Scattered People, Shared Identity:

An Examination of Music and Identity Among Jewish Populations in Germany, France, and Israel During the Holocaust

by

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ABSTRACT

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Under the supervision of Professor Gillian Rodger, PhD.

This thesis is an examination of music's role in identity formation, specifically focusing on Jewish identity in Germany, France, and Israel before and during World War II. This thesis is an examination of how societal changes function as a catalyst for identity negotiations, how said negotiations function within cultural context, and, above all, how music functioned on all sides of these arguments. The following sections will discuss the current trends in Jewish identity research, the historical events of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century with particular focus on Jewish life before and after the Napoleonic era, the role of Jews in the modernism movement, German nationalism in music during the interwar period, the role of music in German- Jewish identity formation during the Holocaust, and the development of a national style and German-Jewish culture in Israel.

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The idea for the topic of this thesis came to me during my very first semester of graduate school. It is a topic in which I have always been deeply interested, and therefore this work has been, in my opinion, a long time coming. That is not to say, however, that it has been easy. The completion of this thesis has been one of the biggest academic feats of my life, and it would not have been possible without a small army of people lending me support and positive words at nearly every step.

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Introduction

Throughout the entirety of recorded history, humans have engaged in the act of self-conceptualization, to the extent that one must wonder if part of what it is to be human is the act of defining what it means to be human. Historically, humans have always arranged themselves into groups defined by specific parameters such as locality, nationality, religion, ethnicity, social class, and a vast number of other categories, all in the effort of finding commonality among fellow humans. While the final result may look vastly different in present day society than it did several hundred years ago, the motives behind the desire to be viewed as part of something bigger than oneself have always been, at their core, a survival mechanism.

In the process of creating these groups, humans subsequently engaged in the acts of self-definition and collective thought, prescribing boundaries around the conceived notions of what it meant to be part of a specific group, and which behaviors or attributes were necessary for admission. This process, though perhaps seemingly straightforward on paper, is in a constant state of flux to this day. The formation of cultural identity is a process in which constant scrutiny is required, and for some cultural groups, this has been a much more difficult process than others.

In the story of Jewish identity formation, three themes—diaspora, assimilation, and authenticity—have been central players for centuries. All three carry different weights at different historical intervals, however all three are omnipresent and significant factors in the history of Jewish identity formation in Germany from the late eighteenth century through the end of World War II. The complex interplay of historical events, cultural movements, and societal attitudes set the stage for a tumultuous period of cultural self-consciousness where the collective

community of German Jews found themselves asking what it really meant to be both a German and a Jew. To make an attempt at a finite definition of German Jewish identity—or identity in general— during this time would be a futile effort at best; this work will not strive to definitively say what German Jewish identity was, or was not, but will instead serve as an examination of how societal changes function as a catalyst for identity negotiations, how said negotiations function within cultural context, and, above all, how music functioned on all sides of these arguments.

This examination begins with an assessment of the current trends within the field of Jewish identity research, paying particular attention to the shifts in terminology (diaspora, migration, etc.), the role of locality as a concept, the mythology of the "homeland," and an acute awareness of history, especially regarding how a culturally shared past can influence an individual future. These factors are then all applied to musicological concepts, prompting questions of how the boundaries of Germanness and Jewishness can intersect within one individual, and more broadly how this intersection can underscore and potentially undermine the hierarchy of the western Art Music canon, prompting questions about the meaning of authenticity and the nature of German nationalism.

The first chapter details the historical events of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, beginning before Napoleon's emancipation of the Jews and concluding with the birth of Zionism and the eve of World War I. An examination of Jewish life in pre-Emancipation France, serves as a prelude to the rampant change that occurred within the European Jewish communities after Napoleon passed the legislation that emancipated the vast majority of European Jews. The section about the Enlightenment lays the foundation for the Emancipation as well, discussing both the secular Enlightenment and the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) and

how these overlapping movements birthed the ideas of religious autonomy, Christian rationalism, modernism, political liberalism, and, ultimately, early Zionism. The section that follows details the dynamics of Napoleon's legislation and how Napoleonic rule influenced the lives of European Jews. Additionally, this examination opens an avenue for a frank discussion of Jewish assimilation and the privatization of religious practices in France, and how Napoleonic rule played the role of chief influence to this and other shifting opinions.

The focus widens in the section that follows, expanding to include the thoughts and reactions of the Holy Roman Empire, regarding the Jews of German-speaking lands and the building distain toward the French for strong-arming the aristocracy into granting them extra rights. This section also details the rise of Christian Rationalism, which leads into a discussion of German Jewish conversion efforts and their accompanying complications, using the Mendelssohn family as a case study for this concept. The chapter then concludes with a synthesis of the rise of Nationalism in Western Europe, paying particular attention to how the aftermath of wartime attitudes played a role in reaffirming the national identities of numerous European countries. This conversation then turns focus to the European Jewish populations and how their rising uncertainties and anxieties led to the resurgence of Zionism, and concludes with a brief examination of the construction of *Bildung* culture and the beginnings of Jewish exclusion from it.

Chapter two focuses on the Jewish communities of Germany and the varying cultural elements at play in the creation and maintenance of German Jewish identity from the Weimar era through the end of the Holocaust. This section begins with a discussion of Jewish contributions to the Modernist movement and how these contributions worked against the Jews who wanted to be considered part of German culture. Gustav Mahler serves as a case study in the section that

follows, referencing an article written by an anonymous music critic as proof that Jewishness functioned as a racial category in Fin-de-Siecle Vienna, and "the Jewish Body" functioned as something tangible to which anti-Semites could point as a means of validating boundaries of difference between Germans and Jews.

The section that follows delves deeper into the internal dichotomy of German Jews, examining what it meant to be German during the rise of the Third Reich, and contrasting that with what it meant to be Jewish. The idea of *Volksbegabung*— or the thought that Germans possessed an innate, God-given talent for music— stands as a unifying element across each subsection of this chapter and is illustrated in discussions of German reactions to Jewish references in sacred music, the repertoire selections and internal conflict among German Jewish members of the Jewish Culture League orchestra, and especially in the hierarchy construction and power struggles that occurred within Nazi concentration camps between inmates and S.S. guards.

The third chapter is an examination of the development and perpetuation of a national style among the German Jewish communities in Israel. It begins with a brief detailing of the different elements of institutionalized music practices German Jewish immigrants instated within their new communities, and how these practices could serve as evidence that German Jewish communities in Israel created for themselves a sense of binationality, and felt simultaneously connected to both their former homeland as well as their new one. The section that follows this is a recount and analysis of reactions to the performance of Wagner's music in Israel, exploring each side of the issue and drawing connections to elements of Zionist and Nationalist ideals throughout.

Lastly, the work concludes with a brief summary, and a suggestive look at areas where further research is needed, specifically within the fields of Identity research. As a concluding thought, the overall meaning and mythology of authenticity are called into question, and the author posits that the process of Identity creation should be an individualized process, where cultural meaning is originated not through societal context, but rather through personal assessment, application, and redefinition.

Jewish Identity: A Literature Review

How does one begin to dissect the complex interplay of symbolism, religion, location, and heritage that comprises the ever-shifting, multi-faceted entity that is Jewish Identity? In an examination of recent scholarship, much deliberation has occurred, mostly centralizing around the question of what it truly means to be Jewish. Discussions of Jewish identity cannot persist without discussions of diaspora, to the extent that it is highly unlikely one will even find worthwhile scholarly writing about Jewish identity that does not mention the diasporic nature of Judaism. Diaspora is an inescapable, ancient condition in its Jewish meaning, and it holds many broad theological, sociological, and cultural aspects in its depths.[1] For many, the concept of diaspora even serves as an organizing principle in Jewish life, capable of adapting to varying degrees of application and ascribed meaning.[2]

One common habit is the use of the word "diaspora" as a stand-in for "migration." As Mary Chamberlain states in "Diasporic Memories: Community, Individuality, and Creativity- A Life Stories Perspective," the terms are often used interchangeably when applied to any large movement of peoples, but though diaspora always involves migration, migration does not necessarily always involve diaspora.[3] Diaspora is distinctly referring to a forced exodus. It is a recognition of dispersed populations, and above all a recognition of historically shared trauma.[4] Chamberlain goes on to argue that, while any migratory upheaval would certainly involve at least some trauma, the "ruptures" involved in examples such as the Jewish exodus or the African

[1] Elan Ezrachi, "In Search of Roots and Routes: The Making and Remaking of the Diasporic Jewish Identity," in *Dynamic Belonging: Contemporary Jewish Collective Identities*, ed. Harvey E. Goldberg, Steven M Cohen, and Ezra Kopelowitz (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 206.
[2] Ezrachi, "In Search of Roots and Routes," 206.
[3] Mary Chamberlain, "Diasporic Memories: Community, Individuality, and Creativity- A Life Stories Perspective," *The Oral History Review* 36, no. 2 (July 2009): 179.
[4] Ibid., 179.

slave trade signal "a qualitative difference in the migration experience" that can only be categorized through a "postmemory of place or trauma."[5]

In a chapter written only two years following Chamberlain's article, Elan Ezrachi expands on this topic by offering an alternative view. Historically, diaspora has been viewed and discussed as a part of the sociology of immigration, that is to say, "the one-way process of displacement, relocation, and acculturation,"[6] however, Ezrachi is quick to point out that more recent discourse has framed the diasporic experience in a much more multidimensional sense.

Recent discussions of Jewish identity require an awareness of multilocality-- an embracing of both *here* and *there*.[7] For most, the *here* will always refer to the country of current residence, but the *there* is far less concrete. Ezrachi states that there are three themes in Jewish diasporic narratives that relate to areas beyond a current country of residence: immigration, the Holocaust, and Israel. [8]

Dependent upon the individual in question, those three elements could pull varying amounts of weight in the formation of identity, however, though any or all elements may not be central, they each play a part in the shaping of a broader Jewish cultural narrative, and a broader narrative of diasporic cultures.

The role of Israel in diasporic Jewish identity is one rife with complexity and subjectivity. In Robert Chazan's book *Refugees or Migrants: Pre-modern Jewish Population Movement*, the author examines the historically unconventional nature of Jewish ethnic identity. Chazan observes that while generally ethnic identity involves "close ties to given locales," this

[5] Ibid., 179.
[6] Ezrachi, "In Search of Roots and Routes," 211.
[7] Ibid., 213.
[8] Ibid., 208.

constraint has historically been removed as a requirement for Jewish ethnic identity. Additionally, this removal is what provided Jews with the freedom to relocate at will to overcome perceived "shortcoming in their home ambiance," or to seek more fruitful opportunities elsewhere.[9]

Ezrachi elaborates on this idea by bringing both the tangible and symbolic dynamics of Israel into the picture. For most immigrants, their stories center around a theme that enables most members to trace their own narratives back to an "old country" they left behind. For most, this "old country" is perceived as negative, and the choice to immigrate to a new land is seen as the favorable option. [10] For most Jews within the diaspora, this "old country" in question would be Israel. Diasporic Jews are unique in this regard, in that for most, no personal memories of Israel actually exist. Most did not live in Israel prior to their immigration, and for most, Israel is more of a theoretical "old country"— a symbolic homeland which exists in the lives and memories of diasporic Jews through symbolism and metaphor much more than in actual, concrete forms.[11]

In his chapter titled "Diaspora and Homeland," Erich Gruen illustrates this same concept in a more historical sense, validating the idea that Jews have been a migrant, diasporic culture for most of history. Gruen states that with Jewish immigrant communities, their destiny does not lie in achieving a "return" to a mythical homeland, but rather to define their nations and shape their identities according to text. In viewing themselves as "people of the Book," Jewish homeland resides in a tangible, portable temple comprised of Scriptures and any other array of Jewish

[9] Robert Chazan, *Refugees or Migrants: Pre-modern Jewish Population Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 225.

[10] Ezrachi, "In Search of Roots and Routes," 208.
[11] Ibid., 209.

writings that help define their nation and give voice to their sense of shared identity.[12] Gruen offers the destruction of a temple in 70 BC as an example of how superfluous tangible locations are to Jewish identity when he states that this event "compelled Jews to reinvent themselves, to find other means of religious sustenance, and to adjust their lives to an indefinite period of displacement."[13]

Chamberlain contributes to the conversation of nontangible links by offering a similarity between Jewish and African diasporas. Both have carefully constructed narratives and utilize "foundational stories" to celebrate a close identification with family and affirm survival. These foundational stories "explain and substitute for not being in Africa (or Israel)," and point to a need to "tell, to pass on to the generations the explanations as to why they are no longer where they could or should be," therefore functioning as a connective link, solidifying the bonds of kinship and lineage, neither of which rely on a physical place for their meaning.[14]

These foundational stories also operate as "engines of inclusion," to the extent that if one so desired to set themselves outside of the collective narrative, they could only do so by "colluding with the foundational stories and original myths." The connectivity is inescapable, and implicitly recognized by the entire diaspora. [15] Ezrachi offers a surprisingly straightforward summary of this overall concept when he states that current trends in Jewish Identity research reflect the idea that "many Jews construct their identity in a way where Israel and global Jewry

[12] Erich S. Gruen, "Diaspora and Homeland," in *Diasporas and Exiles: Varieties of Jewish Identity,* ed. Howard K. Wettstein (Berkley: University of California Press, 2002), 18
[13] Gruen, "Diaspora and Homeland," 19.
[14] Chamberlain, "Diasporic Memories," 184-185.
[15] Ibid., 185.

are not central." [16] For the majority of diasporic Jews, ethnic unity lies partly in their reflection of their culture within their respective nation-states.

A particular acute dichotomy riddled with complexities and trauma exists within the diasporic German-Jewish community. Some scholars, Ezrachi among them, would state that while a relationship to Israel is very much a living category, focused on the present and the future, negative and problematic memories of the displacement of the Holocaust are based in the past. [17] In truth, this narrative of a past-tense influence is damaging to numerous German Jews still to this day grappling with the complexities of their own identity formation. While the scope of the particular research highlighted in this work is situated in and around World War II, it is essential to note that threads of the 'Nationality versus Ethnicity' discourse still actively permeate Jewish Diaspora thought to this day.

For most German Jews who fled the Nazis, the relationship with the country of their birth was nothing short of complicated. How else was one supposed to feel when their friends and neighbors suddenly decided they and their families needed to be excluded from German society to the point of persecution? In her book, *Germany on Their Minds: German Jewish Refugees in the United States and their Relationships with Germany, 1938-1988*, Anne C. Schenderlein illustrates this point by examining the opposing psychological forces active within the minds of German-Jewish refugees after being forced to relocate outside of Germany. Schenderlein states that these exiled populations carried with them "a profound sense of their Germanness, on the one hand, and the deep injury that non-Jewish Germans had inflicted on them, on the other."[18]

[16] Ezrachi, "In Search of Roots and Routes," 207.
[17] Ibid., 209.
[18] Anne C. Schenderlein, *Germany on Their Minds: German Jewish Refugees in the United States and their Relationships with Germany, 1938-1988* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018), 4.

Schenderlein elaborates on this opposition further by presenting a set of questions that the vast majority of German-Jewish refugees carried with them, regardless of what country in which they now resided: Can one engage with German matters without "losing Jewish self-respect?," and furthermore, could one be considered a "good" member of their new homeland while still adhering to German culture?[19] These questions are ones that permeate the spheres of musicology, and are the very basis of this entire analysis. These questions prompt further inquiries about authenticity, the nature of being German, the nature of being Jewish, the intersection of those two demographics, and, in inquiring, subsequently underscore the very foundations of western Art Music practices with an unsettling amount of skepticism.

However, before one can even begin to search for answers to those questions, as tantalizing as they may be, further understanding of the interplay of the many layers of Jewish identity, especially as it relates to, and deviates from, German identity, is still required. Schenderlein touches on this topic with a focus on German Jews who fled to the United States, however her statements are applicable to the broad gambit of German-Jewish refugees regardless of where they landed. She states that the narrative of this situation is frequently framed as an immigrant story of "letting go in order to integrate," and that said integration is often depicted in a linear fashion,[20] even presented as one with a point of completion or a finish-line, so to speak. The finality of citizenship and cultural assimilation looms over these stories like a gilded figure of desired prosperity, and it seemed in these narratives that the more tenuous the refugee's connection with Germany became, the less affected by their complicated German heritage they would become.[21] However, real-world applications rarely function so neatly, and Schenderlein

[19] Schenderlein, *Germany on Their Minds*, 212.
[20] Ibid., 5-6.
[21] Ibid., 6.

states that, for most refugees, identification with their *German Jewish* refugee identity was "largely conditioned by their relationship to Germany,"[22] both in an acute awareness of their German past, as well as their elected interactions with aspects of German culture they brought with them.

Schenderlein also considers the terminology these groups used to represent themselves. Many scholars are comfortable using the terms 'diaspora' and 'migration' interchangeably. Some have also attempted to apply the term 'exile' as a blanket statement for everyone who left Germany because of Nazi persecution. Schenderlein argues that this application is erroneous and does not match the "lived realities nor the self-identification of most German Jews."[23] In actuality, any of the above terms may suit one member of a community, but would not suit another, pointing to a need for a much more transitive vocabulary, and a willingness toward flexibility.

Historically, the term 'refugee' seems most widely applied to Jewish diasporic communities, as evidenced by Chazan in his survey of premodern Jewish population movement. The Hebrew Bible, traditional Jewish, traditional Christian, and other modern "non-supernatural formulations" all overwhelmingly project Jews as refugees, accompanied by a population movement that is "unfailingly involuntary, painful, and hurtful." [24] He and Schenderlein are both in agreement at the assessment that, historically, the category of refugee is meant to be transitory,[25] and Chazan supports this with quotations of Hebrew scripture that ask exiled communities to seek welfare in their current cities; those in exile were meant to maintain their

[22] Ibid., 6.
[23] Ibid., 3.
[24] Chazan, *Refugees or Migrants*, 220.
[25] Schenderlein, *Germany on Their Minds*, 4.

lives and continuity, so that they may be prepared for "the divinely provided return to the homeland and normalcy." [26] Though in more modern applications, one may question if the term is transitory not for the sake of returning to the homeland-- since for many, this was a symbolic place rather than a tangible one-- but rather for the sake of flexibility when it came to self-definition. Schenderlein examines a curious trend in this area as it relates to Holocaust scholarship in hindsight.

In the 1980s, a surge of interest in the events of the Holocaust swept over the people of the United States and other Western European countries, creating the 'Holocaust Survivor' as a central figure in its history and memory.[27] With this uptick in interest, a subsequent uptick could also be seen in German-Jewish refugees self-identifying as Holocaust survivors. Even those who had fled prior to the deportations to ghettos and camps sometimes also identified as Holocaust survivors.[28] Their former titles as refugees or exiles no longer seemed to serve or convey their feelings about their own identities, or the shift in societal opinion regarding their circumstances. Schenderlein takes this opportunity to address the more conscious side of identity formation, stating that it is not only a process driven by its own "free-flowing dynamics," but also a process that is "consciously negotiated, fashioned, and performed," thus resulting in narratives that are perpetually changing, contingent, and quite possibly contradictory. [29] Ezrachi also addresses this transitive, individualized approach to identity formation in his observations regarding recent studies of American Jewish identity.

[26] Chazan, *Refugees or Migrants*, 229.
[27] Schenderlein, *Germany on Their Minds*, 4.
[28] Ibid., 4
[29] Schenderlein, *Germany on Their Minds*, 5.

These studies are moving away from attempting to generate group definitions of identity and moving rapidly toward studying the ways in which individuals go about constructing their Jewishness.[30] This shift in favor of accepting more open-ended, individualized definitions points to a previous undercurrent of more authoritative thinking on the subject. Riv-Ellen Prell addresses this issue in a chapter titled "'How Do you Know That I Am a Jew?': Authority, Cultural Identity, and the Shaping of Postwar American Judaism." In this article, Prell utilizes a case study involving Jewish summer camps in the 1960s to frame discussions of identity, and the ways in which being Jewish is made authoritative through specific sets of relationships and processes.[31]

Collisions of culture and religion often created rifts for Jews in the diaspora, whether they were residing in Germany, America, Israel, or France, and these conflicts point to the need for a complex discussion of authority as it relates to the problem of identity. Prell uses an instance of Black, Jewish teenagers attending Jewish summer camps as a means to demonstrate how these competing ideas of authority are problematic when applied to how individuals and communities understand themselves to be Jewish.[32] According to Prell, authority is discursive. It is "a system of symbols and images, a language for defining experiences, for preparing Jews to claim what is and is not Jewish."[33] As will soon be evident, these same attitudes are reflected in the assemblances of musical culture in German-Jewish communities in Germany, France, and Israel. Conflicting ideas of identity parameters clashed on all fronts, creating tension, requiring

[30] Ezrachi, "In Search of Roots and Routes," 209-10.
[31] Riv-Ellen Prell, "'How Do you Know That I Am a Jew?': Authority, Cultural Identity, and the Shaping of Postwar American Judaism," in *Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of Anthropology and History: Authority, Diaspora, Tradition*, ed. Ra'anan S. Boustan, Oren Kosansky, Marina Rustow, and Herbert D. Katz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 33.

[32] Prell, "'How Do you Know That I Am a Jew?,'" 33.
[33] Ibid., 55.

compromise, subverting, and dismantling preconceived, deeply rooted notions on the very nature of Jewishness, Germanness, and cultural identity.

Through an understanding of the complex web of frameworks and influences surrounding the German-Jewish Diaspora— that which is comprised of varying degrees of refugees, exiles, migrants, and survivors, all contingent upon self-identification and subject to frequent redefinition— clearer conclusions may be reached when interpreting the actions, decisions, and reactions involved in the process of shaping, dismantling, and rebuilding the musical practices of Diaspora Jewish communities in a variety of locales during and after World War II.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Jews in Pre-Emancipation France

Historically, Jewish people have lived amid a constant ebb and flow of degrees of intolerance, facing discrimination, expulsion, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and blatant racism in nearly every area in which they have chosen to settle. However, there were times in history when Jewish populations lived in peace in European nations, and tracking the shifts in societal thought and legislative action throughout history is vital to understanding the mindsets of those who lived during those times.

During the mid-1700s, France was on the cusp of revolution. A drastic uptick in its population, coupled with dwindling resources and a razor-sharp class divide caused rampant social and economic distress for its citizens. Jewish populations in particular suffered greatly during this time. Since state control during this time was awarded to the Catholic Church, Jews faced an absurd number of restrictions to their daily life. They were confined to living in ghettos, or at the very least within narrow and strict geographical boundaries. While the Kings of France had granted special permission to about ten thousand Jews to reside in regions such as Carpentras and Cavaillac, or the Boynne-Bordeaux district, more than thirty thousand Jews were restricted to living in Alsace and Lorraine and served as frequent targets of the contempt and hatred of their non-Jewish, peasant neighbors.[34]

Some regions, such as Strasbourg, employed degrading tactics such as a "Head-Tax" where Jews were not permitted to enter or leave without paying a steep price. In addition,

[34] Aubrey Newman, "Napoleon and the Jews," *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1967): 25.

Strasbourg also maintained a curfew where, upon sunset, Jews were chased out of the city.[35] Other areas frequently placed restrictions upon how many Jewish families could live within their borders or excluded Jews from all but a select few professions. The most notable restriction included the prohibition of Jews from the profession of moneylending. The regional and economic limitations placed on Jews during this time not only ensured conflict externally between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens of France, but it also created sharp rifts within the French Jewish communities and wore at patterns of community life within the ghettos.[36] Situations for most looked bleak in pre-Revolution France, however a noticeable trend of awareness and opposition was increasing in volume amid certain groups of French society. It was the belief of many that the continuation of such restrictions was "archaic and represented a blot on a rationally minded society."[37]

Enlightenment

Though Jewish existence throughout all of Europe has been historically unjust, fleeting periods of history have served as moments of brief respite for western European Jews. One such period began in the eighteenth century with the dawn of the intellectual movement known as the Age of Enlightenment. The movement was born through a growing consensus among members of European society that social and political change were not only achievable, but desirable.[38] This notion was supported by strong support for foundational societal principles such as liberty, brotherhood, progress, and separation of church and state. In France, especially, the focus landed on a lobby for individualism and religious tolerance. Enlightenment thinkers pervaded every significant cultural sphere from literature, to art, to music, and philosophy, and their

[35] Newman, "Napoleon and the Jews,": 25.
[36] Ibid., 25.
[37] Ibid., 26.
[38] Ronald S. Love, *The Enlightenment* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2008), xiii.

contributions later birthed other similarly foundational movements such as neoclassicism, liberalism, and communism.

With the concept of religious tolerance surfacing within the spheres of influential society, and beginnings of the French Revolution all but promising the liberation of Jews from ghettos across Europe, the intellectual leaders of Jewish communities felt free and willing to turn their gazes inward, inspecting their own cultural, linguistic, and societal practices, and as a result, generating a parallel movement of their own known as the Jewish Enlightenment, or Haskalah. The schools of thought on Haskalah seemed to be divided into two separate groups: those who wanted to preserve Jewish culture as its own unique entity, and those who strove for complete assimilation into their surrounding societies. The former group worked to promote cultural and moral renewal and celebration of traditional Jewish values, most notably in the form of reviving Hebrew for secular purposes. The latter group sought to adopt the more modern values of their secular neighbors, changing their cultural practices and even their appearances to reflect a more assimilated stance. They strove for rationalism, liberalism, and freedom of thought, knowing that the expansion of Jewish rights in European society allotted them several freedoms, including the ability to modernize.

The Modernist movement specific to the arts occurred about twenty years after the early Haskalah era, but no cultural group or ethnic community contributed to this movement more than the European Jewish community, whose intellectuals and artists pervaded the contributions to modernism quite thoroughly at every level.[39] The groundwork for these contributions were firmly laid during the Jewish Enlightenment and exemplified just how differently the forces of

[39] Phillip V. Bohlman, *Jewish Musical Modernism, Old and New* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1-2.

modernity functioned for European Jewish populations. While each Enlightenment, Jewish or otherwise, revolved around the notion that there should be balance between a person as a citizen and a person as a human, the Jewish Enlightenment sought to establish a place in history for Jewish modernism, rather than liberate itself from it.[40]

Napoleon and the Jews

The French Revolution reached its apex in 1789, and by 1790 France and the U.S. became the first countries of the time to grant Jews full political, legal, and social equality. For perhaps the first time in European history, in any country aside from Poland—which had emancipated its Jewish populations nearly five hundred years prior—all formal barriers to Jewish participation in French society had been removed.[41]

Napoleon Bonaparte became an essential figure in European history during this time. The trajectory of his early life was unusual, if not a bit ironic, considering he grew up on the island of Corsica during the time when it was annexed to the French. The Treaty of Versailles had awarded the land to French troops in order to keep the Genoese rebels on the island in line. This oppressive political and economic state led Napoleon to grow up with a strong dislike of French people, and an even stronger dislike of unfair or unequal treatment. It was his firm belief that positions of merit should be awarded to those who deserved them most, and not just those who had the strongest lineage or political connections. This philosophy was tested and only grew more resounding after being denied a prominent position in the French military, losing the position to someone less apt but far more connected. Despite this, Napoleon rose in the ranks of the French military through his success in battle and his overwhelming talent for rallying troops

[40] Bohlman, *Jewish Musical Modernism*, 2.
[41] Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1993): 7.

and boosting morale. However, Napoleon would not stop there; he would go on to overthrow the French Directory, becoming the First Consul, and eventually Emperor with sights firmly set on conquering the rest of Europe.

However, before this occurred, Napoleon passed a religious freedom decree, completely emancipating the Jewish populations of France. To the diverse populations of nearly forty thousand Jews in France, this was a time of elation and as close to complete freedom as they had ever achieved.[42] However, Napoleon's decree evidently came with its own fine print. Whether explicitly stated or not, Napoleon emancipated the Jews with the goal of seeing them assimilate completely into French society. Those who subscribed to similar Haskalah thoughts were, as one might assume, completely content to oblige. Though, on the other hand, those Haskalah thinkers who desired to see the Jewish communities of France thrive as unique ethnic communities grew troubled, and their anxieties only increased in 1791 when the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen were passed. This legislation removed all legal distinctions between Jews and non-Jews, effectively framing all religious practices as private, individual matters.[43] For some, especially for Jews who only considered themselves Jewish by name,[44] this was yet another step in the right direction, however this legislation came with a complication; if religion became an individual practice, then airing collective grievances became extremely difficult, and doing so risked charges of being unwilling to assimilate or thinking that Jews were still a "nation within the nation."[45]

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[42] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, 7.
[43] Renee Poznanski, *Jews in France During World War II* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 2001): 2.
[44] Jeffrey S. Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

[45] Ronald Schechter, "Familiar Strangers: Napoleon and the Jews," in *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France 1715-1815* (University of California Press, 2003): 194.

Jewish Reform in German States

Ripples of Napoleon's legislations swept across the rest of Europe and Jews everywhere were experiencing collective redefinitions of their senses of self. In German-speaking lands, for example, because of the increase in secularization as well as increased Jewish acculturation, Jewish communities began to think of themselves not as scattered groups of "the shunned aliens of the past," but as Jewish Germans.[46] However, Germany itself was divided in opinion on a number of topics, and its Catholic ruling class was growing steadily more nervous at the revolution in France and its implications for the future of the Holy Roman Empire. On the topic of religion, German intellectuals and Enlightenment thinkers were in the process of a consensus of ideas that would come to be known as the Christian Rationalist movement, which promoted the intermingling of natural religion, Christianity, and rationality, and regarded Jewish otherness as "merely a difference in religion" rather than a difference of culture.[47] The general populations and laws of German-speaking lands, however, did not agree with this assessment. There was a great deal of hostility directed at the Jewish populations of Germany under the Holy Roman Empire, and society as a whole refused to grant them anything more than partial entry among their ranks.[48] For many Jewish Germans, conversion, and ultimately baptism, seemed to be the answer—the key to entering the areas of German society from which they had been historically excluded. However, as many Jews would find, the flames of anti-Semitism and bigotry would not be doused so easily, and certainly not by holy water.

Mendelssohn and the Limitations of Conversion

[46] Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation*, 3.
[47] Ibid., 3.
[48] Ibid., 3.

The Mendelssohn family serves as an extraordinarily apt example of the struggles, limitations, and pitfalls of conversion in nineteenth century Germany. While the primary focus and discussion of this issue, especially in post-war scholarship, has been on Felix Mendelssohn, in order to understand his stance fully, one must first look at the actions of his father, Abraham, and the methods he chose to employ in order to subvert the implications thrust upon his family at the hands of the unshakingly Jewish Mendelssohn legacy.

Abraham understood that bearing the name 'Mendelssohn' carried a hefty burden in German society. He was once quoted as acknowledging that the name held "enduring significance" to German Jews and that the name itself represented "Judaism at its transitional period."[49] Abraham knew these struggles well, for he had lived them first-hand as the direct descendant of Moses Mendelssohn, the man responsible for the translation of the Torah into German; the man whose philosophical ideas all but single-handedly ushered in the era of the Haskalah. Abraham grew up knowing that the name 'Mendelssohn' would be unlikely to ever escape its synonymous nature with Judaism, but he also knew that to identify as Jewish and to embrace Jewish identity were two very different things.[50]

Abraham took actions over the course of his life to create his own existence and livelihood separate from the Jewish community, but he also needed to ensure that the life he built was as sustainable and privileged as any other Christians would be.[51] Additionally, he knew that he could not just stop once he himself had attained those rights, but rather he also needed to ensure that those same rights and privileges would be extended to his progeny as well. Separating himself from Judaism—first through dissociating from the community, then later

[49] Ibid., 12.
[50] Ibid., 15.
[51] Ibid., 16.

through baptism—was his means of achieving this.[52] It is also absolutely critical to note that Abraham's livelihood never depended on the Jewish community. He was extremely strategic in choosing the cities where he resided, ensuring that each of those cities would allow him most of the same rights and privileges as the Christian populations. In Berlin, Paris, and Hamburg, Abraham was, therefore, able to practice his business with any members of the population and engage with whichever elements of society he so chose, purposefully distancing himself from the synagogues, and, in doing so, choosing to raise his children with Enlightenment ideals in mind.[53]

The Mendelssohn household of Felix's upbringing was one full of secular, rationalist, and Enlightenment thoughts and practices. While he and his siblings were certainly aware of their Jewish heritage, they had very little religious upbringing of any type during their adolescence until the family's conversion to Protestantism in 1816.[54] However, for all the Mendelssohn's rationalism and assimilation efforts, they were not able to escape the lineage ties to Moses Mendelssohn, which proved to be the root of their assimilation difficulties, even after their conversion and separation from the Jewish community.[55] During Abraham's childhood, Moses had been granted "General Privileges" by the Prussian government, which had also been passed down to Abraham's mother and his siblings after Moses's death.[56] Those privileges, however were not extended to his grandchildren,[57] leaving Abraham in a troublesome spot when it came to raising his children outside of Jewish traditions. It was because of this that Abraham always chose places similar to Berlin, where even his children could experience similar rights as those he had enjoyed under the protection of Moses's "General Privileges."

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[52] Ibid., 16
[53] Ibid., 16-17
[54] Ibid., 17.
[55] Ibid., 7.
[56] Ibid., 17
[57] Ibid., 19.

This became problematic when the family returned to Berlin from Hamburg in 1811 and Abraham realized that, while he was protected by both the General Privileges and citizenship, the only thing protecting his children's rights was the citizenship put in place by French laws and the arrival of Napoleonic occupation in Prussia.[58] Their rights were entirely dependent upon French occupation, and the prospect that this may change is what motivated Abraham to have his children baptized.[59] It seemed he was not alone in this anxiety, as well, for in 1816—the same year the Mendelssohn children were baptized—the highest number of baptisms occurred within a span of twenty years.[60] This spike in baptisms is indicative of a spike in anxiety across the German Jewish community, likely due to the 1815 ratification of the constitution for the German Confederation. With the fall of Napoleon, many states were lobbying to see Jewish emancipation laws reversed, and while some attempted to negotiate uniform emancipation codes, ultimately the French laws were deemed invalid, and the fate of Jewish emancipation was placed individually in the hands of the German states, some of which opted to return to pre-Napoleonic laws dating back to the seventeenth century.[61] This shift in legislation also came with a shift in societal attitude, increasing sentiments of German nationalism, anti-French feelings, and anti-Semitic views.

Throughout the remainder of Felix's life, despite the efforts of his father, he would constantly be followed by the shadow of his presumed Judaism. Mendelssohn's desire was to build a name for himself and seek social acceptance outside the borders of Berlin's intelligentsia in which his family had established themselves. He also sought international professional recognition and success as a Christian musician. It was therefore crucial for Mendelssohn to

[58] Ibid., 19.
[59] Ibid., 21.
[60] Ibid., 21.
[61] Ibid., 22.

"prove the sincerity of his Christian faith" and his own distance from Judaism.[62] Despite his best efforts, Mendelssohn was perpetually perceived as both religiously and culturally Jewish: concert programs would intentionally omit the "Bartholdy" from his name, listing him simply as "Felix Mendelssohn," with claims that the alternative would have been too long to fit on the program.[63]Every allusion to Jewish texts or elements in his sacred music faced intense scrutiny, and even after Mendelssohn's death, the insistence of his Jewishness rose in tandem with the rising anti-Semitic climate. After World War II, his intentions and perceived Jewish loyalties faced constant revision in order to fit prevailing redemption narratives throughout history. To this day, the prevailing view of Mendelssohn has largely been one of a man who expressed pride in his Jewish heritage, or at the very least felt a strong connection to it.[64]

The Rise of Nationalism in Western Europe

Prior to the French Revolution and Napoleonic era, it is difficult to trace the threads of nationalism as a broad concept across Europe. In the Middle Ages, nationalism may have existed, and if it did, it was most likely reserved for the elites, entirely inaccessible to the uneducated peasant class.[65] In the seventeenth century, the only European country where nationalism definitively emerged was England, where a sovereign populace developed during the English Revolution.[66] However, the indisputable origin point of nationalism and sovereignty begins with the French Revolution.[67] The armies traveling east from France brought with them the concept of liberation from autocratic monarchies and the divine right of kings, instead touting

[62] Ibid., 12.
[63] Ibid., 26.
[64] Ibid., 14.
[65] Panikos Panayi, *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany: Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Turks,* (London: Routledge, 2013): 2.
[66] Panikos Panayi, *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany: Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Turks, and others* (London: Routledge, 2013), 3.
[67] Panayi, *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany*, 3.

the possibilities of rule by a united people, linked by common bonds of geography and culture.[68] Through this ideology, the rapidly expanding middle classes of Europe were bolstered by the notion that they could oppose their rulers through revolutionary actions.

For many European nations, the largest period of transition toward nationalism occurred after Napoleon's fall at the Battle of Waterloo and well after the decisive end of the Enlightenment. The ideas governing the rise of nationalism, however, were the product of both influences. For nations like Greece, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria, national unity came from mutual uprisings against the Ottoman Empire, but in the case of nations like Germany and Italy, national identity hinged upon shared cultural elements like language and music.[69] Germany's sense of nationality, though, also drew upon sources born out of animosity. Not only did Christianity become a fundamental component, but after enduring French occupation and Napoleonic legislation, German identity also included anything that showed opposition or distain toward the French— including Jewish emancipation.[70] Additionally, it is at this point that acceptance into the sphere of German nationalism became a matter of authenticity. It was widely believed among nineteenth-century Germans that an individual could only find true fulfilment and authenticity if they were considered part of a nation.[71] Here, the social status of Jews was particularly important in determining what was or was not authentic, and anti-Semitism set a firm boundary of exclusion around authentic German nationalism.[72] The concept of *Bildung*, or High Culture, also carved a place for itself within this argument. Among "authentic" Germans, it was widely accepted that exposure to High Culture "improved the moral quality of individuals

[68] Ibid., 3.
[69] Lily E. Hirsch, *An Orchestra in Nazi Germany: Musical Politics and the Berlin Jewish Culture League*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 39.
[70] Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation*, 21.
[71] Manja Herrmann, "The Power of Authenticity: Individualism, Gender, and Politics in Early German Zionism," *Modern Judaism* 39, no. 1 (2019): 94.
[72] Herrmann, "The Power of Authenticity," 94.

and of society as a whole."[73] The inherent elevating powers of theater, music, art, and literature were implicit in this improvement, unless, of course, the individual attempting to partake or participate was Jewish, for this was seen as the ultimate undermining of authentic German culture.[74]

In France, similar anti-Jewish attitudes took root. The preceding devastation of military defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, fundamental constitutional change, and a post-war depression thrust France into a time of great political and financial uncertainty, which proved to be a fertile breeding ground for anti-Semitism.[75] The French people were facing hardships they had not faced in several years, and if the French were not going to blame themselves for their circumstances, they needed to find a group to which they could affix that blame. The role of scapegoat fell to the Jews, who had benefitted from the Revolution and had expressed gratitude toward the Republican party, thus condemning them in the eyes of conservatives, Catholics, and Socialists who had never been receptive of an elected parliament or republic.[76] For Jews across the rest of Europe, the post-Revolution world soon became a post-Emancipation world as several countries participated in hard overcorrections away from the Napoleonic legislations to which they no longer needed to abide. The landscape of tolerance for Jews across Europe was in flux, and anxiety amongst the Jewish communities was on the rise, and Zionism, with its promise of the creation of a unified Jewish nation, appeared to be the sole source of solace.[77]

These uncertain times for the Jews fostered an interesting retrospective counter-narrative to the previous era of emancipation. Author Ahad Ha'am wrote on this topic in 1891, stating that

[73] Sander L. Gilman, "Are Jews Musical? Historical Notes on the Question of Jewish Musical Modernism and Nationalism," *Modern Judaism* 28, no. 3 (2008): 245.
[74] Gilman, "Are Jews Musical?," 245.
[75] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, 11.
[76] Ibid., 12.
[77] Hirsch, *An Orchestra in Nazi Germany*, 39.

emancipation had brought Jews into a period of "inner slavery," and he argued that emancipated Jews were actually anything *but* free, as the assimilation culture made them "spiritual slaves under a veil of freedom."[78] This statement echoed throughout certain sections of Jewish intellectual circles, and, amid the tumultuous, unstable, time before World War I, a wave of Zionism swept across Europe. Ha'am's contributions aided in adding to the discourse of authenticity within the Zionist perspective, and from these writings, a hierarchy of Jewish authenticity began to form. At the bottom of this spectrum were the assimilated and baptized Jews, and at the top sat the "authentic," Zionist Jew.[79]

Moses Mendelssohn's foundational thoughts on this topic ultimately became the cornerstone of modern Zionist thought. In the eighteenth century, Mendelssohn and other Enlightenment thinkers argued that if German Jews underwent a transformation into citizens of a nation state, then they would be able to bridge the gap between the two ideologies and become both Germans and Jews.[80] Theodore Herzl had a similar mentality when he envisioned his version of a Jewish state-- one without nationalist conflicts, but still united by a shared Jewish identity and the participation in Western High Culture.[81] However, the harder the Jews attempted this, the harder the Germans tried to find reasons to exclude or invalidate their efforts. Giacomo Meyerbeer serves as a good example of this exclusion in action.

When the Germans asserted that Jews needed to alter their "Jewish" mentality in order to experience the "ethical dimensions" attributed to *Bildung*[82], Jews like Meyerbeer attempted to do exactly that. Meyerbeer set out to prove that Jews not only possessed the "sensibility and

[78] Herrmann, "The Power of Authenticity," 95.
[79] Ibid., 97.
[80] Gilman, "Are Jews Musical?," 239.
[81] Ibid., 246.
[82] Ibid., 240.

sensitivity" to be full-fledged members of European High Culture, but to also prove that Jews could and did contribute in equal capacity to Germans.[83] However, the more these achievements came to actual fruition, the louder the anti-Semitism became. The Germans perpetuated anti-Semitic stereotypes that reinforced the established conclusion that Jews were too inhibited by their inferior sense of culture to be able to comprehend "the true nature of 'classical' music."[84]

[83] Ibid., 240.
[84] Ibid., 241.

CHAPTER TWO

JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN GERMANY

Jews and Modernism

The turn of the nineteenth century in Europe was a time of great change. The majority of the continent was undergoing a rapid spike in technological advancement, accompanied by varying degrees of political and economic instability. In the context of this uncertainty and novelty, a new concept, *die Moderne*, was becoming quite popular in German-speaking lands. Serving as an umbrella concept in the literary spheres, *die Moderne* encompassed both the contemporary era (modernity) and the new aesthetic trends (modernism) that were becoming prevalent and popular during this time.[85] As with most aesthetic movements, the lexicon of this new literary trend soon found its way into the vocabulary of music critics and musicians, and thus the modernism movement in music came into being. However, the aspects of modernism were not universally popular. Wagnerian critics, and Wagner himself, for instance, conflated modernity with the "popular and profitable genres," and therefore saw modernism as unfit to be included in the avant-garde.[86] According to the Wagnerian minds, modernism was something "fleeting and arbitrary, moved by whimsy rather than deep necessity."[87] It was associated with materialism and the *mode* (fashion), but above all else it was associated with the French and with the Jews.[88] Jewish modernism, however, does not refer to a particular kind of modern culture that is Jewish, but rather the "network of self-contradictory but compelling"[89] concepts that

[85] Jonathan Gentry, "Critical Formalism: Max Graf, Julius Korngold, and the Language of 'Modern Music' in Vienna Around 1900," *The German Quarterly* 91, no. 4 (2018): 425.

[86] Gentry, "Critical Formalism," 426.
[87] Scott Spector, "Modernism Without Jews: A Counter-Historical Argument," *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no. 4 (2006): 615.

[88] Spector, "Modernism Without Jews," 615.
[89] Ibid., 618.

collectively comprise the cultural scaffolding of "Jewish modernism." German-Jewish modernism is not necessarily a topical entity; there is no collective work or formal definition one can point to. Rather, the concept may be better characterized by its function within German-Jewish society rather than by its prescriptive contents.

Jewish identity in the context of modernism increased greatly in complexity, and music played a prevalent role throughout the process. As the genre of modernist music came to be known, Jewish contributions to the corpus of works facilitated the discourse about music as "a phenomenon of defining and ascribing Jewish identity."[90] A discussions of what was or was not considered Jewish-- musically or more broadly-- occurred loudly and frequently, occasionally branching off into political spheres. For instance, in 1896, Zionist Nathan Birnbaum gave a lecture titled "*Die Judische Modern*" in which the term "Jewish modern" functions in two contradictory roles.[91] While Theodor Herzl is often credited as the father of political Zionism, Birnbaum appears to have been the one who actually coined the term, and while Birnbaum's early Zionist writings would come to be eclipsed by Herzl's place within the movement, the two figures still envisioned the same dream for the future of the Jews: a Jewish state in Palestine. Birnbaum, however, saw the route to this new Promised Land as accessible through "the spiritual renewal of Judaism"[92] which included a rejection of assimilation, and a growing consciousness of Jews in the Diaspora. It is within this context that Birnbaum employed the term "Jewish modern," which stood to illustrate two separate concepts: the negative reference to assimilated Jews who saw themselves as forward-thinking (modern), but also for Judaism as a whole as it

[90] Bohlman, *Jewish Musical Modernism,* 3.
[91] Spector, "Modernism Without Jews," 622.
[92] Ibid., 622.

stood at a point of reorientation.[93] Through this essay, Birnbaum asked Jewish communities to view the Jewish modern as a plea for an independent national existence.

Ultimately, the concepts presented in "Die Judische Moderne" proved to be too confusing and contradictory for audiences at the time, and the terminology eventually transformed from "Jewish modernism" to "Jewish Renaissance."[94] This, however, serves as a small example of the phenomenon happening at a much larger scale across Europe. The question of what it meant to be Jewish had already played a key role in the discourse and discussions of the German Enlightenment and the Haskalah, but now, with the resurgence of Zionism, the arguments stood to represent the broader tensions between "universalism and particularity."[95] The term "Jewish music" held within its definition a set of similar dichotomies; "Jewish" was the reflection of the religious aspects of cultural identity, while "music" represented the secular practices. Philip V. Bohlman addresses this contradiction in his book *Jewish Musical Modernism: Then and Now* when he states that the act of naming "did not so much create a different music as intensify the level of discourse about music as a phenomenon of defining and ascribing Jewish identity, particularly in a modern context where that identity was increasingly complex and ambiguous."[96] That is to say, to call something "Jewish music" was not to create a new genre, but rather call into question what the inclusion of that work did to transform, add to, or challenge the understanding of Jewish identity. Bohlman elaborates further, describing how this cultural and ethnic instability and self-consciousness led folklorists to seek out volumes of Jewish folk songs, songsmiths churned out Jewish popular music, and synagogue musicians set about revolutionizing their music practices, all for the purpose of legitimizing their individual

[93] Ibid., 622.
[94] Ibid., 622.
[95] Ibid., 623.
[96] Bohlman, *Jewish Musical Modernism,* 3.

conceptions of Jewish music as the proper definition. Thus, "the physical and ontological boundaries that determined just where Jewish music took place could no longer contain it as Jewish music's presence in modern Jewish society exploded."[97]

A heightened sense of threat arose out of this flurry of production and collection. Germans saw this explosion of activity as a warning sign. Jews were making efforts to assimilate, emancipate, and legitimize themselves in German society, and Germans responded with public displays of anti-Semitism as a means of stemming Jewish gains in society.[98] In *Fin-de siècle* Vienna in particular, the response to modernism and Jewishness were met with twin levels of anxiety, as the two were consistently conflated, eventually escalating to the point that anti-Semitism came to be seen as an accepted means of protesting the modern world.[99] This anti-Semitic anti-modernism prevented Jewish modernist composers from making inroads into official musical circles, and the simultaneous rise of the Vienna Secession movement in the visual arts—a countermovement to modernism that favored more traditional artistic styles—functioned as a way to aesthetically distance oneself between liberal Jews and the rising anti-Semitism in late nineteenth-century Vienna.[100] As these public views intensified, "Jewish" became much more than just a religious category; to define a person as a Jew was to define them culturally, ethnically, and especially racially.[101]

[97] Ibid., 3.
[98] Ibid., 12.
[99] K. M. Knittel, "'Ein hypermoderner Dirigent,' Mahler and Anti-Semitism in Fin-de-Siecle Vienna,'" *Nineteenth-Century Music* 18: 260.
[100] Bohlman, *Jewish Musical Modernism,* 3.
[101] Knittel, "'Ein hypermoderner Dirigent,'" 259.

Mahler and the Jewish Body

The public reception of Gustav Mahler in *Fin-de siècle* Vienna serves as a clear example of how pervasive anti-Semitism was in Viennese society, and how contributions of Modernism played a part in its justification. For a decade, Mahler was an extremely notable figure in the Viennese music scene: he directed two major musical organizations and made drastic changes and improvements to each of them.[102] His musical talent and conducting prowess were obvious and widely viewed as favorable. However, despite these positive attributes and achievements—and despite the fact that he had converted—Mahler's Jewishness "inevitably caused anxiety in many influential Viennese circles."[103]

For German readers, "Jewishness" was a category of racial difference, and in *Fin-de siècle* Vienna, it was not uncommon to see this difference represented visually in caricatures which depicted stereotypes of Jewish appearance.[104] While these visual representations served to reinforce anti-Jewish attitudes and insinuate someone's Jewishness without having to explicitly state it, the boundaries of difference did not stop at appearance. Jews were also condemned for the way they sounded, especially regarding those Jews who spoke Yiddish, and, as demonstrated by criticisms of Mahler's conducting style, even the way Jews carried themselves bore the mark of Jewishness and difference.

The idea that Jews were bodily different from non-Jews had been a prevailing concept as far back as the Black Plague, and anti-Semitic opinions held that the Jewish body was both a site and cause of disease. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, medical science solidified

[102] Ibid., 276.
[103] Ibid., 276.
[104] Ibid., 260.

scientific claims that links existed between race and nervous disorders,[105] leading the public to assume that Jewish movements were "visible signs of the wild, uncontrolled movements of the hysteric."[106] In a fascinating turn of events, the rise in nervous illnesses came to be correlated with the rise in modernism, and while an American diagnosis of nervousness simply reaffirmed national pride in being a fast-paced, advanced society,[107] Germans saw this as a sign of inferiority and weakness with some additional underlying implications.[108] Anti-modernists and anti-Semites were in agreement that if modernism was the direct cause of nervous disease, and Jews were linked to both, the weakening of German minds must be the fault of the Jews.

The physicality of Jewish nervousness can be seen in an examination of an article written by an anonymous music critic regarding Mahler's conducting performance. The article describes Mahler's hands as "out of control" and gestural descriptions like "snatching" and "fluttering"[109] allude to an idea that Mahler was not just "Jewish," but "visibly Jewish." The emphasis on the physicality of these gestures reinforces the boundaries of difference, and places Mahler firmly within the realm of modernism and, therefore, firmly outside the realm of acceptance. Additionally, while no concrete proof exists that these critiques of Mahler's gestures were not exaggerated—that in fact the extent of his mannerisms matched their descriptions[110]— it is important to note that visual evidence alone would never be enough to determine this, as it would not account for the "essential difference that was ascribed to them."[111]

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[105] Sander L. Gilman, "Madness and the Jews," in *Difference and Pathology:Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithica, N.Y., 1985): 150-52.
[106] Knittel, "'Ein hypermoderner Dirigent,'" 265.
[107] Tom Lutz, *American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History* (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press,1991), 2.
[108] Knittel, "'Ein hypermoderner Dirigent,'" 265.
[109] Ibid., 268.
[110] Ibid., 275.
[111] Ibid., 275.

Regardless of whether these opinions were overstated or not, the numerous caricatures in existence that depict stereotypically Jewish elements of Mahler's appearance, coupled with the rising anxieties directed toward Mahler's position in Viennese cultural circles is enough to prove the anti-Semitic nature of these criticisms. Additionally, when viewed through this lens, links to these critiques can easily be seen in anti-modernist and anti-Enlightenment contexts as well. Essentially, the boundaries of difference between Germans and Jews were rapidly expanding in *Fin-de siècle* Europe, casting into question the nature of German-Jewish identity, both as separate entities of "German" and "Jewish," but especially as an intersection of two cultural spheres at opposition.

German Jews: Germans *and* Jews

The "German in Music"

At the close of World War I, the overall climate of German society was one of displacement and disillusionment. The war had caused a great disruption to family life as most Germans knew it, and the steep reparations demanded by France cast Germany into a time of economic turmoil. Amid all the catastrophe and political upheaval of German defeat, the Weimar Republic was born. The Weimar Era for the Jews, specifically, marked the turning point where the previous concern and unease they felt in a post-emancipation world escalated into a full-blown crisis. In response to the uncertainty, Jews funneled their energy into contributions to the *Bildung* culture and sought security by tightening their grasps on the classical Enlightenment ideals associated with the movement.[112]

For many, the Weimar Republic was an opportunity for radical renewal. Social reformers, feminists, and Jews leapt at the opportunities to reconstruct Germany into a staunchly democratic nation where liberal ideals and equality ruled.[113] However, these groups faced challenges from Christian Germans, conservatives, and anti-Republicans who responded to the changes by rapidly sliding into irrationalism, racism, and xenophobia.[114] Ultimately, this was an opportunity for rebirth in the eyes of both groups, however the latter sought to reaffirm traditional ideas of German Nationalism, and place firm boundaries around the aspects of German culture that seemed most at risk of corruption by outside groups—minority and immigrant groups whom they also viewed as responsible for all the nation's troubles.

[112] Sharon Gillerman, *Germans into Jews: Remaking the Jewish Social Body in the Weimar Republic*(Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 7.
[113] Gillerman, *Germans into Jews*, 2.
[114] Gillerman, *Germans into Jews*, 7.

Music was a cornerstone of the reconstruction of German Nationalism in the Weimar Era. Educational organizations such as the German youth movement and other voluntary associations perpetuated the idea that an active involvement in music "belonged at the center of a German humanistic education,"[115] so much so that its integration into daily German life was considered an essential element of the youth movement's mission and a key factor for German self-definition.[116] However, as indicated by the conservative tastes and loud outcry against modernism, *music* was not a broadly defined term in this application. It is here that the idea of *Volksbegabung* emerges. The term itself translates to "the people's talent," and implies a special German "endowment for music."[117] Germans leaned on the works of a handful of composers as proof of this God-given talent, and used this to reinforce the canonical hierarchies that emerged from this philosophy. As evidence of this practice, one needs only to examine the repertoire of public music organizations to note precisely upon which composers Germans placed their value.

An examination of the surviving play lists of the "Spielschar Ekkehard"— the amateur music and dance group of the German youth movement— reveals that, of the sixty-eight pieces listed, all but two originated before the time of Schubert (1797-1828).[118] Additionally, in total, 65 percent of all the music performed by the Spielschar was written by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Handel or Haydn.[119] More to the point, if the latter two composers are removed from that list, Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart alone comprise 44 percent of the listed repertoire.[120]

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[115] Celia Applegate, "Saving Music: Enduring Experiences of Culture," *History and Memory* 17, vol.1-2 (Spring-Winter 2005), 220.
[116] Bruce Campbell, "Kein Schoner Land: The Spielschar Ekkehard, and the Struggle to Define German National Identity in the Weimar Republic," in *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 129.
[117] Applegate, "Saving Music," 220.
[118] Campbell, "Kein Schöner Land", 132.
[119] Ibid., 132.
[120] Ibid.,132.

If viewed as a case study, the repertoire of the Spielschar points to the motives of the ensemble's director and serves as a reflection of the overall attitude of anti-Republican Germans of the time. Director Gerhard Roβbach reflected his version of German cultural identity in the chosen repertoire of the Spielschar, and he hoped to utilize the music as a means of unifying the "chronically divided anti-Republican and conservative forces in Germany."[121] According to musicologist Bruce Campbell, in Roβbach's mind, "those who would not yet unite around a common political program could still perhaps be held together by Beethoven and Bach."[122] The programming of the Spielschar was designed to appear as apolitical as possible; this was not music meant to shock or provoke controversy, especially not among the portion of the population raised within the musical confines of the German classical canon.[123] Although, despite its appearance of innocence, Roβbach's choices still intentionally projected the image of a German society in opposition of the Weimar Republic and the modernist cultural trends that went with it.[124] The entirety of the list lacked any piece of music by identifiably Jewish composers, very few pieces of foreign origin, and nothing that would have been considered modern or progressive.[125] It was instead a validation of the audience's middle-class, conservative identity,[126] and a strong reinforcement of the formation of *volkisch* racial unity that married the idealism and vitalism so essential to the foundations of the German youth movement, but also excluded and othered all those who did not fit within the established boundaries,[127] and served as

[121] Ibid., 131.
[122] Ibid., 131.
[123] Ibid.,132.
[124] Ibid.,132.
[125] Ibid.,133.
[126] Ibid.,133
[127] Doris Bergen, "Hosanna or 'Hilf, O Herr Uns': National Identity, the German Christian Movement, and the 'Dejudaization' of Sacred Music in the Third Reich," in *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 145.

the very building blocks of racially-charged assertions of German greatness that eventually lead to the Holocaust.[128]

Examples of the German classical music canon as a unifier were not exclusive to amateur and public music groups by any means. Sacred music, which is explored more thoroughly in the following sections, offered the hymns of Martin Luther, and the instrumental music of Bach as points where Germans could unify confessionally.[129] This trend continued well beyond the Weimar era, as evidenced by one 1938 publication claiming Bach "transcended all theological and church political conflict to reach a place untouched by the confessional and ideological struggles of our day."[130] Both of the above examples of unification efforts serve as tangible examples of how Germans self-describe their cultural identity, however both examples also operate on a very specific definition of German music, therefore the question must be asked: What *is* German music?

It is worth noting that, while many nations have certain style conventions, instrumentations, or other tangible musical elements they can point to as a contributing factor to a "national sound," there is, in truth, little about German music that makes it sound distinctly national.[131] In fact, some scholars would argue that the "German" in music is not even a demonstrable musical trait at all, but rather a "property which emerges in a historical process, through a confused web of events, circumstances, decisions, and intentions."[132] The "German" in

[128] Campbell, "Kein Schöner Land," 137-138.
[129] Bergen, "Hosanna or 'Hilf O Herr Uns," 145.
[130] Ibid., 145.
[131] Celia Applegate, "How German is it? Nationalism and the Idea of Serious Music in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Nineteenth Century Music* 21, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 275.
[132] Bernd Sponheuer, "Reconstructing ideal types of the 'German' in music," in *Music & German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 39.

music is the point at which aesthetics and sociopolitical issues intersect, often manifesting as "an idealized form of self-description sanctioned by the elite and disseminated through education."[133]

Bernd Sponheuer is one scholar who posits that the German in music can manifest as two different types. The first type focuses on "the specifically German," and functions as an unyielding boundary between several sets of binary opposites. This type of German in music is exclusive and denies non-Germans any of the qualities claiming to be German. The binaries created under this type all revolve around a central, parent binary of Sensuality (*Sinnlichkeit)* versus Intellect (*Geist).*[134] Figure 1 provides a table of some of the created binary opposites which Sponheuer lists as examples.

- Figure 1: Sensuality (*Sinnlichkeit)* versus Intellect (*Geist)*

Sinnlichkeit		*Geist*
Melody		Harmony
Galant Style		Learned Style
Nature		Art
Beauty		Character
Poetic		Prosaic
Metaphysical	Versus	Physical
Organic		Mechanical
Sequence		Development
Culture		Civilization
Entertainment		Ideas

[133] Sponheuer, "Reconstructing ideal types of the 'German' in music," 39.
[134] Ibid., 40.

The second type of German in music is most accessibly summarized as "music for the world' that brings the purely human to its fullest expression."[135] It is "universal" and "synthetic," manifesting in the fusion of things that are usually separated, walking the line between Italian and French, form and function, horizontal and vertical.[136] This universalist ideal is as much a fusion of form and function as it is of myth and history, but regardless of whether a German individual aligns their own identity with the exclusivity or the universality of German music, either option creates a hierarchy in which the German is always assigned the role of the intellectual.[137]

Regardless of a person's individual position within or without these perceived borders, music was at the center of every level of the polity.[138] For Jewish communities, one side of those borders was "entirely limited by religious, ritual, and community functions," while the other side was a perpetually changing, growing landscape of musical autonomy where they could potentially make significant contributions.[139] The double-edged sword of this entire scenario lies in the fact that these musical boundaries only gained strength as the years passed, resulting in a redefinition of identity based largely upon "a product of difference."[140]

[135] Ibid., 40.
[136] Ibid., 40.
[137] Ibid., 40.
[138] Campbell, "Kein Schöner Land," 129.
[139] Bohlman, *Jewish Musical Modernism*, 7.
[140] Ibid., 7.

Sacred Music and Jewish References

Though rare, there were occasions when Germans and Austrians created justifications for the appearance of elements of Jewishness within the hard borders of Germanness. The prime example of this phenomenon is the approach to Jewish references in German sacred music. According to historian Doris Bergen, while critics and propagandists largely, and almost literally, sang the praises of Beethoven symphonies and Wagner operas, most "ordinary Germans" felt a stronger, "more intimate" connection with church music, and felt it served as a more accurate expression if their national identity.[141]

Based on the parameters specified by the *Volkisch* movement toward German ethno-nationalism, and further reinforced later by the Nazi push for a *Volksgemeinschaft,* to be a "True German" was to be Christian; only Christians were Aryans, and only Aryans were Germans. This mindset served the dual purpose of reinforcing church music as a unifier while simultaneously disqualifying German Jews from this "imagined *Volk.*"[142] Because of music's essential role in the German conception and construction of their identity, there was a sense of cultural self-consciousness and a great deal of anxiety over the thought that it may be "tainted" with references to Judaism.[143] Campaigns to "dejudaize" sacred music were put in place, involving parsing out any references to Hebrew or Israel, as, even if sung, these gestures held political connotations and could imply either the performer or the listener possessed an "insufficient commitment to National Socialist racial policy."[144]

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[141] Bergen, "Hosanna or 'Hilf, O Herr Uns'," 141.

[142] Ibid., 145.
[143] Ibid.,145.
[144] Ibid.,141.

These campaigns usually tended to focus on textual references rather than musical ones,[145] but because sacred music was both embedded in the church *and* the secular culture of Germany, these efforts to tamper with the musical content of German greats like J.S. Bach were met with surprising levels of opposition.[146] The Germans who defined themselves partially by their devotion to sacred music maintained that the texts of should remain unaltered for the sake of posterity and viewed the meddling as an offense to the works of composers who, thanks to the perpetual assertions of superiority, had been built up to near-God status themselves.[147] Bach, for example, was seen as "the profound, contrapuntal 'patriarch of German music,'"[148] ushering in a cultural myth of a German "spirit realm" of music and escalating to the point where instrumental (or absolute) music was seen as a product of the gods and an "echo of a higher world."[149] Additionally, these exceptions and justifications of pre-existing Jewish elements in sacred music also occasionally manifested as opposition to firing church personnel on the basis of perceived race or ethnicity. Many times, church congregations would rally behind the decision to employ "non-Aryan" church musicians,[150] whose musical talents and dedicated years of service seemed to outweigh any racial indiscretions.[151]

Sacred music also functioned as a unifying force outside of Germany as well. Due to centuries of immigration, members of a so-called "German diaspora" known as the *Volksdeutschen,* or ethnic Germans, lived outside of Germany but still considered themselves members of the culture, and at the core of this consideration was the fundamental belief that

[145] Ibid.,141.
[146] Ibid.,145.
[147] Sponheuer, "Reconstructing Ideal Types of 'German' in Music," 37.
[148] Ibid.,51.
[149] Ibid.,37.
[150] Bergen, "Hosanna or 'Hilf, O Herr Uns,'" 145.
[151] Ibid., 141.

music was essential to their identity.[152] It was also the link between the *Volksdeutschen* and their nationally German kin, creating an imagined lineage of shared musical heritage.[153] As the *Volkisch* movement transitioned into the *Volksgemeinschaft* movement and Germany transitioned into yet another war, a stronger correlation developed between German militarism and sacred music.[154] Between 1914 and 1918, German soldiers stationed in parts of the Russian Empire encountered groups of *Volksdeutchen* who would occasionally greet them with Lutheran, Baptist and Mennonite hymns. Later, when Hitler's armies invaded those same areas, the *Volksdeutschen* showed the soldiers the same loyalty to German hymns, which comforted the soldiers, and led to the use of music as a sort of "litmus test for determining who was German."[155] These practices continued both inside and outside the boundaries of Germany throughout the entirety of World War II, casting music in an uncomfortably polarizing role throughout its entirety.

[152] Ibid.,144
[153] Ibid., 144.
[154] Ibid., 143.
[155] Ibid., 144.

Jewish Orchestras in Nazi Germany

In January of 1933, Hitler rose to power in Germany. For Jews across Europe, their worst fears were about to be realized. While thousands fled to other countries, several German Jews remained in Germany out of an unwillingness to uproot their lives in the only country they had ever called home. Life under Hitler's rule was frightening and difficult to say the least, with new legislation passing at steady intervals, ensuring life for Jews in Germany was not an easy one. On April 7, 1933, the Civil Service Laws were put in place, subsequently dismissing thousands of Jews from various musical posts.[156] Not long after that, Kurt Baumann and Kurt Singer, two well-respected German-Jewish musicians established one of the few places in Nazi Germany in which Jews were still allowed to engage in music and theater—the Jewish Culture League (*Jüdischer Kulturbund*).

After a few years of struggling for official acceptance, Singer eventually acted as the organization's spokesperson and met with Nazi administrator Hans Hinkel. Ultimately, the Nazis viewed an association with the Jewish Culture League as very beneficial thing; by exploiting the League for the sake of propaganda, the Nazis could offer proof to the world that Jews were not being mistreated.[157] Additionally, Hinkel could use his proximity to the group to bring about the end of the perceived Jewish appropriation to German culture by censoring the League's repertoire to only include "Jewish music."[158]

Participation in the Jewish Culture League was an eye-opening experience when it came to recognizing the diversity of the Jewish populations in Germany. Though all members

[156] Lily E. Hirsch, "Ein Tanz auf dem Vulkan': The Legacy of the Jewish Culture League," *Music and Politics* 5, no. 2 (2011): 1.
[157] Hirsch, "Ein Tanz auf dem Vulkan,'" 1.
[158] Ibid., 1.

identified as Jewish, it was evident that the term held a different level of importance for almost every member. The diverse representation of Judaism also proved to be a bit of a complication, especially when it came to adhering to Hinkel's censorship requirements. Between the Zionists, assimilated Jews, Eastern European, rural, Orthodox and even secular Jews among the ranks of the Jewish Culture League, none could agree on the precise definition of "Jewish music."

Some interpreted this request as the performance of music written by Jewish composers,[159] however even that distinction proved to be complicated when one considered composers like Mendelssohn and Mahler, who were born Jewish but converted later in life. Some members disagreed with this point, too, though, claiming Jewish music should encapsulate Hebrew and Yiddish folk music. This request, however, proved to be an extremely controversial one. Many League organizers did not consider Hebrew or Yiddish folk music to be high culture[160], and therefore did not want to promote it as such. Many members did not speak or even know Yiddish, and therefore did not feel it adequately represented their personal Jewish experience. Some, too, did not even consider themselves Jewish, and were only labeled as such by Nazi legislation.[161] These members certainly did not feel a connection to Yiddish folk songs and felt the performance of such repertoire would "turn their Jewish organization into a ghetto."[162]

Similar nationalist thinking pervaded the attitudes of Jewish Culture League members well beyond the first year of its operation. The connection to German musical culture was important to its members and reflected in the League's performance repertoire, as evidenced by

[159] Hirsch, *An Orchestra in Nazi Germany*, 57.
[160] Ibid., 37.
[161] Ibid., 37.
[162] Lily E. Hirsch, "Under Pressure: Jewish Art Music, 1925-1945," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S Walden (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 206.

their performance of Beethoven's Eroica Symphony in August of 1934.[163] This assertion of German repertoire, however, did not sit well with the Zionist members of the League, who felt they should be promoting Jewish awareness in a time of erasure. The Nazis supervising the Jewish Culture League surprisingly had no problem with the German Zionist members of the League, and in fact showed a measure of support for them. To many in the Nazi party, Zionism was seen as a dangerous idea, however some also viewed it as a means to an end—a Germany without "the polluting influence of Jews."[164]

Music in Nazi Concentration Camps

The vitality of music in daily life was a pervasive cultural norm across all of Germany, and the confines of the concentration camps were no exception. Based on the memoirs of survivors, we know music was a daily occurrence in National Socialist concentration and extermination camps,[1] but its existence alone is not what makes it noteworthy. Many survivor accounts credit their participation in music as an essential component of their survival, and on one level, it was just that. However, there was a far more sinister, subtextual role music played in camp life that often goes unmentioned. Depending on its application, music served as both the salvation and the destruction of the inmates of concentration camps. Within a prisoner's own grasp, it was a vehicle for their grief and anguish, but at the hands of S.S. Guards, it was quite literally a mode of torture. Though many survivors continually spoke on how they were saved by music, many more also opposed this, citing accounts of music being used in a deeply injurious fashion.

[163] Hirsch, *An Orchestra in Nazi Germany*, 38.
[164] Ibid., 40.

The first example of music's nefarious role in concentration camps was presented to inmates upon arrival. Often new arrivals would be greeted by a music performance as a means of luring them into a false sense of security. The Nazis used the public performance of music as one of the many ways they manipulated public opinion.[165] Press photos of prisoners engaging in musical practices would often surface as a means to suggest that living conditions within the camps were good, and prisoners were not being mistreated, merely reeducated.[166] Additionally, in some camps, authorities would order prisoners to establish musical ensembles. These ensembles would typically be comprised of professional and amateur musicians, and their duties would include performing for camp officials, march prisoners across the grounds to and from work, or even fulfil propaganda purposes, reassuring the public that the camps could not possibly be bad if there was organized music present.[167]

Unfortunately, for most prisoners, manipulation and exploitation were far from the worst things they would endure in the camps. In 1936, a group of concentration camps including Sachenhausen, Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, and Neuengamme fell under the control of Theodor Eicke, the IKL, or head of the Concentration Camps Inspectorate. These camps were intended to serve as "re-education" camps for those the Germans considered outside of the boundaries of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.[168] With music being a major cornerstone of German nationalism, it is unsurprising that it would be included in "reeducation." What *is* surprising, however, is that the

[165] Guido Fackler, "Cultural Behaviour and the Invention of Traditions: Music and Musical Practices in the Early Concentration Camps, 1933-6/7," *Journal of Contemporary History* 45, no. 3 (2010): 619.

[166] Fackler, "Cultural Behaviour and the Invention of Traditions," 618.
[167] Ibid., 608.
[168] Juliane Brauer, "How can music be Torturous?: Music in Nazi Concentration and extermination camps," *Music and Politics* 10/1, 2016: 10.

Nazis found ways to weaponize music, employing methods that quite literally tortured prisoners with sound.

Perhaps the most prevalent example of this was forced singing. Between 1933 and 1936, singing on command was an established practice in early concentration camp life.[169] Frequently, camp guards would order inmates to sing while marching, or during punishments, and prisoners who had been labeled as traitors would be forced to sing military or patriotic songs.[170] Occasionally, guards would utilize music as a means to humiliate prisoners, ordering them to sing songs with obscene lyrics, like the ”Hurenleid” (Harlot’s Song).[171] These methods were just a few ways that music would be combined with physical or psychological torture tactics, and the result was a direct attack on a prisoner’s humanity.[172]

For German Jews especially, this tactic was particularly damaging, acting as a direct attack on the very fabric of their cultural identity. For example, in Sachsenhausen, the majority of the prisoners were German-speaking, and had also taken part in the bourgeois youth movements of the 20s and 30s, therefore ensuring that they shared a common repertoire of popular songs with the guards.[173] The use of music allowed S.S. guards to exert absolute power over prisoners’ bodies. By forcing them to sing, or listen to music during these strenuous times, especially if the music to which they were being subjected had strong ties to German national identity, the guards could essentially work to invalidate the emotions and experiences that comprised prisoners’ identities.[174]

[169] Brauer, "How can music be Torturous?,” 11.
[170] Fackler, “Cultural Behaviour and the Invention of Traditions,” 608.
[171] Ibid., 608.
[172] Brauer, "How can music be Torturous?,” 2.
[173] Ibid., 12.
[174] Ibid., 9.

JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN ISRAEL

Historical Context

Introduction

In 1917, British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour wrote a letter that would serve as a pivotal document to British colonial ambitions in the Middle East for the next several decades. This document, which came to be known as the Balfour Declaration, served as the catalyst to the "establishment of a national home for the Jewish people,"[175] and the eventual creation of the state of Israel. While many Zionists viewed the outcomes of the Declaration as positive, the document itself was problematic for many reasons. Due to its ambiguous wording, and its assumptions of who held power at the time, the Balfour Declaration can be seen as the document which disrupted the peace in Palestine, and pitted the Arabs against both the native Sephardic Jews and immigrant Jewish populations, creating tensions between and within the groups that persisted for decades beyond the initial conflict.

In order to fully understand the motivations for the document's creation, and to gain an accurate understanding of the cultural and ethnic undertones present amid the different Jewish communities in Israel, a few critical questions must be asked of the Balfour Declaration. These questions are as follows: what were the motivating factors for its creation and implementation, and how was it generally received by both native and immigrant communities in Palestine?

[175] William M. Mathew, "The Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate, 1917-1923: British Imperialist Imperatives," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 40, no. 3 (July 2013): 231.

The Balfour Declaration: Colonial Motivations and Misplaced Power

There was peace in Palestine before the Balfour Declaration,[176] and the fallout due to this document's influence caused conflict between Arab and Zionist communities for well over the next twenty years. From the perspective of outside parties, the British involvement in the Zionist cause seemed to come from nowhere, however, there were a number of underlying motivations for Britain to create this opportunity for Zionist Jews. The first of these reasons was the British desire to gain access to the Suez Canal, which served as the principal sea route to India.[177] The thought was, if they could defeat the Turkish and German armies and gain control of Palestine, the British armies would take the strategic advantage and be that much closer to controlling the Near East.[178] Control of the Canal, however, was the surface-level ambition, and many modern scholars now suggest that there may have been ulterior motives. For example, William M. Mathew discusses the probability that The Balfour Declaration also served the dual purpose of aligning the British with Zionist ambitions—or at least presenting the appearance of doing so—which would logically help them garner support from Jewish communities around the world, and potentially foster an allied relationship. In fact, at the War Cabinet meeting where the document was finalized, the main reason the majority of the Cabinet approved was due to "the influence it would likely have on the Jewish population throughout the world and the desirability of winning their sympathy, and... their active support during the war."[179]

The reception of the Balfour Declaration, overall, was not a popular one. In addition to the ambiguous wording of the letter, the implementation of the document also included the

[176] The Economist, "The Balfour Declaration's Impact, 100 Years On," *YouTube* video (November 3, 2017): 3:46.
[177] Mathew, "The Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate, 1917-1923," 237.
[178] Ibid., 236.
[179] Ibid., 233.

disregard for one specific sentence that promised no disruptions for native, non-Jewish populations already inhabiting the land. To the dismay of the Palestine Muslims and Christians, the Balfour Declaration caused complete upheaval and disruption. In the years that followed, the document was bitterly attacked in Parliament, mostly due to its "injustice of imposing upon a country a policy to which the great majority of its inhabitants are opposed."[180] Many saw it as propaganda—a document born not out of diplomatic interest, but rather out of "prejudice, faith, and sleight of hand."[181] In truth, there was no need to annex Palestine for the purposes of securing access to India. Rather, the British, anti-Semitic belief that Jews controlled the world served to motivate the 'Allies' global propaganda to conflict with the Central Powers.[182]

The British Mandate and the Balfour Declaration also had a profound effect on the Jews and Arabs of Palestine and Israel. Much like the cultural shifting and redefining that occurred in France during the Jewish Emancipation, the influx of so many Jewish immigrants to Palestine had a profound effect on the cultural boundaries of the communities now residing in Palestine and Israel. Tensions over job competition during the 1927 economic crisis, and some cultural tensions between the Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews, local Arabs, and the European and secular cultures of the newcomers created a cultural landscape of discontinuity and self-consciousness.[183] The Hebrew city of Acre can serve as the setting for a case study of this phenomenon.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the city of Acre saw itself as part of the Hebrew revival movement in Palestine. The citizens of this town established community institutions and ran

[180] Ibid., 232.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Ibid., 233
[183] Anat Kidron and Shuli Linder-Yarkony, "A Hebrew Community in a Mixed CIty? Acre during the British Mandate," *Israel Studies* vol. 24, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 67.

Hebrew cultural activities within a primarily Arab city.[184] At the community's height, there were approximately eight hundred Jews living in Acre, but this was rather short-lived because by1938, within the growing threat of the Arab uprisings, most of the residents had left and the community had fallen apart.[185] Up until this point, however, relations between Jewish and Arab residents of Acre were peaceful and respectful, suggesting that the communities sought to live together in harmony.[186] Even the use of the term "Hebrew" rather than "Jewish" was a conscious designation of organized communities in Yishuv society that saw themselves as part of the Zionist revolution.[187]

However, Acre's economic downfall could be found in the fact that it resembled so many other Arab cities that became marginal during this time. The chief reason for which being that these communities—these rural cities with their "Oriental nature"—did not attract new Zionist immigrants.[188] Though veteran residents and new immigrants often lived peacefully in Acre, immigrants had difficulty assimilating due to the dissimilarities between the local identity of longtime residents (Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews) and the national identities of new (mostly Eastern European) immigrants.[189]

National Style and German Jewish Culture

Institutionalized Music and Binationality

The political climate of Germany on the eve of World War II caused many Jews to flee their homeland. While a great deal of them fled to America, Israel (thanks in part to the Balfour

[184] Kidron and Linder-Yarkony, "A Hebrew Community in a Mixed CIty?," 50.
[185] Ibid., 51.
[186] Ibid., 52.
[187] Ibid., 50.
[188] Ibid., 65.
[189] Ibid., 66.

Declaration) was the subject of a huge influx of Jewish refugees during that time. Zionist Jews from all over Europe sought out Israel for its symbolic position as the "Homeland." Modernist Jews saw Israel as a cultural blank slate; a place where they could continue their Modernist expressions and further their influences on European Jewish culture. Many others were seeking to join up with relatives who had already moved to Israel during the time of the British Mandate. With all these separate Jewish communities flocking to a central point, all for various motivations, and all carrying their own conceptualizations of the cultural parameters of Jewish identity, the arrival of the Central European Jewish immigrants marked the start of a huge cultural shift in Israel which had a profound impact on the cultural landscape of the region, especially where the musical culture was concerned, resulting in a radical change in Israeli musical life.[190]

German Jews, upon immigration, still sought to define themselves by the parameters of Modernist ideology. They also sought to assert their Germanness by continuing the performance of German music. The construction and establishment of musical organizations modeled after those the group had left behind were quickly founded, providing a means for immigrant musicians affected by the Nuremburg laws to obtain orchestral positions and sustain themselves. Additionally, with these organizations also came the establishment of music academies where students wishing to study music and also escape the oppressive climate of Germany could obtain certificates to study abroad in Israeli cities like Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, while maintaining the format of the education they would have received in Frankfurt or Berlin.[191]

[190] Phillip V. Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow: Music in the German-Jewish Community of Israel* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989): 10.
[191] Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams* Flow, 10.

Though a great number of immigrants invested themselves in constructing a culture in Israel that resembled their former lives in Germany, this rapid construction was met with some opposition. Several members of the Central European immigrant group were reluctant to maintain some German musical practices for complicated reasons. Some considered the performance of music by certain composers insensitive or offensive because of the composers' associations with the Nazis or their anti-Semitic ideologies. In these instances, those who felt this way seemed to feel that their Jewishness was at opposition with their Germanness, and these attitudes caused divisiveness among the otherwise cohesive group of German Jewish Immigrants.

The desire to construct and participate in this type of culture is reflective of a deeply felt national commitment among German-speaking immigrants. Stephen Aschheim refers to this phenomenon as either 'ethnonationalism,' or 'binationalism,' where an individual feels attached to the cultural practices of one nation or ethnicity while simultaneously residing in a different locality.[192] Examples of this phenomenon in practice can be seen in an examination concert programming and musical practices surrounding the performance of contentious composers such as Richard Wagner.

Wagner in Israel

The Palestine Orchestra, known today is the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1936 and was composed mostly of musicians who were expelled from Central and Eastern

[192] Steven E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007): 7.

Europe during this time.[193] The orchestra's programs initially included works by several German and Austrian composers, including Richard Wagner, however after the events of *Kristallnacht,* attitudes toward the composer shifted monumentally. Wagner's name and music became synonymous with Nazi ideology, and the performance of Wagner's works was banned across Israel.[194] This reaction was due to the openness with which Wagner expressed his anti-Jewish thoughts, which he openly published under his own name. There was a consensus among many that Wagner was a "flagrant anti-Semite who flaunted his belief that Jewish contributions were harmful to the purity of the German arts."[195] Those who opposed the playing of Wagner in Israel believed that Wagner's anti-Semitism encouraged and inspired Hitler's anti-Semitic agenda. Hitler's supporters elevated Wagner's music and used it as an antagonization against the Jews, thereby "assigning it an order of blame for the Holocaust."[196]

However, for as many Jews that believed this to be true, there is almost an equal number of Central European immigrants living in Israel who felt the opposite. Supporters of Wagner leaned harder into their Germanness, citing aesthetic considerations as the reason Wagner should be included in programs, and believed that its quality should be at least a "decisive criterion for its inclusion in a concert program."[197] However, more importantly, those who supported the performance of Wagner in Israel did so under a belief that to exclude it would be an action in line with the same hateful logic used by the Nazis. It was this subgroup's belief that Nazi ideals were rooted in exclusion, and that excluding a body of work because of the

[193] Hanan Bruen, "Wagner in Israel: A Conflict Among Aesthetic, Historical, Psychological, and Social Considerations," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 27, no. 1 (1993), 99.
[194] Bruen, "Wagner in Israel," 99.
[195] Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow,* 4.
[196] Ibid., 4
[197] Bruen, "Wagner in Israel," 100.

beliefs of the composer would make them no better than the Nazis. A willingness to abandon Wagner's music was, in their eyes, a willingness to abandon the culture of Germany for that of Israel.[198]

This logic, perhaps, was why Wagner's music was occasionally heard in Israel even despite the bans. Rare performances of the composer's works occurred, but certain precautions had to be implemented to keep them contained within the sphere of Central European immigrants who supported such actions."[199] For example, a performance of *Siegfried Idyll* occurred, but was kept out of the awareness of the public eye because it was marketed as "a Concert of the Early Works of Schoenberg and the Influences on Them."[200] Most of these concerts were through chamber orchestras or small setting concerts as part of a subscription series, but that did not necessarily mean that all repertoire was permissible. Hanan Bruen retells a moment where a Wagner performance was met with stark opposition in his article titled, "Wagner in Israel: A Conflict Among Aesthetic, Historical, Psychological, and Social Considerations." Bruen states that, decades after the Wagner ban was established, "Zubin Mehta, the musical director of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, attempted to add an excerpt from *Tristan and Isolde* to a subscription concert. At the end of the regular program, he turned to the audience, announced and explained his intentions, and suggested that those who did not wish to listen to a work by Wagner might leave the hall. There was an instant uproar."[201]

[198] Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow,* 5.
[199] Ibid., 5.
[200] Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow,* 6.
[201] Bruen, "Wagner in Israel," 100.

CONCLUSION

To begin a distillation of the contents of this work first requires a comprehensive look at the different roles and weights the terms ‘diaspora,’ ‘assimilation,’ and ‘authenticity’ play in the broader discussion of Jewish identity. The appearance and influence of ‘diaspora’ in this paper is most present in the first few sections. It is discussed at length as a major component of Jewish identity and is present in the Jewish mythology of the “homeland,” as well as in the foundational thoughts of early Zionist thinkers. However, this term carries complications, as evidenced by the discussion of locality and how Jews in the diaspora form a collective identity based around a shared cultural past rather than basing their racial or national identity on a location. In the discussion of Jewish identity research, it was noted how the works and contributions of Jewish composers—specifically *German* Jewish composers—could potentially undermine the overall hierarchy of the Western Art Music canon and how it became problematic for both Germans and Jews during the rise of German nationalism.

The question and application of ‘assimilation’ first appears in the discussion of Napoleon and the Jewish Emancipation. The question of assimilation is fraught, as it is one that forces both Jews and non-Jews to grapple with their own beliefs about what it means to be a member of any community, as well as what it truly means to be Jewish. The question of assimilation is one that begs the asker to build and acknowledge cultural boundaries, and actively choose if they would prefer to stand within them or without them. The Mendelssohn family serves as a case study for how pervasive and influential the Christian Rationalist movement became in German-speaking lands after Napoleonic rule attempted to grant German Jews additional rights. The question of conversion underscored the lives of most families during this time. Though, as evidenced by the prejudice the Mendelssohn family encountered, conversion was not the “cure all” method, and

even Jews who converted were still not fully German in the eyes of the native German populations. As discussed in the conclusion of the first chapter, the rising uncertainties and anxieties of European Jewish populations led to the resurgence of Zionism as the rise in *Bildung* culture caused Jews across Europe to seek answers to the questioning of their own authenticities.

This essential question of assimilation dovetails into questions of authenticity. In this work, discussions of authenticity can be seen in the debates of the Jewish Culture League, and within the folds of arguments about what to do with Jewish references in German sacred music. It can be seen within the barbed wire confines of a Nazi concentration camp, where German Jews were mocked with their own authenticity, and where music was used to negate their Germanness and emphasize their "otherness." It can be seen within the boundaries of the Hebrew city of Acre, and the German chamber music concerts in the homes of Israeli Jews. It is through discussions of these events where it becomes evident that no clear answer to this question exists.

While the discussions in Chapter Two were thorough to the best of the author's ability, there are still many avenues worth pursuing in studies of how Jewish populations navigated and negotiated their own ideas of authenticity. For example, a parallel examination of the art and literary trends during the Holocaust would be beneficial for the sake of cataloging overlapping themes within both Jewish and non-Jewish artists, writers, and composers, and how *Volksbegabung* influenced more than just the music world. Furthermore, a deeper examination of the programming of the Jewish Culture League would provide an excellent look at how the Nazi presence and propaganda influenced how free Jews felt to express themselves. Additionally, extensive research and scholarship has been done about the power struggles among S.S. Guards and inmates in Nazi concentration camps, but it would be worthwhile to delve deeper into primary source material regarding the dynamic of different Jewish groups, and how inmates divided

themselves in order to gain a better understanding of how each group perceived their own authenticity.

Questions of authenticity also arise in Chapter Three, especially regarding the development of a national style among German Jewish immigrant communities. There exists, however, a much deeper need for a thorough examination of the cultural practices of native Jewish communities residing in Palestine prior to the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate. The Hebrew community of Acre serves as a fascinating example of how the influx of new Jewish immigrants radically altered the economic state of small communities, however, a need for deeper research on the cultural impact of immigrant populations on pre-existing Jewish populations in Palestine and Israel would be beneficial to the overall understanding of how Jews in Israel navigated and created their own ideas of authenticity.

Concrete conclusions are difficult to come by when discussing nonlinear concepts, and hard binaries are rarely applicable in studies of identity, so perhaps it is worthwhile to treat endeavors such as these as a suggestive look at the myth of authenticity overall, and how the application of such boundaries can be potentially harmful to the collective memories and cultural identities of diasporic communities and ethnic groups who have been subjected to complicated timelines, migratory stories, and adopted mindsets of multilocality as a result. To be Jewish is to understand that a homeland is nowhere and everywhere all at once, and the cultural practices that resonate with each individual person are what make that person authentically Jewish, regardless of the location of their physical homeland.

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