Jakob Schönberg (1900–1956) and Jewish Art Music in Southern Germany
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> The Mannheim composer Karl Hamburger presents/offers a dance scene, "Esther," for large orchestra. In the form of a symphonic poem, it attempts to portray Esther's rescue of the Jewish people. What is remarkable about this excellently orchestrated work in Romantic musical style is the use of southern German melodies as they are sung to the words of the Book of Esther … as well as the well-known *Moaus zur jeschuossi.*[1] Even though it is a work in the old style, it should eventually find a place in the concert programs of Jewish events.[2]

This statement from a brief newspaper article by the music critic and composer Oskar Guttmann about Karl Hamburger (1890–1962) is the only available information about the work of the teacher and musician. Despite Guttmann's recommendation, *Esther* was never performed and hardly any biographical data is available on Hamburger, save for the fact that he was born in Burgsinn, a market community in the Main-Spessart district in Lower Franconia, fought in the First World War, and immigrated to the United States in 1941.[3] In some respects, this situation is characteristic of the state of research on Jewish composers of art music in southern Germany in general. Only some of their bequests can be located and their works are hardly present in today's concert life.

Some these composers and their works can be traced through a composition competition, which the Reichsverband of the Jewish Culture League organized in 1936. This remarkable and spectacular campaign to promote contemporary Jewish composers took place during the increasing disenfranchisement of the Jews, exactly one year after the infamous Nuremberg Racial Laws were passed. To appeal to the creativity of Jewish composers just when anti-Semitic measures reached a life-threatening dimension was a daring undertaking indeed.[4] For the organizers, the competition was meant to accentuate Jewish presence and its specific conditions.

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[1] This refers to the Hanukkah song "Maoz tsur," rendered here in the old Ashkenazic pronunciation.

[2] "Der Mannheimer Komponist Karl Hamburger legt eine Tanzszene 'Esther', für großes Orchester vor. In Form einer sinfonischen Dichtung wird die Rettung des jüdischen Volkes durch Esther zu schildern versucht. Bemerkenswert an dem ausgezeichnet instrumentierten Werk romantischer Haltung ist die Verwendung süddeutscher Melodien, wie sie zu den Worten des Buches Esther ... gesungen werden, sowie die des bekannten Moaus zur jeschuossi. Wenn auch ein Werk älterer Art, soll es doch gelegentlich in den Konzertprogrammen jüdischer Veranstaltungen einen Platz finden." Oskar Guttmann, "Tanzszene," *Jüdische Rundschau: Allgemeine jüdische Zeitung* 39, no. 102/103 (December 21, 1934): 20.

[3] See Reiner Strätz, *Biographisches Handbuch Würzburger Juden 1900–1945* (Würzburg: Schöningh, 1989), 232. For a torso of an encyclopedic entry, see also *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS- Zeit*, http:// www.lexm.uni- hamburg.de, s.v. "Hamburger, Karl."

[4] Kurt Singer saw the competition as an opportunity "to promote the creative work of the composers" and "to transform Jewish identity into Jewish sound." ("… die Produktion der Komponisten zu fördern….jüdisches Wesen in jüdischen Klang zu bannen.") "Der Reichsverband Jüdischer Kulturbünde: Entwicklung, Arbeit, Aufgabe," *Jüdische Rundschau: Allgemeine jüdische Zeitung* 41, no. 58 (July 21, 1936): 4.

Of the 122 works submitted in five divisions, three received prizes:[5] Werner Seelig-Bass's Prelude for orchestra, the Richard Fuchs's oratorio *Vom jüdischen Schicksal*, and Hugo Adler's *Schischey schirey (Sechs hebräische Volkslieder)* for choir a cappella.[6] The latter two composers were active in southern Germany. Max Sinzheimer (1894–1977), a conductor, organist, and pianist, who was active in Mannheim, served on the jury, amongst others. The works of another child of southern Germany, Herbert Fromm, received honorable mention.

Vom jüdischen Schicksal received the highest score of the awardees. Kurt Singer described the oratorio as "a heroic work of force and strength, sometimes advancing into the monumental, a work that also captures form and content in a stylistic unit."[7] However, this and other works that entered the competition have hardly been performed. As Michael Haas points out in his chapter, *Vom jüdisches Schicksal* was canceled at the last minute due to the ban imposed by Hans Hinkel.[8] Through the efforts of his descendants, the oratorio was premiered only a few years ago in New Zealand.[9]

Works of other composers experienced a similar fate. Erich Katz (1900–1973), who from 1921 until his arrest in 1939 resided in Freiburg, received an award in the category Choral Music with *Die Sonne*—the work has fallen into complete oblivion.[10] Herbert Fromm (1905–1995) from Kitzingen, who had studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich, contributed a motet for mixed choir a cappella on the words of Psalm 18 which was recommended for performance, but similarly fell into oblivion. Reasons are self-evident: many of the composers left Germany in the following years; others fell victim to the Shoah. None of the award-winning works ever had the chance to be established in the repertoires of the concert hall, lest the canon. One composer whose name appeared in conjunction with the competition and who left was Jakob Schönberg (1900–1956). His life and work as musicologist and composer are the subject of this essay.

Jakob Schönberg: Beginnings in Fürth

Schönberg was born on September 8, 1900, into an Orthodox family in the Franconian town of Fürth. This city was significantly shaped for centuries by its Jewish population, designated as a "Bavarian Jerusalem" or "Franconian Jerusalem." While neighboring Nuremberg suffered enormous economic disadvantages due to the displacement of the Jews in the early seventeenth century and subsequently lost half of its (Christian) inhabitants over the course of the following two hundred years, Fürth's population grew tenfold during that time due to an influx of Jews from Vienna, Nuremberg, and other cities who were attracted by the liberal

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[5] According to the *C.-V.-Zeitung* there were 123 works: fifteen ceremonial preludes for orchestra, eight choral works with orchestral accompaniment, nine choral works for youth groups, fifty-seven song cycles, and thirty-four works for choir a-cappella, see *C.-V.-Zeitung* 16, no. 4 (January 28, 1937): 7.

[6] See Karl Wiener, "Das Preisausschreiben der Kulturbünde," *C.-V.-Zeitung* 16, no. 19 (May 13, 1937): 15.

[7] "...ein heroisches Werk von Wucht und Kraft, zoweilen ins Monumentale vorstoßend, ein Werk zudem, das Form und Gehalt in eine stilistische Einheit bannt." Kurt Singer, "Das musikalische Preisausschreiben," *Jüdische Rundschau: Allgemeine jüdische Zeitung* 42, no. 35 (May 4, 1937): 5.

[8] See Dora Fuchs, "Biografische Skizze von Dr. Richard Fuchs,"1970, Memoire Collection, ME 162, MM 26, Leo Back Institute Archives, New York.

[9] The European premiere of *Vom jüdischen Schicksal* took place on January 28, 2020, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in Karlsruhe. The young Karlsruhe musicologist and violinist Jaleh Perego is currently completing a dissertation on Fuchs.

[10] The Erich Katz bequest is held at the Regis University in Denver, Colorado.

local conditions. By 1800 the Jews accounted for 20 percent of Fürth's population. Although conditions changed when the town passed to Bavaria in 1806, the Jewish community of Fürth remained an important driving force of economic and cultural development, especially when Fürth established itself as the industrial center of Middle Franconia.[11]

Schönberg's father David, a bookbinder and merchant, was also a hazan at the Klaus Synagogue in Fürth. This prayer house, donated in 1707 by the then chief rabbi of Fürth, Bärmann Fränkel, was associated with a yeshiva that was an important center—alongside Frankfurt and Altona—of Jewish scholarship in Germany until the nineteenth century. At times up to four hundred Talmud students studied there.[12] The Klaus Synagogue was located in the so-called *schulhof* (school yard), which also included the two largest and oldest synagogues of the city, the so-called old shul and the new shul. The Schönberg family's house faced the Jewish community center on Blumenstraße.[13] The young Schönberg thus grew up surrounded by Orthodoxy, a denomination many German Jews had abandoned for the liberal strand of Judaism.

In line with his family's religious leanings, the young Schönberg first attended to the Israelite Realschule in Fürth beginning in 1906. In 1916 he continued his education at the Oberrealschule, a high school in Nuremberg, from which he graduated in July 1919.[14] In parallel, he received his music education, supported by his family who showed great interest in the arts. As Jakob Schönberg's musical talent became evident at the age of five, he received his first piano lessons. Later, his family would encourage and support his diverse career in music.

Schönberg made his first public appearances as pianist in his teens in his hometown and continued to perform regularly thereafter, as documented in a newspaper article of 1921:

> For quite a while, the name of a young composer from Fürth, the student Jakob Schönberg, has dominated the interest of the musical life of our city. In our memories we go back to the years shortly before the outbreak of the world fire [World War I], when a little boy from the Israelite secondary school appears before us, bravely presented himself playing the piano at closing ceremonies .... The talent has grown with the boy from back then ….[15]

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[11] Hitler therefore liked to compare the "German" city of Nuremberg with the neighboring "Jewish" city of Fürth, cf. Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-1945*, Munich 2002, p. 758.

[12] Bernd Windsheimer und Wolf-Martin Hegert, *Geschichte der Stadt Fürth* [History of the City of Fürth], Fürth 2007, pp. 42-43.

[13] Gerhard Krause, "Jacob Schönberg in memoriam…," in *Gemeindeblatt der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Fürth*, September 1966.

[14] See the short curriculum vitae in Jakob Schönberg, *Die traditionellen Gesänge des israelitischen Gottesdienstes in Deutschland* (Nuremberg: Buch- und Kunstdruckerei E. Spandel, 1926), 95.

[15] "Seit längerer Zeit dominiert im Interesse des musikalischen Lebens unserer Stadt der Name eines jungen Fürther Komponisten, des Studenten Jakob Schönberg. Wir greifen in unserer Erinnerung in die Jahre kurz vor Ausbruch des Weltenbrandes zurück, da taucht vor uns ein Bürschlein aus der israelitischen Realschule auf, wie er bei Schlussfeiern gar beherzt … im Klavierspiel schon seinen Mann stellte. Das Talent ist mit dem Knaben von damals groß geworden …." "Jakob Schönberg und sein Kompositions-Abend," undated newspaper clipping, box 1, folder 2, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute Archives, New York.

Another newspaper also reported that as a child, Schönberg "thankfully has repeatedly provided his services at charity events to promote a good cause."[16] Until his graduation from high school, Schönberg only took private lessons from a Mr. Frankenberger. Thereafter he went north to Wilhelmshafen for "special music studies."[17] He remained for one year, then returned to his Franconian homeland at the end of 1920.

As a twenty-year-old, Schönberg already had already composed an impressive amount of music, which he showcased in a concert on April 5, 1921. It took place at the Berolzheimerianum, an educational center where all of Fürth's inhabitants could acquire education free of charge.[18] Since no organizer is mentioned in the concert program, it may be that the composer himself or his parents underwrote the event (though the concert was not free of charge).[19] That a twenty-year-old son of the city introduced himself to the public with his own compositions was unusual. Even more unique was the selection of repertoire, which did not consist of small-scale genres as expected from a young composer. Instead, the evening offered a full-length symphonic program with three orchestral pieces composed between 1917 and 1920, and played by 45 musicians of the Reichswehr-Orchester Nürnberg under the baton of Schönberg himself. The renowned operatic tenor Max Altglass performed two of Schönberg's songs to texts by Ludwig Uhland and Nikolaus Lenau. Only the concluding piece of the evening revealed Schönberg's heritage, the symphonic poem *Die Zerstörung von Jerusalem* that conveyed a Zionist idea, which the composer himself had briefly explained:

> More a tone poem than a tone painting, this symphonic poem aims not only to depict the collapse of Jerusalem, but above all to express the composer's feelings when he dedicated hours of remembrance to this sad event. A hopeful voice, however, announces the joyful promise that the homeless and fate-driven Jewish people will be given back a home and a finite peace.[20]

Newspapers from Fürth and Nuremberg published positive reviews, mentioning the *full hall* [emphasis in the original] and the following assessment:

> Schönberg unites skill and serious endeavors and this is our guarantee that we are not dealing with a temporary phenomenon in the arts that appears and disappears like a

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[16] "… dankenswerterweise schon wiederholt bei Wohltätigkeitsveranstaltungen seine Dienste zur Förderung einer guten Sache zur Verfügung [stellte]." Undated newspaper clipping, box 1, folder 2, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute Archives, New York.

[17] Schönberg, *Die traditionellen Gesänge*, 95.

[18] In 1904 the pencil manufacturer Heinrich Berolzheimer had donated 223,000 gold marks to build the educational center. Inaugurated in 1906, the foundation became quite important for the industrial and worker city of Fürth. Today, the art-nouveau building houses the Comödie Fürth.

[19] For the program, see box 1, folder 2, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute New York.

[20] "Mehr Tondichtung als Tongemälde will diese symphonische Dichtung nicht nur den Zusammenbruch von Jerusalem schildern, sondern vor allem die Gefühle des Komponisten zum Ausdruck bringen, die er empfand, als er diesem traurigen Ereignis Stunden der Erinnerung widmete. Eine hoffende Stimme kündet aber die frohe Verheißung an, dass dem heimatlosen und vom Schicksal getriebenen Volke der Juden eine Heimstätte und endlicher Friede wiedergegeben werden soll." Undated newspaper clipping, box 1, folder 2, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute New York.

> meteor, but rather we carry within us the conviction that he will continue to honor his hometown in the ranks of creative artists.[21]

Only one critic by the last name of Kippel was critical, complaining, among other things, about Schönberg's harmonic boldness. But overall, he recognized the aptitude of the young composer, wishing that "this talent test may encourage Mr. Schönberg to study diligently with a recognized master of composition. That which is truly significant and viable will ultimately always prevail in art."[22]

Beginning with the winter semester of 1921, Schönberg studied at the universities of Erlangen and Berlin, and for a short time at the renowned Institute of Technology in Darmstadt (the focus of his technical profession is unknown). He returned to Erlangen in 1923 to finish his musicological studies and receive his doctorate in 1925, summa cum laude.

Related to his studies, Schönberg also began to work as a music critic. Around 1925 the organist of the Nuremberg synagogue, Theodor Fraenkel (1873–1930), remarked that Schönberg "made a good name for himself as a composer, pianist, conductor, and critic."[23] By then, Schönberg's occasional articles in the local press had evolved into regular in-depth music journalism.[24]

"The Traditional Songs"

In 1926 Schönberg published his doctoral dissertation "Die traditionellen Gesänge des israelitischen Gottesdienstes in Deutschland." This was a musicological study of *Baal T'fillah*, the anthology by cantor Abraham Baer (1834–1894) with original compositions, as well as music from Salomon Sulzer, Louis Lewandowski, and Samuel Naumbourg, covering the liturgy of the entire Jewish calendar year.[25] In Germany it has been customary to publish one's dissertation to be awarded the doctoral certificate and receive the title, Doctor of

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[21] "Schönberg vereinigt Können und ernstes Streben und das ist uns Garantie dafür, dass wir es mit und in ihm nicht mit einer vorübergehenden, meteorgleich auftauchenden und wieder verschwindenden Erscheinung im Kunstleben zu tun haben, dass wir vielmehr die Überzeugung in uns tragen, er werde seiner Vaterstadt in den Reihen schaffender Künstler noch Ehre machen." Undated newspaper clipping, box 1, folder 2, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute New York.

[22] "Die abgelegte Talentprobe möge H[errn] Schönberg zu fleißigem Studium bei einem anerkannten Meister der Komposition ermuntern. Das wirklich Bedeutende und Lebensfähige setzt sich in der Kunst letzten Endes immer durch." Kippel, "Kompositionsabend Jakob Schönberg," undated newspaper clipping, box 1, folder 2, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute New York.

[23] "... als Komponist, Pianist, Dirigent und Kritiker bereits einen guten Namen gemacht hat." Theodor Fraenkel, "Die traditionellen Gesänge des israelitischen Gottesdienstes in Deutschland," undated newspaper clipping, box 1, folder 2, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute New York.

[24] All of Schönberg's writings published in the Bavarian press during the 1920s can be found in box 1, folder 3, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute Archives, New York.

[25] Within fifty years, *Baal t'fillah, oder, Der practische Vorbeter: Vollständige Sammlung der gottesdienstlichen Gesänge und Recitativ der Israeliten nach polnischen, deutschen (aschk'nasischen) und portugiesieschen (sephardischen) Weisen nebst allen den Gottesdienst betreffenden rituellen Vorschriften und Gebräuchen* appeared in four editions, the first being published ca. 1877 where Baer served as cantor, followed by three German editions in 1883, ca. 1900, and 1930 respectively, attesting to a continuous demand well into the early 1930s.

Philosophy. Schönberg was unable to attract a commercial publisher for the publication despite the obvious scholarly value of his work and the highest honors he received. The existing—albeit extremely sparse and incomplete—information about his life gives the impression that assertiveness was not one of his strengths. Among other issues, he was apparently unable to obtain a position commensurate with his qualifications and receive the recognition of various experts. Therefore, his parents' support may have been all the more important for him. Since the dissertation was self-published, Schönberg also had to distribute the book himself. Newspaper advertisements state that the book could be obtained from the author, at Blumenstraße 24 in Fürth, an indication that Schönberg returned to live in his parents' house.

Schönberg's publication appeared at a time when synagogue music had been the subject of intense lengthy discussions. However, these discussions reflected ideological influences prevalent in Jewish cultural circles and beyond. Anti-Semitism and philo-Semitism were equally destructive forces, the latter prevalent in the writings of Heinrich Berl (1896–1953), especially in his book *Das Judentum in der Musik*, which was published the same year as Schönberg's. [26]

With his dissertation, Schönberg was the first to take an open-minded and impartial look at the topic of the debates, which he subjected to scholarly analysis. In doing so, he did not investigate the abstract term "Jewish music" due to its range of diversity, as many other authors did before him, but concentrated on a clearly defined aspect: the liturgical music of the synagogues in Germany. Until then, there had been practically no serious study in this area, apart from a few anthologies.

Rooted in the aforementioned anthology by Abraham Baer, Schönberg leaned on the research of Abraham Z. Idelsohn, who had been doing pioneering work since the beginning of the twentieth century, especially with regard to the music of Eastern Jews. Following Idelsohn's approach, Schönberg aimed to identify the exact provenance of the synagogue music on German soil, bolstered by comparative analysis and based on the results presented by Idelsohn. Schönberg's advisor at the University of Erlangen was Gustav Becking (1894–1945), who later became professor in Utrecht and Prague. Perhaps even more important was the support of Theodor Fraenkel (1873–1930)[27], the chief cantor of Nuremberg's Jewish community who provided Schönberg with items from his extensive library.[28]

In his examination of synagogue melodies, Schönberg discovered that many different traditions coexisted which in some cases were very highly divergent, suggesting that the music was subject to a far greater spectrum of influences than that of the Eastern Jews as previously proposed by Idelsohn. From the late Middle Ages to the beginning of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, German folk song entered the melodic repertoire of the synagogues, though only their initial motifs or first phrases. Thereafter Protestant melodies entered the melodic vocabulary. They themselves were influenced by popular melodies as the hazanim had access to the music through printed sources. As Schönberg carefully explained: "The joy of singing, which expressed itself during the sixteenth century in the German Protestant congregational song and which showed a happy aspiration in combining old and

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[26] The writer, essayist, and music critic Heinrich Berl repeatedly wrote about Jewish art and culture, and some of his publications appeared in Jewish periodicals. Because of his pronounced philo-Semitic stance, he was often mistakenly referred to as a Jew. See for example his essay "Mein Weg zur jüdischen Musik," *Jüdische Rundschau: Allgemeine jüdische Zeitung* 35, no. 30 (April 16, 1930): 215.

[27] Biographical details about Theodor Fraenkel can be found in his obituary, see Bl., "Oberkantor Theodor Fränkel, Nürnberg," *Mitteilungen des Jüdischen Lehrervereins für Bayern*, no. 2 (February 1, 1931): 1.

[28] See Schönberg, *Die traditionellen Gesänge*, 5.

new folk songs with other folk elements, had not remained without influence on the Jewish congregational singing of the liturgy."[29]

Synagogue music in Germany received a fresh influence during the Baroque era and thereafter in the second half of the eighteenth century, when the hazanim adopted the trends of contemporary European art music, such as the melodic style of Haydn and his successors and later that of Mendelssohn. Schönberg described this development as "the great amateur and epigone movement" and saw its culmination in the work of Louis Lewandowski.[30]

Biblical cantillation was one of Schönberg's particularly foci. Until then, research had been hampered by a lack of scholarly objectivity: either continuity was denied, negating any ancient origins of cantillation, or it was believed that cantillation was an immediate remnant of the temple music from biblical times. Schönberg was the first to analyze the motivic structures of cantillation and to discover their pentatonic modality. For him, this provided clear evidence of their origin before the ninth century CE, that is when pentatonicism had already been succeed by church modes. Biblical cantillation was the only music in Jewish culture that had no foreign influence. According to Schönberg, it thus provided the basis for determining essential *Jewish* characteristics in synagogue music.

For Schönberg, these characteristics were also emotive: "The whole creative power lies in the invention of the motif. The dominant musical experience is summarized in these short musical expressions, which are precisely the root of the preserved thousand years' old, a tradition that even now does not seem dusty and surviving. We find this compactness of musical form … in the vocabulary and poetry of the Jews as well."[31] Schönberg believed that the melodic motifs of the cantillations would contain characteristic Jewish "sound compounds," which were quasi-quintessential of the Jewishness in music and which had originally arisen from the melody of the Hebrew language. These motifs would therefore show the "peculiarity of having very special, typical tone steps that, which to my knowledge are not to be found in any other people's song." Aside from the above-mentioned pentatonicism, they also displayed a free rhythm, which Schönberg relates to *Sprechgesang*.[32]

At the time of Schönberg's publication, these assumptions were not only of theoretical importance for musicology, they also gave impulse for a reform of synagogue music. In fact, Schönberg's theses would play an important role in the renewal of synagogue music, which ensued around the same time. Schönberg himself claimed to have initiated this renewal, especially with his journalistic work.[33]

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[29] "Die Sangesfreudigkeit, die während des 16. Jahrhunderts in dem deutschen evangelischen Volksgesang zum Ausdruck kam und die im Zusammenfassen von alten und neuen Volksliedern und volkstümlichen Tönen ein glückliches Bestreben zeigte, war sicherlich nicht ohne Einfluss auf die jüdischen Volksgesänge der Liturgie geblieben." Ibid., 57.

[30] Ibid.

[31] "Die ganze schöpferische Kraft liegt in der Erfindung des Motivs. Hier in diesen kurzen musikalischen Ausdrucksformen ist das starke musikalische Erlebnis zusammengefasst und gerade auf diesen Umstand kann man die Erhaltung einer tausendjährigen Tradition zurückführen, einer Tradition, die selbst jetzt nicht einmal staubig und überlebt wirkt. Diese Knappheit der musikalischen Form finden wir … in dem Wort- und Dichtungsschatz der Juden wieder." Ibid., 59.

[32] "… die Eigentümlichkeit, ganz besondere typische Tonschritte aufzuweisen, die sich meines Wissens nach in keinem anderen Volksgesang wieder vorfinden." See Ibid.

[33] Jakob Schönberg to Salli Levy, January 23, 1928, Mus 33I, Archives of the World Center for Jewish Music, Music Department, Jewish National Library Jerusalem. Schönberg refers to an article he published in the *Israelitisches Familienblatt* (Hamburg) in 1925, in which he criticized contemporary synagogue music and provided guidelines for its renewal, which then were followed by Heinrich Schalit, in the *Eine Freitagabend-Liturgie* of 1931.

Very little is known about Schönberg's life in the later 1920s and early 1930s. One of the few available sources is his English-language autobiography, which he had completed in 1938. Reviewing these years, he wrote: "I became a pianist, wrote articles on musical topics for German newspapers and music magazines, worked as a music consultant [in the original: music expert] in the program committee of the Bavarian Radio, conducted the orchestra of the Phoebus Theater in Nuremberg (with 2000 seats), with which I directed 50 pieces, and worked in film as a conductor and music illustrator."[34] Hardly anything is known about Schönberg's work at the Bavarian Radio. From 1922 to 1930, it was known as Deutsche Stunde in Bayern, though the then editor and later director of the Bavarian Radio, Rudolf von Scholtz (1890–1956) confirms that Schönberg was a highly valued radio employee, calling him "an admirable expert on old and new music. Especially praiseworthy is his fine ear for instrumental technique and for vocal productions."[35]

Still, it cannot be ascertained whether Schönberg was a valued and busy musician in his Franconian-Bavarian homeland, as he later portrayed himself in his autobiography, or whether he had to fight hard for material survival and therefore also accepted less lucrative work such as music illustrator—a more likely scenario. Be it as it may, this chapter of his life abruptly ended on March 9, 1933, when a Nuremberg NS official announced at the Fürth town hall to about 10,000 people: "Also here in Fürth, too, in the city that was once red and totally Jewish, a clean, honest German city is being made."[36] With the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses beginning on April 1, 1933, Jakob Schönberg was most certainly deprived of his livelihood. Like many Jews from the province, he was then forced to leave his hometown and move to a larger city where a more substantial Jewish community could offer opportunities. Thus, Schönberg moved to Berlin.

The New Beginning in Berlin: *Shirei Eretz Israel*

Shortly after his arrival in Berlin, Schönberg published his song "Land von unser Vergangenheit" (Land of our past), based on a Yiddish text by Josef Zucker-Holländer.[37] In the print edition, Schönberg designates the melody as a "Jewish folk song." Yiddish folklore had been on the periphery of Schönberg's artistic interest and this piece, published at his own expense, may have been an attempt to introduce himself to the city's Jewish musical circles. It remained Schönberg's only published work.

In 1934 Schönberg began to devote himself to the folk music of Jews in Palestine. The arrival of the first organized group of immigrants in the region, the so-called Bilu group from the Russian Empire, set off the development of an independent musical culture. Subsequent waves of immigration led the musical landscape to become highly diverse, as the immigrants

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[34] "Ich wurde Pianist, schrieb Artikel zu musikalischen Themen für deutsche Zeitungen und Musikzeitschriften, arbeitete als Musikberater [im Original: music expert] in der Auswahlkommission des Bayerischen Rundfunks, dirigierte das Orchester des Phoebus-Theaters in Nürnberg (mit 2000 Plätzen), mit dem ich 50 Stücke leitete, und arbeitete für den Film als Dirigent und Musikillustrator." Jakob Schönberg, "Biographical Sketch," folder 1, Jakob Schönberg Music Scores and Papers ARC MUS 11, The Jewish Theological Seminary of Amercia (henceforth JTSA), New York.

[35] "...ein bewundernswerter Experte für alte und neue Musik. Besonders lobenswert ist sein feines Gehör für Instrumentaltechnik und für Gesangproduktionen." *Bayerische Radio-Zeitung*, January 2,1929, ibid.

[36] "Auch hier in Fürth, der Stadt, die einst rot und total verjudet war, wird wieder eine saubere ehrliche deutsche Stadt gemacht." Quoted after Bernd Windsheimer, *Geschichte der Stadt Fürth* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2007), 120.

[37] Josef Zucker-Holländer was an activist of the Reichsverband ostjüdischer Organisationen in Deutschland (Reich Association of East Jewish Organizations in Germany).

brought with them different traditions from their home countries. The Jewish community in the region was so heterogenous that a "Jewish-Palestinian" music could only emerge gradually. Popular songwriters such as Mordechai Zeira, Matityahu Weiner, Yehuda Shertok (Sharett), Jedidya Gorochow, and others contributed to the creation of a local musical style. As Abraham W. Binder observed: "When I returned to the land in 1931, I found that Palestine had begun to develop new folk songs and was singing discriminatingly. Melodies were being classified as 'exile melodies' and 'eastern melodies.' The new tunes were characterized as having a distinctive 'eastern' flavor. Palestine was singing a new song composed, not by professional composers, but by the folk, the peasant folk. Upon analyzing some of the tunes by Zaira [sic], indeed the most popular of Palestinian song writers, and some of the other new tunes which are popular in the homeland, I found that these songs drew from three sources: one, the Jewish liturgical song; two, the Yemenite song; three, the song of the Arab."[38]

Indeed, the new Palestinian songs were linked to Hasidic melodies (which Binder called "liturgical"), as well as Yemenite and the Arabic song. The acceptance of Hasidic elements relates to their presence in the *old yishuv*, the Jewish community of the southern Syrian provinces in the Ottoman period, up to the onset of Zionist migrations. European influences, both from the west and the east, were removed. The disappearance of the Russian idiom, which had played an important role in Palestine for decades is particularly noteworthy. Musical elements that were associated with Diaspora were avoided; everything non-Jewish was excluded to foster a national consciousness through text and music. The new Jewish-Palestinian idiom therefore mainly included elements of Eastern origin.

Jewish composers in Europe became interested in these new and emerging repertoires, regarding them as "authentic" Jewish music. In the meantime, the notion emerged that a fully-fledged Jewish music would only develop in a Jewish state, not in the Diaspora. Among those who promulgated this idea was Joachim Stutschewsky, a Ukraine-born cellist, composer, and musicologist. He asserted: "There is no doubt that the most complete fulfillment of Jewish music will only be possible in Palestine. In the Palestinian landscape, the culture of the new life and the Hebrew language, there the musician will also find the inner attitude that will fertilize his sensory world and imagination, and that will allow his talent to unfold to the fullest."[39] These new Palestinian songs were the first signs of an independent Jewish musical culture.

While these songs were primarily known in the United States through the collection of Abraham W. Binder, Jakob Schönberg was the first musician in Europe to systematically research and disseminate them. Unlike Binder, he was unable to record the songs in Palestine. Instead, he turned to visitors from Palestine who were in Germany at the time.[40] Among the Palestinian Jews who shared the music with Schönberg were not only amateur singers but also important musicians such as Bracha Zefira (1911–1990) or Mordechai Roth (1902–1986). In 1935 Schönberg published these melodies in an anthology, on behalf of the Makkabi

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[38] Abraham W. Binder, *New Palestinian Folk Songs. II* (New York 1933), iii.

[39] "Dass die vollkommenste Erfüllung einer jüdischen Musik erst in Palästina möglich sein wird, steht außer Zweifel. In der palästinensischen Landschaft, der Kultur des neuen Lebens und der hebräischen Sprache, dort wird auch der Musiker die innere Haltung finden, die seine Empfindungswelt und Phantasie befruchtet und die Entfaltung des Talentes im vollen Maße zur Auswirkung bringt." Joachim Stutschewsky, *Mein Weg zur jüdischen Musik* (Vienna: Jibneh-Musikverlag, 1935), 19.

[40] See Anneliese Landau, "Jakob Schoenberg," *Musica Hebraica*, no. 1–2 (1938): 43. Landau wrote also an article Schönberg in *Jüdische Rundschau: Allgemeine jüdische Zeitung* 43, no. 34 (April 29, 1938): 12.

Association in Germany and the Hechaluz Association in Germany.[41] *Shirei Eretz Israel* was released simultaneously with another song book by Joseph Jacobsen and Erwin Jospe.[42] Their prefaces were written the same month as Schönberg's. However, the concepts of the two anthologies could not have been more different. If the work of Jacobsen and Jospe was a tribute to German-Jewish tradition, Schönberg's unveiled a new Jewish identity, shaped by Zionism. This difference was perceived at the time of publication and is aptly summarized in a review by Ludwig Altmann (1910–1990), a keyboardist and composer: "While 'Hawa Naschira' was a compendium of all that German-speaking Jewry can sing, Schönberg's collection is limited to the Hebrew song, whereby the specifically religious, synagogue song is almost completely excluded. Instead, Schönberg ... has given us the first, truly comprehensive song book of secular Palestine."[43]

Schönberg's anthology practically dispensed with any German text: the front page, the table of contents, and the foreword were written in Hebrew. Only individual words from the lyrics, which might not be clear to the German reader, were translated at the end of each song. With a total of two hundred and thirty songs, the anthology is the most extensive collection of Palestinian music folklore and remains unsurpassed. The first print run of 15,000 copies contributed significantly to the worldwide dissemination of this music. Zionist, pianist, publicist, composer, and educator Alice Jacob-Loewenson deemed it "a valuable tool for schools and young people … and even the musician will find many stimulating things in it."[44] Indeed, the collection was to become an indispensable source for folklorists and Jewish composers. Among the latter was Viktor Ullmann (1898–1944), who while being imprisoned in Terezín used "Rachel" (a melody by Yehuda Shertok) in the same key and with only a slightly changed rhythm as the fugue subject of his *Variationen und Fuge über ein hebräisches Volkslied.*

Schönberg's move to Berlin advanced his development and career, albeit with restrictions: his works were only performed in concerts organized by Jews and only reviewed in Jewish newspapers. That aside, he quickly established himself in the Jewish music scene in Berlin in spite of strong competition. Beginning in the fall of 1934, he began to contribute music criticism to the Zionist *Jüdische Rundschau*. And he would dedicate one of his most important works, the *Chassidische Suite* for piano (1937) as well as its orchestral version to the editor-in-chief, Robert Weltsch (1891–1982).

In the spring of 1934 Schönberg himself became a subject among Jewish music journalists. Hans Nathan was the first to publish an extensive article about the thirty-three-year old composer, which appeared in the *Jüdische Rundschau*.[45] He provides an analytical

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[41] Jackob Schönberg, ed., שירי ארץ ישראל / Shire Erets Yiśra'el (Berlin: Hotsaat Yudisher Ferlag, 1935)

[42] Joseph Jacobsen and Erwin Jospe, eds., *Hawa Naschira! (Auf! Laßt uns singen!): Liederbuch für Unterricht, Bund und Haus* (Leipzig: Anton J. Benjamin, 1935).

[43] "Gab 'Hawa Naschira' gleichsam ein Kompendium all dessen, was das deutschsprechende Judentum singen kann, so beschränkt sich die Sammlung von Schönberg auf das hebräische Lied, wobei das spezifisch religiöse, synagogale fast ganz ausgeschlossen bleibt. Dafür hat uns Schönberg […] das erste, wirklich umfassende Liederbuch des weltlichen Palästina gegeben." Ludwig Altmann, "Neue Liederbücher," *C.-V.-Zeitung* 14, no. 42 (October 17, 1935): 10.

[44] "Im ganzen ist hier ein wertvolles Hilfsmittel für Schulen und Jugendbünde geschaffen, und selbst der Musiker wird darin manches Anregende finden." Alice Jacob-Loewenson, "Musik in Palästina," *Jüdische Rundschau: Allgemeine jüdische Zeitung* 40, no. 80 (October 4, 1935): 12.

[45] Hans Nathan, "Jüdische Musiker unserer Zeit: Jakob Schönberg," *Jüdische Rundschau: Allgemeine jüdische Zeitung* 39, no. 27–28 (April 5, 1934): 13.

overview of about five years of Schönberg's creative activity, attempting to draw concert organizers' attention to the young and unspoiled composer. Ironically, the article appeared at a time when Schönberg's work was undergoing a radical stylistic change, triggered by his involvement with Palestinian music folklore. This meant that most of the observations shared in the article were, in fact, erroneous. Four years later, Anneliese Landau affirmed: "This folk music becomes Schönberg's signpost. He consciously builds his works around their sound and later out of their sound, works of a distinctly Jewish style, though they were created in Germany."[46] This article by Anneliese Landau, written in 1938, is an important source and an interesting study of Schönberg's stylistic development after 1934. In her opinion, Schönberg was an exception in Germany at the time. Following the example of the national-Jewish school in Russia, he sought to find a genuine Jewish style which, according to Landau, could only be possible in Palestine.[47] All the more remarkable for Landau was that Schönberg developed a style on German soil organically linked to Palestinian folklore—a true achievement. Schönberg himself repeatedly emphasized the fundamental importance of the newly discovered folklore from Palestine for his compositional work, such as when he states that "the Palestinian melos captivated me; I got caught up in this delightful new world."[48]

For the years 1933 to 1935 no performances of Schönberg's works in Berlin are documented. Only in April 1936 did the composer achieve a breakthrough with a concert at Gertrud Weil's house.[49] The program featured his piano sonata; three love songs based on texts by Yehuda Halevi, a movement from his string quartet; "Chinesische Lieder" for soprano, flute (then replaced by a violin) and viola; as well as further arrangements of Palestinian songs and "Hora" for piano.[50] The announcement of the concert in the *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt* conveyed that an unusual artistic event was to be expected: "This young composer, although the number of his works that have become known to date is not large, has already earned the right to special attention; among the current creative Jewish musicians, he has shown himself to be one of the few on whom one is justified in placing hopes for the future." Obviously, the critic, renowned Beethoven scholar Ludwig Misch, already knew some of Schönberg's works from private performances, when he continued: "Whether one thinks of the peculiar arrangements of Palestinian folk songs, the string quartet which is as substantial as it is problematic in its expressiveness, or the recently performed piano fugue by Jakob Schönberg, one can always sense a personality all its own, an artist who has something to say and who with ruthless seriousness struggles for a new, for his own language."[51]

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[46] "Diese Volksmusik wird Schönberg zum Wegweiser. Bewusst baut er erst um ihren Klang herum und später aus ihrem Klang heraus seine Werke, Werke eines ausgeprägt jüdischen Stils, obwohl sie in Deutschland entstanden." Landau, "Jakob Schoenberg."

[47] Ibid.

[48] Program text for the performance of *Zwei Horas* for orchester (ca. 1936), in *Monatsblätter des Jüdischen Kulturbundes Bezirk Rhein-Main* 4, no. 2 (February 1938).

[49] The house concerts organized by Gertrud Weil (1876–1944), in particular the chamber music evenings, played an important role in the dissemination of works by Jewish composers. Between 1937 and April 1938, she had organized 100 concerts in her house, with the support of the Künstlerhilfe of the Jewish Community in Berlin, an unprecedented commitment, put to a hold by the Gestapo. Weil was deported to Terezín in 1943 und murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

[50] Akademie der Künste Berlin, ed., *Geschlossene Vorstellung: Der Jüdische Kulturbund in Deutschland 1933–1941* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste Berlin, 1992), 402.

[51] "Dieser junge Komponist hat, obwohl die Zahl seiner bisher bekannt gewordenen Werke nicht groß ist, bereits Anspruch auf besondere Beachtung erworben, er hat sich unter den jüdischen schaffenden Musikern der Gegenwart als einer der wenigen ausgewiesen, auf die man Hoffnungen für die Zukunft zu setzen berechtigt ist. Ob man der eigenartigen

Ludwig Altmann published an almost euphoric review of the evening: "Today we have to call attention to an important, though so far little, too little-known composer, Dr. Jakob Schönberg, to whom an evening at Weil is dedicated. If being creative means finding new ways and styles intuitively and not constructively, then Schönberg fully deserves the honorary title of creator."[52] In general, it is striking that the music critics—progressives and conservatives, nationalistic and acculturated—unanimously evaluated Schönberg's works. No other contemporary Jewish composer was mentioned with so much praise and recognition, and accompanied by projections of his career prospects. His compositions were described as "the best piece of the evening"[53] and the "highlight of the program."[54]

In 1937 and 1938 Schönberg's works were increasingly included in the programs of major Jewish music events. The arrangements of Palestinian folk songs were most frequently performed. Several new works were also presented. Among them were his symphonic compositions, such as the symphonic *Horas*, which were in the repertoire of both large orchestras of the Jewish Culture League in Berlin and Frankfurt am Main—and which they also played at their guest performances in other cities. One of these *horas* (the final movement of his suite for orchestra, which is a symphonic version of the *Chassidische Suite*) was played in an orchestral concert in Berlin in February 1938. According to Schönberg, the concert was the tenth performance of this work.[55]

Further works, drawing from his anthology of Palestinian folk songs, was a suite of six arrangements for medium voice and piano,[56] revised by Schönberg as suite for large orchestra.[57] Now that Schönberg's works were being performed by orchestras, he revised his piano quartet as a Sinfonia concertante for string orchestra.[58] The exact chronology of all these works cannot be determined, since Schönberg did not date his manuscripts and his catalogue is not organized chronologically.

During his Berlin period, Schönberg's vocal music also enjoyed growing popularity among performers and audiences. They were performed by Paula Lindberg Salomon (1897–2000), Paula Guttmann (1884–1963), Mascha Benyakonsky (1908–2007, later known as

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Bearbeitungen palästinensischer Volkslieder, des ebenso gehaltvollen wie in der Ausdrucksart problematischen Streichquartetts oder der jüngst aufgeführten Klavierfuge von Jacob Schönberg gedenkt, immer handelt es sich um Arbeiten, hinter denen man eine Persönlichkeit eigenen Gepräges spürt, einen Künstler, der etwas zu sagen hat und mit rücksichtslosem Ernst um eine neue, um seine eigene Sprache ringt." Ludwig Misch, "Musik bei Weil," *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin* 26, no. 17 (April 26, 1936): 6.

[52] "Es gilt heute auf einen bedeutenden, bisher wenig, zu wenig bekannten Komponisten, hinzuweisen, auf Dr. Jakob Schönberg, dem ein Abend bei Weil gewidmet ist. Wenn schöpferisch sein bedeutet, dass neue Wege und Stile intuitiv und nicht konstruktiv gefunden werden, so gebührt Schönberg dieser Ehrenstil eines Schöpfers in vollem Maße." Ludwig Altmann, "Ein neuer jüdischer Komponist," *C.-V.-Zeitung* 15, no. 18 (April 30, 1936): 4.

[53] Wilhelm Graff, "Konzert des Opernchors des Kulturbundes," *Jüdische Rundschau: Allgemeine jüdische Zeitung* 43, no. 41 (May 24, 1938): 9.

[54] Oskar Guttmann, "Lieder- und Duetten-Abend," *Jüdische Rundschau: Allgemeine jüdische Zeitung* 42, no. 38–39 (May 14, 1937): 19.

[55] Jakob Schönberg, biographical sketch, p. 5, folder 1, Jakob Schönberg Music Scores and Papers ARC MUS 11, JTSA, New York.

[56] Jakob Schönberg Music Scores and Papers, ARC MUS 11, MI 851.S38S59, JTSA, New York.

[57] Ibid., ML96.S38S94.

[58] Ibid., M 1042.S38S56.

Benya), Hede Türk Börnstein (1901–1978), Erhard Wechselmann (1895–1943), Erna Jacoby (1895–1943), Hilde Aronson-Lindt (1899–1944), and Siegbert Steinfeld (1909–?). Indeed, Schönberg's songs became part of the standard repertoire of Jewish singers in Germany at the time.

Flight and Exile

Schönberg did not consider emigration until the beginning of 1938. When he failed to obtain an affidavit, required to enter the United States, he left for London in 1939. Almost nothing is known about Schönberg's ten-year stay in England, save for his work at a school for Jewish adult education, the Institute for Jewish Learning in London, founded by fellow émigré Joshua Heschel in January 1940. There Schönberg gave a course on Jewish folk songs, in German.[59] Schönberg was obviously unable to compose during this period; at least there are no dated works from 1938 through 1948.

The gap in Schönberg's biography ended when he moved to New York in January 1948. The primary reason for the trip to New York was most likely David J. Putterman's commission of a "V'shomru" for tenor solo, mixed choir, and organ[60] for Park Avenue Synagogue. On May 7, 1948, just a few days before the anticipated foundation of the State of Israel, the Sixth Annual Sabbath Eve Service of Liturgical Music by American and Palestinian Contemporary Composers took place at the Synagogue. The service was dedicated to "the faith of Israel and the dream of Zion." That evening Schönberg's "V'shomru" received its premiere by Cantor Putterman, the synagogue choir under the direction of Max Helfman, and Isidor Geller on the organ.

The first year in New York was marked by several successes for Schönberg. At the end of February, the piano version of the *Chassidische Suite* was played in a concert of the Jewish Music Forum.[61] By the end of the year, on November 5, the outstanding American pianist Ray Lev (1912–1968) performed the third movement of the suite, "Hora (Fugue)," in a concert at Carnegie Hall. Newspaper reviews were full of praise; Schönberg's piece was described as the best of the program. Two weeks later, on November 21, a concert by the Hebrew Arts Foundation's chamber orchestra, The Kinor Sinfonietta under the baton of by Siegfried Landau, played Schönberg's symphonic *Horas*.

After this promising start, however, Schönberg was unable to build on these first successes. No further performances of his works are known. He made a living solely from teaching, first working at the Trinity School. In 1956 he was employed at the Carnegie School of Music in Englewood, New Jersey. According to a newspaper advertisement, Schönberg taught piano, harmony, music theory, ear training, musicology and composition for advanced students and even teachers at this small-town music school. However, his new career was cut short by his untimely death. On May 1, 1956 he died of complications resulting from a brain tumor.[62]

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[59] See the course catalogue for the summer semester May–July 1940, box 1, folder 1, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute Archives, New York.

[60] Schönberg later conceived another version for tenor, mixed choir, string ensemble, and organ.

[61] Joseph Yasser to Jakob Schönberg, March 1, 1948, box 1, folder 1, Jakob Schönberg Collection AR 3390, Leo Baeck Institute Archives, New York.

[62] In 2012 a double CD with his vocal and chamber music works has been released. "Composition by Jakob Schönberg: Another Schönberg" (Hänssler Profil PH12023) is the first recording of his music worldwide.