

### **Eastern European Emigrants and the Internationalisation of 20th-Century Music Concepts**

**Veranstalter:** Anna Fortunova and Stefan Keym, Leipzig University

**Datum, Ort:** 29.01.2020–31.01.2020, Leipzig

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The history of music in the 20th century is characterized by the global transfer and exchange of artistic concepts, models and techniques. An important catalyst for these processes of cultural transfer was the phenomenon of emigration (often involuntary, such as by artists persecuted by totalitarian regimes). The global spread of Arnold Schönberg's compositional method of dodecaphony or of Heinrich Schenker's new system of analysis of tonal music was mainly a result of the emigration of these musicians and/or their disciples to the USA in the 1930s.

Just like these Germanic artists, musicians and scholars from Eastern Europe also emigrated to other (mainly Western) countries, especially around the time of the October Revolution and as a result of the Second World War. They also brought their artistic and cultural heritage to their temporary or long-term host countries, where their music concepts came into interaction with local traditions and thus contributed to the internationalisation and global fusion of ideas.

The aim of this conference was to reinvestigate the paths of Eastern European émigré composers and other artists, their interaction with their host cultures and their impact on the internationalisation of artistic concepts and the rise of new global trends of culture.

The conference was opened by the organizers ANNA FORTUNOVA and STEFAN KEYM (Leipzig), who discussed the role of music in migration processes from Eastern Europe in the 20th century using case studies such as Piotr Souvtchinsky and Alexander Tcherepnin. Stefan Keym also emphasized, with reference to the cultural transfer theory of Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, that the success of a cultural concept or object transferred to another space depends not only on the quality of this concept or the persuasiveness of its

author but also, and above all, on the needs of the culture that adopts the concept. Thus, the question would not only be what goals and strategies Eastern European musicians pursued in the „West“, but also what aspects of their music or music aesthetics were of particular interest to their colleagues and audiences in different countries, and to what extent they were able to take advantage of gaps left unfilled by local composers.

In his lecture, CHRISTOPH FLAMM (Lübeck/Heidelberg) highlighted not only the negative aspects of (mostly forced) migration but also its positive qualities as an enrichment for the host culture. At the same time, he warned against neo-nationalist tendencies that attribute to music (and to the many different art movements that exist within a single country) the only „correct“ collective identity. DÖRTE SCHMIDT (Berlin) showed in her lecture that the attempt to integrate other cultures into the musicological discourse is often guided by the idea that it is something „foreign“. One of the examples she pointed to was the Darmstadt Summer Courses, which in the 1960s tried to expand contacts in the direction of Eastern Europe in order to represent as many different musical cultures as possible.

In her presentation on the Russian art magazine *Jar-Ptiza* (*Firebird*), ANNA FORTUNOVA looked at cultural transfers in 1920s Berlin. The aim of the magazine, which published articles in Russian, German and English, was to familiarize Western European (primarily German) readers with Russian art. JASCHA NEMTSOV (Weimar/Potsdam) also dealt with Berlin, in this case as one of the most important Russian-Jewish cultural centers of the 1920s. His lecture focused on actors such as the composers Jakob Dymont, Michail Gnesin, Joseph Achron or Joel Engel, the publisher Leo Winz and the composer, poet, philosopher and painter Arno Nadel, who was murdered in Auschwitz. The paper was divided into sections dedicated to the Russian-Jewish publishers in Berlin and to the concerts of contemporary Jewish music of the time (1922, 1928, 1935), in which works of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco or Darius Milhaud, among others, were performed.

WENDELIN BITZAN'S (Düsseldorf) con-

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tribution on the Russian composer Nikolai Medtner, who lived in Berlin from 1921 to 1924, showed how important the element of timing can be for a 'successful emigration'. However, the art scene in Berlin was not conducive to an artist closely associated with 19th-century traditions and he finally found a home in Great Britain. In contrast to Medtner, György Ligeti had a successful career after leaving his homeland. The Hungarian composer's biographical background has long been neglected due to the incompatibility of folkloristic music with the image of an avant-gardist. MÁRTON KERÉKFY (Budapest) showed, however, that Ligeti, especially in his later compositions, alludes both to Hungarian folk music and to his own early pieces that were written before he left his home country.

Just like Ligeti, Igor Stravinsky was able to celebrate great success in his newly adopted home of Paris. MARINA LUPISHKO (Le Havre) dealt with Stravinsky's connections to the visual arts. The aesthetic concept of the Ballet Russes sought not just to combine music and dance but also to include the visual arts. This *Gesamtkunstwerk* found the ideal breeding ground in French Wagnerism. France was also the adoptive country of the Russian composer Arthur Lourié. OLESYA BOBRIK (Moscow) addressed, among other aspects, both the importance of the Catholic faith for the artist and his relationship with Scriabin and Stravinsky.

In general, networks of actors were the focus of many presentations, for example in GEORGY KOVALEVSKY'S (Saint Petersburg) lecture on the philosopher and musicologist Ivan Lapshin, who was forced to emigrate to Prague via Berlin in 1922 due to his political loyalties. He was closely connected with the circle around Nikolai Rimski-Korsakov and was also in contact with the theatre director Konstantin Stanislavski. During his emigration, Lapshin wrote several scientific works (most of which were published in Prague), including a history of Russian music.

Two lecturers, LIDIA ADER (St. Petersburg) and RIMA POVILIÓNENĖ (Vilnius), took a closer look at quarter-tone music. Ader spoke about the composer Ivan Vyschnegradsky, who emigrated to France, and his en-

vironment, while Povilónienė examined microtonal compositions in Lithuania, especially those of the 1970s and 1980s. The comparison of Witold Lutosławski's Second Symphony with Jurgis Juozapaitis's *Rex Symphony* gave rise to discussions about where mutual musical inspiration ends and plagiarism begins. RŪTA STANEVIČŪTĖS (Vilnius) contribution also focused on Lithuania, examining the extent to which Lithuanian composers contributed to the avant-garde musical discourse. She concluded that the formation of a common cultural identity was dependent on the establishment of differences in musical cultures. JOLANTA GUZY-PASIAK (Warsaw) spoke about Polish Émigré-composers in the USA. Karol Rathaus, Zygmunt Stojowski, Wanda Landowska, Stanisław Skrowaczewski, Wiktor and Felix Labunski, Jerzy Fitelberg and others were at the center of her reflections. Through their teaching activities, these composers were all able to help shape subsequent generations of composers.

JERNEJ WEISS (Ljubljana/Maribor) talked about Czech musicians in Slovenia, especially during the interwar period. Due to limited career prospects and the establishment of Czech cultural institutions, the number of Czech musicians who went abroad was at times so great that even the concert program of the National Theatre in Ljubljana was affected by Czechoslovak Independence Day. As the names of the musicians in 1908 testify, more than fifty percent of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra was made up of Czechs.

In his lecture on popular music during the Cold War, MICHAEL G. ESCH (Berlin) showed how jazz was consumed by the growing cultural and political elite, especially in Eastern Europe, while at the same time losing its oppositional character due to Europeanization and institutionalization. On the other hand, Esch elaborated on the (sexual) identity revolution using the example of the Czech band *The Plastic People of the Universe*.

As impulses for the final discussion, Stefan Keym summarised the results of the conference, highlighting three aspects: Firstly, there was great diversity in the examples dealt with. Secondly, geographical juxtapositions and demarcations should always be

questioned, because the very terms „Eastern“ and „Western Europe“ depend on the point of view and cannot be clearly defined. Thirdly, the different perspectives and narratives from which the life and creative paths of the emigrated composers were viewed and portrayed should be taken into account. These include traumatic experiences as well as positive aspects of creative development in contact with the host culture(s).

**Conference overview**

Wednesday, 29th January 2020

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Anna Fortunova / Stefan Keym (Leipzig):

Conference Opening

Christoph Flamm (Lübeck/Heidelberg): Emigration in 20th Century Music History

Dörte Schmidt (Berlin): Emigration and the Transfer of Ideas in Music and Musicology

Jernej Wess (Maribor): Czech Musicians in Slovenia between the two World Wars

Michael Esch (Leipzig): Styles, Significations and Contexts of ‘Popular’ Music during the Cold War

Thursday, 30th January 2020

Jascha Nemtsov (Weimar / Potsdam): „Focal Point of Musical World Culture“: Jewish-Russian Musicians in Berlin in the 1920s

Marina Lupishko (Le Havre): Igor Stravinsky and Russian Painters in the West

Rūta Stanevičūtė (Vilnius): From National to Cosmopolitan: Multiple Identities and Cultural Transfer in Lithuanian Migrant Music

Jolanta Guzy-Pasiak (Warsaw): Polish Émigré Composers in America

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Anna Fortunova (Leipzig): The Russian Art Magazine „Firebird“ as a Medium of Intercultural Transfer in Early 1920s Germany

Wendelin Bitzan (Düsseldorf): Decision, Hope, and Resignation. The Russian Composer Nikolai Medtner’s Stay in Berlin, 1921–1924

Lidia Ader (St Petersburg): Microtonal Music

Actors: Ivan Wyschnegradsky and his Circle

Olesya Bobrik (Moscow): Arthur Lourié and France

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Friday, 31st January 2020

Georgy Kovalevski (St Petersburg): Ivan Lapshin’s correspondence with Rus-

sian Scientists and Musicians

Rima Povilionienė (Vilnius): (E)migration of Ideas: Ways of Microtonal Composing in Lithuanian Music in the 70 and 80s

Márton Kerékfy (Budapest): Folklorism and Nostalgia in György Ligeti’s Later Music

Tagungsbericht *Eastern European Emigrants and the Internationalisation of 20th-Century Music Concepts*. 29.01.2020–31.01.2020, Leipzig, in: H-Soz-Kult 08.05.2020.