

**FORGETTING ABOUT TRAUMATIC PAST?
ON THE POSITION OF FILM MUSIC COMPOSERS
IN POST-WWII GERMANY**

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**ЗАБОРАВЉАЊЕ ТРАУМАТИЧНЕ ПРОШЛОСТИ?
О ПОЛОЖАЈУ КОМПОЗИТОРА ФИЛМСКЕ МУЗИКЕ
У НЕМАЧКОЈ ПОСЛЕ ДРУГОГ СВЕТСКОГ РАТА**

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents selected German film music composers who were active in Germany during the inter-war period as musicians trying to regain their position and renegotiate their role in the German post-war society marked by trauma and transition processes. Film music composers were believed to have stayed above politics and associated with a "harmless" type of music; therefore, they could adapt to the new situation comparatively more easily, particularly since the Allies had already treated musicians ambivalently. While pinpointing the reasons behind such a lenient attitude towards film music composers, the paper also touches on those rare cases when film music composers were actually accused of supporting the Nazi system.

KEYWORDS: film music composer, NS film music, German music after WWII.

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АПСТРАКТ

Рад се бави одабраним немачким композиторима филмске музике, активним у Немачкој у периоду између двају светских ратова, који су настојали да поврате свој положај и поново преговарају о својој улози у немачком послератном друштву обележеном траумом и процесима транзиције. Веровало се да су композитори филмске музике остали изнад политике и да су повезани с „безопасном” врстом музике. То им је олакшало прилагођавање новој ситуацији, будући да су савезници већ амбивалентно третирали музичаре. У раду су појашњени разлози попустљивог односа према композиторима овог жанра, а издвојени су и ретки примери у којима су композитори филмске музике били оптужени за подршку нацистичком режиму.

Кључне речи: композитори филмске музике, филмска музика у нацистичком режиму, немачка музика после Другог светског рата.

While framing post-war German culture as marked by trauma and transition processes, this paper – situated at the crossroads of historical, musicological, and film studies and combining their different methodologies – seeks to shed some light on the lives of selected German film music composers associated with Nazi ideology in the inter-war period and their attempts to renegotiate their position as members of German artistic circles in the post-war reality. The scope of this paper encompasses the first decades after the end of the WWII and it includes different experiences of German film music composers trying to regain their importance as influential musicians.

The ultimate trauma of the German history after 1945 was connected, among other things, with the disclosure of the Holocaust (Giesen 2004, 115), and the exposure of Nazi politics, also in the realm of the arts, music, and cinematography. It goes without saying that film music composers working in the Third Reich actively contributed to the Nazi cinematographic industry, even though they supposedly steered away from politics. In post-war Europe, however, their role was often treated ambiguously since German musicians were (in general) believed to “have remained above politics” (Potter 2007, 626). Nevertheless, several composers linked to the National Socialism (NS) became scrutinized as subjects of musicological and/or historical analysis, particularly by those scholars who ventured to examine the Nazi involvement in music, and their “deployment of the musical professional” (Botstein 2005, 493). Still, German film music composers, including those who supported the propaganda system promoting the NS, have managed to escape the attention of scholars, even though most of them continued their

musical careers after the WWII, proving that German society chose various ways of transiting into new reality, oftentimes tacitly “forgetting” about the distressing facts from its prominent members’ past. As some authors claim, at that time, German intellectuals might have felt that “all that remained of their country was its art” (Monod 2000, 339). Pamela M. Potter aptly described the confrontation of the Nazi past in the history of the visual and performing arts as the “art of suppression” (2016, 44), accordingly titling her recent book, which deals with historiography of German music, art, architecture, theatre, film, and dance in the traumatic period following the defeat of the Nazi Germany. She also pointed to rejection and avoidance, among other things, which can be viewed as common mechanisms encountered, for example, in literature and other writings whose authors try to negotiate historical trauma (LaCapra 2014, 97).

THE POWER OF MUSIC

The validity of music is often related to, and sometimes even predefined by aesthetic values or social interests that dominate in a community. Consequently, music can be strongly related to political situations and impacted by political regulations. Some authors, like Robin Ballinger, argue that music can also shape political consciousness “through its complex system of signification,” which “is a powerful site of struggle in the organisation of meaning and lived experience” (Ballinger 2005, 430). This presumption is based on the belief that music transcends communication barriers and can be understood both locally and nationally, even transnationally. Furthermore, its political power has been recognised by numerous rulers aware of the potential influence of music, especially on human emotions. Hence, politicians are prone to regulate music production by motivating and stimulating musicians to undertake certain types of politicised expression etc. (Barbalet 1985, 531). It is generally accepted that music can also be used for propaganda as an excellent tool that facilitates the acceptance of an ideology by large audiences. For example, in the layer of lyrics, songs serving propagandistic purposes convey certain messages, often strengthened by the accompanying images, as is the case of cinematography. Indeed, it “has been argued that film [...] has a unique power as a tool for propaganda” (Jason 2013, 203 and 217), and it is no surprise that, for the Nazis (when they consolidated the power in 1933), the sound films became instrumental in their attempts to ensure public support for the regime. At the same time, music, in general, has come to be treated as one of the key elements of the Nazi propaganda, believed to seduce the masses. Music was also a part of the Nazi strategy in that sense that it helped, for example, “to promote incarceration as a disciplinary measure and patriotic education, whilst at the same time

manipulating public opinion” (Fackler 2010, 619). The widespread use of music at open events organised by the Nazi Party and observed in its publicity served as a propaganda outlet, given also that musical institutions in the Third Reich were funded by the state. While music played on the German radio of that time was already the subject of scholarly interest (Drechsler 1988), the functions that the music served in Nazi films, surprisingly, still remain under-researched, perhaps with some notable exceptions that concern music in such symbolic films as 1935 *Triumph des Willens* (Loiperdinger 1987, 58). The research of NS films predominantly concentrates on their plots: (hidden) meanings, messages, etc., and on their visual aspects. As noted by Lindsay Carter, musicologists predominantly approach Nazi films by focusing on composers who provided their soundtracks (2019, 15). Indeed, music in these films, particularly when associated with haunting images, has had the liminal power to stir emotions. Thus, it was harnessed by the Nazis to serve political causes in sound film, as “the German sound cinema of the 1930s aspired to control all possible effects. Nazi film music beat audiences into delightful submission” (Koepnick 2002, 46). This aim was also achieved by references to music of Bruckner or Beethoven (Hirsch, 2007, 489), or allusions to military music etc. Still, music in Nazi films defies straightforward categorisations and escapes simplistic generalisations, although musicologists often locate film music of the Third Reich in “the fields of popular culture or communications” (Weinberg 1984, 106).

GERMAN MUSICAL SCENE AFTER WWII

Indeed, in the 1930s, most film music composers in the Third Reich, as in the whole Europe, were usually simultaneously involved in various realms of musical scene, for example, working in cabarets. Composers providing music for sound films typically treated it as a side job. These composers often came from different walks of life and worked, on a daily basis, in a variety of places. Because of that specificity, they often crossed over, or joined different cultural domains, thus accumulating substantial cultural capital to transgress the role of a composer associated with a single genre. That particular position of film music composers in Europe (unlike the US) did not change much after WWII, and arguably German composers who wrote music for NS films benefited from it. Following the end of the WWII, all composers from Germany found themselves in a delicate situation, also because the re-organization of the musical life was a complicated and multifarious process. It started as early as 1945, when the Americans set up the so-called “music control” within the office in Munich. It became clear that managing the German musical scene required extra delicacy when one of the composers who offered services was, among others, Richard

Strauss (1864–1949) – a favourite composer of the NS regime. In 1947, Richard Strauss was cordially welcomed in London, which only symbolically proved that the politics of oblivion and “forgetting” (or, maybe, forgiving?) was successfully employed in the case of German musicians. Among other things, it was due to the implementation of the idea of educating Germany, *inter alia* through music, which was initially cherished among the British and then promoted by the rest of the Allies (Thacker 2017, 18). However, performing German military and nationalistic music was forbidden. The French went even further, proposing to blacklist certain German composers and their compositions written after 1933, even for a short period (Thacker 2017, 21, 27). In reality, German composers were affected by the denazification procedure only to a limited level, as the attitude of the Allies towards musicians in post-war Germany was rather ambivalent, even though the role of music in the development of the Nazi culture was generally well-known.

In these traumatic circumstances, German musicians needed to adapt to the post-war reality. Several tendencies appeared. To begin with, the process of denazification affected musical institutions, including opera houses, orchestras, etc. Soon, it became clear that, in many cases, up to one-fourth of musicians engaged in each orchestra had belonged to NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers’ Party), so it was deemed almost impossible for musical institutions to function without former party members. It was determined that the musicians’ past cannot jeopardise the existence of these ensembles (Thacker 2017, 50). Another factor affecting German musicians working for official institutions after the WWII was the challenge connected with re-establishment of an appropriate repertoire, an issue which also needed a dose of delicacy. Music by German composers that had been banned by the Nazis was restored. Thus, popular composers discriminated against by the Nazis on racial or other grounds (for example, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, or Tchaikovsky) were reintroduced to concert halls. However, after the WWII, the music by those German composers who were considered the embodiment of the German spirit by the Nazis also continued to be played. It was agreed that composers such as Bach or Beethoven, despite their German origins, should be considered as a part of the universal heritage, as, in general, the musical circles were

marked by conscious effort to reanimate the music allegedly silenced by Nazism, depart from what was construed to be a Nazi aesthetic that left music vulnerable to propagandistic exploitation, and to reimagine the recent past as a police state in which music and musicians were forced into submission. This creation of Nazi musical dystopia served the purpose of sanitizing all that was to emerge in the new German states as a welcome departure from the horrors (Thacker 2017, 50).

The third factor that affected the transition to normality was opening to the modern music. The city of Darmstadt offered to host *Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik*, initiated as early as 1946 by German musicologist Wolfgang Steinecke (1910–1961), who presented himself as politically unencumbered and was thus exempt from the denazification procedure. His initiative to bring Germany closer to contemporary music succeeded. Thus, Darmstadt became an important place on a musical map of the post-war Europe, with many composers, performers, and philosophers heading to Germany every summer to participate in the *Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik*. The initiative aimed at proving that German composers were willing to make up for the lost time and wished to become a part of the European contemporary scene, and re-connect with the European musical culture. Furthermore, German circles seemed ready to assume a leading role in the process of designing new roads for the development of European music. Many German composers identified with a slogan formulated by Ernst Hermann Ludimar Meyer (1905–1981), who postulated that musicians from Germany should look forward and think about progress, rather than look back (Thacker 2017, 115). Upon settling back in Berlin, Meyer formed a group of musicians with whom he attempted to define paths of implementing the Leninist-Marxist theory in music in the German society.

German composers opted for various possibilities, either opening up to the Western musical tendencies or accommodating Leninist-Marxist influences. Most of them, however, enjoyed an “almost seamless transition” to the post-war reality (Potter 2007, 626), facilitated also by the belief (shared not only amongst the Germans) that even under the Nazi regime, musicians were able to remain unaffected by politics. It was assumed, as if tacitly, that music, as a sonic phenomenon, could not express any political views. Accordingly, composers were granted “prolonged denazification proceedings” (Potter 2007, 626) and the positions that they had held in Hitler’s Germany were not openly discussed. Some authors, like Pamela Potter, believe that the privileged situation of the German musicians after the WWII should be related to the nineteenth century cult of the composer and the appreciation for German music, while other researchers, like Leon Botstein, suggest that it might have been an effect of the Nazi admiration of music, especially their “deployment of the musical professional” (2005, 493). Botstein believes that it was the Nazis who “cultivated and promoted the musician [...] In the context of dictatorship, repression, and terror, music became privileged not only as a compensatory sphere of personal and individualistic expression, but also as a component of the homogeneous cultural racial community” (2005, 493). In the Third Reich, the figure of a musician was promoted because it served as a metaphor of a perfect, i.e., in this case, an obedient, well-organized Nazi.

Potter divides German musicians active in the Third Reich into perpetrators and victims (Potter 2007, 639). That dichotomy may, however, simplify the complicity of their situation and ignore various shades of the pre-war reality because it was not only professional, but also amateur musicians who could (actively or passively) support the system, while music-making, in general, was perceived as an allegory of Nazi ideals. As Botstein suggests,

the ideal Nazi subject was an obedient and loyal servant of the state who sang in a choir and played string quartets or the piano at home with friends. Even amateur public performance within non-commercialized public venues was encouraged. The joy of music making made the subordination by the state and the absence of political freedom tolerable. Active amateurism was also the best preparation for the complete release of emotion as anonymous witnesses and listeners in the concert hall, opera house, and mass rally (2005, 493).

Hence, as several researchers claimed, e.g. Joseph Wulf in his 1963 *Musik im Dritten Reich*, or Fred K. Prieberg in his 1982 *Musik im NS-Staat*, musicianship during the NS times was inevitably and always politically charged.

A “MINOR ROLE” OF FILM COMPOSERS

As already underlined, most German film music composers active in the NS times, continued working in the second half of the twentieth century and almost seamlessly re-assumed their career immediately after the war. Often-times, they became respected teachers, presidents of various musical organizations, etc., and a handful of them continued to work in the film industry. Although today composing for films is a rather prestigious job, with several well-known film music composers touring around the globe (e.g. John Willimas or Hans Zimmer), in the 1930s and 1940s, composing for films, especially in Europe, was considered, among composers themselves, an inferior type of work, treated as “a somewhat peripheral activity” (Dutilleux 2003, 27) or as a “secondary task” (Schnittke 2002, 22). At that time, a composer writing film music was believed to perform a servile function as one of the most popular composers of the early twentieth century – Aaron Copland (1900–1991) attested (despite composing music for a few films). He insisted that “there is no sense in denying the subordinate position the composer fills” (Copland 1940, 141–143). Film music was felt to have played “a minor role,” while still “struggling for its place in the sun: the film people themselves almost invariably treat it very casually and are not quite clear in their own minds about its

importance, musicians take it up more for the sake of fees than for art's sake, and he is a rare exception among them who shows any sympathy for its novel forms" (London 1970, 11).

It seems that the nineteenth century division into E-Musik (Ernst-Musik) and U-Musik (Unterhaltung-Musik) affected composers who considered writing soundtracks as compromising their talent for financial benefits. Consequently, some composers even refused to write film music (Ligeti 1983, 24). However, the position assigned to film music composers impacted the assessment of their involvement with the film industry of the Third Reich: it was excused, viewed as a way of amending their financial situation. Many composers of film music, additionally active in other forms of entertainment business, chose to steer away from the politics by writing music for films which seemed apolitical, for example, cinematographic operettas. But their music could also be featured in propagandistic films or otherwise used by the NS regime to support the ideology, not to mention that some film music composers actively supported NS.

Many composers who became engaged in composing for the film industry in the 1930s stemmed from the U-Musik circles, as was the case of Frank Fux [Fox] (1902–1965), a well-educated composer (he studied with Joseph Marx, Ferdinand Löwe, and Franz Schmidt) initially based in Vienna. He focused on film music after he was appointed music director of the Tobis Sascha film industry. After the Anschluss, he moved to Berlin, providing music, among other things, to such propaganda films as *Kora Terry* (1940) (Fox 2000, 130). After the WWII, Fux immediately resumed composing film music providing soundtrack for *Der weite Weg / Schicksal in Ketten* (1946), the first Austrian feature film shown in cinemas after the end of the war. Fux continued working for the radio, cabaret, and he also composed light music, for example, operettas and Viennese songs, and stayed active as a conductor.

Another composer for whom cinematography offered financial support during the NS times was Edmund Nick (1891–1974), who became conductor of the Bavarian State Operetta in 1947. He subsequently worked for the West German Broadcasting Cologne and the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich. Before the war, Nick was also a musical director of the Silesian Radio in Breslau, but in 1933 he moved to Berlin, where he became active on the cabaret scene. When in May 1935 cabarets were declared a hotbed of Jewish and Marxist propaganda, Nick decided to leave the city, at least temporarily, heading to Slovakia. His position was uncertain since he was married to a Jewish singer Käte Jaenicke (1889–1967), and consequently his daughter Dagmar Nick was treated as "half Jewish." Nevertheless, Nick worked for the UFA, composing music for short and commercial films; alas, his name was

often omitted in the opening credits (Nick n.d.). At the end of the war, Nick moved to Bohemia, where he started writing books about operettas (also composing them).

Operettas were so popular at that time that their success was capitalised in the so-called *Tonfilmoperetten*. The genre seemed politically unbiased, but, in fact, these film operettas were also exploited by the Nazi propaganda. After 1933, many composers (to name Jean Gilbert, Friedrich Hollaender, Paul Abraham, Mischa Spoliansky, Hans May, Werner Richard Heymann), as well as directors (e.g. Wilhelm Thiele), and singers (for example Jan Kiepura, Marta Eggerth) who made their names in the genre, went into exile, eventually migrating, for example, to Hollywood. The genre of *Tonfilmoperette*, being a mixture of dialogues, sounds, and music, nevertheless remained one of the most preferred genres among composers who actually stayed in Germany (Volker 2006, 13–28). These films allowed composers to focus on existing music written by the great Austrian or German operetta masters of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, Nico Dostal, Franz Lehar, and Johann Strauss II, and they often worked on adaptations of operettas' music featured in *Tonfilmoperetten*. Another tendency observed among film music composers under NS was to allude to cabaret traditions, especially in cinematographic light musicals, often conceived as war romances, to mention *Die große Liebe* of 1942 (Jason 2013). Composers who chose to function outside the propaganda system by contributing music to such films continued their professional careers after the WWII, for example, Leo Leux (1893–1951) who was responsible for music in several entertainment films, among others, *Robert and Bertram* (1939). This light-hearted musical comedy in the style of Laurel and Hardy can be, however, credited as a perfect example of Nazi movie, depicting Robert and Bertram as stereotypical Jews.

Another very successful film music composer, who stemmed from U-Musik circles and continued his career after the WWII unbothered, was Michael Jary (1906–1988). This German composer of Polish origin was born as Maksymilian Michał Jarczyk, and before the WWII he enjoyed several successes, including hits like “Roter Mohn” featured in the film *Schwarzfahrt ins Glück* (1938). Because Jary was denied his visa and was therefore forced to stay in Germany, he collaborated with the lyricist Bruno Balz, writing songs that became great hits with the UFA: “Ich weiß, es wird einmal ein Wunder geschehn” and “Davon geht die Welt nicht unter.” Between 1939 and 1945, Jary supplied music for around 30 films, but he was also active as a conductor, and released albums with his music. According to contemporary enthusiasts of his music, he “became an insider tip in the film industry: he was regarded as a master of symphonic background music and, after some initial difficulties,

hits also became his profession” (Michael Jary n.d.). During WWII, Jary became one of the most willingly performed composers of light music, with his compositions broadcast on the radio, and his hit “Roter Mohn Tango” heard in the Auschwitz camp. While Jary typically wrote music for melodramas, e.g. *Gabriele Dambrone* (1943) or *Das große Spiel* (1942), featuring famous German footballers of the era, some films with his music, like *Auf Wiedersehen, Franziska* (1941), carried propagandistic content (Hoppe 1941, 558; Grundschoettel, 1941), and already in the 1940s, they were deemed as bringing comfort to “the countless German women who made the war lonely,” and the film *Zwei Welten* (1939) with Jary’s music receiving the title of “artistically valuable” in 1940 (Giesen and Hobsch 2005, 345). Consequently, some films with Jary’s music, including *Falschmünzer* (1940) or *Blutsbrüderschaft* (1941), were either completely banned by the Allies, or their public performances were limited. After the war, Jary was mostly associated with a number of evergreens, also stemming from the revue film *Karneval der Liebe* (1943) or *Großstadtmelodie* (1943), which featured the hit “Berlin – ich bin verliebt in dich bei Tag und Nacht,” hailing the splendour of the old imperial capital (Lexikon 1987, 1440). Altogether, during his lifetime, Jary wrote music to over 130 films, musicals, and hundreds of songs (Kiszakiewicz 1972), as he reassumed his responsibilities after the war, including that of a conductor. He also became engaged in the reorganization of musical life in Germany, for example, founding the orchestra of the Radio Saarbrücken.

It can be concluded that many composers who were predominantly linked to composing light music during the NS regime successfully reassumed their musical careers after the WWII (like the above-mentioned Nick or Jary) for they were perceived through the prism of the U-Musik as a presumably less “harmful” type of music, notwithstanding the fact that films featuring their music were, or might have been used to promote Nazi ideology.

But there are also several German pre-war film music composers who seamlessly transitioned to the new reality even though they openly supported the Nazi regime. Most of them continued their professional career as film music composers after the WWII.

For example, Siegfried Bethmann (1915–1993) who was also a member of the NSDAP, worked as the first conductor of the theatre in Heidelberg after 1945; then in 1946, he became engaged in Roßlau, where he founded a town orchestra, only to relocate to Leipzig, where he worked for a radio station (Knocke and Neuhold 2015, 11–34). The post-war career of Franz Grothe (1908–1982) also shows that the active membership in the party (his number was 2.580.427), and even enormous popularity during the NS times – his hits like “Lied der Nachtigall” from the film *Die schwedische Nachtigall* (1941) were

also performed in Auschwitz – did not hinder the composer's career after 1945. Grothe became a chairman of the Supervisory Board of GEMA (Gesellschaft für musikalische Aufführungs- und mechanische Vervielfältigungsrechte) and the director of the Franz Grothe Foundation; finally, he even received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic in 1980 (Prieberg 2009, 2711). Similarly successful was the after-war career of a Nazi politician Clemens Carl Otto Schmalstich (1908–1960), who took over the leadership of the Siemens Orchestra in 1945, thus continuing his pre-war activities (previously he worked as a conductor in the most prestigious opera houses, including the Neues Schauspielhaus in Berlin). Although his compositions were initially banned (only in the Soviet occupation zone, though) (Prieberg 2009, 6580–6582), after the WWII, Schmalstich became active in the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur [Taskforce for German Culture] as an area cultural director and as a branch leader for light music and operetta. Alois Melichar (1896–1976), who also continued to compose for films (staying active until 1950) was highly praised in the 1970s for his achievements, especially in the realm of accompaniment music, which some scholars deemed the most welcomed in film soundtracks (Cadars and Courtade 1972, 99). In the inter-war period, Melichar was involved in the campaign to formulate the principles of film music appropriate for NS German films insisting on establishing clear guidelines, but his postulates were never answered, which was “a typical manoeuvre of Nazi bureaucracy” (Volker 2006, 21). His role in the development of the NS cinematography was, however, either forgotten or purposefully ignored, and effectively silenced in literature on film music.

Yet, several composers of film music who continued their careers after the WWII had a rather ambivalent, to say the least, attitude towards the NSDAP, but saw no other option as to join the party, and, perhaps, even to use the membership to their benefit. Some truly believed in the ideology before understanding the reality behind the slogans. For example, Peter Paul Kreuder (1905–1981) became a member of the Nazi Party in 1932, resigning only two years later. Other composers involved in the German film industry disassociated themselves from the dominant ideology or tried to shun it – for example, Willy Schmidt-Gentner (1894–1964). However, his “Ich bin heute ja so verliebt” from the film *Operette* (1941) could be heard in Auschwitz. After the end of the war, Schmidt-Gentner continued to compose music for numerous films until his retirement in 1955. Some composers, such as Norbert Schultze (1911–2002), were advised to become members of the NSDAP to avoid being conscripted. Schultze composed several hits: martial and propaganda songs; for example, in 1938, he set the poem “Lili Marleen” to music. He was also responsible for soundtracks for propaganda films, including the super-production *Kolberg*

(1945). Schultze explained his attitude towards the NS regime as a natural (and quintessentially conformist) consequence of the situation he encountered, saying that at the time of the Nazi rule he was “at the best age for a soldier, 30 or so. For me, the alternatives were: compose or croak. So, I decided for the former” (Anonymous 2005). After the WWII, not only did Schultze continue his work as a film music composer (often collaborating with the director Rolf Thiele), but he also benefited from the royalties from his hits written between 1933 and 1945. The money was supposedly used to finance the German Red Cross, as German Wikipedia informs (2024).

BANS AND ACCUSATIONS

The transition to the post-war life was often marked by bans on certain compositions or even entire soundtracks (e.g. when films featuring them were forbidden). However, this enforced absence was usually short-lived, rarely, if ever, affecting the composers. For example, the film music composer Franz Adam (1885–1954) continued his work in Munich, although his compositions were on the US military government’s “black list,” while in 1948, the composer was classified by the Munich Spruchkammer in group III (as less incriminated), and then moved to group IV (Prieberg 2009, 82). Several propagandistic films were also put on such black lists and disappeared from the public sphere. Among others, the flag-ship Nazi film *Jud Süß* (1940) with music by Wolfgang Friedrich Zeller (1893–1967), who was also responsible for soundtracks for other Nazi films, *Der Gouverneur* (1939) or *Menschen im Sturm* (1941), met the same fate and it was also banned in 1945. After the WWII, Zeller re-established his career and became a conductor in a Berlin-based theatre. He continued to work as a film composer writing music for anti-fascist (!) films such as *Ehe im Schatten* (1947) or *Morituri* (1948). Even if some composers, like Herbert Windt (1894–1965) initially fell into disfavour, in the denazification trials, they were often completely cleared. Windt is still well-remembered for his music in Leni Riefenstahl’s 1934 propaganda film *Triumph des Willens*. Worth recalling is the fact that Windt – along with Zeller, Jary, Grothe, and Georg Haentzschel – was considered the most prominent film composer of the Third Reich, listed by the Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in 1944 (Kellenter 2020, 459).

Only in rare cases, the composers whose music was used in propagandistic NS films, were explicitly accused of supporting the regime. In the book *Eight German Composers of the Nazi Era*, Michael Kater named Werner Joseph Mayer (1901–1983) “the Enigmatic Opportunist” (2000: 3–30). The composer was better known as Egk: the pseudonym is believed to be an acronym of “ein

guter Komponist” or “ein großer Künstler,” i.e. “a good composer” or “a great artist.” An alternative anecdote claims that it is an anagram of the initials of his wife, the violinist Elisabeth Karl, for Egk used it from the time of their marriage in 1923, making it his official family name in 1937. Egk never joined the Nazi party, but his works were used in Nazi films (Meyer 1977, 15). Twenty years before Kater’s book, in 1969, Egk sued his younger colleague – composer Konrad Boehmer (1941–2014) – for calling him “one of the vilest figures of National Socialist music politics” (in original: “eine der übelsten Figuren nationalsozialistischer Musikpolitik”) (Boehmer 1969, 90). But even before that, in 1947, Egk defended himself in a Spruchkammer trial against accusation of performing the Hitler salute in public in front of Hermann Göring (Eckstein 2017). Infamy followed Egk: when Kater called him “the Enigmatic Opportunist” the author clearly reflected on these events, and alluded to the late 1960s coverage of Egk’s past in the German press. At that time, the *Der Spiegel* described Egk as “an opportunist who shook hands with Hitler and praised the tremendous Nazi era in which everything was striving mightily forward” (Anonymous 1969).

PERSPECTIVES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It might be said that German film music composers seamlessly transitioned into the post-war reality benefiting from a rather lenient attitude of the Allies toward musicians, and paradoxically they also profited from the fact that composing for films was still underrated. Music in films was assigned an undefined role, i.e. it continued to be perceived as an indispensable element of cinematography but only of nominal value. It was classified as a sonic filler, almost a technical ingredient, and not as a sonic counterpart of the visuals. However, in the practice, music, sound, and image were closely bound and they underlined the meaning of the films, oftentimes openly, and sometimes only superficially alluding to Nazi ideology, even in then popular light comedies, romances, and musicals, or apparently non-political *Bergfilms* (Stilwell and Powrie 2008, 3). It is, nevertheless, difficult (sometimes even impossible) to determine how, and to what degree the Nazi values and ideals were embedded in these seemingly non-political films, and also how ideological elements were deduced and gauged by the German audiences (Weinberg 1984, 118). However, it is commonly agreed that films produced in the Third Reich served the general ideological purposes, and most of them used the potential of music to awaken certain associations, often promoting strong military associations, enticed by soldier songs and marches (Reimar 2003), thus leading to the formation of the specific “Nazi musical style.” Some researchers believe that Nazi

ideology, even if only temporarily, compromised the German music (Potter 2007, 643), and thus it also affected film soundtracks.

Notwithstanding the actual involvement of German film music composers in Nazi politics, they cherished successful careers after WWII, perhaps with some minor exceptions. As demonstrated, in most cases, they continued their activities as musicians without substantial problems, obtaining prominent positions, and contributing to local musical scenes etc. The ambivalence of assessment criteria applied to musicians of the Third Reich, particularly film music composers whose soundtracks were categorised as of secondary importance, allowed for implementation of the mechanism of repression of their past in the period right after WWII. Later, it seems that the same mechanism has been employed by societies in Eastern and Western Germany alike, as if they had hoped for better (quicker?) coping with the traumatic past. The pre-war involvement of film music composers with the Nazi ideology was either “forgotten,” or treated as if isolated from the context in which their actual soundtracks originated. However, with the change of the paradigm observed in film musicology, particularly in the light of the new conceptualizations of the role music plays in films, the implications and consequences of composing for films produced in the NS time, as well as the position of German film composers in the post-war German society, should be revisited and this issue certainly calls for more and in-depth research.

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АНА Г. ПЈОТРОВСКА

ЗАБОРАВЉАЊЕ ТРАУМАТИЧНЕ ПРОШЛОСТИ?
О ПОЛОЖАЈУ КОМПОЗИТОРА ФИЛМСКЕ МУЗИКЕ У НЕМАЧКОЈ
ПОСЛЕ ДРУГОГ СВЕТСКОГ РАТА

(РЕЗИМЕ)

Рад се фокусира на одабране немачке композиторе филмске музике активне у Немачкој између двају светских ратова, који су поново успоставили свој положај у послератном немачком друштву. Наиме, композитори филмске музике успели су у томе да се њихова улога у друштву преиспита, јер се веровало да су остали изнад политике. Њихово стваралаштво било је често повезивано с „безопасном”, то јест забавном и лакоом музиком. Поред тога, савезници су амбивалентно третирали музичаре. Зато су немачки композитори филмске музике могли релативно лако да се прилагоде новој ситуацији. У раду је детаљно сагледана ова проблематика. Иако смо размотрили и ретке случајеве у којима су аутори филмске музике били оптужени за подршку нацистичком режиму, у раду смо представили велики број композитора овог жанра који су релативно лако прешли у послератну стварност, упркос томе што је послератна немачка култура била озбиљно трауматизована и прогањана непосредном прошлошћу. Траума немачке историје после 1945. године била је повезана, између осталог, с откривањем Холокауста и разоткривањем нацистичке политике, што је пратило и токове у области уметности, музике и кинематографије. Случај филмских композитора показује да је немачко друштво бирало различите, па и прећутне начине преласка у нову стварност.