



Chamber Music Society
of New York

For Immediate Release
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Review tickets available

**The Lyric Chamber Music Society of New York
Launches
a
Unique New Series
In its 2010-2011 Season**

That *Other* Music: Die Andere Musik

Inaugural Concert:

February 9, 2011 7:30PM
Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 East 65th Street,
Tickets 212-239-9190 or www.lyricny.org

Igor Begelman – clarinet, Avery Fisher Career Grant 2000
Len Horovitz, Rieko Aizawa – piano
Jesse Mills – violin
Honggang Li – viola, Shanghai Quartet
Nicholas Tzavaras – cello, Shanghai Quartet

About the Series

“The Lyric is proud to announce a new series which will focus on discovering - -and rediscovering - - a vast amount of music of exceptional quality and artistic significance, created during the first half of the 20th Century, which has been neglected and should be heard,” Artistic Director, Dr. Joan Thomson Kretschmer explains.

Some of the music will be performed for the first time, since the works were suppressed by totalitarian regimes, while other compositions may be familiar to listeners. Concerts will feature ‘silenced voices,’ composers who met a variety of fates during World War II.

“Besides its particular historical role in the Nazi holocaust, the story of these silenced voices also serves as a general case in point about political repression and its consequences for our global cultural heritage,” Kretschmer continues. “We believe that the music world has been deprived of important creative input in the latter half of the 20th century by suppressing and dismissing the works of these composers. As part of our mission to bring under-exposed artistic excellence to the attention of a wider audience, we feel that performing this music in an ongoing series is an important contribution to restoring its proper place in the classical canon and to reinvigorating the repertoire for listeners and composers of today.”

The series will include works by:

- Victims of concentration camps, such as Erwin Schulhoff and Viktor Ullmann
- Those suppressed by Stalinism, like Dimitri Shostakovich and Mieczyslaw Weinberg

- Prominent Austro-German composers who fled from the Nazi dictatorship in the 1930s for the United States, including Arnold Schoenberg, Paul Hindemith, and Kurt Weill.

The Lyric will explore a range of musical styles and genres, also integrating the music of Gershwin, Ravel, Bartok, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Britten, and Hollywood composers.

Strictly classical pieces will be performed along with jazz and other styles to make for an incredibly exciting and diverse combination. Events with discussions and lectures will provide additional information on featured composers, their life experience and geopolitical views that caused their music to disappear from the public eye. As always the great array of Lyric artists will be on board to assist.

"I am thrice homeless, as a native of Bohemia in Austria, as an Austrian among Germans, and as a Jew throughout all the world. Everywhere an intruder, never welcomed." GUSTAV MAHLER

With the guidance of Conductor, James Conlon, and Bob Elias, Director of the Orel Foundation, the Lyric will give new perspective to the music-making of a turbulent period, examining artistic ideologies, racism, and prejudice in the world of the Third Reich.

Whereas recent series have focused on reanimating what the Nazis described as "entartete," or degenerate, music, the Lyric programming aims to reclaim this "other" music from the negative implications of Nazi rhetoric.

"Degenerate music" is "a very problematic term," Elias explains. "Though it has, for better or worse, become a sort of "brand" for music suppressed by the Nazis, one must keep in mind that the word itself--usually translated as "degenerate"--is a horrible word, whether in German or in English. When used it should always be in quotes and/or preceded by 'so-called.' "

"The Nazis were very skilled wordsmiths, and it's a problem that we continue to use their terminology even today; for example, Kristallnacht is a Nazi term, penned to give a tinkly ironic cast to the pogroms of November 1938; the word "deportation," when used in connection with shipping Jews and others to their deaths, is a brilliant bit of euphemism; I could go on and on. "

For Hitler and his colleagues, some music was considered inferior for a variety of political reasons. Composers of non-Aryan races, like Gershwin, Ravel, and Weill, were summarily dismissed, as were foreign and modern musical styles, and compositions in direct conflict with Nazi ideology.

Conlon writes: "The first half of the twentieth century was to see an explosion of creativity in all the arts, not least in classical music and opera. It was also an era of profound political and social upheaval, tumultuous transition, revolution and warfare. The art and music of the time reflect this and, like a cardiogram, tracked its movements. Out of the growing pains came new, formidable, innovative impulses. In the first third of the century, a vibrant, dynamic and liberal artistic culture nourished this even before the First World War.

But in 1933, with the Nazi accession to power in Berlin, the German-speaking world was to experience the greatest rupture of the over two-century-old cultural milieu. It interrupted, at best, destroyed and uprooted at worst, one of the supreme and enduring cultural traditions in Western Civilization: German Classical Music."

Under the artistic direction of Avery Fisher Career Grant Winning Clarinetist, Igor Begelman, and internationally renowned composer and sax virtuoso, Daniel Schnyder, the concerts will program works of artistic merit by musicians killed during the Holocaust, composers favored by the Nazi aesthetic, and other composers whose careers were disrupted or curtailed by the war, forever changing the course of music history.

About the February 9, 2011 program and composers

The inaugural concert features Avery Fisher Career Grant Winner Igor Begelman, clarinet; Len Horovitz and Rieko Aizawa, piano; Grammy-nominee Jesse Mills, violin; and from the Shanghai Quartet Honggang Li, viola and Nicholas Tzavaras, cello.

The program for the inaugural concert mixes well-known works with recently recovered compositions to demonstrate the significance of the loss the cultural world endured with the suppression of these artists and their work:

MAURICE RAVEL

Deux Mélodies Hébraïques

HANS KRASA

Tanec (Dance)

Passacaglia

Fugue for String Trio

GIDEON KLEIN

Trio for Violin, Viola, and Cello

MIECZYSLAW WEINBERG

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 28

KURT WEILL

Suite from Three Penny Opera

ALEXANDER VON ZEMPLINSKY

Trio in D Minor for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano, Op. 3

Maurice Ravel's music faced the Nazi's embargo of non-Aryan music in the mid 1930's when rumors suggested, that his name might be derived from "Rabbele" (young Rabi), suggesting semitic origin. Around that time Ravel's name appeared in the Grosse jüdische National-Biographie (ed. by S. Wininger. Cernauti, Tipografia 'Arte', [1925-1936]) and a book called Judentum und Musik, mit dem ABC jüdischer und nichtarischer Musikbeflissener, by Hans Brückner and Christa Maria Rock (2.Aufl. München, H. Brückner, 1936).

As Roland-Manuel writes: "Many proofs have been produced in support of this mistaken opinion; especially the interest which Maurice Ravel took in Jewish matters, his harmonization of Hebrew melodies, and, above all, the close friendships he formed with several Jewish people who were - and are - some of his finest interpreters and best friends."

A letter of complaint by the composer to Brückner requesting a correction and an intervention on Ravel's behalf by the French ambassador with Joseph Goebbels finally ensured that Ravel's music

could still be played in Germany, despite its many influences of jazz, a musical style deemed anti-German by the Nazis.

The following are excerpts from composer biographies found on the Orel Foundation's Website at <http://orelfoundation.org/index.php/site/>:

Hans Krása (1899–1944) played an active role in Prague's multi-ethnic musical life between the wars. During WWII, Krása was deported to the Terezín concentration camp, where a remarkable musical community flourished among its Jewish prisoners. On 16 October 1944 he was transported to Auschwitz and perished two days later.

At Terezín, Krása became the head of musical activities of the camp's so-called Freizeitgestaltung ("leisure time activities"), established by the Nazis once they realized the propaganda value of cultural activity at their "model" concentration camp. The camp's precarious conditions and the need for distraction drove musicians to high levels of creativity, forming one of the most vibrant musical schools in occupied Europe. Among them were Karel Reiner, Karel Ančerl, Pavel Haas, Viktor Ullmann, and Gideon Klein. During his 26-month internment, Krása composed his String Trio and the Three Songs for Soprano, Clarinet, Viola and Cello, both frequently performed.

Rudolf Freudenfeld, the son of HaGibor's director, smuggled the piano reduction of Krása's two-act childrens opera *Brundibár* into the fortress ghetto. After Krása re-orchestrated the work for the available forces, rehearsals began at the so-called Dresden barracks. Constantly interrupting rehearsals were the deportation of the child actors to concentration camps in the east, who were replaced by newly arriving children. After more than two months of rehearsals, the Terezín premiere of *Brundibár* took place at the Magdeburg barracks on 23 September 1943. On average, the opera was performed once a week until autumn of 1944, by which time the final transports had left the fortress.

Although Krása had conceived the opera before there was any immediate danger to Jews of Czechoslovak nationality, the Terezín production could be easily interpreted allegorically, with the evil *Brundibár* representing Hitler. The surreptitious communication of ideas was helped by the fact that the text, sung in Czech, could not be understood by the SS-guards. On 23 June 1944, the Terezín ghetto was selected by the Nazis for the visit of an International Red Cross commission, who came in response to the growing concerns internationally over the treatment of Jews. For the visit, the production of *Brundibár* was hastily moved to the large Sokol Hall outside the ghetto, where the stage designer František Zelenka was given materials for the improvement of the set and costumes. The embellishment of the production took place overnight. The opera's final scene was later captured in the Nazi propaganda film *Theresienstadt*, more well known under the deceptive title *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* [The Führer Gives the Jews a City]. Ironically, the scene included in the film was where *Brundibár* is defeated; the film never made it to the German screens during the war.

Gideon Klein (1919-1945) was a pianist, composer, writer and educator. In his short life he combined a dizzying array of skills, experiences, musical styles and activity. He arranged Hebrew folk melodies, wrote quarter-tone compositions, served as repetiteur for the infamous production of the Verdi Requiem in Terezín, and was a formidable presence in the musical life of that place.

Klein's music studies in Prague took place in difficult and uncertain conditions — by November of 1939 the Czech universities were closed by the Nazis, and Klein was forced to leave the Conservatory by 1940. An attempt to study in London in response to an invitation to study at the

Royal Academy of Music was aborted. For the next year Klein tried to continue his activities using the pseudonym Karel Vránek, playing concerts in private homes, and continuing to work as a composer. His own apartment became the site of something very much like a salon, a meeting place for musicians and writers. On December 4th 1941 he was sent to Terezín where he remained for almost three years.

Klein's time in Terezín is a record of remarkable activity under adverse circumstances. He became an avid educator, on musical and other subjects, and devoted himself to the teaching of the camp's orphans. He remained active as a performer, serving as pianist for several opera productions and playing in solo recitals such works as Beethoven's Op.110, Janáček's Sonata, and Busoni's transcription of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in C Major and performing such chamber compositions as the Schubert Trio in Bb, Op.99, and piano quartets by Brahms and Dvořák. He also displayed conspicuous artistic growth as a composer, completing several choral works, a formidable Piano Sonata, a Fantasy and Fugue for String Quartet, and his final work, a Trio for strings, completed a week or so before he was transported to Auschwitz.

Although there was a flurry of interest in Klein's music immediately after the war, his legacy and that of his fellow Terezín prisoners did not fare so well under the Communists. Complex conflicts and geo-political alliances created an atmosphere of de facto anti-Semitism in Czechoslovakia under normalization, ranging from the Slánský trials to the more benign but similarly toxic undermining of both religious and cultural forms.

Mieczysław Weinberg's flight from Nazi-occupied Europe was rather different from the customary exile to the West - to England or the United States. His move to the Soviet Union meant a second period of threat and discrimination under Stalin. But unlike many of his émigré colleagues in the West, Weinberg did enjoy considerable success as one of his adopted country's most fêted and frequently performed composers, especially during the 1960s and 1970s when Emil Gilels, Mstislav Rostropovich, Kiril Kondrashin, the Borodin Quartet and Leonid Kogan all recorded and performed his works. Weinberg's massive oeuvre, which includes over 150 opus numbers, found favour on the opera stage, on movie soundtracks and in chamber and orchestral programs. However his music was known only in the USSR, its spread stifled by the Iron Curtain and the restrictions imposed by the cold war. His career foundered completely when the USSR fragmented, and it is only over the last five to ten years that Weinberg has found a growing number of enthusiasts outside Russia. Peermusic have reissued a number of his works and Weinberg's significance is now being reassessed, to a point where several critics argue that the century's greatest Russian music was composed by a triumvirate that consisted of Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Weinberg.

Weinberg fled from Warsaw in 1939, shortly before Hitler's Panzers swept through Poland, marked the beginning of a series of well-timed re-locations. In 1941 he found work as a coach at the Tashkent opera house, 2000 miles away in eastern Uzbekistan. Many intellectuals and artists had been evacuated here, among them the illustrious actor and theatre director Solomon Mikhoels, a Latvian Jew whose daughter, Natalia Vovsi, Weinberg would soon marry. At Mikhoel's behest Shostakovich examined the score of Weinberg's First Symphony. Immensely impressed, he organized for Weinberg to come to Moscow. Here Weinberg re-established his friendship with Nikolay Myaskovsky, Professor of Composition at the Moscow Conservatory whom he had first met in 1940.

After 1917, the emerging Soviet Union had offered Jews living conditions superior to anything they had ever previously enjoyed. But this dispensation was short-lived and a renewal of repression in the 1930s saw the banning of Jewish newspapers and periodicals, and the closure of Jewish theatres

and educational institutions. During the Second World War — still known in Russia as “The Great Patriotic War” - the reins of anti-Semitism were relaxed again, this time by Joseph Stalin, who wanted to encourage Jewish support for the war within the Soviet Union as well as to access funds from American Jewry. It was during this period of relative tolerance that Weinberg found refuge in Moscow. Official permission to reside in the city, a rarity during the war, was granted thanks to Shostakovich's influence. He arrived in the capital in 1943 and remained there until his death in 1996. A lifelong friend, Shostakovich's enthusiasm for Weinberg's abilities grew and he came to describe him as "one of the most outstanding composers of today".

Weinberg performed in the premieres of Shostakovich's Seven Romances on Poems of Alexander Blok op. 127 (collaborating with Galina Vishnevskaya, David Oistrakh and Mstislav Rostropovich) and the Violin Sonata op. 134, standing in for Svyatoslav Richter. Weinberg worked as a freelance composer and pianist, outside the organizations that would have required him to become a party member, and therefore without the protection of the state. His status became increasingly precarious after 1948 when some of his compositions joined a list of prohibited works that included pieces by Shostakovich and Prokofiev.

When Stalin's anti-Semitic purges began again in 1948, Andrei Zhdanov — Stalin's deputy with responsibilities for “ideology, culture and science” — began a campaign aimed at extinguishing works with creative connections to Western musical developments; those works that exhibited traits of “cosmopolitanism and formalism” and in particular anything produced by Jewish artists and thinkers. Instead Zhdanov wanted works that could be easily assimilated by the public and glorify the achievements of the Soviet Union. This was nothing less than a communist incarnation of the *Reichsmusikkammer's* similarly repressive credo. Weinberg was not banned under the Zhdanov decree, unlike his colleague and friend Myaskovsky.

Weinberg was arrested in January 1953 and charged with conspiring to establish a Jewish republic in the Crimea — a concoction that although absurd, was still accompanied by a death sentence. The truth lay in Weinberg's connection to Miron Vovsi, a close relative of his wife and the principal defendant in Stalin's trumped-up “Doctor's Plot”. With scant regard for his own safety, Shostakovich, wrote to Stalin and to his equally unpredictable security chief, Lavrenti Beria, protesting Weinberg's innocence. Weinberg, incarcerated in sub-zero temperatures was deprived of sleep and interrogated. It was only Stalin's propitious death on March 5th 1953 that led to Weinberg's public rehabilitation and ultimate release.

Weinberg lost many relatives in the war, including his parents and sister who died at the Trawniki camp, about 90 miles south east of Warsaw. His experience of hate and racism inform his music to a very considerable degree. He contemplates the horrors of repression, the suffering of the Jews, and in particular the loss of children in many of his works. He once wrote: "Many of my works are related to the theme of war. This, alas, was not my own choice. It was dictated by my fate, by the tragic fate of my relatives. I regard it as my moral duty to write about the war, about the horrors that befell mankind in our century."

But Weinberg's personal response to the attacks on himself and those close to him remained stoical and positive, and he was relentlessly prolific in almost every musical genre. There are 26 complete symphonies — the last, Kaddish, written in memory of the Jews who died in the Warsaw Ghetto. Weinberg donated the manuscript score to the Yad Vashem memorial in Israel. There are also four Chamber Symphonies. Weinberg and Shostakovich had a light-hearted but long-running rivalry as to who could compose the most string quartets: Weinberg ultimately composed 17 (two more than his friend). There are also 28 instrumental sonatas, either for piano solo or with violin, viola, cello

or clarinet. The sonatas for solo cello are particularly ingenious, as is the sonata for solo double bass, one of the most unusual and effective modern works for the instrument. His seven concertos include one for cello, which was programmed by Rostropovich during the 1960s, a brilliant concerto for trumpet, a violin concerto championed by Leonid Kogan and a fine concerto for clarinet. There are over 150 songs ranging from Yiddish laments to settings of poems by Julian Tuvim and Shakespeare; a Requiem (drawing on secular texts), seven operas, three operettas, two ballets, and incidental music for 65 films, plays, radio productions and circus performances.

Composer **Kurt Weill** forged a far-reaching career that challenged the purity of preexisting styles. As a famous German Jew, he fled Nazi Germany, finding for himself in foreign countries such as America, where versatility of styles, unlike anything in Germany, interested him the most. That these varied styles— music and theater, American and European—in which he worked were (and sometimes still are) hostile to one another, places him less in the role of a unifier, and more in the role of a “crossover” artist.

As the distinctively chaotic culture of Berlin between the wars began to thrive, Weill found his way into the Novembergruppe, an organization of progressive artists from different disciplines that included musicians such as Hanns Eisler and Stefan Wolpe. In this progressive environment, Weill found collaborators who would help mold his innovative vision of modern music theater, including Yvan Goll and Georg Kaiser.

While Weill was working as a writer/critic for *Der Deutsche Rundfunk*, he glowingly reviewed a 1927 radio performance of Bertolt Brecht's *Mann ist Mann*. Brecht was so impressed by the review, and by the fact that a composer could have such insights into theater, that he invited Weill to dinner which led to their collaboration on the “Mahagonny Lieder”.

Weill added a sixth song to the “Mahagonny Lieder,” provided a stridently dissonant accompaniment while maintaining the cabaret feel, and created the first of the Brecht/Weill collaborations with the title *Mahagonny Songspiel*. *Mahagonny Songspiel* was staged for the 1927 Donaueschingen Festival, which was organized by Paul Hindemith and emphasized new music theater.

A successful revival in London of John Gay's 1728 *The Beggar's Opera* caught Brecht's eye, and he instructed his assistant, Elisabeth Hauptmann, to prepare a German translation of it. Brecht insisted the German version of *The Beggar's Opera*, discard the original 18th-century songs and replacing them with new, original songs. Weill set new lyrics by Brecht to new songs, and they called the result *Die Dreigroschenoper*. The overwhelming success of this 1928 production made celebrities out of Brecht and Weill.

Weill's music in *Die Dreigroschenoper* showed significant influence by the hit songs from America's then infamous Tin Pan Alley and jazz. Many songs from *Die Dreigroschenoper* became hits shortly after they were performed, especially the opening number “Die Moritat von Mackie Messer,” which would become one of the biggest hit songs of the 20th-century after both Weill and Brecht had died.

Elsewhere, songwriters such as Friedrich Holländer and Rudolf Nelson wrote popular songs for singers such as Marlene Dietrich, creating a culture that the Nazis referred to as “Jewish Bolshevism.” At least one of these famous singers, Kurt Gerron, who played Tiger Brown in the original cast of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, was murdered along with his family in Auschwitz in 1944. [He had been forced to direct the infamous Theresienstadt propaganda movie for the Nazis.]

Weill fled from Germany to Paris in 1933 and arrived in New York City in 1935, expecting to only work on one gigantic pageant of Judaism with the title *The Eternal Road*. The enormous Meyer Weisgal production brought together a “dream team” of director Max Reinhardt, librettist Franz Werfel and Weill.

When Weill died of a heart ailment one month after his 50th birthday (3 April 1950), his legacy and estate went into the hands of Lenya, who continued to nurture his career up until her death in 1981. Unexpected prosperity came in 1954 with an English-language version in New York City of Brecht/Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*. A few years later, Louis Armstrong made the song “Mack the Knife” into a hit single, followed by a version by Bobby Darin (1959) that became one of the most famous Grammy-winning hits of all time. In 1967 the Doors recorded a simplified version of “The Alabama Song” from the “Mahagonny Lieder”, inspiring artists such as David Bowie and Marilyn Manson to record their own interpretations.

Alexander Zemlinsky (October 14, 1871 – March 15, 1942) was one of the most powerful musical voices of his time. A remarkably influential musician, he had connections with both the more traditional and the Second Viennese School. Although his work was nearly forgotten after the war, he has recently been recognized as one of the 20th century's significant compositional voices.

Brahms was reportedly impressed with his Clarinet Trio (1896) and recommended it to Simrock as Zemlinsky's first publication. At this time Zemlinsky was conducting Vienna's Polyhymnia orchestra, at which time he met composer (then cellist), Arnold Schoenberg. An informal teacher-pupil relationship developed between the composers: Schoenberg composed his D Major Quartet under Zemlinsky's supervision and dedicated his Op. 1 Lieder to him as “teacher and friend.” In 1896 Zemlinsky won the Luitpold Prize in Munich for his opera *Sarema* with a vocal score by Schoenberg. Zemlinsky's reputation as a composer was further established with the premiere of his second opera, *Es war einmal...*, conducted by Gustav Mahler at the Vienna Hofoper in 1900.

In 1904 Zemlinsky and Schoenberg founded the Vereinigung Schaffender Tonkünstler, with support from Mahler, to promote contemporary music in Vienna. At this time Zemlinsky was appointed first Kapellmeister at the Volksoper, before departing briefly to join Mahler at the more prestigious Hofoper. However, when Mahler resigned, his contract was not extended, and Zemlinsky returned to the Volksoper.

Although Zemlinsky received praise for conducting the Berlin production of Kurt Weill's *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* in 1931, and later for setting Klabund's (pseudonym of Alfred Henschke) *Kreidekreis* in 1932, he soon returned to Vienna with new focus on his own compositions. After completing the score for *Der König Kandaules* in 1936, Zemlinsky was required to abandon its orchestration because of the Anschluss in March 1938. He fled first to Prague and afterwards to New York City with his wife and daughter. Once in New York City, Zemlinsky hoped to perform *Kandaules* at the Metropolitan Opera, but the libretto was considered inadequate. He was forced to forsake these larger works and direct attention to smaller compositions for financial reasons. In 1939 Zemlinsky attempted a final opera, *Circe*, but it remained incomplete after the composer suffered a series of strokes. Memorable moments of his final years include a brief reconciliation with Schoenberg and a national NBC broadcast of his *Sinfonietta* in 1940 under the direction of conductor Dimitri Mitropoulos.

Zemlinsky's compositions are recognized for bridging the gap between late Romanticism and twentieth-century modernist styles. Following the path of teachers Robert and J.N. Fuchs, and also Brahms and Wagner, Zemlinsky notably developed shifting tonal centers within a formal technique

of variation and word-painting in the style of Viennese expressionism. The influence of Brahms is apparent in Zemlinsky's early works, while later works draw from Mahler and the extended harmonies of Wagner. Zemlinsky eventually explored symbolism, but unlike his colleague Schoenberg, avoided extreme dissonance, twelve-tone technique and atonal music in general. Although these compositions reflect an affinity with Berg, who sought rational solutions to structural problems, Zemlinsky embraced asymmetry and did not seek such solutions.

Zemlinsky was admired not only for his compositions, but also for his conducting. Kurt Weill and Stravinsky, among others, praised him for his notable interpretations of Mozart and for his advocacy of Mahler, Schoenberg and contemporary music in general. Zemlinsky's work vanished from concert and opera programs until the late 1960's, when his music was revived in the wake of widespread Mahler zeal. The Fourth Quartet and Psalm XIII, neither of which had been published or performed during his lifetime, were rediscovered and celebrated posthumously. In 1907 *Der Traumgörge* was scheduled for a performance by Mahler, but was cancelled by Felix Weingartner, and postponed until its world premiere in 1980.