

Singing a Song in a Foreign Land: related performances

Singing a Song in a Foreign Land was a major research and performance project focusing on musicians who emigrated from central Europe as a result of Nazi persecution during the 1930s and 40s. The project, which ran from 2012 to 2014, formed part of the EU funded Project ESTHER, a collaboration with Jeunesse Musicale Schwerin, Exil Arte Vienna, Pro Quartet Paris, and DUNK Helsinki. In February 2014 the project came to a climax with an exhibition, concert series and three-day symposium at the RCM. The project was led by Norbert Meyn, and supported by the Culture Programme of the European Union, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Rothschild Foundation.

Norbert Meyn has developed the theme of music and migration further with research and performances about musicians such as Peter Gellhorn, and a series of concerts supported by Culture Vannin and the Isle of Man Arts Council.

The Singing a Song in a Foreign Land project also led to the formation of Ensemble Émigré, which is directed by Norbert Meyn and brings together musicians and scholars to create innovative programmes of vocal and instrumental chamber music, with a special interest in exploring music connected to migration and human mobility. The ensemble aims to highlight and celebrate transcultural connections between people of different backgrounds and their expression in music. It supports and mentors young professional musicians and provides opportunities for them to work alongside established artists, and also works with artists and academics from different disciplines and aims to commission new work.

Performances and performance workshops related to/arising from the Singing a Song in a Foreign Land project have included:

2012

Hans Gál: *Nachtmusik* and *What a Life!* Amaryllis Flemming Concert Hall, Royal College of Music, London, 26 September 2012.

Two works by Hans Gál (1890-1987) were performed for the launch concert for the Singing a Song in a Foreign Land project: *Nachtmusik* op. 44 with Patricia Rozario (soprano) and a semi-staged performance of the Revue “What a Life!” written in 1940 during internment on the Isle of Man.

A short report on the performance is available here:

<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/singingasong/about/whatalife/> and video excerpts can be seen at this link: <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/singingasong/performancevideos/>

Hans Gál: *What a Life!* Golden Hall, Neustädtisches Palais, Schwerin, Germany, 29 September, 2012.

RCM performers travelled to Schwerin in Germany to give a second performance of *What a Life!* at the Golden Hall, Neustädtisches Palais as part of the festival Verfemte Musik 2012.

2013

Musicians in Exile, Cité Internationale des Arts and Goethe Institute, Paris, 8-10 April 2013; Royal College of Music, London, 22-24 April, 2013.

Voice and string quartet masterclasses and concerts in Paris and London with Norbert Meyn, Heime Müller (Paris) and Louis Fima (London).

Georg Tintner: *The Ellipse*, Britten Theatre, Royal College of Music, London, 24 April 2013.

The RCM continued its exploration of music and emigration with a performance of Georg Tintner's *The Ellipse* by RCM soprano Anna Rajah and the Park Quartet. A video excerpt from this performance is available here: <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/singingasong/performancevideos/>

Hans Gál: *What a Life!* German Historical Institute, London, 25 June 2013.

A short recital of songs from the Revue by Hans Gál with Malcolm Miller (piano) and Norbert Meyn (tenor) given as part of the conference *Forward from the Past: The Kindertransport from a Contemporary Perspective*, organised by the Leo Baeck Institute London in cooperation with the German Historical Institute London, Aberystwyth University, and the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, University of London. The conference programme is available here: https://www.ghil.ac.uk/fileadmin/redaktion/dokumente/2013/Conference20130625_programme.pdf

Hans Gál: *What a Life!* Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France, 7 November 2013.

A concert performance of the Revue by Hans Gál with RCM singers and instrumentalists at the Council of Europe, Strasbourg. The performance formed part of a colloquium seeking to preserve the memory of the holocaust and to prevent future crimes against humanity. For further information please see: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/holocaust/-/colloquy-music-in-concentration-camps->

A copy of the programme (in French) is also available here:

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900016804703d1>

2014

Émigré Salon, Parry Rooms, Royal College of Music, London, 21 February 2014.

Both this performance and the concert listed below formed part of the *Singing a Song in a Foreign Land* symposium. Works performed were Franz Reizenstein: *Oboe Sonatina* op. 11 and *Variations on the Lambeth Walk*; Egon Wellesz: *Zwei Stücke* for clarinet and piano op. 34; Robert Kahn: *Diary in Music* for solo piano (selections), plus Lieder by Wellesz, Kahn, Karl Rankl and Joseph Horowitz.

Gala Concert: *The Watchman's Report*, Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, Royal College of Music, London, 22 February 2014.

Stephen Johns and the Royal College of Music Chamber Choir joined forces with leading instrumentalists for a gala concert which included various responses to exile: Robert Kahn: *Trio in G minor* op. 45 for clarinet, piano and cello; Joseph Horowitz: *String Quartet no. 5*; Hans Gál: *British Folk Songs*; Karl Weigl: *The Refugee* and *The Watchman's Report*; Ernst Toch: *Valse* for chorus and percussion; Hanns Eisler: *The Little Woodbury Songbook*.

The Symposium programme is available on RCM Research Online here:

<http://researchonline.rcm.ac.uk/1337/>

2016

Leaves from the Tree of Life – Blätter vom Baum des Lebens, Liberal Jewish Synagogue, London, 24 January 2016.

The culmination of three days of music at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, London, was a programme of words and music commemorating National Holocaust Memorial Day. Norbert Meyn (tenor), Marianne Olyver and Nigel Yandell (violin/piano duo 'Postcards from Europe'), Lucy Colquhoun, Cathy Heller Jones, and students from the Royal College of Music gave a special evening of readings, music and song that wove together the stories of suppressed composers in a theatrical libretto by artist, writer and academic, Joseph Kohlmaier. The programme included works by Gerhard Braun, Hans Gál, Robert Kahn, Karl Rankl, Viktor Ullmann, Alexander Zemlinsky and others, as well as a performance of all three 'spoken music' pieces by Ernst Toch from a new edition of the scores by choreographer Christopher Caines. For more information please see: <http://www.ensemble-emigre.com/events/>

Peter Gellhorn workshops, Royal College of Music, London, April-May 2016.

- *String Quartet no. 2*, Alke Quartet, 7 April 2016.

- *Thoughts on a Chinese Tune* for two clarinets and piano duet, *Sonata for Two Pianos*, *Totentanz* for two pianos - Jakob Fichert & Eleanor Hodgkinson (piano), Ingrid Pearson & Janet Hilton (clarinet), 24 April 2016.
- *String Quartet no. 1* - Alke Quartet, 26 April 2016.
- *Mooragh* for string quartet and male vocal ensemble, *Andante* (1940), *Trio Suite*, *The Cats* (Isle of Man 1940) - Alke Quartet, 28 April 2016.
- *Capriccio and Intermezzo* for violin and piano, *Oboe Suite* - Eunsley Park (violin), Aleksandar Djermanovic (piano), Rebecca Watt (oboe), Lucy Colquhoun (piano), 4 May 2016.
- *Songs and Duets* - Louise Fuller (soprano), Katie Coventry (mezzo soprano), Lucy Colquhoun (piano), 6 May 2016.

Austrian Cultural Forum: 60th Anniversary Programme, Austrian Cultural Forum, London, 16 June 2016.

Ensemble Émigré gave a performance celebrating the contribution of Austrian émigrés, especially musicians and composers to the ACF's programme and the wider UK cultural landscape. The programme featured vocal and instrumental music by Ernst Toch, Hans Gál, Robert Kahn and Peter Gellhorn as well as arrangements of Folk Songs by Ferdinand Rauter. For more information please see: <https://www.acflondon.org/events/acf-60th-anniversary-open-house-weekend/>

A Celebration of Composer/Conductor Peter Gellhorn, Recital Hall, Royal College of Music, London, 3 July 2016.

This event included a lecture by Dr Terence Curran, a panel discussion with members of ICSM (International Centre for Suppressed Music) chaired by Norbert Meyn, and performances of Gellhorn's *Sonata for Two Pianos* and *String Quartet no. 1* by Jakob Fichert (piano), Eleanor Hodgkinson (piano) and the Alke Quartet. More information is available here: <https://www.jmi.org.uk/event/petergellhorn/>

Singing a Song in a Foreign Land, European Commission, London, 21 November 2016.

Songs and chamber music by Ferdinand Rauter, Hans Gál, Joseph Horovitz, Geza Frid, Matjas Seiber and Peter Gellhorn were performed by Ensemble Émigré: Rosanna Cooper (mezzo-soprano), Norbert Meyn (tenor), Eunsley Park (violin), Lucy Colquhoun (piano).

Music for Utopia and Dystopia, Chancellor's Hall, Senate House, University of London, 14 December 2016.

A free concert of art songs especially selected to trace utopian visions of human relationships and society as well as the dystopian fallout from them, which is powerfully reflected in the experience of musicians who had to emigrate because of political convictions or persecution. The programme included the Masonic Cantata K619 by Mozart, Schubert's setting of Schiller's Ode to Joy, politically inspired songs by Hanns Eisler as well as musical discoveries from the Singing a Song in a Foreign Land project. The international record producer and acclaimed author of 'Forbidden Music' Michael Haas (University of Vienna) narrated the programme.

A video recording of extracts from this performance is available here: <https://london.ac.uk/senate-house-library/exhibitions-and-events/exhibitions/utopia-and-dystopia>

2017

The Barbed Lyre: Leaves from the Isle of Man, Liberal Jewish Synagogue, London, 2 April 2017.

The Royal College of Music, Ensemble Émigré and the Liberal Jewish Synagogue presented a programme of music and stories related to the internment of German and Austrian Nationals on the Isle of Man in 1940. Some of the music by Peter Gellhorn had only come to light through recent research at the Royal College of Music. This performance was also given at the Erin Arts Centre, Port Erin, Isle of Man on 16 May 2017, and at The Studio Theatre Douglas, Isle of Man on 17 May 2017.

A flyer for the London performance is available here: <http://www.leobaeck.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/The-Barbed-Lyre-April-2.pdf>

A short media report on the Isle of Man performance is available on isleofman.com here: <https://www.isleofman.com/lifestyle/culture-entertainment/internment-music/>

Performance at the *Who is British music?* Symposium, Bristol University, 6 June 2017.

The symposium *Who is British Music? The Place of Immigrant Musicians in 20th-century Constructions of National Music History* included a public concert by Ensemble Émigré: Simon Wallfisch (baritone/narrator), Eunsley Park (violin) and Lucy Colquhoun (piano) performed seldom heard works by immigrant composers, including vocal and instrumental music by Peter Gellhorn, Karl Rankl, Roberto Gerhard, Geza Frid, and Hans Gál. For more information please see: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/events/2017/june/who-is-british-music.html>

The English Songs of Karl Rankl, Austrian Cultural Forum, London, 22 October 2017.

A workshop and informal performance with Norbert Meyn (RCM) and Joseph Breinl (Kunstuniversitaet Graz) exploring the little known English songs written by Rankl during World War II in Oxford. A Schönberg pupil and friend of Hanns Eisler, Rankl became the first music director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden after the war.

For further information please see: <https://www.acflondon.org/events/english-songs-karl-rankl/>

Music of Seiber, Rankl, Schubert and Brahms, Burgh House, London, 23 November 2017.

Ensemble Émigré presented songs and chamber music at this event supporting the INSIDERS/OUTSIDERS initiative lead by Monica Bohm-Duchen, aiming to celebrate the cultural legacy of refugees from Nazi Europe and their contribution to British culture. For more information please see: <http://www.ensemble-emigre.com/events/>

2018

On the Record: Memories of the Anschluss 80 Years Ago, Austrian Cultural Forum, London, 18 March 2018.

Ensemble Émigré provided two musical interludes at this event: Norbert Meyn (tenor) and pianist Lucy Colquhoun performed Lieder from the cycle *Schwanengesang* by Franz Schubert and three songs by Erwin Weiss, Hans Gál and Joseph Horowitz, which were immensely popular in British émigré circles providing, as they did, a sense of identity. For more information please see: <https://modernlanguages.sas.ac.uk/events/event/12537>

The Wayfarer, Austrian Cultural Forum, London, 30 May 2018.

Performance given by Ensemble Émigré of songs and chamber music exploring human mobility and exile, including Gustav Mahler's *Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen*, Vaughan Williams's *Songs of Travel* and works by Egon Wellesz and Alexander Zemlinski, interspersed with excerpts from the book *The Freedom of the Migrant* by the Czech-born philosopher Vilém Flusser (1920-1991). Performers: Sigridur Osk (mezzo-soprano), Norbert Meyn (tenor), Ingrid Pearson (clarinet), Christopher Gould (piano). For more information please see: <https://www.acflondon.org/events/ensemble-%C3%A9migr%C3%A9-presents-wayfarer/>

Music Behind Barbed Wire, Burgess Foundation, Manchester, 24 June 2018.

RCM musicians and Ensemble Émigré performed music by Ferdinand Rauter, Hans Gál and Peter Gellhorn, former internees at the Warth Mills Internment Camp in Bury, in association with the Warth Mills Project and Refugee Week.

For further information please see: <https://www.anthonyburgess.org/event/concert-music-behind-barbed-wire-ensemble-emigre/>

NEWSTALGIA Exhibition Opening Concert, Austrian Cultural Forum, London, 2 October 2018.

Ensemble Émigré contributed a musical performance with songs by Karl Rankl, Peter Gellhorn and Erwin Weiss to the opening of the exhibition NEWSTALGIA at the Austrian Cultural Forum, London. The exhibition extended beyond the gallery space in a dedicated issue of the street publication Arts of the Working Class, which included an article about "Engaging with Émigré Music in Britain" by Norbert Meyn, listed on RCM Research Online here:

<http://researchonline.rcm.ac.uk/392/>

For more information about the NEWSTALGIA exhibition please see:

<https://www.acflondon.org/events/newstalgia-exhibition/>

2019

Robert Kahn: The Sprudeling Fountain, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 11 March 2019.

RCM musicians performed a programme of music by Robert Kahn (1865-1951).

For further information please see: <https://www.adk.de/de/programm/index.htm?date=2019-03-11>

A Celebration of Egon Wellesz, Lincoln College Oxford, 3 June 2019.

This recital with Norbert Meyn (tenor), Ingrid Pearson (clarinet), and Christopher Gould (piano) included the so far unpublished Stadler Lieder and music for clarinet and piano by Egon Wellesz, as well as works by Ferdinand Rauter, Karl Rankl, Robert Kahn, and Hans Gál, who all featured in the 'Singing a Song in a Foreign Land' project.

For further information please see: <https://www.music.ox.ac.uk/event/lincoln-college-egon-wellesz-and-other-emigrees-in-1930s-britain/>