

Explore the story of émigré musicians from Nazi Europe in Britain, the Royal College of Music Museum's latest exhibition opens in January 2023

The Royal College of Music (RCM) Museum's latest exhibition, *Music, Migration & Mobility – The Story of Émigré Musicians from Nazi-Europe in Britain*, explores the lives and legacies of musicians who fled the Nazi regime and the ravages of war.

Many of the most influential figures in post-war British musical life were émigré musicians who were forced to leave their homeland as a direct result of the rise and impact of the Nazi regime in Germany. From Jewish musicians who were removed from their posts to political opponents escaping retribution, Britain offered a creative home where they could thrive and go on to play a role in enriching its cultural life.

Among them were the composer and former RCM professor **Joseph Horowitz** (best-known for his 70+ television and film scores, including that for *Rumpole of the Baily*); cellist and surviving member of the Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz **Anita Lasker-Wallfisch** (who founded the English Chamber Orchestra), composer **Mátyás Seiber** (who wrote music for many prominent artists including Dennis Brain and Peter Pears who was regarded as one of the finest teachers of composition in the country); the artist **Milein Cosman** (whose work is on display at the RCM and the Wigmore Hall); the legendary artist, musician and broadcaster **Gerard Hoffnung**; the broadcaster and writer **Hans Keller** and many others who would play a key role in the development of now major British institutions including Glyndebourne Festival, the Royal Opera, the BBC and the RCM itself and whose work resonates today through film, TV and art.

From annotated scores and costumes to recordings and concert programmes, alongside photography and personal items, *Music, Migration & Mobility* invites visitors to delve into the lives and experiences of the musicians who settled in Britain as a result of the Nazi regime. First hand reflections are woven throughout the exhibition, introducing visitors to the musicians' migratory journeys, motivations, experiences and their impact on wider British culture.

The poignant story of cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, a survivor of the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen, is told alongside her cello case, which dates to her early years in Britain. Materials including original programmes, drawings and a tuba owned by German artist, musician and broadcaster Gerard Hoffnung, who was brought to England as a boy, offer an insight into his humorous productions. Other objects featured in these sections include composer Mátyás Seiber's film scores, original story boards and an Ivor Novello Award for the popular song *By the Fountains of Rome* written in 1956.

The exhibition begins with an exploration of why musicians fled and delves into their long and harrowing journeys, enhanced with a series of interactive maps, personal testimonies and possessions. It goes on to look at the challenges that faced them once in Britain and the impact of internment. Locations such as Mooragh Camp on the Isle of Man saw many musicians grouped together, allowing a creative atmosphere to flourish. Makeshift posters and programmes created within the camps are displayed alongside photos, letters and poetry giving insights into how creative networks developed, even during the most challenging times.

The journey through *Music, Migration & Mobility* continues as visitors are transported to the now iconic Glyndebourne Opera Festival. The Festival's early success was thanks to émigrés such as Fritz Busch and Carl Ebert who promoted the employment of those who fled. Newspaper clippings illustrate the debates taking place in post-war Britain. Set-design sketches, costumes and backstage photos invite visitors into the world of the émigré musicians and their work. The exhibition continues, examining the Amadeus Quartet and their cultural contribution. Memorabilia from their first concert at Wigmore Hall, portraits by the artist Milein Cosman and letters all demonstrate their standing.

The final sections explore émigré musicians as founders, educators and cultural figures. Objects including instruments, books, photographs and programmes give insights into the lives of those who remained in Britain after the war.

Royal College of Music researcher and exhibition curator Norbert Meyn said: 'In telling the stories of just some of the musicians who settled in Britain during the mid-20th century we hope to explore not just individual experiences, but also the far-reaching impact of migration on culture at large. Music moves when people move and just as traditions, skills, ideas and indeed objects get passed on from one generation to another, so does the impact of musicians' migration during this period.'

The *Music, Migration & Mobility* exhibition is one of many outputs of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded Music, Migration and Mobility research project at the Royal College of Music. The project, led by Norbert Meyn, brings together an international team of musicians and researchers from Royal Holloway's Centre for the Geohumanities and the University of Salzburg, for one of the biggest musicological research projects at the Royal College of Music to date.

The *Music, Migration & Mobility* exhibition opens at the Royal College of Music Museum on 17 January 2023. The RCM Museum is open Tuesday–Friday, 10.15am–5.45pm and Saturday–Sunday, 11am–6pm. Entry to the exhibition is free and can be [booked online](#).

To find out more about the Music, Migration and Mobility research project, visit the [project webpages](#) or [online resources](#).

Director of Communications – talia.hull@rcm.ac.uk

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About the Royal College of Music Museum

The Royal College of Music Museum maintains one of the richest and most relevant collections of music-related objects in the UK and Europe. Standing in excess of 14,000 items, it represents a range of music-making activities over a period of more than five centuries. It contains the earliest known guitar, the earliest stringed keyboard instrument and the most recognised portraits of Joseph Haydn and Farinelli.

Following a £3.6million investment from Heritage Lottery Fund, the Museum underwent a major redevelopment in 2020-21.

About the Royal College of Music

Founded in 1882, the Royal College of Music (RCM) is a world leading music conservatoire with a prestigious history and contemporary outlook. More than 900 undergraduate and postgraduate students come from over 50 countries and are taught in a dynamic environment, leaving the RCM to become the outstanding performers, conductors and composers of the future.

In 2022, the RCM was ranked as the global top institution for performing arts in the prestigious QS World University Rankings by Subject. RCM professors are leaders in their fields, and under such expert guidance, RCM students regularly achieve remarkable success around the globe.

Among over 9,500 alumni are composers and performers such as Louise Alder, Sir Thomas Allen, Sophie Bevan, Benjamin Britten, Clemency Burton-Hill, Rebecca Clarke, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Dame Sarah Connolly, Gerald Finley, Gustav Holst, Lord Lloyd Webber, Anna Meredith MBE, Sir Hubert Parry, Mark-Anthony Turnage, and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Regular visitors to the RCM include Sir Thomas Allen, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Alina Ibragimova and Lang Lang. Our recent honorary doctorates include Sir Antonio Pappano, Jonas Kaufmann, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Bryn Terfel, Steve Reich and Maxim Vengerov (Polonsky Visiting Professor of Violin).