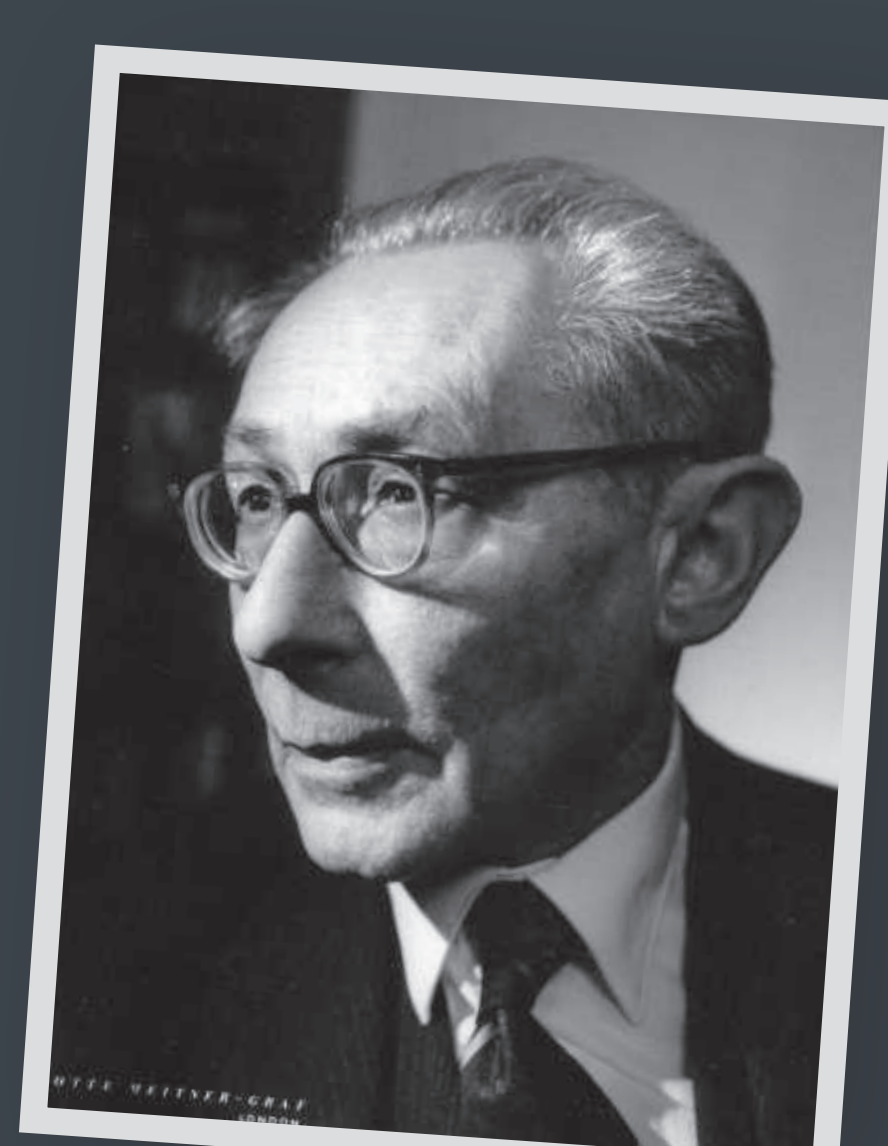


COMPOSITION

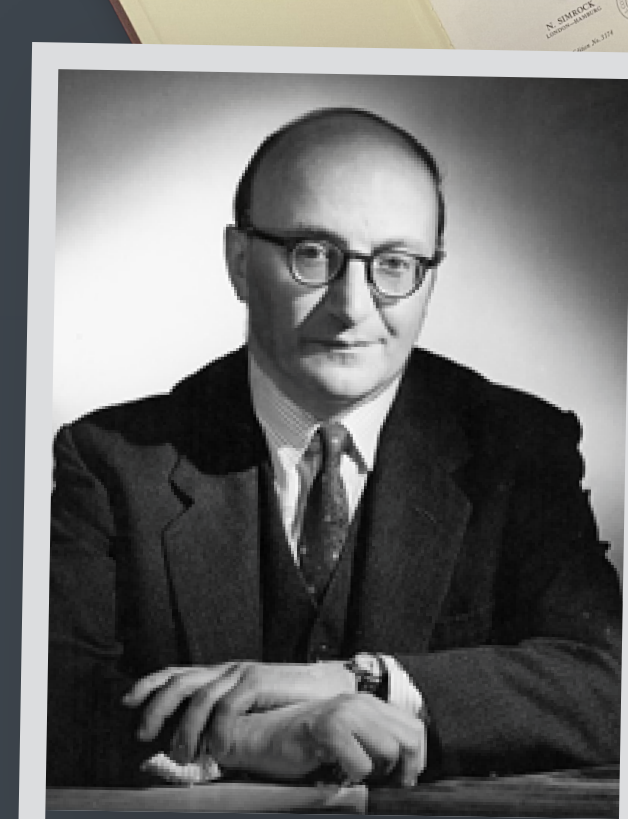
Compositions represent perhaps the most enduring legacy of émigré musicians from Nazi Europe. Some, like Hans Gál, Egon Wellesz and Berthold Goldschmidt, were already well-established before their emigration and went on to write a major part of their oeuvres in the UK. Others, such as Franz Reizenstein and Joseph Horowitz, completed their musical education in Britain and developed their own, unique styles. As immigrants, many found difficulty in re-establishing themselves and had to accept a great variety of work, thereby developing highly versatile careers.

Schönberg's dodecaphonic style became more familiar in Britain through the work of Roberto Gerhard, Leopold Spinner, Egon Wellesz and Karl Rankl, all of whom had been his pupils. A variety of stylistic influences make hybridity a characteristic of much émigré work, which provided an international outlook during this period. Please download our repertoire guides to learn more about the wide variety of published compositions by émigré composers.



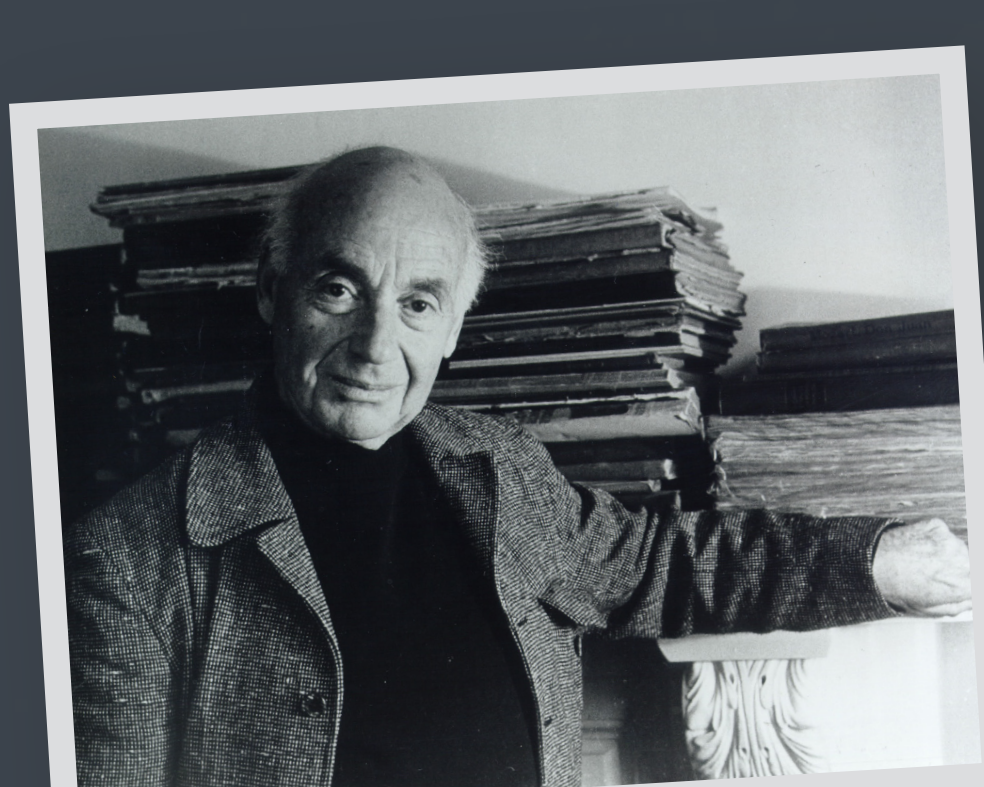
Hans Gál was widely admired as a composer of opera, ballet, symphonic, chamber and choral music in Austria and Germany before his emigration. He wrote more than half of his entire oeuvre in Britain. He taught at the University of Edinburgh, where he continued to develop his highly sophisticated and pleasing style.

Photo courtesy of the Hans Gál Society
Scores courtesy of RCM Library



Franz Reizenstein (1911-1968) was born in Nuremberg and studied first in Berlin under Hindemith and then, as a young refugee, under Ralph Vaughan Williams at the Royal College of Music. Reizenstein was a successful virtuoso pianist and composer of orchestral, vocal, piano and chamber music as well as film scores.

Photo courtesy of John Reizenstein (www.franzreizenstein.com)



Berthold Goldschmidt (1903-1996) was forced to emigrate from Germany after a hugely successful early career as a conductor and composer. His opera *Der Gewaltige Hahnrei* had been celebrated in Mannheim in 1932. He worked as a conductor and coach in Britain and came to wider international acclaim only in the final decade of his life when many new works were written and published.

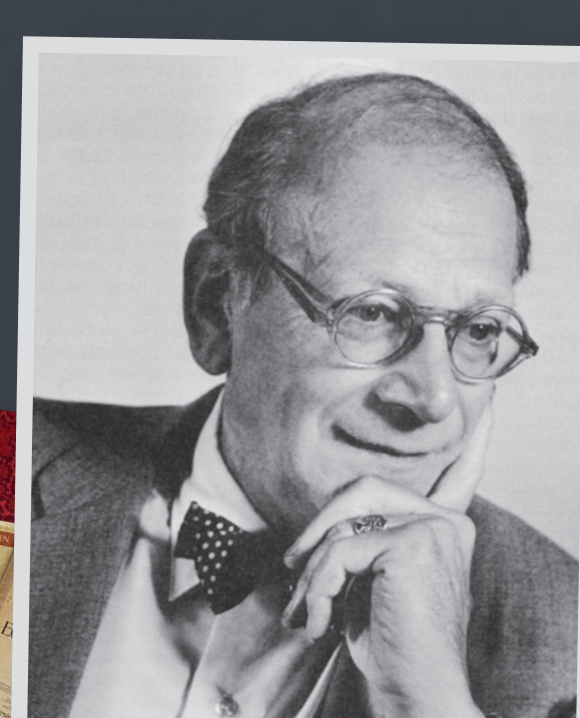
Photo courtesy of Derek Goldfoot



A revered teacher and colleague at the Royal College of Music for many decades, **Joseph Horowitz** achieved widespread critical acclaim and success as a composer of orchestral concertos, chamber music, ballet and film music.

His fifth string quartet was dedicated to the eminent art historian E.H. Gombrich, and premiered by the Amadeus Quartet; Gombrich and three members of the Quartet had fled Vienna, like Horowitz, following the arrival of the Nazis.

Photo courtesy of the RCM
Scores courtesy of RCM Library



Egon Wellesz (1885-1974) was one of the most renowned and widely-performed modernist composers of the first quarter of the 20th century. After studying with Arnold Schönberg for a short period he found his own path as a composer of opera, ballet and chamber music. A highly respected scholar, he became a Fellow of Lincoln College Oxford after his migration to Britain, where he also wrote his cycle of nine symphonies, completed in 1971.

Photo courtesy of Beasey and Hawkes
Scores courtesy of RCM Library



Hybrid Styles and Popular Media

Upon relocating to Britain, some composers found difficulty in re-establishing their careers in their new home, and therefore had to adapt to a variety of work in a multitude of musical styles. In this way, they developed versatile careers that extended beyond the traditional bounds of the world of classical music.

Mátyás Seiber is perhaps a typical example: he wrote modernist works inspired by Schönberg as well as popular songs, folk song arrangements, incidental music for radio and scores for blockbuster and animated films.

Mátyás Seiber won this Ivor Novello award in 1957, for his 1956 song 'By the Fountains of Rome,' which he co-wrote with Norman Newell, and for which he performed on the recording. He produced jazz and popular music under the pseudonym George S. Mathis, a play on his full name, Mátyás György Seiber.

Many composers undertook film and television work to make a living – for example, Franz Reizenstein wrote many film scores, including for the 1959 Hammer horror film, *The Mummy*.

Image of Novello Award courtesy of Julia Seiber-Boyd; artwork for *The Mummy* from the recording available on Spotify



Mátyás Seiber's compositions have been loved and admired all over Europe and beyond, but few know the full range of his output which includes chamber music inspired by Hungarian folk tunes as well as modernist twelve-tone works, large scale orchestral and choral works, art songs, folk song arrangements and film scores.



Compositions by Mátyás Seiber

Courtesy of RCM Library

Roberto Gerhard (1896-1970) was one of the most influential composers in post-war Britain, and enjoyed success as a composer of ballet, opera, chamber and electronic music.

Born to Swiss-German parents in Barcelona, he studied with Granados, Pedrell and Schönberg, and became an important modernist figure in Catalonia before emigrating to Britain in 1939 in order to escape the Franco regime.

Photo by Catharine Scudamore, courtesy of the Darlington Summer School Foundation



Erika Fox (b.1936) was born in Vienna shortly before the *Anschluss* and came to England as a refugee. Her distinctive compositional style results from the melding of a variety of musics of Eastern European origin, including Hasidic (Chassidic) music, liturgical chant, and modal ancient melodic lines that share commonalities with the folk music of Eastern Europe.

Photo courtesy of Tim Fox



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The Festival of Britain Opera Competition

The Festival of Britain, which ran for five months across the summer of 1951, was designed as a celebration of British culture and its 'contribution to civilisation', to lift the spirit of the public after years of war and rationing. The new Arts Council put particular effort into the promotion of classical music and opera, reviving interest in older English repertory and commissioning an explosion of new work. The exhibitions on the South Bank of the Thames were also crowned by the opening of a new concert hall, the 'Festival Hall', which replaced the old Queen's Hall, destroyed by bombing in 1941.

Perhaps the most ambitious of the plans was the opera commissioning scheme, launched in 1949. As well as commissioning specific works from named composers, the Arts Council wanted to give an opportunity to lesser-known composers to compete for a commission. It therefore invited composers to submit proposals for new operas anonymously, and, through an elaborate sifting and judging process, the many entrants were whittled down to four 'winners', who were to receive a commissioning fee and, it was hoped, a production of their work.

Of the four successful entries, three were by émigrés: the German-born Berthold Goldschmidt's *Beatrice Cenci*, the Viennese-born Karl Rankl's *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, and the Australian-born Arthur Benjamin's *A Tale of Two Cities*. The fourth winning work was *Wat Tyler* by Alan Bush. Bush was born in London, but was also a committed Communist, and in 1951 the Cold War was very cold indeed. The fact that none of the four works was performed has led to speculation about political bias and xenophobia on the part of the Arts Council, though there were many practical reasons for the failure of the project: the timescale was too tight, the financial resources too meagre, and the Council had badly underestimated the number of composers who would enter, as well as failing to secure in advance any agreement about performance with existing opera companies.

