

CLASSICAL MUSIC

When Nazis tried to silence music

Carla Shapreau is on a research mission to bring World War II persecution of Jewish musicians to light.

By Mike Boehm

Nazi crimes against visual art are easy to grasp. We can see images of paintings they stole. We can read about court battles Holocaust victims and their heirs have fought to get them back.

But how does one show the willful obliteration of music?

Carla Shapreau saw how during a visit to Vienna, and now she is telling the world.

A violin maker, attorney and lecturer at the UC Berkeley School of Law, Shapreau is on a research mission to bring Nazi persecution of Jewish musicians to light. She looks for valuable musical instruments and collections of sheet music that the Nazis confiscated, and anything else that will add to the store of knowledge about how Jewish musicians were hounded into emigration, silence or death.

Two years ago Shapreau went to the city library in Vienna to continue her search for a lost musical past. On display under glass in the library's exhibition room was a small book with a marble-patterned binding. It contained printed names — about 2,000 of them, lined up vertically across 23 pages. Published in the late 1930s, it was the member Iyengar yoga gradually became recognized as a treatment for headaches, hypertension, arthritis and other medical conditions.

ship index of artists, most of them composers, represented by a performing rights society called AKM. The society's function was to collect royalties earned in Austria from performances or recordings and give them to the composers.

The Nazis had a knack for doing evil in the most bureaucratic way, and Shapreau saw immediately that this little book was a striking example of it. Somebody dutifully had drawn red slashes across more than 500 of the names, marking them as Jews. By crossing them out, AKM aimed to end their careers — not just in Austria but in other nations, including the United States, where AKM had deals with other performing rights organiza-

Table with 4 columns of names and initials, representing a 1930s index of artists. Many names are crossed out with red lines, indicating persecution. The table is divided into two main sections labeled '4' and '5'.

CARLA SHAPREAU

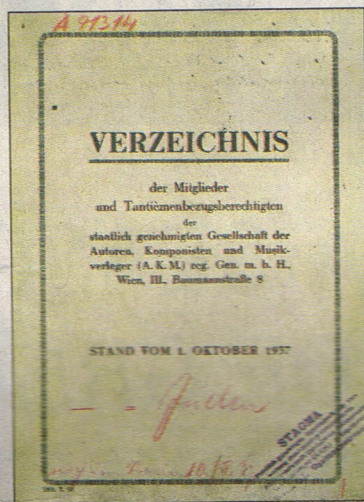
COMPOSER JOSEPH BEER'S name is among those marked off in a 1930s index of artists. The slashes marked them as Jewish.



ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD, shown in 1920, was a



JOSEPH BEER, shown in France during World War II,



A MEMBERSHIP INDEX of artists from the 1930s was

in each country, respectively. Copyrights in the EU expire 70 years after the artist's death. Schoenberg hopes the need for changes will become clear next year, when "The Diary of Anne Frank" will stop generating royalties. Frank died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945.

For Shapreau, the red-lined Vienna index, uncovered by Austrian scholars Christoph Lind and Georg Traska, is most valuable as a testament to tragic history rather than as a lever for prying loose confiscated performance royalties.

As Conlon puts it, the fate of Jewish composers and musicians during the Holocaust is "a subject where there is very little general knowledge of what was going on; we're trying to open it up."

Shapreau said that Lind and Traska

States, where AKM had deals with other performing rights organizations to collect members' royalties.

"Name by name, this diminutive yet chilling red-lined Nazi-era artifact was a prelude to evolving persecution in Austria for those in the musical world," Shapreau writes in an article recently posted on the website of the Los Angeles-based OREL Foundation ([www.orel.org](http://www.orel.org)). Accompanying it are images of the entire AKM index.

For composers' heirs, Shapreau said, uncovering more of the truth might constitute a small victory over the forces that had tried to expunge their parents' or grandparents' artistry.

The new discovery is important to Beatrice Beer, a French American operatic soprano whose father, Joseph Beer, is crossed out near the top of Page 5.

Beer was late for a recent rehearsal in Philadelphia when a reporter reached her to ask about Shapreau's findings. She'd heard about the list but hadn't seen it. "This is so emotional for me," Beer said. "This gives me the chills."

It's not news that her father was blacklisted and his career destroyed, she said. But there's something uncanny about being able to see the moment in which he was marked for creative erasure. "This comes as a bombshell in red."

OREL Foundation exists to make the music of composers such as Joseph Beer resound again. It's an outgrowth of Los Angeles Opera music director James Conlon's ongoing effort to perform works by composers the Nazis had banned.

The "Recovered Voices" series of concerts of suppressed music he began at L.A. Opera in 2006 is now based at the Colburn School, a downtown L.A. music conserva-

**ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD**, shown in 1920, was a targeted Austrian composer.

tory, where OREL recently hosted an international symposium with performances and scholarly presentations about music and the Holocaust. The foundation's website serves as a clearinghouse for information about musicians and music banned by the Nazis from 1933 to 1945.

### Erich W. Korngold

Perhaps the best-known name slashed in red in the Vienna composers' index is Erich Wolfgang Korngold, who by 1938, when the Nazis absorbed Austria, already had made a mark in Hollywood as a pioneer of symphonic film scores. With the Nazi takeover, Korngold no longer could shuttle back and forth to keep up his film composing in Hollywood and his concert-music career in Europe. His first work as a full-time U.S. resident was the Oscar-winning score to the 1938 hit "The Adventures of Robin Hood."

Also on the list — but not expunged in red — is one of the most famous Jewish composers of all time, Irving Berlin, whose Austrian rights were handled by AKM. Conductor-composer Alexander Zemlinsky, a leading figure on the European classical music scene, also was passed over. Shapreau says that the red-lined booklet was Austrian music authorities' first try at finding the Jewish element; it was prone to errors and omissions that they would subsequently correct.

Shapreau writes that AKM first tried to identify Jews by sending a questionnaire to its artist roster, asking members to state their religious and racial background.

This disgusted Bela Bartok, a non-Jewish Hungarian repre-

**JOSEPH BEER**, shown in France during World War II, was blacklisted.

mented by AKM. In a letter quoted by Shapreau, he execrated "the notorious questionnaire" whose inquiries he said included "Are you of German blood, or kindred race, or non-Aryan?"

"Our opinion," Bartok wrote, "is that such questions are wrong and illegal...we must insist on having nothing to do with [it]."

Shapreau notes that some composers who'd initially avoided being branded as Jews were fingered by Helmut Wobisch, a trumpeter in the Vienna Philharmonic who went on to serve as a postwar managing director of the notoriously Nazi-friendly orchestra.

Michael Haas, author of "Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis," said that other striking documents include advertisements placed in German and Austrian newspapers by musicians trying to persuade the public that they'd been marked incorrectly as Jews.

In 1991, an exhibition on "degenerate music" that had first been mounted in Germany came to the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, displaying photographs and documents attesting to the persecution of Jewish musicians. It was a recreation of an exhibition Nazi propagandists had put on from an entirely different perspective in Germany in 1938 as a companion to the 1937 exhibition of "degenerate art" by Jews and modernists.

Shapreau says it's not clear whether the AKM booklet and its red marks could be the start of a paper trail that might point some heirs of blacklisted composers toward royalty payments confiscated by the Nazis.

**A MEMBERSHIP INDEX** of artists from the 1930s was found at the Vienna library.

She came across a 1941 lawsuit by Frank Sabotka, a music publisher whose royalties were handled by AKM, claiming today's equivalent of \$1 million in unpaid royalties for performances in the United States that had been collected by the U.S. performing rights society, ASCAP, under an agreement with AKM. The outcome may be buried in court archives in New York, Shapreau said.

### Legal claims

E. Randol Schoenberg, a Los Angeles attorney known for winning prominent cases to recover Nazi-looted paintings, said it's unlikely that legal claims for unpaid royalties would get far in the wake of early 2000s agreements the U.S. struck with Germany and Austria to pre-empt most U.S. lawsuits by Holocaust victims and their heirs. Germany, Austria and corporations based there paid \$4.7 billion into special accounts set aside to settle claims for damages.

Among the names slashed in red in the Vienna composers' index is Eric Zeisl, Schoenberg's maternal grandfather, who escaped to a career in Hollywood. The attorney's other grandfather, the modernist composer Arnold Schoenberg, doesn't appear on the list. He immigrated to the United States soon after Adolf Hitler's ascension to power in 1933 and apparently was not represented by AKM.

Randol Schoenberg says heirs of composers and authors could be compensated, if the European Union would extend the blacklisted artists' copyrights by seven years in Austria and 12 years in Germany, the duration of Nazi rule

we're trying to open up... Shapreau said that Lind and Traska continue to research AKM's conduct during the Nazi era — and that the performing rights society has itself engaged a musicologist to examine its Nazi-era archives and publish his findings.

"We all know bad stuff happened, but we don't know the details, and the devil is in the details," she said.

Heartbreak cries out from the details of what happened to Joseph Beer. He grew up in Lvov in what was then Poland, now Ukraine. Based in Vienna, he became a rising star, his operas regularly produced. Then came the Nazi takeover of Austria.

Beer fled and spent the war hiding in France while his parents and sister were murdered in concentration camps. Beatrice Beer said her father continued to compose music for the rest of his 79 years, but anguish, bitterness and guilt kept him from sharing it. Opportunity sometimes knocked, she said, but he would shut the door.

The soprano says that since 1999, when she performed her father's music at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., "my life's mission has been to make sure he's back in the major repertoire."

Beer was headed to the rehearsal hall where preparations were underway for the U.S. premiere of excerpts from Beer's opera "Polish Wedding" this weekend at the Atlantic Coast Opera Festival outside Philadelphia.

It's another red-letter day for a name on the Vienna list, another affirmation that the red lines meant to silence them can be erased.

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Rechtshal. Hans von (Ps.) K Blaustein, Heinz Georg K