you four-eyes, line up for filming. Look pleasant, satisfied, as if you’d just dined on goose. What, you stinking Jew, what sort of a look is that? Here’s a slap in the face for you”—and the blows began to fall, elbow jabs, kicks administered by a gentleman in green to the head of a helpless old man. A whole company of old ladies are commanded to go and bathe. “Please I can’t. I have diarrhea, rheumatism. . . .” An old lady, who doesn’t even know how to swim, has to get into the water.

The next part of this valuable film:

Orthodox Jews and rabbis were sent to the [municipal orchestra] and had to jump up and down in the rhythm of the jazz band. Oh, and the food! The Jews lick their chops after devouring the excellent cakes and sweet buns (naturally, only when the camera is pointing at them) and afterwards they practically pumped their stomachs out. The best cabarets, the [children’s playground]—everything was filmed, and filmed, of course, “with a natural smile on the lips.”

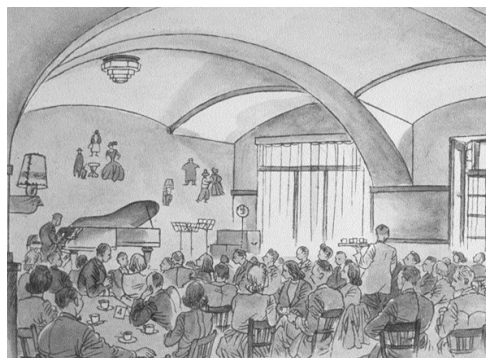
That was the intermezzo.

This movie business was an excellent idea, sir. . . . You see, we did without magnifying mirrors, without improving their living conditions, and now we are redeemed in the eyes of our friendly enemies.

And that was the conclusion.*

Children were not the only ones to express their outrage. When the Nazis ordered the artists in the camp to create posters and drawings showing the camp as a “paradise for Jews,” they secretly drew other pictures that revealed what life in the camp was really like.

Although many of the artists managed to hide their drawings or smuggle them out of the camp, the Nazis discovered some of their work. Four painters, an architect, an art collector, and their families were herded into a high-security prison within the camp and interrogated. Two were murdered there and the rest were shipped to the gas chambers of Auschwitz.



“Kaffeehaus” by Joseph E. A. Spier.



“Life in the Barracks” by B. Fritta.

* From *We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, The Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezin*. Translated by R. Elizabeth Novak. Jewish Publication Society, 1994. Used by permission.

Although filmmaker Kurt Geron cooperated in the making of the film, he too was sent to Auschwitz as were Hans Krasa and many of the children shown in the film. *Passacaglia and Fugue for String Trio* was Krasa's last composition. He completed it in 1944, less than two months before he was murdered in Auschwitz. He never heard it performed.

GUIDE TO THE EXCERPTS FROM *PASSACAGLIA AND FUGUE FOR STRING TRIO*

1. Opening Ostinato (Track 3-00.22): Notice that the cello repeats the theme, an eight-bar *ostinato*, 18 times. In Italian, the word *ostinato* means “obstinate” and refers to a “stubbornly repeated bass.” The ostinato provides a foundation for each of the variations in the *passacaglia*. How does Krasa vary the theme?
2. Folk Dance Motif (Track 4-00.16): This section sounds like the kind of music often heard in a folk dance. What elements contribute to that effect?
3. Waltz Motif (Track 5-00.18): The waltz is a dance that became popular in the early 1800s. It is played in a moderate triple time tempo. What images come to mind when you think of a waltz?
4. Folk Dance Motif (Track 6-00.15): This section also has the flavor of folk music. Why do you think the composer mixes the moods and images of folk music with a waltz?
5. Harmonics/Chromaticism (Track 7-00.22): In this section, the harmonics are the high-pitched tones produced by lightly touching the strings of a cello, violin, or viola. What emotions does it evoke?
6. Passacaglia from the *Passacaglia and Fugue for String Trio* (Track 8-06.27): A *passacaglia* consists of a set of variations constructed on a continuously repeated harmony or melody appearing predominantly in the bass line. Use your journal to describe the mood prompted by each variation.



Connections

What does Alfred Kantor regard as the “great paradox of Terezín”? How did musicians and other artists contribute to that paradox? What role did the Nazis play? To what extent did the paradox Kantor describes foster illusions? Allow some to deny the reality of the camp?

Once, during the performance of a play, a deportation was unexpectedly announced. Neither the actors nor members of the audience knew whether a deportation notice would be waiting for them when they returned to their barracks. One of the actors, Yana Shanova, recalls:

*We wanted to interrupt the performance, but the audience would not permit it. . . . The spectators willingly sacrificed two hours of precious, irreplaceable time, in which they could have said goodbye to their friends and packed their necessary belongings, to see once more for the last time a theatrical production. **

Author Joseph Conrad once wrote that the artist “speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery that surrounds our lives; to our sense of pity and beauty and

pain.” How is this view of the artist reflected in the incident Shanova describes? To what extent does Hans Krasa fit Conrad’s view of the artist?

Satire is a form of writing that ridicules people, practices, or institutions in order to reveal their failings. Writers often use satire to force readers to think critically about a particular subject. What did Herbert Fischl want his readers to think critically about? How did he use satire to make his point? How did he use irony to underscore his message? The word *irony* describes a contrast either between what is stated and what is meant or between what is expected to happen and what really happens. How does Hans Krasa use irony in *Passacaglia and Fugue for String Trio*?

* Quoted in *Hitler’s Gift: The Story of Theresienstadt* by George E. Berkley. Branden Publishing Co., 1993, 127.

A Statement of Faith

READING 7

In a television series exploring the nature of creativity, journalist Bill Moyers tells viewers, “It is not a scientifically certifiable fact that each child born into the world comes with the potential to create. It is rather a statement of faith. But I can’t imagine any declaration more important . . . to make. Where our heart is, so too perhaps is our greatest treasure.” The Jews of Terezín struggled to honor that “statement of faith” in a place where young and old alike were dehumanized and routinely humiliated.

In Terezín, the Nazis fostered the illusion that Jews had some measure of authority by creating a “Council of Jewish Elders” to manage the community. In fact, it was the Nazis who ran Terezín. They issued the orders. They made the rules. And they saw to it that those rules were enforced exactly the way they wanted them to be enforced. From the start, they regarded Terezín as a forced labor camp. So they split up families soon after their arrival, housing men, women, and children in separate barracks.

The Council of Jewish Elders used what little authority it had to protect the children. They were given extra food. Special workers—for the most part, former scout leaders—were assigned to their barracks. Although caregivers were not supposed to teach their charges, many of them saw education as their first priority. So did the children. As one teacher recalled: “They started their learning with such energy and enjoyment, that even today it would be worth while to write a paper on ‘pedagogical problems in the concentration camp.’ We were able to punish the children, for instance, by temporary exclusion from lessons. School went on in spite of the prohibition against education. One of the pupils was always on guard, and when he noticed danger—the SS men—he whistled, and teaching turned into amusement of the children. We sang and played. That was permitted.”*

In Helga Kinsky-Pollack’s barracks, there was “a parliament, we had an emblem, we had a hymn which we sang, and we had a uniform which we only had on at festivities.” Each girl chose a sign for her bed. Pollack selected a lighthouse because “in the dark sea when everything is dark, only one place shines and helps the people drowning in the water. That is a lighthouse, and I thought it was an emblem of somehow to survive.”** Kurt Kotouc also lived in the children’s barracks. He told an interviewer:

Everything that happened to us made us grow up faster, at least psychologically. We had witnessed the destruction of our homes, the helplessness of our parents. Marked by stars and numbers, in quarantine and in the Schleusen [the staging area for transports to Auschwitz], we saw conventions destroyed, and witnessed the ardor and fragility and finiteness of human relationships, we saw altruism and naked selfishness, we listened to the death rattle of the dying and the heavy breathing of couples having sex.

And this was how Valtr Eisinger found us. He was still very young himself, only

* From “Brundibar” by Rudolf Franek in *Terezín. Council of Jewish Communities in the Czech Lands*, 1965, 253.

** Quoted in *Children With a Star* by Debórah Dwork. Yale University Press, 1991, 128.

twenty-nine. He was not a brilliant man, just a talented teacher at the beginning of his career. He hadn't yet been given the chance to stretch his abilities, to clarify his views of life and the world. He was still busy with himself, and now wanted above all to help us. . . . We loved his enthusiastic courage, his certainty in this fragile world of the camp. . . . We felt close to him, this wonderful teacher who talked to us about the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, translated poems, played football, moved into a bunk in our home, sang in *The Bartered Bride*, and loved his Terezín wife, Vera, with all his heart. We could laugh at his faults, but they only brought him closer to us. The knowledge of our common fate, and Eisinger's personality, enabled us to establish a community that included orphanage boys as well as the son of a scientist or a self-assured son of a luxury car dealer.*

With the encouragement of Eisinger and other child-care workers, the boys in Home Number One of L417 [house number 17 on the fourth lengthwise street] created a secret magazine, *Vedem*. It was published every Friday for nearly two years. The first issue contained a speech by one of the boys, Walter Roth:

The banner has been raised. Home Number One has its own flag, the symbol of its future work and its future communal life. The Home has its own government. Why did we set it up? Because we no longer want to be an accidental group of boys, passively succumbing to the fate meted out to us. We want to create an active, mature society and through work and discipline transform our fate into a joyful, proud reality. They have unjustly uprooted us from the soil that nurtured us, from the work, the joys, and the culture from which our young lives should have drawn strength. They have only one aim in mind—to destroy us, not only physically but mentally and morally as well. Will they succeed? Never! Robbed of the sources of our culture, we shall create new ones. Separated from all that gave us pleasure, we shall build a new and joyously triumphant life! Cut off from a well-ordered society, we shall create a new life together, based on organization, voluntary discipline and mutual trust.

*Torn from our people by this terrible evil, we shall not allow our hearts to be hardened by hatred and anger, but today and forever, our highest aim shall be love for our fellow men, and contempt for racial, religious, and nationalist strife.***

The boys in Home Number One of L417 participated in many of the cultural activities in Terezín. Several had parts in Hans Krasa's children's opera. *Brundibar* is the story of two small children, Pepicek and Anicka, who sing in the streets to raise money for their sick mother. When *Brundibar*, the wicked organ grinder, tries to stop them, a dog, a cat, and a sparrow come to the children's aid. So do other boys and girls in the neighborhood. Together they sing a lullaby and people on the street shower them with money. When *Brundibar* steals their earnings, the children and the animals chase him. The opera ends with their victory. In *Vedem*, Rudolf Lauf describes what the opera meant to him and the other children.

We arrived an hour and a half before curtain, and when we saw each other in our make-up, which we thought terrible, we began to cut up as usual, till Rudi had to come and set-

* From *We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, The Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín*. Translated by R. Elizabeth Novak. Jewish Publication Society, 1994. Used by permission.

** Ibid.

tle us down. But as soon as the audience started filing in, our little souls were slowly but surely overcome by stage fright. Three of the “experienced” actors walked up and down backstage and said over and over again: “I haven’t got stage fright, nothing can throw me off,” and only their scarlet ears belied them. But as soon as the first bars of the music sounded, we forgot our fear and went to it. Everything went well. Brundibar . . . on stage with the artisans saw to it that there was a lot of fun, while Pepicek, Anicka, and the animals took care of the musical side of things. And the lullaby sung by the choir: “Mummy is rocking. . .” moved everyone and reaped well-deserved applause. . . . And when we had finished and the hall was filled with thunderous applause, we were all happy and content, for man is a creature eager for fame. And in all of us there was some satisfaction at having done a thing well. . . .

Brundibar will soon disappear from the thoughts of those who watched it in Terezín, but for us actors it will remain one of the few beautiful memories we have of that place. *

At the end of the opera, the children are supposed to sing, “Who so loves his mother and father and his native land is our friend and may play with us.” But at Terezín, those lines were rewritten. Instead the children sang, “Whoever loves justice and will defend it and is not afraid, is our friend and may play with us.”



A scene from *Brundibar*, as featured in the propaganda film *The Fuehrer Donates a City to the Jews*.

Connections

Teachers like Valtr Eisinger wanted to bring their children “out of the ghetto spiritually” and keep them “mentally sane, so that they would become quite normal people.” What does it mean to bring someone “out of the ghetto spiritually”? What kind of learning is involved in the process? How can music contribute to that effort?

The word *vedem* means “in the lead.” How appropriate was the name? To what extent did the boys and their magazine live up to the ideals expressed in Walter Roth’s speech? If you could write a letter to Walter Roth or Rudolf Lauf, what would you ask them? What would you want them to know about you and your friends?

* From *We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, The Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín*. Translated by R. Elizabeth Novak. Jewish Publication Society, 1994. Used by permission.

What is the moral of *Brundibar*? What lesson did Lauf and the other children in the cast learn from it? What do you think their audiences learned?

The cast gave 55 performances of *Brundibar* before Krasa, Franek, and the children were placed on a transport to Auschwitz. Rudolf Franek was among the few to survive. He later tried to explain why the opera was so popular with young and old alike:

*With what enthusiasm we sang: "Beat your drum, we have won . . . we did not give in! . . . we were not afraid. . . ." Everything could be summed up under the concept of Brundibar. You must face evil. One man alone is helpless. "There must be more of us! The more, the better!"**

How important is the change in the last lines of the opera? To what extent is the change an act of resistance? What does the opera suggest about the relationship between music and resistance? Between music and society?

Honza Treichlinger, a 14-year-old orphan, played Brundibar, the evil organ grinder in the opera. Rudi Franek later wrote of Treichlinger's performance:

Honza, quite instinctively, made the character of Brundibar so human that although he played a wicked character, he became the darling of the audience, and not only of the children in the audience. He learned to "twitch the whiskers" which we stuck under his nose. He twitched them so well, and at just the right time, that tension relaxed in the auditorium, and often we could hear the children releasing their bated breath.

From the moment in which he "made" the character, he played all performances without an understudy. Anybody else would have failed.

*What might he have become? Actor or engineer? How he could have humanized his own life as he had his role! That he was rather short was fateful to him. He was fourteen years old. He went to Auschwitz with the old and the small children and directly into the gas chamber.***

How does an actor "humanize" a character? How does a person "humanize his or her life"? Vaclav Havel, the president of the Czech Republic, has described *Vedem* as "an artifact that has emerged out of a longing for art. Art springs from truthful and extreme experiences perhaps even more than it does from talent, and it has the capacity to be stronger than death." Would the boys in Home Number One agree? Do you agree? How is music linked to the issues and circumstances people face today? What part does music play in your life?

* From *We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, The Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín*. Translated by R. Elizabeth Novak. Jewish Publication Society, 1994. Used by permission.

** Ibid.

“A Living Message”

READING 8

TRIO FOR SPRING INSTRUMENTS. FOR USE WITH *STRING TRIO, MOVEMENT NO. 2* BY GIDEON KLEIN (Tracks 9-15). A movement is a major section of a musical work. The title of this movement is “Variations on a Moravian Folk Song.” It is based on a lullaby the composer learned as a child. The short/long dotted rhythm is a characteristic of music in the part of Czechoslovakia known as East Moravia. Notice how the composer expresses an array of intense emotions by varying the theme or recurring melody. These variations paint a musical picture of Klein’s state of mind in Terezín.



In an interview with Mark Ludwig, the director of the Terezín Chamber Music Foundation, Gideon Klein’s sister describes his *Trio for String Instruments* as “our life at the time.” Eliska Kleinova also views it as a “living message to future generations.” In telling of the way her brother would often encourage other musicians “to perform, to breathe again through their art and share it with fellow prisoners,” she recalls:

When [Pavel] Haas was deported to Terezín, he would not have a thing to do with music in the ghetto. He was miserable. His health was bad. Haas had eye problems. He missed his wife and daughter terribly. During the Nazi occupation, [he and his wife] divorced. His wife was not Jewish. The divorce saved the wife and child from the transports. All this was too much for Haas. Gideon had a deep respect for Haas’s creativity. He gathered scraps of paper. You know paper was very scarce in Terezín and drew the music staves like music manuscript paper. In giving the paper to Haas, Gideon urged, almost commanded, him to compose again. He spoke of artistic responsibility to oneself, one’s muse, and to all of us in the ghetto.



Pavel Haas with his wife and daughter, 1940.

Historian Ruth Bondy, a survivor of Terezín, remembers how that sense of artistic responsibility affected life in the concentration camp:

There . . . was an enormous thirst for music, which opened a window into another world, different from the reality of the ghetto. Listening with closed eyes to Bernard Kaff playing Chopin, one knew oneself to be above all the degradation suffered at German

hands, to be a man. . . . [With] instrument-playing officially permitted, it was only natural that the first opera performed should be Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, considered the Czech national opera in their struggle against the Hapsburgs. The opera opened in November 1942 at . . . children's home L 417. Only a fraction of the audience had seats; everyone else stood shoulder to shoulder, listening. The true meaning of the choral words seemed to be clear for the first time: "Why not be merry, if God has granted us health"—and if not full health, at least life. People were moved to tears, the performers were called back again and again by an emotional audience who would not let them leave.

The *Bartered Bride* was performed thirty-five times, and the children of L 417 . . . learned entire scenes by heart. The school became the center of musical life: there the musicians met after work, copied scores, discussed interpretations, and gave children lessons; there music lovers came to hear Gideon Klein, who worked as an instructor in the boys' dormitory. At twenty-three years old, a tall, slim young man with black hair on a pale forehead, Gideon was a superb pianist and a master of languages, philosophy, and composition. He who should have been one of the world's great musicians sat at the old piano, supported on crates, and burst out of the confines of the ghetto, conquering the darkness and shedding light all around.*

In 1944, Klein was shipped to Auschwitz and then to Furstengrubbe, a labor camp in Silesia, where he died in January 1945. According to an eyewitness, not long before Klein's death, he and the other prisoners were ordered to undress for a physical. While they waited, an SS guard noticed a piano. He asked if anyone knew how to play it. Klein stepped forward and proceeded to play. The witness did not recognize the music, but recalls that it did not please the guard. He wonders if Klein would have survived had he played a safer tune.



EXCERPTS FROM *STRING TRIO, MOVEMENT NO. 2* by Gideon Klein

1. Theme (Track 9-00.46): The folk song on which the theme is based expresses a longing for one's village. Describe the tone and the mood of the theme.
2. Variation—cello with violin/viola pizzicato (Track 10-00.14): In this variation, the cello states the theme, while the violin and viola play pizzicato (by plucking the strings of the instruments). What do the pizzicati add to the variation?
3. Variation—running sixteenth notes (Track 11-00.05): This variation features running sixteenth notes. What is the mood? How does it contrast with the mood of the opening?
4. Variation—lyrical (Track 12-00.18): What is the mood of this variation? What music elements contribute to that mood?
5. Variation—pizzicato (Track 13-00.26): This variation returns to the dotted rhythmic pattern of the theme, but the feeling is different. How do the pizzicati contribute to the mood of this variation?
6. Coda (Track 14-00.13): This excerpt is near the end of the movement. What emotions does it convey?
7. *Trio for String Instruments, Movement No. 2* (Track 15-07.14): Chart the range of emotions expressed in the excerpts. Follow the chart as you listen to the entire movement. What emotions and feelings does the movement convey?

* From *Elder of the Jews: Jakob Edelstein of Theresienstadt* by Ruth Bondy. Translated by Evelyn Abel. Grove Press, 1989, 364.

Connections

Eliska Kleinova describes her brother's music as a "living message to future generations." How does Klein use music to tell his story? What is the moral of the story he tells through his music?

Ruth Bondy writes, "Listening with closed eyes to Bernard Kaff playing Chopin, one knew oneself to be above all the degradation suffered at German hands, to be a man." She describes Gideon Klein as bursting "out of the confines of the ghetto, conquering the darkness and shedding light all around." What is she suggesting about the role of music in a society? The role of Kaff and other musicians?

Expressing Outrage

READING 9



FOR USE WITH *STRING QUARTET NO. 3* BY VIKTOR ULLMANN (Tracks 16-25). Ullmann uses the language of music to express a variety of feelings. Using your musical journal, note how he achieves each change in mood as well as experiences in Terezín?

Reflecting on his stay in Terezín, composer Viktor Ullmann noted “that by no means did we sit weeping on the banks of the waters of Babylon, and that our endeavor with respect to the Arts was commensurate with our will to live. And I am convinced that all those who, in life and in art, were fighting to force form upon resisting matter, will agree with me.” Born in 1898 in Czechoslovakia, then part of Austria-Hungary, Ullmann was already an accomplished musician and composer when he arrived in Terezín on September 8, 1942. There he produced an astonishing amount of music—at least 20 compositions, including a piano concerto, a symphony, piano sonatas, and a string quartet. He also served as the camp’s music critic. It was a job he took seriously. In one review, he suggested that the pianist and other musicians tackle pieces banned in other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe:



Viktor Ullmann

Lastly, a word to our pianists: the competitive fervor with which they present to us the romantic composers is worthy of praise and very respectable. However, there are a large number of composers that deserve our interest, not only because they are Jews but also because they have talent and genius and have not yet been performed in the surrounding world. I mention the names of [Felix] Mendelssohn, Carl Goldmark, Paul Lukas, Arnold Schoenberg, Ernest Bloch, E. W. Korngold, Wilhelm Grosz, Ervin Schulhoff, Kurt Weill, Hans Eisler, Carol Rathaus, Egon Wellesz, Ernst Toch, Paul Pisk—I could go on, not even mentioning any of the Theresienstadt composers.

Ullmann saw music as a way not only to give voice to the silenced but also to express his own outrage. He collaborated with Petr Kien, a fellow prisoner who was both a painter and a poet, on an opera titled *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (The Emperor from Atlantis). Kien wrote the libretto [the words] and Ullmann the music. It is the story of Emperor Ueberall—“Above all” in English—a cruel ruler who seeks to glorify his name by ordering Death to lead the army into unnecessary wars. Death refuses, going on strike. Without Death, there is chaos. Order is restored only when Death promises to return to his duties, provided the emperor become his first victim.

Der Kaiser von Atlantis is an allegory—a literary work in which all or most of the characters, settings, and events stand for ideas, qualities, or figures beyond themselves. Allegories usually teach a moral lesson. Ullmann used music to underscore that lesson. The opera opens with a trumpet call based on the Death theme from *Asrael*, a popular symphony by Czech composer Josef Suk. Ullmann knew that his audiences would recognize the music; it was often

performed when a prominent individual died or in times of national tragedy. His listeners were also likely to recognize the German national anthem, *Deutschland Ueber Alles* [Germany above All Others], even though it was to be performed in the minor key. The opera ends with yet another well-known work—an adaptation of Martin Luther’s triumphant hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*.

Not long after rehearsals began in the summer of 1944, the SS abruptly canceled them. The Nazis had no intention of allowing an opera with such an obviously political message to be performed. In October, Ullmann, his wife, and his son were murdered in the gas chambers in Auschwitz. Kien suffered the same fate.

EXCERPTS FROM *STRING QUARTET NO. 3* BY VIKTOR ULLMANN

1. First Movement, Opening Theme (Track 16-00.46): Describe the mood of the opening theme.
2. Solo Cello—musical bridge to Second Movement (Track 17-00.24): A bridge is the transition from one movement to the next. Does the cello solo prepare the listener for the second movement? What is the mood? Describe the character of the cello.
3. Second Movement—waltz motif (Track 18-00.18): A waltz is a dance in a moderate triple time tempo. How does this waltz differ from others you have heard? Why might some call it “menacing”? Why might others liken it to “dancing on a grave”?
4. Musical Bridge to Third Movement (Track 19-00.26): This musical bridge takes the listener back to the musical language of the first movement. What do you think the composer is trying to communicate in this bridge?
5. Third Movement—fugue (Track 20-00.52): In a fugue, each voice or instrument states the theme. Notice how a single voice or instrument—the viola—states the theme and is then imitated by two distinct voices—the cello and the second violin—one after the other. What images come to mind while listening to this fugue? What feeling is the composer conveying?
6. Third Movement—ponticello in Violin 1 Part (Track 21-00.13): The word *ponticello* is the Italian word for the bridge of the cello (or other string instrument). The bridge transmits the vibrations of the strings throughout the instrument. By moving the bow close to or on top of the bridge, a musician can produce a variety of sound effects. Depending on the speed and pressure of the bow as it moves across the strings, those sounds can be eerie, nasal, shimmering, or icy. What mood does the ponticello in this excerpt convey?
7. Fourth Movement—opening (Track 22-00.13): How is this opening different from the openings heard in the previous movements?
8. Fourth Movement—coda (Track 23-00.25): What is the mood of this section? How is it like the mood in the opening theme? How is it different?
9. *String Quartet No. 3* (Tracks 24 and 25-16.12): As you listen, record in your journal the feelings the composer conveys in these movements. Which feelings seem to dominate the work?



Connections

Wynton Marsalis, a jazz musician, once told an interviewer, “Art means something higher than survival, because survival just means existence. Art means that you structure and order. You’re trying to understand [what will give substance to human existence] and give structure to it.” Would Ullmann agree? How are his efforts to “force form upon resisting matter” like Marsalis’s idea that art requires “structure and order”? That art means something higher than survival?

Some insist that armed resistance is the only form of legitimate resistance. Others believe that resistance requires an organization. Still others believe that resistance is more about the will to live and the power of hope than it is about either weapons or organization. How did Ullmann view resistance? How do you regard it? To what extent are Ullmann’s *String Quartet No. 3* and his opera acts of resistance? To what extent is all of the music created and performed in Terezín an act of resistance?

Ullmann served as a music critic in Terezín. He wrote dozens of critiques of recitals, operas, and other performances. What is the purpose of criticism in the creative process?

Across Boundaries

READING 10

FOR USE WITH EXCERPTS FROM *STRING QUARTET NO. 2 OPUS 7* BY PAVEL HAAS (Tracks 26-29). This work was inspired in part by the Chinese saga of the Monkey King, a noted prankster often in trouble with the other gods. The composer also found inspiration in other cultures. Listen for these influences as well.



The Nazis saw music as “the most German of the arts.” Pavel Haas and other Jewish composers in Terezín saw it as “the most universal.” To them, music knew no borders, no boundaries. They found ideas in Asian poetry, Indian philosophy, Moravian lullabies, American jazz, and hundreds of other sources. In writing his *String Quartet No. 2*, Haas, the son of a Jewish shopkeeper from East Bohemia, found inspiration in Chinese poetry, Czech folk songs, and popular dance music.

Other artists have also found their voices in distant cultures. For example, Julius Lester, a noted author and professor, found his voice in seventeenth-century Japanese haiku. The first time he opened a book of Japanese poetry, he writes, “I knew: This is my voice.”

*This simplicity, this directness, this way of using words to direct the soul to silence and beyond. This is my voice! I exulted inside. Then I stopped. How could I, a little colored kid from Nashville, Tennessee—and that is all I knew myself to be in those days like perpetual death knells—how could I be feeling that something written in seventeenth-century Japan could be my voice? I almost put the book back, but that inner prompting which had led me to it would not allow such an act of self-betrayal. I bought the book and began writing haiku, and the study of haiku led to the study of Zen Buddhism, which led to the study of flower arranging, and I suspect I am still following the path that opened to me on that day when I was eighteen, though I no longer write haiku. I eventually understood that it made perfect sense for a little colored kid from Nashville, Tennessee, to recognize his voice in seventeenth-century Japanese poetry. Who we are by the sociological and political definitions of society has little to do with who we are. In the quiet and stillness that surrounds us when we read a book, we are known to ourselves in ways we are not when we are with people. We enter a relationship of intimacy with the writer, and if the writer has written truly and if we give ourselves over to what is written, we are given the gift of ourselves in ways that surprise and catch the soul off guard.**

In an issue of *Vedem*, thirteen-year-old Hanus Pollak describes a similar experience after reading a book written in the United States in the 1850s:

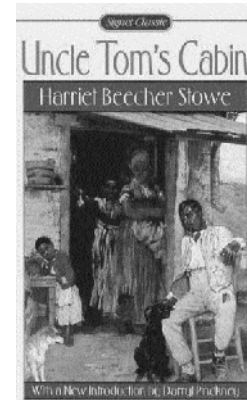
Not long ago I read Uncle Tom’s Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe. You all surely know the book. It tells the life story of several black slaves in America. Many of the horrors of

* From *Falling Pieces of the Broken Sky* by Julius Lester. Little Brown, 1990, 71-73. Reprinted by permission.

Negro* slavery are described in the book, the beatings, the starvation, and so on. But most of all I was moved by the splitting up of families. Many slave families were waiting in the slave markets to be auctioned off. Their only wish was to be sold together to one master. But not even this smallest desire was granted. They were sold separately, and would probably never meet again. This is how Negro slaves were sold and treated in America in the nineteenth century, that is to say, three hundred years after the discovery of America.

How do we differ from those slaves, and how do our times differ from those times? We live here in Terezín, in a slave warehouse. Just like the Negroes, we are subjected to beatings and hunger. The one way in which we perhaps differ is the irregular and unjustified splitting up of families. But even this is now happening. On January 29, 1944, young men and old, sons, fathers, brothers, relatives were sent away by transport. This is happening to us Jews, a persecuted people. Just like the Negroes, Tom and the three others, we bear our fate calmly and heroically, looking it straight in the eye. On April 2, 1944, when they actually boarded the train that was to take them away into the far unknown, I stood on the street corner with the crowd to see many friends, perhaps for the last time, while others took leave of their relatives. Then the slave owner [the SS commandant] dressed in a green uniform and cap, called the overseer [the commandant of the gendarmes], telling him to allow those dogs onto the train to say farewell to the departing. Not long afterward, the train left, and word spread like wildfire through Terezín about the decency and compassion of the slave owner who had allowed his slaves to say farewell to their children, their fathers, their brothers, their loved ones.

So how do we really differ from those . . . slaves, now, at a time of great cultural flowering, in the middle of the twentieth century? Could not a book called *Mr. Kohn's Garret* be written to stand beside *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?**



EXCERPTS FROM *STRING QUARTET NO. 2 OPUS 7* BY PAVEL HAAS

1. Opening (Track 26-00.34): Haas once likened this movement to “the wild abandon of a night of revelry.” What sounds contribute to that feeling?
2. Chinese Folk Motif (Track 27-00.22): Notice the jazzy edge to the rhythm in this excerpt. What influences does it suggest?
3. Rumba—with percussion (Track 28-00.50): A rumba is an Afro-Cuban dance. How does the use of percussion instruments affect the mood of this excerpt?
4. *String Quartet No. 2 Opus 7*, Movement 4. (Track 29-08.38): What moods does the movement convey? How does the composer draw from other cultures to convey those moods?

* The use of the term *Negro* reflects the period in which the essay was written.

** From *We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, The Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín*. Translated by R. Elizabeth Novak. Jewish Publication Society, 1994. Used by permission.

Connections

What does Julius Lester mean when he says he found his “voice in seventeenth-century Japanese poetry”? What kind of voice is it? Is it his conscience telling him the right thing to do or a voice that defines who he is? What is the connection between voice and identity?

To what degree are we bound by our culture? By the way we are educated? Is there a book, film, or piece of music that has had an effect on you similar to the one Hanus Pollak describes?

Writer Jimmy Santiago Baca believes that “the only way to learn is to write and write until you are able to come really close to the way you see life.” The word *see* has special meaning for Baca:

*The way the Indians say “seeing” is how close you can come to the way things really are, the way a deer sees a rock, or the way a frog sees water; we call that “seeing.” Every human being has that seeing in them, and someone who gets up and writes every day, all he or she is trying to do is to get close to his or her seeing capabilities; that’s where the good poems come from, when you are able to see. **

How is Baca’s use of *see* similar to what Lester calls *voice*? How is it like the way musicians use the word *hear*? How is *seeing* like *empathy*—the ability to walk in someone else’s shoes? Are you able to “see”? To “hear”? If so, describe the experience. How did you feel? Did it take courage?

* Interview by John Crawford and Annie O. Eysturoy in *This Is About Vision: Interviews with Southwestern Writers*, ed. John F. Crawford et. al. University of New Mexico Press, 1990, 189.

Legacies

READING 11

By the late summer of 1944, more and more Jews were being shipped from Terezin to Auschwitz. By October, even members of the Council of Jewish Elders and their families were on their way to the death camp. As were thousands of children. Shortly before he was transported to Auschwitz, thirteen-year-old Hanus Pollak wrote an essay entitled “‘We Old Heroes, Warriors for the Young’: A Manuscript Found on July 4, 1950.” He addresses future generations in the aftermath of World War II:

*It is your task to rid the world of the tempest of war, to build a dam to hold back the old and evil world, a huge dam that cannot be swept away. You must form your ranks under one flag, the best, that will lead you forward to victory, and then plant that flag on the pinnacle of that dam! May your flag not be a mere rag. Let it be your shield, a shield of justice, truth, and love. You must not hide behind this shield. The shield must not weaken your conscience. Let the shield be only the symbol of your striving, striving toward the birth of a new life.**

Hanus Pollak did not live to see the end of World War II. He was murdered just months before the war ended in 1945. Nearly 50 years after his death, in the spring of 1992, at the height of another war, this time a civil war in Bosnia, a musician used his music to voice a similar message. During the siege of Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, Vedran Smaljovic, the principal cellist with Sarajevo’s National Theater Philharmonic Orchestra, stood at a window in his home at four o’clock one afternoon and watched people line up at one of the few bakeries that still had flour for bread. Suddenly, a shell exploded killing 22 people and injuring many others.

At exactly four o’clock the next day, Smaljovic, dressed in his concert clothes, set up his cello in the bomb crater and proceeded to play. He later told an interviewer, “I played for 22 days for my citizens, for my neighbors. And when I play I just dedicate each day for one of my neighbors who was killed. . . . That music actually heals my live neighbors and as well heals me. And I have to continue.”**

After offering the 22 concerts, one for each of his slain neighbors, Smaljovic decided to continue giving daily recitals. He played amid the ruins of Sarajevo’s symphony hall, in the burned-out library, and on the street. That year, a student described Sarajevo as “a city where, despite constant sniper-fire, theatre performances are attended as though it was peacetime. A besieged city, where young people rehearse the musical *Hair* by candlelight, while guns from the surrounding hills bombard playgrounds. Where one of the great human souls of contemporary Europe, Vedran Smaljovic, played his cello in a tuxedo and white tie on the spot

* From *We Are Children Just the Same: Vedom, The Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezin*. Translated by R. Elizabeth Novak. Jewish Publication Society, 1994. Used by permission.

** Interview, All Things Considered. National Public Radio. June 10, 1999.

where a shell had landed only twenty minutes before, while people stood around, listening in silence.”*

An adult listener recalls, “He seemed unreal. It was such a paradox to oppose the death with music. It was just amazing to watch him there It meant a lot to see that kind of personal courage. For some people, it seemed like a stupidity; for me, it was a perfect example of how, you know, the soul can carry you beyond that horror.”

By the end of the year, Smaljovic’s cello was gone, destroyed. He still refuses to talk about it, saying it’s too painful. For a time, he borrowed other instruments and continued playing. By the spring of 1993, he decided that he could no longer perform in what he calls “the capital of hell.” Even though he left Bosnia of his own accord, Smaljovic is bitter that he was forced from his home by a war fought to bring about ethnic cleansing. His father and grandfather were Muslims. Smaljovic now lives and works in Northern Ireland.

In 1999, Smaljovic offered a reporter his own solution to the fighting that had now spread from Bosnia to Kosovo and threatened other parts of the Balkans. There are, he told the reporter, “. . . 40,000, 45,000 soldiers in Kosovo, 45,000 in Macedonia, Albania, UN troops or whatever. I would be happy that each of them have a musical instrument and now they go together and play. It will be amazing.”

Connections

What does this reading suggest about what people have learned from the past? About what they have failed to learn?

How does Smaljovic seem to define his role in society? What does he see as the role of music in a society? What similarities do you see between his response to the siege of Sarajevo and the way the composers featured in this guide responded to the Nazis? What differences seem most striking? How important are gestures like Smaljovic’s? If you were to write him a letter, what would you ask him? What would you like him to know about you and your responses to music?

How does playing an instrument in an orchestra or some other musical group differ from playing solo? What skills does it require? What attitudes and values? How might those skills, attitudes, and values be useful in other aspects of life?

* Quoted in *Children from Atlantis: Voices from the Former Yugoslavia*. Translated by Christina Pribicevic-Zoric. Central European University Press, 1995, 60.

Additional Resources

For a fuller treatment of ideas and concepts developed in this guide, see *Facing History and Ourselves Resource Book: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Other materials of interest available from Facing History and Ourselves include:

Elements of Time: A companion manual to the Facing History videotape collection of Holocaust testimonies—the result of a five-year collaborative project between Facing History and the Fortunoff Video Archive at Yale University that was made possible through the vision and support of Eli Evans and the Charles H. Revson Foundation. The book includes transcriptions of the videos along with essays by some of the many scholars who have addressed Facing History conferences.

Samuel Bak Poster Set: Reproductions of seven paintings by Samuel Bak are available as full-color, museum-quality posters. Bak's work, which is featured on the covers of many Facing History publications including this one, provides a powerful resource for teachers and students studying the historical development of the Holocaust. A survivor of the Holocaust, Bak describes his work as speaking “of a world that was shattered, of the process of growing up and rebuilding, which when you think about it, is everyone's experience.” Included is a short guide by Bernard Pucker, whose Boston gallery features Bak's work and supported the creation of the posters.

Teachers may borrow a number of videos and slides from Facing History and Ourselves to extend and enrich this study guide. Possibilities include:

Degenerate Art (video, 60 min.) A look at the exhibition of “degenerate art” that opened in Munich in 1937.

Social Responsibilities of the Artist (video) Sybil Milton, a Holocaust historian, describes the official art of the Third Reich and the modes of protest from artists before and during World War II. This lecture is part of the Elements of Time series.

Seeing Through “Paradise” (28 slides and an educational packet with suggestion for incorporating the art of Terezín into a Facing History unit.) The slides reveal the wide range of art produced in the camp—from Nazi propaganda to underground art.

Theresienstadt: Gateway to Auschwitz (video, 58 min.) This film contains photos, paintings, drawings, poetry, and interviews with a few of the children imprisoned in Terezín who survived the Holocaust.

The following books can be used to explore specific topics and/or concepts highlighted in this guide:

Bondy, Ruth. *Elder of the Jews: Jakob Edelstein of Theresienstadt*. Trans. by Evelyn Abel. Grove Press, 1989.

Bor, Josef. *The Terezín Requiem*. Trans. by Edith Pargeter. Avon, 1963. A survivor's account of the efforts of conductor Raphael Schachter and hundreds of other artists to perform Verdi's *Requiem* in Terezín.

- Grunfeld, Frederic V. *Prophets Without Honour: A Background to Freud, Kafka, Einstein and Their World*. Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1979. Includes brief biographies of Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg.
- Kantor, Alfred. *The Book of Alfred Kantor: An Artist's Journal of the Holocaust*. Schocken, 1987. Through words and pictures, Kantor chronicles his experiences in Terezín and later Auschwitz.
- Kater, Michael H. *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany*. Oxford University Press, 1992.
- _____. *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich*. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Levi, Erik. *Music in the Third Reich*. St. Martins Press, 1994.
- Seeing Through "Paradise": *Artists and the Terezín Concentration Camp*. Massachusetts College of Art, 1991. Published in conjunction with an art exhibition, the booklet contains essays by survivors of Terezín and examples of artwork created in the camp.
- Schwertfeger, Ruth. *Women of Theresienstadt: Voices from a Concentration Camp*. Berg Publishers, 1989.
- Slavicky, Milan. *Gideon Klein: A Fragment of Life and Work*. Trans. by Dagmar Steinova. Helvetica-Tempora Publishers, 1995.
- Spies, Gerty. *My Years in Theresienstadt*. Trans. by Jutta R. Tragnitz. Prometheus Books, 1997.
- Troller, Norbert. *Theresienstadt: Hitler's Gift to the Jews*. Trans. by Susan E. Cernyak-Spatz and edited by Joel Shatzky. University of North Carolina Press, 1991. An account of one man's experiences in Terezín from early 1942 until September 1944, when he was deported to Auschwitz.
- Volavkova, Hana, ed. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezín Concentration Camp, 1942-1944*. Schocken, 1993.
- We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, The Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín*. Trans. by R. Elizabeth Novak. Jewish Publication Society, 1994.

Teachers may also access the Terezín Chamber Music Foundation photo and digital archives as well as additional research materials through the foundation's website at www.terezinmusic.org.

