



Music Violence Memory

26–28
November
2025

IN AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

Oświęcim, Poland

Music, Memory, Violence in Auschwitz-Birkenau

26–28 November 2025

A Conference at the International Centre for Education about
Auschwitz and the Holocaust in Oświęcim, Poland

Organized by the Adam Mickiewicz University, the Research Institute
for Music Theatre Studies (*fimt*) and the Auschwitz-Birkenau
Memorial and Museum

Wednesday, 26.11.2025

Part 1. The History Project

9.00–10.30	Registration
10.30–11.00	Opening, welcome addresses (Andrzej Kacorzyc, Prof. Dr. Krzysztof Kozłowski, Prof. Dr. Anno Mungen)
11.00–12.00	Presentation 1: Dr. Piotr Setkiewicz – "German Music in Auschwitz"
12.00–13.30	Lunch break

Section 1: General Approaches to Music and Violence

Moderation: Dr. Katarzyna Naliwajek

13.30–14.30	Presentation 2: Dr. Morag J. Grant – "Music, Ritual and the Framing of Genocide"
14.30–15.30	Presentation 3: M.A. Nikola Vasilijević – "The Musical Regime: Phenomenological and Discursive Challenges for Musicology"
15.30–16.30	Presentation 4: Dr. Élise Petit – "Music and Violence in Nazi Camps: Towards a Topographic Approach"
16.30–17.00	Coffee break

Section 2: The Arts and the Holocaust – Moderation: Prof. Dr. Mikołaj Jazdon

17.00–18.00	Presentation 5: Prof. Dr. Laura Morowitz – "Violence, Trauma and the Annihilation of the Self in Jerzy Adam Brandhuber's <i>Auschwitz Cycle</i> (1946)"
18.00–19.30	Double Presentation 6: <i>The Zone of Interest</i> Prof. Dr. Sven Kramer – "Gaze Control in <i>Son of Saul</i> and <i>The Zone of Interest</i> " Prof. Dr. Marek Kaźmierczak – „(After)images «in spite of everything.» <i>The Zone of Interest</i> in the Context of Film Representations of Auschwitz"
20.00	Dinner

Thursday, 27.11.2025

Section 3: Space, Sound, and Music

- 8.00–11.30 **Guided tour** of the Auschwitz-Birkenau site with Renata Koszyk
- 11.30–13.00 **Lunch break / Student groups: meeting point at the room -1/5**

Section 4: Performing Music – Moderation: Prof. Dr. Laura Morowitz

- 13.00–14.00 **Presentation 7:** Prof. Dr. Patricia Hall – “Performing Foxtrots from Auschwitz-Birkenau”
- 14.00–15.00 **Presentation 8:** Dr. Laurence Sherr – "Prisoner Music Performances in Auschwitz I, II, and III: Correlations among Performance Spaces, Functions, Personnel, and Repertory, and Their Psychological Impact on Prisoners"
- 15.00–15.30 **Coffee break**

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Marek Kaźmierczak

- 15.30–16.30 **Presentation 9:** Prof. Dr. Lori Weintrob & Prof. Dr. Thomas Juneau – "Musical Tributes to *One Man from Krakow*"
- 16.30–17.30 **Presentation 10:** Dr. Jacek Lachendro – "Orchestras and Music in KL Auschwitz from the Perspective of Prisoners and SS men (based on the Accounts and Memories of Survivors)"
- 17.30–18.30 **Presentation 11:** Prof. Dr. Anno Mungen – “Robert Schumann’s *Träumerei* in Auschwitz-Birkenau”

Friday, 28.11.2025

Part 2. The Memory Project

9.00–10.00 **Workshop for students:** M.A. Zuzanna Karpińska and M.A. Martin Gruber – "Mediating Memory. Intercultural Dialogue on Forms of Remembering in *The Passenger*"

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Lori Weintrob

10.00–11.00 **Presentation 12:** Dr. habil. Katarzyna Naliwajek:
Female German-Jewish Musicians – Victims of Auschwitz – and Their Commemoration

11.00–12.00 **Presentation 13:** Prof. Dr. Mikołaj Jazdon – "Amongst the Ashes of Auschwitz. On Andrzej Brzozowski's *Archeology*"

12.00–13.00 **Presentation 14:** Prof. Dr. Christine Hoppe – "Memory in Sound, Materiality: A Chopin Étude and a Cello as Media of Musical Remembrance"

13.00–14.00 **Lunch break**

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Sven Kramer

14.00–15.00 **Presentation 15:** Prof. Dr. Andrea Bombi "Sonic Mnemagoues: the Phonosphere of *If this is a man*"

15.00–16.00 **Lecture recital:** M.A. Chiara Antico – "Collecting and Embodying Auschwitz Music Repertoire as a Living Archive: The *Resonances* Project"

16.00–17.30 **Screening of the film *Lilac/Bez*** with Prof. Dr. Laura Morowitz, Prof. Dr. Mikołaj Jazdon, and Prof. Dr. Marek Kaźmierczak

From 17:30 **Dinner / Departure**

Dr. Piotr Setkiewicz:
German Music in Auschwitz

The history of Oświęcim during World War II is commonly associated with the concentration camp established on its grounds and the extermination of Jews, carried out primarily in the Birkenau gas chambers. A separate topic, often overlooked in scholarly literature, is the history of the city and the large IG Farben factory located nearby. Germans were present in all these parts of Oświęcim during the war: in the concentration camp, of course, the SS men who manned it; in the city, German settlers, officials, and police; and in the IG Farben factory, a community of thousands of German workers, engineers, and guards, supervising the work of the much larger forced labourers. Local authorities sought to provide all of them with access to German culture by organizing theatre performances, variety shows, and music concerts. These activities were intended not only to provide simple entertainment for the participants, but also to have an often-emphasized ideological dimension: proving the superiority of German culture, thus justifying the theft of land and the displacement of its inhabitants. Furthermore, these concerts and performances were also intended to play a therapeutic role for the SS men: to soothe their nerves, frayed by their daily participation in the mass atrocities committed in the camp.

Ph.D. Piotr Setkiewicz was born in 1963, studied history at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and earned his doctorate at the Silesian University in 1999 for a dissertation on IG Farben-Werk Auschwitz 1941–1945.

He began working for the research department at the Museum in 1988. Head of the archives from 2001–2007, he became head of the research department in 2008. His research interests include the employment of prisoners in German industry and the history of the Auschwitz sub-camps.

Dr. Morag J. Grant:

Music, Ritual and the Framing of Genocide

In this paper I will address the presence of music in the National Socialist concentration and death camps, as well as other sites of mass murder in the Shoah, by asking what this music evokes from the perspective of military ritual and practice. Building on Inna Klause's suggestion that music in the camps may have arisen as much through ad hoc decisions as through centrally prescribed practices, I will argue that long-standing and endemic traditions of music in the military can help explain why music became such a significant feature of life and death in the camps. Two main aspects of this will be explored here. The first concerns how musical practices have been employed to ritually frame and thus facilitate acts of violence in war: multiple forms of such strategies can be identified throughout the history of warfare. The second relates to the profound connection between music and ideas of discipline, order and punishment in the European military, especially since the early modern period. These practices and more are sometimes directly reflected in the way music appeared in the camps, and the perspective taken here is that this should therefore not surprise us: indeed, elements of military musical practice have surfaced in many other contexts of political detention and internment, not only under the Nazis. For this reason, however, it is also necessary to go further and ask not only why musical communication lends itself to the preparation and facilitation of collective violence more generally, but also what specific factors and consequences come to bear in the context of Nazism, and the militarisation of racism that leads to genocide.

M. J. Grant (Morag Josephine Grant) is Chancellor's Fellow in Music at the University of Edinburgh. She studied in Glasgow, London and in Berlin. Her research currently focuses on the musicology of war and other forms of collective violence, including genocide and torture. From 2008-2014, she

was a junior professor at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, where she established and led the research group “Music, Conflict and the State”. Her work has been funded by numerous fellowships and scholarships, including from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, the Käte Hamburger Centre of Advanced Study “Law as Culture”, and the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. Her research and teaching often intersect with the topic of music and human rights, and she co-leads the project Environmental Conditions of Detention, which seeks to raise awareness of the impacts on detainees of the sensory conditions of their environment (www.detentionconditions.org). Further research interests include serial and experimental music; song studies; and music in Scotland.

M.A. Nikola Vasiljević:
***The Musical Regime: Phenomenological and
Discursive Challenges for Musicology***

What does music convey when it is forced upon a body that cannot flee it; or when it is weaponized as a means to dehumanization; or when its sonic qualities are utilized for silencing sounds of beatings and mass executions? In Nazi concentration camps, music was transformed into an instrument of violence intended to break bodies, annihilate subjectivity and humiliate victims. These cases open themselves to phenomenological examination of real-time immediacy and experience which can substantially reformulate and readdress the issue. The analysis will unfold across three entangled dimensions. Firstly, the psychological: how are relations of music to memory, identity, and emotion abused. Secondly, the physical: how was music enforced through spatial and corporeal constraints. Thirdly, the political: how was music turned into a vehicle for demonstrating power at the expense of its cultural meaning.

These practices exposed the latent violent potentialities within music and its culturally normativized form. While modalities of all three have agency also in artistic practices, their application in concentration camps presents an extreme case. This presentation will consider literature and documented accounts that relate to music from Nazi death camps, treating them as practical extremes related to culturally prevalent concepts. Without recourse to notions of artistic value, it reframes the question: what does the violent abuse of music reveal about its “enlightened” alter-ego? The paper attempts to criticise the present discourse by utilizing phenomenology to reevaluate fundamental premises of musical experience, but also how musicology understands its own object of study. This implies bracketing not only “positive” or “negative” values, but also the aesthetic premises of music and its environments.

Focusing on real-time immediacy within the camps shows how “bracketing” music itself reveals the inherent mechanism of violence that we avoid confronting

Nikola Vasiljević studied Piano and Pedagogy in Linz, Austria, followed by a Master's program in Aesthetics at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. As a scholarship holder of the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, he is currently conducting his PhD research on genealogy of music, examining the discursive boundaries of music by focusing on its violent mechanisms and practical aberrations. He is experienced as a classical and pop-musician, producer, teacher and archivist.

Dr. Élise Petit:
Music and Violence in Nazi Camps:
Towards a Topographic Approach

Although the role and presence of music in the concentration camp system have drawn the interest of researchers and musicians since the late 1980s, the connection between music and violence in this system is still mostly unknown. Yet the presence of music in Nazi camps mainly served the Nazi system of moral and physical destruction. Numerous accounts written after the war by survivors mention the presence of music in concentration camps and killing centres, mainly to accompany the marching of the Kommandos in the morning and in the evening. Many of them also mention the strength of music, which, thanks to its soothing power, was said to have helped people get through the worst hours in the camps. These testimonies often fail to mention that music was first and foremost misused, or better said abused, by the perpetrators in a destructive way: while the camp orchestras sometimes did play for prisoners on Sundays, as propaganda pictures show, they more frequently accompanied punishments, violence, and even executions.

In fact, the role of music and its involvement in violence were mainly linked to its presence in the “outdoor areas” of the camps: at the gate, on the roll call place, in the working Kommandos, at the unloading ramps. These specific spaces were filled with specific music repertoires, mostly military band music and light songs. But music in the “inside spaces”, mostly associated with authorized or clandestine concerts and cultural events serving resistance strategies, could also be related to certain forms of violence. There also, specific repertoires were involved. Using music, testimonies, scores, and other original documents, paper will offer a topographic approach concerning the correlations between music and violence, putting in relation spaces, repertoires, and functions of music.

Élise Petit is Associate Professor and Head of the Musicology Department at Université Grenoble Alpes (France). She is a specialist of musical policies in 20th century Germany, from the Third Reich to the Cold War. She was awarded multiple fellowships to conduct her research about Music in Nazi camps, and has published numerous articles about this subject in French and in English. She is the author of *“Entartete Musik”. Musiques interdites sous le IIIe Reich* (Paris: Bleu Nuit, 2015) and *Musique et politique en Allemagne, du IIIe Reich à l’aube de la guerre froide* (Paris: PUPS, 2017). In 2023-2024, she was the curator of the exhibition *La musique dans les camps nazis at the Mémorial de la Shoah* in Paris, which catalog she also authored.

Prof. Dr. Laura Morowitz:

***Violence, Trauma and the Annihilation of the Self in
Jerzy Adam Brandhuber's Auschwitz Cycle (1946)***

All of the iconic visual images of the Holocaust are photographs. Of the thousands upon thousands of these photos nearly all were created to record the success, the efficiency, the seamless execution of the annihilation. The images now burned into our brains were almost never created to function as they do now, to ensure a repertoire of second hand, visual memory to ensure the acts of barbarism they caught with the camera will never be forgotten.

There are also thousands of brilliant works of fine art by victims of the Holocaust yet not a single one has ever emerged as truly iconic. Who can propose a work of visual art that occupies the same weight in the public consciousness as Primo Levi's *Is this a Man?* (1947) What image, or even what series of images – for we have many of these – is charged with pushing back against oblivion in the same way as Elie Wiesel's *Night?* (1956) There is no sketchbook equivalent to the *Diary of Anne Frank*. Why? How do we understand images of violence in the Holocaust made by those who experienced it? What language do they find to express it, if doing so is even possible. One of the aims of this paper is to explore these questions.

A second focus, following the first, is to analyze the very little-studied drawing series, the *Auschwitz Cycle*, by Jerzy Adam Brandhuber, imprisoned there from January 1943 to October 1944, when he was transferred to Sachsenhausen. An exhibition of his works held at the Auschwitz Museum in 2021 included a biography and portions of several memoirs. I will explore these drawings, which differ profoundly from many of the other camp *oeuvres* made by victim/artists such as David Olère and Leo Haas. I will argue that what we see in the *Auschwitz Cycle* is the depiction of violence from within, a decentring, disintegration and decontextualization of the body in

moments of violent rupture. In this cycle it is impossible to understand the larger context, the chronology, or the spatial layout of Auschwitz. Often one cannot know whether it is even day or night. There is only the world of the victims and of the perpetrators, no individuals. These images cannot be turned into a story; they remain as sensation, feeling, experience. They are not metaphors that attempt to equate the experience to something else. They are not, as the photographs I described earlier are, “readable”.

Above all, they are not like “Night” or other memoirs because there is no “I” in them; the corporeal and emotional self has disintegrated. There is a literal disembodiment; the figures are lacking individuality and volume, even readability, as human form. There is only fragmentation, and an inability to distinguish one body from another. These powerful and deeply disturbing images speak in the language of trauma: “The disastrous knowledge, the unexperienced experience of severe trauma is discommunion and non being”. They are images in which there is no relation between self and other, because there is no longer any self.

Laura Morowitz is Professor of Art History at Wagner College and the Senior Research and Programming Director of the Wagner College Holocaust Center. Her most recent books are *Art, Exhibition and Erasure in Nazi Germany* (Routledge Press, 2023) and *Erasure and Eradications in Modern Viennese Art, Architecture and Design* (Routledge, 2022, co-edited with Megan Brandow-Faller. Her chapter on “Art as a Source for Studying the Holocaust,” appeared in *Sources for Studying the Holocaust: A Guide for Students*, ed. Paul Bartrop. Routledge Press, 2023. Her articles and essays have appeared in *The Journal of Holocaust Research*, *Art Bulletin*, *the Oxford Art Journal*, *Modernism/Modernity*, *Austrian Studies Year Book*, *The Journal of the History of Collecting* and many others. She has presented her research at many museums including the British Museum, the National Gallery of Washington DC, the Rijksmuseum and the Musee LeMans.

Prof. Dr. Sven Kramer:

Gaze Control in Son of Saul and The Zone of Interest

The sphere of the Sonderkommando at Birkenau and the commandant's villa at Auschwitz I (Stammlager) represent two extremely different places within the universe of Auschwitz. Feature films from recent years have focused on each of these microcosms: *Son of Saul* (László Nemes, 2015) and *The Zone of Interest* (Jonathan Glazer, 2023). Nemes' film shows the extermination process through the perspective of the victims, Glazer follows the affairs of the Höß family while excluding the murderous events nearby. While the films create utterly different images of Auschwitz, they both raise aesthetic and moral questions regarding the depiction of the crimes committed here. They approach these questions from opposite but related vantage points. The lecture aims to retrace the dialectic which lies in the unmitigated depiction of the victims' destruction on the one side, as well as in exclusively focusing on the perpetrators' life world on the other side. The aesthetic and moral problems of both perspectives can be understood as complementary to each other.

Sven Kramer, since 2005 Professor of German Literature and Literary Studies at Leuphana University in Lüneburg.

Prof. Dr. Marek Kaźmierczak:
(After)images «in spite of everything.»
The Zone of Interest in the Context of Film
Representations of Auschwitz

In their representation of Auschwitz, the creators of the film *The Zone of Interest* abandon the oculocentric perspective. In the context of films depicting the death camp, including feature films, documentaries and television films, this artistic approach seems original. To some extent, it probably is. However, our perception of the film will change and the filmmakers' approach will cease to be original when we consider the influence of audiovisual culture on how Auschwitz is perceived, and what I refer to as 'afterimages'.

Marek Kaźmierczak works at the Institute of Film, Media, and Audiovisual Arts at the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He is a (bio)semiotician. He studies the influence of everyday thinking in contemporary culture, examines representations of the Shoah in popular culture, and deals with interspecies communication from a semiotic perspective.

Prof. Dr. Patricia Hall:
Performing Foxtrots from Auschwitz-Birkenau

While many Holocaust survivors have given vivid accounts of the music they heard in Auschwitz, even supplying titles, we really don't know what this music sounded like. There are photographs and drawings of a few of the ensembles that played in the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex, but no recordings were ever made.

In this presentation I explain the process I used in reconstructing music played in Auschwitz from manuscript parts preserved in the Collections Department of the Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau. These parts were dance band arrangements created by Polish political prisoners from Auschwitz I and performed at Sunday concerts for the SS. We'll listen to performances of these reconstructions and see how they have been adapted in recent soundtracks like Barry Levinson's *The Survivor* and Jonathan Glazer's *The Zone of Interest*.

Finally, and most importantly, how can these reconstructions educate audiences and performers about the music of Auschwitz, the musicians that performed it, and by extension, the Holocaust? I'll describe the recent concerts of our University of Michigan student ensemble in Vienna and Poland, as well as concerts by other youth ensembles that took place during International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Patricia Hall (Professor Emerita, University of Michigan), is the author of *A View of Berg's Lulu Through the Autograph Sources* (University of California Press, 1997, winner of the ASCAP Deems-Taylor Award), Berg's *Wozzeck* (Oxford University Press, 2011), co-editor with Friedemann Sallis of *A Handbook to Twentieth-Century Musical Sketches* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and general editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship* (Oxford University Press, 2017). Hall founded the online journal *Music & Politics* and was editor from 2007 to 2017.

She served as the president of the Society for Music Theory from 2019 through 2021. She has been researching manuscripts at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum for the last nine years and was interviewed on the PBS NewsHour. Performances of the Music from Auschwitz manuscripts took place in January 2025 for International Holocaust Remembrance Day at Wigmore Hall, London, Music of Remembrance, Seattle, and at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum.

Dr. Laurence Sherr:
***Prisoner Music Performances in Auschwitz I, II, and
III: Relationships among Performance Spaces, Music
Function, and Repertory, and Their Impact on
Prisoners***

Prisoner musicians performed in diverse locations in the three main facilities of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi concentration and extermination camp: Auschwitz I, Birkenau/Auschwitz II, and Auschwitz III: Monowitz. Sites where music-making regularly occurred are graphically identified through a combination of Sherr's illustrations on Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and other camp diagrams, extant historical photos, artworks created by camp prisoners, and by Sherr's photo and video documentation of sites in Auschwitz I and II. Selected locations used less frequently are also shown. Relationships between the music's site, function, repertory, and impact on prisoners is considered for each location. Motivations for Sherr's photo and video documentation of concentration camp music sites include memorialization, historical corroboration, and pedagogy. Regarding the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, a personal connection arose from the death of his mother's mother and sister in the camp. An assessment of the music's impact on prisoners poses the question: Did the playing of prisoner musicians aid in the ability of any prisoners to survive the inhumane conditions in the camp, or, did it contribute to Nazi aims of degrading prisoners and depriving them of their humanity through a form of psychological violence? Prisoner testimony provides a complex answer addressing both aspects of the question, including their overlap and intersection. Sherr's Auschwitz-Birkenau research is built on the contributions of Dr. Jacek Lachendro in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Research Center, specifically Lachendro's article "The orchestras in KL Auschwitz" in *Auschwitz Studies* 27 and Sherr's consultations with Lachendro over the past 14 years.

Laurence Sherr is recognized for his uniquely interconnected work on music related to the Holocaust, uniting his activities as composer of remembrance music, lecturer, event producer, and educator. He has presented this work on five continents; his purpose is to foster greater understanding and tolerance. Displaying “lamenting and profound beauty,” and delivering a “powerful impact” (Fanfare), Sherr’s album – *Fugitive Footsteps: Remembrance Music* – was awarded a Global Music Awards Gold Medal (Album Composer, Album Concept). Sherr’s compositions are performed internationally and appear on European and American albums. He has received numerous prizes, awards, and fellowships.

Dr. Sherr’s primary research areas are music at the Auschwitz camps and Theresienstadt ghetto, and his interviews with survivors about their experiences with music during the Holocaust. Broader interests include music in the ghettos, camps, and among the partisans; the suppression of musicians and genres under Nazi rule; and Holocaust remembrance compositions.

Prof. Dr. Lori Weintrob & Prof. Dr. Thomas Juneau:

Musical Tributes to One Man from Krakow

This presentation will explore three types of musical performance connected to Krakow and Auschwitz-Birkenau. The first captures the dreams of a 13-year-old Polish-Jewish boy named Abramek Koplowicz (Feb. 18, 1930-1944) soaring “over rivers and seas” from the Nile to Tibet, who was murdered in Auschwitz. A second type of music is the eyewitness memories of Arthur Spielman, now 96 years old, who was born in Krakow, and is a life-long member of the Krakow Friendship Society of New York. Finally, we will discuss the challenges of teaching about the Holocaust through the lens of music, from *Triumph of the Will* (1935) to Hanns Eisler’s haunting score of *Night and Fog* (1955). We will particularly focus on Alma Rose (niece of Gustav Mahler) and the women’s orchestra in Auschwitz-Birkenau, including through documentary film as well as the controversial *Playing for Time*.

Abramek Koplowicz and his parents were deported to Auschwitz from the Lodz ghetto, where he and his mother Johet-Gitel were murdered. Abramek survived the initial selection but was killed in September 1944. His father survived, yet only in 1983 were Abramek’s poems discovered by his step brother, Eliezer “Lolek” Greenfeld. The poem has since been translated into 15 languages (by Sarah Lawson and Małgorzata Koraszewska). Abramek was also a talented painter and a careful reproduction of his work “Prayer” was given to Pope Francis in 2014. The author/pianist Diane Abdi Robertson (Atlanta, Georgia, USA) first read the poem in Yad Vashem in 2008. The version our student choir performed in 2019 at Wagner College was composed by Stanley Hoffman (whose own mother survived Auschwitz), who has agreed to be interviewed for this research.

This work in five movements brings to life the youthful dreams of Abramek Koplowicz. Composed for mixed choir (SATB) and chamber orchestra, each movement encapsulates a mood of the poet. The first movement, *Dream*, is set with a flowing instrumental motive that accompanies a sighing vocal melody in the choir. The second movement, *I’ll Fly*, is sung homophonically

by the choir, conveying the idea of the poet flying over the rivers and mountains of exotic lands far away. The third movement, *The Peaks of Tibet*, create a musical landscape of soaring heights through the orchestral music. Hoffman also uses musical devices such as key changes and ascending vocal lines to paint the image of a young man scaling a great mountain. *I Will Flutter* takes creative texts, including the idea of fluttering over "Kangaroo Isle", to create a virtuosic sing-song melody, as the choir whims away on nonsense syllables. This technique beautifully evokes the innocence of the poet. Finally, the technically challenging movement *Fly, Cruise, Soar!* paints a rhythmically energetic and electrifying ending to the work. Through the use of dramatic musical techniques, Hoffman truly embodies the innocence and tragedy of this burgeoning poet who was taken too soon.

Arthur Spielman survived the Krakow ghetto by fleeing across the mountains to Slovakia and then Hungary. He continues to relate his history to students in New York and around the world. He often discusses and sings the local Polish and yiddish music of his youth, notably Mordecai Gerbertig. He can still recall and sing the words to songs of his childhood such as those about the Górale mountain people, Krakowiaczek Jeden ("One Man from Krakow") and chassidic hebrew *zimiro*t (prayer-songs).

We will be able to play brief clips of performances as we analyze these works and memories. For a few years, we have been team-teaching about music, the Holocaust and World War II, combining our expertise as a historian of the Holocaust and as a composer and music professor. We have travelled with the Wagner College choir to perform in Normandy (for the 80th anniversary of D-Day) and Paris (at the *Musee de la Shoah*), France.

Lori R. Weintrob is a Professor of History and Director of the Holocaust Center at Wagner College, in Staten Island, NY. She has connected Holocaust survivors with over 30,000 youth over the past decade and received awards for interfaith community-building. She serves on the boards of Staten Island Women, Inc. and VISIONS. One of her most recent books is entitled *Heroines of the Holocaust: Reframing Courage and Resistance in Genocide* (with Routledge Press).

Dr. Jacek Lachendro:

***Orchestras and Music in KL Auschwitz from the
Perspective of Prisoners and SS men (Based on the
Accounts and Memories of Survivors)***

There were more than 10 prisoners' orchestras in the Auschwitz camp complex, with four major ones in terms of their size (from 30-40 up to over a hundred of prisoners-musicians) and length of operating. The presentation will focus on those four ones: the men's orchestra in the camp for men in Auschwitz I, the male and female orchestras in Birkenau, and the men's orchestra in Monowitz with the emphasis on prisoners' and SS men views and reactions on the music they played.

Jacek Lachendro is a historian, the deputy head of the Research Center at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. His research interests include the history of Auschwitz concentration camp (e.g. the fate of Polish elites, the fate of Soviet POWs, prisoners' orchestras, escapes from the camp, evacuation and liberation of the camp, help provided to survivors after liberation), the history of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (especially its origins and early years), and the history of the Land of Oświęcim during the German occupation.

Prof. Dr. Anno Mungen:
Robert Schumann's Träumerei
in Auschwitz-Birkenau

The many different practices of performing music in Auschwitz-Birkenau include also what one might call private performances. These are based on the specific requests of camp guards or doctors as Josef Kramer, Josef Mengele or Maria Mandl. They forced musicians to play specific pieces of music for him or her in a private setting. One piece of music recurs repeatedly in this context. It is Robert Schumann's *Träumerei* from 1838, written originally for piano. It was played in various instrumentations in the camp. Mengele's order to the cellist Anita Lasker to play this piece for him after he had carried out selections has become particularly well known. Less well known is the broader context of this music within the Nazi understanding of culture. This context allows us to understand the function that this music served for the perpetrators. Central to this understanding are Hans Pfitzner's anti-Semitic pamphlet *Die Neue Ästhetik der musikalischen Impotenz. Ein Verwesungssymptom* from 1920 and the 1944 German movie *Träumerei*. After her liberation, Lasker played *Träumerei* again in a concert in Bergen-Belsen as an act of reappropriation in order to reclaim the music back again to her own identity. All three central terms of the conference can be applied to the example. However, the presentation will focus on the German concept of culture in Nazi Germany associated with musical performances.

Anno Mungen is Full Professor of music theatre studies and director of the Institute for Music Theatre Studies (Forschungsinstitut für Musiktheater) Schloss Thurnau at the University of Bayreuth, Germany. Prior to this appointment in October 2006 he was Professor of musicology at Bonn University, Germany. At the musicology department of Mainz University, he completed his post-doctoral thesis (Habilitation) on the 'Archaeology' of

Film Music. Mungen received his doctorate in 1995 with a dissertation on Gaspare Spontini and German opera of the 1820s from Technische Universität, Berlin, where he studied musicology (with Carl Dahlhaus and others) and art history. He also has a degree in flute from Staatliche Hochschule für Musik, Duisburg, Germany. He is the editor in chief of ACT, an academic online journal on music and performance and initiated the project WagnerWorldWide for the Wagner anniversary in 2013. His research on „Music Theatre in Nuremberg 1920–1950“ presented an exhibition „Hitler.Macht.Oper“ 2018 in Nuremberg. Another project on „Music – Voice – Gender“ included research on Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient (1804–1860), which serves as a basis for a collaboration with the Concerto Köln orchestra, the Dresden Festspielorchester and Kent Nagano to perform Wagner’s Ring des Nibelungen historically informed. He is working on a biographical project on Schröder-Devrient which will include concerts in 2026 (Köln, Philharmonie, Bayreuth, Steingraeber Haus) to celebrate this great artist. In 2021 his book on Wieland Wagner 1941–1944 was published and translated by Krzysztof Kozłowski into Polish as „*Tu głos ma sztuka*“. *Wieland Wagner w latach 1941–1945* (Kraków 2025). Together with him, he is working on a Polish-German project investigating in the cultural politics of occupied Poland 1939–1945. In summer 2026 his book *Von Bayreuth nach Auschwitz. Oper, Politik, Gewalt* as part of the enterprise will be coming out.

M.A. Zuzanna Karpińska and M.A. Martin Gruber:
***Mediating Memory. Intercultural Dialogue on Forms
of Remembering in The Passenger***

The workshop encourages an intercultural dialogue among Polish and German university students, with particular emphasis on how the Holocaust is mediated through art and how it is perceived by generations without the unmediated experience of the event or the opportunity to interact directly with the survivors. It will be explored how memory is shaped by cultural representations of the Holocaust, using Zofia Posmysz's *The Passenger* as a case study.

Beginning at the specific space of Auschwitz-Birkenau, which participants will have experienced on a guided walking tour, the workshop asks how Auschwitz-Birkenau as a symbol for the Holocaust is translated into artistic forms and transported through different kinds of media. *The Passenger*, created originally as script for a radio drama (*The Passenger from Cabin 45*, 1959), and adapted to, among others, a novel (1962), a film (1963) and an opera (1968) provide a case study for forms of memory.

The one-hour workshop is structured as a safe space for open reflection within the conference. After a brief overview to memory studies, we will take a glimpse at one scene from *The Passenger's* adaptations which combined music and the Holocaust to start off an intercultural discussion on the role of music, mise en scène and artistic choices within the student group. This dialogue will explore how Polish and German perspectives on Holocaust and remembrance interact with each other.

Martin Gruber is a researcher at the University of Bayreuth. After his bachelor's in Language and Literature with a specialisation on media studies, he is completing his master's in Media Culture and Media Economics with a focus on media and history. He co-organized an excursion

on “Music in Auschwitz” in 2022 with AMU Poznan. His research focuses on cultural reporting in the NS-press and cultural representations in different media formats. Currently he is co-teaching a course on the press during the “Bayreuth War Festivals” with a public exhibition for 150 years Bayreuth Festival in 2026.

Zuzanna Karpińska is a PhD candidate in Art Sciences at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (AMU). She completed her bachelor’s degree in Film Studies and Media Culture as a part of Interdisciplinary Individual Studies programme. After obtaining her master’s degree in film and media studies, she began her formation at the Doctoral School of Humanities at AMU. In 2024, she took part in workshop on art and cultural politics in occupied Poland at the University of Bayreuth. Her research interests focus on the relationship between art and politics, and film and religion. She is currently researching on the reception of Spanish culture and history in Polish film and television during the communist era.

Dr. habil. Katarzyna Naliwajek:
***Female German-Jewish Musicians – Victims of
Auschwitz – and Their Commemoration***

The paper focuses on female musicians born in Germany into Jewish families at the turn of the twentieth-century who were murdered in Auschwitz. The purpose of this study is threefold: (1) to depict their identities and fate in the camps (such as survival or temporary survival in women's bands); (2) to discuss the methodologies employed in certain encyclopedic descriptions of such individual musicians' stories; (3) to reflect on the possibilities of commemoration and education on these and other musicians who were victims of Auschwitz and other camps – how can this memory be preserved in the global consciousness today?

Among the musicians whose biographies are described there are: a violinist and a student of Joseph Joachim, Helene Croner (1885, Berlin – Auschwitz), her younger sister, flutist, Charlotte Croner (1887, Berlin – Auschwitz – probably Bergen-Belsen); a pianist and pedagogue Klara Kahn (born Hermann, 1910, Frankfurt am Main –Auschwitz); a pianist Helene Lachmanski (born Schaul, 1877, Hamburg –Auschwitz, where she was deported on August 5, 1942); singers such as Susanne Landsberg (born Hollaender, 1892 Köln – Auschwitz); an opera singer Otilie Metzger-Lattermann (1878, Frankfurt am Main – 1943, Auschwitz); Alma Rosé (Vienna 1906–1944, Auschwitz), composer Gertrud Schweizer (1894, Mannheim - 1943, Auschwitz) and many others.

As an introduction to the discussion on the second and third points, two online encyclopaedic projects which contain entries on these musicians will be compared: (1) *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit* (where their place of death is ill-identified as "Auschwitz, Poland", whereas the camp was established on the territories occupied by the Third Reich and Poland as a state did not exist at that time) and (2) *Musik und Gender im Internet (MUGI) Lexicon*.

Dr. Habil. Katarzyna Naliwajek (Institute of Musicology, University of Warsaw) has focused her research on history of music in occupied Poland, including topics such as Nazi musical propaganda, the role of music in detention and genocide sites, persecuted musicians, as well as music-related losses due to Nazi plunder and destruction. In October 2025, she received the prestigious Polish Prime Minister Award for her habilitation and the research on the use of music in dehumanization of victims as well as on murderous consequences of hate speech. Her recent book, *Sounds of Apocalypse. Music in Poland under German Occupation* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2022), was nominated for the Polish Academy of Sciences Award. She curated the exhibition *Music in Occupied Poland. 1939-1945* for which she was awarded the Hosenfeld/Szpilman Gedenkpreis by the Leuphana Universität Lüneburg (2011). In her latest research, she adopts a comparative approach to music propaganda (see: *Weaponized Songs: Pro-Putin and Other Totalitarian Musical Propaganda*).

Prof. Dr. Mikołaj Jazdon:
Amongst the Ashes of Auschwitz.
On Andrzej Brzozowski's Archeology

The presentation will focus on the short documentary film *Archeologia* (*Archeology*), which Andrzej Brzozowski made at the Educational Film Studio (WFO) in Łódź in 1967. The documentary presents the work of archaeologists from the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) who are conducting archaeological research at Crematorium III in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, initiated by the director for the purposes of the film.

Using the form of a short film without dialogue or verbal narration, Brzozowski attempted to tell the story of the victims of Auschwitz through personal everyday objects discovered during archaeological excavations. In the film, he presented a new way of telling the story of the Holocaust, demanding the viewers to use their imagination to see the murdered people behind the objects shown in close-up.

The film was successful at festivals in Poland and abroad, but despite this recognition, the opportunities to show it and write about it in Poland were limited. Since the archives of the Educational Film Studio in Łódź has made documentation from the production of *Archeologia* available in recent years, the author of the paper reconstructs the process of its creation as well as the archaeological work carried out in the autumn of 1967 in the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau. He also presents the director's concept behind the film's composition.

In his latest film, *Datowane XX wiek* (*Dated 20th Century*, 2001), Andrzej Brzozowski returned to the memorial site and museum of the concentration camp in Oświęcim to film the solar eclipse that could be seen there on August 11, 1999. In his new film, he used fragments of *Archeologia*, enriching it with new meanings.

Mikołaj Jazdon, film scholar, Ph.D., professor at the Institute of Film, Media and Audiovisual Arts at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He works on the theory and history of documentary film, the history of Polish film, and cinema of Krzysztof Kieślowski and Andrzej Brzozowski. Author of books *Kieślowski's Documentary Films* (2002) and *Kazimierz Karabasz's Documentary Cinema* (2009), as well as articles on documentary film. Co-author of the studies for the virtual walker tracing the places associated with the realization of Krzysztof Kieślowski's Decalogue (mapadekalogu.pl). Co-author of the book interview with Krzysztof Piesiewicz - *Kieślowski. From Nod End to The End* (2021). He wrote the booklets for the DVD film albums of the Polish School of Documentary series and co-authored scripts for the television series *The Art of Documentary Film* (2008). He was co-founder and long-time director of the Off Cinema International Documentary Film Festival in Poznań.

Prof. Dr. Christine Hoppe:

Memory in Sound, Materiality: A Chopin Étude and a Cello as Media of Musical Remembrance

Chopin's Étude Op. 10 No. 3 ("Tristesse") and the "Auschwitz Cello" from the Göttingen University Instrument Collection represent two distinct yet interconnected forms of cultural memory. Drawing on Astrid Erll's model of material, social, and mental dimensions, in my talk, I want to explore how music and objects function as carriers of memory. While the cello's physical traces anchor memory materially, the Étude's adaptability highlights the fluidity of musical remembrance. Both media reveal the nature of memory, shaped by institutional practices, artistic reinterpretations, and ethical tensions between preservation and reactivation.

Chopin's Étude, composed after his exile following the failed Polish November Uprising (1830), gained new significance in Auschwitz when Alma Rosé arranged it for the women's orchestra as an act of cultural resistance. Simultaneously, the Étude remained popular in form of an arrangement from the film *Abschiedswalzer* (1934) with the German lyrics "In mir klingt ein Lied" and was used for Nazi propaganda. In contemporary contexts, such as Jesse Eisenberg's film *A Real Pain* (2024), the Étude bridges transgenerational trauma for Holocaust descendants, illustrating digital memory's fluidity compared to fixed physical artifacts. The physical presence of the cello embodies the tensions in preserving memory: as a 'mute witness,' it bears witness to the systematic dispossession of Jewish musicians, reflecting the erasure of Jewish daily life and cultural networks, while also raising ethical questions about its role in memory:

Should such objects be returned, displayed in museums, or reactivated musically in order to evoke and preserve memories through performances, as practiced by *the Violins of Hope* initiative? Both media illustrate the dynamic, constructive nature of cultural memory. They encourage us to conceive of history not as a closed narrative but as an open dialogue, mediated by sound, materiality, and collective imagination. Their lasting resonance underscores the dual role of memory: its anchoring in the past and its demand for reflection in the present.

Christine Hoppe is Junior-Professor of Musicology/Gender Studies at the Universität der Künste Berlin. From 2008 to 2022, she worked as a research assistant at Georg-August-University Göttingen, where she completed her Ph.D. in musicology with her thesis "Der Schatten Paganinis: Virtuosität in den Werken Heinrich Wilhelm Ernsts (1814-1865)" in 2012. She served as an interim Professor of Cultural Musicology (Göttingen) and held lecturer positions (Kassel). She organized the international conferences "Der lange Schatten Paganinis" (2015) and "Music in the Body – The Body in Music" (2019) and co-edited several publications on 19th century musical life. Her main research interests focus on musical virtuosity, the body in music, as well as the impact of music on everyday life, social history, and gender. She has regularly explored the role of music in concentration camps and the interplay between music, violence, and memory in her teaching, intertwining it with excursions to Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen.

Prof. Dr. Andrea Bombi:
Sonic Mnemagogues:
The Phonosphere of If this is a man

I mnemagoghi, the "mnemagogues", is a short story published in 1966 in which Primo Levi imagines a chemist who is able to combine chemical compounds in order to obtain smells that exactly match his memory of relevant events of his life. In this paper I use the same word to refer to the sonic references contained in Levi's memoir of Auschwitz-Monowitz, *If this is a man* (1947/19583). Levi's book contains a famous characterization of the music that accompanied the prisoners' march to and from work as the last thing they would forget about the camp. In fact, the entire book is interspersed with sonic references, ranging from various manifestations of the human voice, to the noise of the machines in the Buna, to the noise of the marching prisoners themselves, to silence. All of this allows for a reconstruction of Levi's sonic experience during his deportation: this is by no means an attempt to approach Monowitz's soundscape, but rather to consider sound as a specific and highly relevant component in Primo Levi's construction of memory.

Andrea Bombi teaches Italian language and literature at the University of Valencia (Spain). Between 2002 and 2008 he was Professor at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya. He has published several essays and editions on the Italian madrigal and the Spanish baroque villancico, as well as on urban musicology. Together with Juan José Carreras and Miguel Ángel Marín, he edited *Música y cultura urbana en la Edad Moderna* (Valencia, 2005). His interest in the reception of Italian music between the 17th and 18th centuries has led to the publication of *Entre tradición y modernidad. El italianismo musical en Valencia (1685-1738)* (Valencia, 2011). Subsequently, he edited the volume *Pasados presentes* (Valencia, 2015) on historiography of music. He is currently Director-at-Large of the International Musicological

Society and a member of the of the editorial board of the journal *Cuadernos de Música Iberoamericana*. He is the director of the project « Ciudades sonoras. Urban phonospheres of the Mediterranean (1500–1900)» - CIAICO 2023/55 funded by the Generalitat Valenciana.

M.A. Chiara Antico:
Collecting and Embodying Auschwitz Music
Repertoire as a Living Archive:
The Resonances Project

Many former musicians at Auschwitz described their experience, and survivors like Primo Levi and Charlotte Delbo remembered the impression of the musical activity. Several classical compositions by Schubert, Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Puccini, Schumann, Sarasate, and others are mentioned in the testimonies by former inmates: musicians may easily sing them inside, and imagine the sound context prisoners were living in. Unfortunately, for most of the readers, women's and men's music blocks remain silent, since the title of the piece doesn't recall a specific melody.

The educational remembrance project *Resonances* aims to provide the missing concrete sound of the musicians' activity at Auschwitz. After writing a few drafts for educational activities at school and presenting the idea at the Educational Conference of the ICEAH in 2021, the project reached students, diverse audiences, and interested colleagues. Contextualized lecture recitals let us talk about daily life in the camp, tell the story of the musicians, read their own words, and commemorate music and victims. Working for education is already doing commemoration. Playing the piece someone who experienced Auschwitz played in his audition can strongly connect us with similar inner emotions: sharing music bridges the gap of time. As a professional musician, I can join historians' job and play *Träumerei* by Schumann to honor and thank Anita Lasker-Wallfisch for her commitment to Holocaust remembrance, or Monti's *Czardas* to commemorate Alma Rosé's absolute engagement with the orchestra, and Chopin's *Etude* to remember Helena Dunicz-Niwinska. As August Kowalczyk stated:

“Music has two vital roles: the first is to pay tribute to the victims; the second is for music to purify itself.”¹

I believe that music inspires respect and unity, and deepens research, ethics, and dissemination. Embodying these ephemeral artifacts turns me into a living archive: through my performance, I return resonance to the musicians’ testimonies.

Chiara Antico is an Italian viola player and musicologist. She is a DMA candidate at Universidade NOVA in Lisbon, focusing on musical activity and repertoires during the Holocaust, and devoting her artistic research to the intangible materiality for remembrance. Her educational project deserved an award at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in 2021. She presents papers at international conferences intertwining Musicology and Memory Studies, and she is particularly concerned with the concepts of timelessness and collective memory. Having joined several orchestras in Europe and beyond, currently, she is a music teacher and Holocaust educator. Chiara Antico holds a MA summa cum laude in Music Performance and a Master’s degree in Pedagogy.

¹ <https://youtu.be/aTADea4q6xg?si=hOCmahdpxp98LDE6r>

Music, Violence, Memory in Auschwitz-Birkenau

(26-28 November 2025)

Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań
Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau
Research Institute for Musik Theatre Studies (*fimt*) at the University of Bayreuth

Concept:

Prof. Dr. Krzysztof Kozłowski (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)
Prof. Dr. Anno Mungen (University of Bayreuth, *fimt*)
Dr. Jacek Lachendro (Museum and Memorial Auschwitz-Birkenau)

Coordination of the conference:

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M.A. Wojciech Sławnikowski (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)
M.A. Lidiia Krier (University of Bayreuth, *fimt*)
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Auschwitz

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S t a t e M u s e u m

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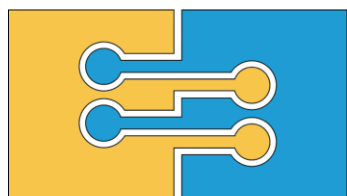
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