

The German Dominance of Music in Norway 1930-45

As much German and Norwegian historians have found out about the political and economic dimensions of Norway's occupation by Nazi-Germany (1940-45), as little do we still know in detail about the consequences on Norway's music life. For centuries both countries had shared strong cultural ties and Norwegian artists traditionally had turned to Leipzig and Berlin for professional education. When central Europe's modern trends of atonality and neoclassicism had their breakthrough during the 1920s and 1930s the majority of Norway's composers chose an alternative path in favor of national folklorism and romantic aesthetics. With the rise of new ideological concepts promoting Germanic supremacy Nordic societies in Germany tried to win Norwegian artists for their ideas. Some of them felt attracted, while other musicians refused the offers, although still sticking to their alternative folklorist views.

The five years of German occupation intensified the aesthetic, political and cultural situation in Norway, ranging from collaboration to resistance and persecution. But Norwegian musicology in general still has not examined yet the balance of politics and music in detail. Either it was not included into their historiography, or – for the later contributions – it has not been attached to the international literature and theories about music and Nazism. After a few legendary reports from the immediate post-war years by journalist Hans Jørgen Hurum, music critic and female composer Pauline Hall and music scholar Olav Gurvin only recently dimensions of resistance, collaboration, sentence for treason and reintegration of musical elites were outlined in a few critical studies. On the contrary Norway has not been recognized by the international research community dealing with music and nazism. Norwegian historians have concentrated on the military sides of collaboration and the stylization of a heroic resistance, so that they did not care for cultural issues either. Therefore still little is known about the structures, strategies, protagonists, and events regarding music in Josef Terbovens's Reichskommissariat and the complementary Norwegian authorities, about the resistance's musical policies or the persecution of Jewish and communist artists.

This Project is located at the Institute for Musicology, University of Münster, and will deal with three main topics:

- Structures, Protagonists, Ideologies - German Music Policies for Norway 1930-45 (Andreas Bußmann)
- The Presence of German Musicians in Norway and Norwegian Musicians in Germany 1930-45 (Ina Rupprecht)
- Music and Resistance. Cultural Defence against the German Occupation of Norway 1940-45 (Prof. Custodis, Projectleader)