

## A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE HOLOCAUST


Timeline • People • Arts • Activities • Resources

# Teacher Resources for: Music


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Integrates an understanding to reactions against 20th century trends in classical music as well as learning about various forms of resistance and conditions in daily life. Surprisingly, music existed in the camps, and was used as a form of resistance. Currently composed music helps to express feelings of the intense topic.


## Vocabulary

**Auschwitz - Birkenau /oushvits - biakenow/** : A complex consisting of concentration, extermination, and labor camps in Upper Silesia. It was established in 1940 as a concentration camp and included a killing center in 1942. Auschwitz I: The main camp. Auschwitz II (Also known as Birkenau): The extermination center. Auschwitz III (Monowitz): The I.G. Farben labor camp, also known as Buna. In addition, there were numerous subsidiary camps.

**Bund /boond/** : The Jewish Socialist Party founded in 1897. It aspired to equal rights for the Jewish population. During World War II the Bund was active in the underground resistance and some Bund members were also part of some Judenrat councils. They took part in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

**Cabaret /kabaray/** : Large restaurant providing food, drink, music, a dance floor, and floor show.

**Cantor:** Leader of chanted prayers in a Jewish service; the congregational singer.

**Concentration camp (*Konzentrationslager* abbreviated as *KZ*) /kontsentrationslahga/** : Concentration camps were prisons used without regard to accepted norms of arrest and detention. They were an essential part of Nazi systematic oppression. Initially (1933-36), they were used primarily for political prisoners. Later (1936-42), concentration camps were expanded and non-political prisoners--Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, and Poles--were also incarcerated. In the last period of the Nazi regime (1942-45), prisoners of concentration

camps were forced to work in the armament industry, as more and more Germans were fighting in the war. Living conditions varied considerably from camp to camp and over time. The worst conditions took place from 1936-42, especially after the war broke out. Death, disease, starvation, crowded and unsanitary conditions, and torture were a daily part of concentration camps.

**Contra fact:** A musical technique that places new lyrics into melodies of old songs. This technique was used during the Holocaust, when lyrics were being written faster than composers could generate the music.

**Dachau /dakhou/ 𐀀:** Nazi concentration camp in southern Germany. Erected in 1933, this was the first Nazi concentration camp. Used mainly to incarcerate German political prisoners until late 1938, whereupon large numbers of Jews, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and other supposed enemies of the state and anti-social elements were sent as well. Nazi doctors and scientists used many prisoners at Dachau as guinea pigs for experiments. Dachau was liberated by American troops in April 1945.

**Degenerate art (*Entartete Kunst*) /entatete koonst/ 𐀀:** Art which did not fit the Nazi ideal.

**Dehumanization:** The Nazi policy of denying Jews basic civil rights such as practicing religion, education, and adequate housing.

**Ghettos:** The Nazis revived the medieval term ghetto to describe their device of concentration and control, the compulsory "Jewish Quarter." Ghettos were usually established in the poor sections of a city, where most of the Jews from the city and surrounding areas were subsequently forced to reside. Often surrounded by barbed wire or walls, the ghettos were sealed. Established mostly in eastern Europe (e.g., Lodz, Warsaw, Vilna, Riga, or Minsk), the ghettos were characterized by overcrowding, malnutrition, and heavy labor. All were eventually dissolved, and the Jews murdered.

**Goebbels, Paul Joseph (1897-1945) /poul yosef gobles/ 𐀀:** Reich Propaganda Director of the NSDAP and Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda.

**Holocaust:** Derived from the Greek *holokauston* which meant a sacrifice totally burned by fire. Today, the term refers to the systematic planned extermination of about six million European Jews and millions of others by the Nazis between 1933-1945.

**Partisans:** Irregular forces which use guerrilla tactics when operating in enemy-occupied territory. During the Holocaust, partisans operated secretly in their efforts to assist Jews and others persecuted by the Nazis.

**Rabbi:** Leader of a Jewish congregation, similar to the role of a priest or minister.

**Reichskammern /raikskaman/ 𐀀:** Reich government departments.

**Reichstag /raikhstag/ 𐀀:** The German Parliament. On February 27, 1933, a staged fire burned the Reichstag building. A month later, on March 23, 1933, the Reichstag approved the Enabling Act which gave Hitler unlimited dictatorial power.

**Siddur** 📖: The Hebrew name for the Jewish prayerbook.

**Synagogue**: Jewish house of worship, similar to a church.

**Tallis**: Jewish prayer shawl with fringes on four sides. These fringes represent the four corners of the world and symbolize God's omnipresence.

**Third Reich /raich/**: Meaning "third regime or empire," the Nazi designation of Germany and its regime from 1933-45. Historically, the First Reich was the medieval Holy Roman Empire, which lasted until 1806. The Second Reich included the German Empire from 1871-1918.

**Torah /tora/** 📖: A scroll containing the five books of Moses.

**Underground**: Organized group acting in secrecy to oppose government, or, during war, to resist occupying enemy forces.

**Volk /folk/** 📖: The concept of Volk (people, nation, or race) has been an underlying idea in German history since the early nineteenth century. Inherent in the name was a feeling of superiority of German culture and the idea of a universal mission for the German people.

**Warsaw ghetto**: Established in November 1940, it was surrounded by a wall and contained nearly 500,000 Jews. About 45,000 Jews died there in 1941 alone, as a result of overcrowding, hard labor, lack of sanitation, insufficient food, starvation, and disease. During 1942, most of the ghetto residents were deported to Treblinka, leaving about 60,000 Jews in the ghetto. A revolt took place in April 1943 when the Germans, commanded by General Jürgen Stroop, attempted to raze the ghetto and deport the remaining inhabitants to Treblinka. The defense forces, commanded by Mordecai Anielewicz, included all Jewish political parties. The bitter fighting lasted twenty-eight days and ended with the destruction of the ghetto.

**Yiddish**: A language that combines elements of German and Hebrew.

**HAND OUT** Display vocabulary list on a separate page suitable for printing. NOTE: You will have to use your browser's back button to return to this page.

### Discussion Questions/Research Topics

- Analyze the use of propaganda by the Nazis.
- What kinds of music were considered "degenerate" in Hitler's time. Why?
- Research the influence of Jazz on rebellious youth groups during Hitler's regime in Germany.
- How was music used as a form of resistance to the Nazi regime?
- How did music aid in concentration camp prisoner moral and survival?
- Wagner was a favorite composer of Hitler and his henchmen. Discuss the composer's beliefs which may have attracted Hitler's admiration.

- Listen to a select piece by Wagner. How does it make you feel? How could it have influenced others during Hitler's time?
- Evaluate the role of the mass media and propaganda in Nazi Germany.
- Many Jewish families in Germany had roots in their towns and villages for generations. Research the contributions of German Jews to their country through music. To narrow your research, focus on a particular period or music or geographic area.
- Research stories of survivors who claim that music was a sustaining force in their lives through the Holocaust.
- Discuss the composer Richard Strauss, his music, and the role he played in the Third Reich.
- Compare the music of Brückner and Wagner.
- Discuss why Hitler identified with the great composers, Beethoven and Wagner.
- Discuss the "degenerate" Jewish composers contributions to the Arts after they fled to the United States to escape Nazi oppression.
- Discuss the music of Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern. What made their music objectionable to the Third Reich?
- Discuss the three-prong policy regarding musicians and artists practiced by the Third Reich.

**HAND OUT** Display discussion questions on a separate page suitable for printing. NOTE: You will have to use your browser's back button to return to this page.

### Reproducible Student Hand-Outs

**HAND OUT** **Concentration Camps.** Map of Nazi concentration camps in Europe.

**HAND OUT** **Ghettos in Europe.** Map showing Jewish ghettos in Europe under the Nazis.

**HAND OUT** **Railroads Leading to Auschwitz.** Map of the rail system that brought victims to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

### Books

- Arnold, Ben. "Art, Music and the Holocaust." in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol 6, No 4, pp. 335-349, 1991.
- Bergmeier, J. P. and Rainer E. Lotz. *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing*. Yale University Press, 1997.
- Cummins, Paul. *Dachau Song: the Twentieth Century Odyssey of Herbert Zipper*. New York: Peter Lang, 1992.

- Fenelon, Fania. *Playing for Time*. Translated from the French by Judith Landry. New York: Atheneum, 1977.
- Flam, Gila. *Singing for Survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto 1940-45*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992.
- Leibman, Ludmilla. *Teaching the Holocaust Through Music*. 1997.
- Levi, Erik. *Music in the Third Reich*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.
- Kalisch, Shoshana and Barbara Meister. *Yes, We Sang!: Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps*. New York: Harper & Row, 1985.
- Karas, Joza. *Music in Terezín*. [New York]: Pendragon Press. 1985.
- Kater, Michael. *The Twisted Muse*. New York: Oxford University Press 1997.
- Meyer, Michael. *The Politics of Music in the Third Reich*. New York: P. Lang, 1991.
- Mlotek, Eleanor and Malke Gottlieb, compilers. *We Are Here: Songs of the Holocaust*. New York: Workmen's Circle and Hippocrene Books, 1983.
- *Songs of the Concentration Camps: From the Repertoire of Emma Schaver*. Arranged by Lazar Weiner. [S.l.: s.n.], 1948. New York, N.Y.: Shulsinger Bros.

**WEB LINK** A bibliography of music in the Holocaust is available at the Wiesenthal Center site.

**WEB LINK** Terezín: A Selected Bibliography from the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

### Other Resources

- *Hidden History: Songs of the Kovno Ghetto*. CD. USHMM
- *Rise UP and Fight! Songs of the Jewish Partisans*. CD. USHMM.
- *Terezín: The Music 1941-44*. 2 CD set. Romantic Robot.  
Includes:
  - Gideon Klein, Sonata for Piano
  - Gideon Klein, Trio
  - Viktor Ullmann, String Quartet No. 3
  - Viktor Ullmann, Piano Sonata No. 6
  - Hans Krása, Tanec
  - Hans Krása, Brundibár
  - Viktor Ullmann, Songs
  - Pavel Haas, Four Songs on Chinese Verse

**WEB LINK** This site recommends recorded music of Terezín, including the Terezín Music Memorial Project.

## Lesson Plans from the Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust

**ACTIVITY** *Requiem Song of the Murdered Jewish People*. Students are exposed to poetry by Zlata Razdolina set to music and practice narration.

**ACTIVITY** Folk Dances of Eastern Europe. Students experience folk dance as a form of expressive art.

**ACTIVITY** Class Memorial. Students plan and conduct a memorial service commemorating the victims of the Holocaust.

## Lesson Plans on Other Sites

**WEB LINK** Assignment: Rescue. The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee, an eight-day unit for high school.

## Florida Resource Manual on Holocaust Education

The following materials from the *State of Florida Resource Manual on Holocaust Education, Grades 9-12* will enrich your class's study of this topic. This manual was distributed to all Florida high schools in the spring of 1999 and should be available in your school resource center.

Jewish Partisan Song	Unit 7	pages 75-76
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### [A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust](#)

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