

The German Impact on Norwegian Music 1930-45 and its Continuities

Music became a major symbolic force in Norway during the 1930s and under German occupation from 1940 to 1945. Its alleged unpolitical nature and its emotional and commemorative qualities made it a perfect medium in the ongoing process of Norwegian nation building during the first decades past 1905. The new generation of Norwegian composers could draw on the long tradition of close cultural relationships between Norway and Germany in their quest for a modern 'Nordic sound', which was a central ingredient of their cultural nationalism. The German occupation in 1940 unsettled the long-lasting German-Norwegian cultural bonds, and Norwegian artists were enforced to rethink their aesthetic positions under dramatically shifting political conditions. So far, the consequences of this double transformation of the 'Nordic' – before and after 1940 – have been absent in Norwegian music historiography, whilst the underlying aesthetic and political ideologies persisted.

All of these issues are addressed by the design, scope, and methodology of the project's three main topics:

- 1) monumentality in Norwegian national music as a unifying force and challenge for Norwegian artists to express greatness independent from German models (“Uniting the Nation: German Monumentality and the Quest for Greatness in Norwegian Music”),
- 2) the reception history of Grieg's exceptional legacy in cultural nation building and his symbolic role in the battle of ideologies of the 1930s and 1940s (“History and Memory: Grieg-Reception 1930-45 and its Continuities”), and
- 3) the impact these political shifts and ideological battles had on contemporary female musicians artistic practice, and their exclusion from written history after 1945 (“Forgotten Protagonists? Female Artists in Norwegian Music History 1930-45”).

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