In 1947, musicologist Paul Nettl published *The Story of Dance Music*, his first book after his immigration to the United States from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia.¹ In their reviews of the book, two critics accused Nettl of Czech nationalism and chauvinism. Hungarian-born musicologist Otto Gombosi (1902–1955), who settled in the US in 1939, was particularly bothered by what he called Nettl’s „disturbing overemphasis on everything Slavic, and especially Czech.”² German musicologist Hans Engel (1894–1970) went even further to make an explicit connection between Nettl’s scholarly work and his presumed ethnic identity. Engel was especially critical of Nettl’s claims that the minuets in multi-movement compositions by eighteenth-century composers of the so-called Mannheim School originated in Czech folk music and that the accentuated openings of these minuets (on the downbeat, without an upbeat) corresponded “to the trochaic rhythm of the Czech language which has no article.”³ Engel viewed such claims as resulting from “patriotic or nationalistic

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² Otto Gombosi, “The Story of Dance Music by Paul Nettl,” *The Musical Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (October 1948): 627. Gombosi was even more critical of Nettl's minor comment about Smetana: “it is chauvinism gone rampant,” he wrote, “to say that 'Smetana is ... a more universal type of genius than Chopin who used only the piano to glorify national aspirations.'”
³ Nettl, *The Story of Dance Music*, 207; Hans Engel, “Paul Nettl. The Story of Dance Music,” *Die Musikforschung* 2, nos. 2–4 (1949): 270–71. The interest of Central European musicologists in the Mannheim School was initiated by Hugo Riemann's editions of Mannheim symphonies from 1902–7, as part of the nationalist series *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern*. As Alexander Rehding has shown, Riemann turned Johann Stamitz into a “[German] national icon.” Alexander Rehding, *Hugo Riemann and the Birth of Modern Musical Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 138–49. Whereas Engel's objections to Nettl's views might have been rooted in this Riemannian tradition, Nettl may instead have been expanding on the ideas of his mentor, Austrian musicologist Guido Adler, who claimed that classical symphony originated in Vienna, not Mannheim. Whereas Riemann, according to Rehding, stressed Stamitz's Bohemian origin to illustrate his connection to the Germanic Holy Roman Empire, Nettl, following in
biases of this Czech emigrant” (“patriotischen oder nationalistischen Einstellungen des tschechischen Emigranten”). Gombosi’s and Engel’s points make sense to some extent because Paul Nettl spent most of his early career in Prague, and after his arrival in the US, he wrote several articles about eighteenth-century Czech music. According to ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl, Paul Nettl’s son, “in the United States, [my father] did what he could to get Czech music known and appreciated.”

Engel’s critique, however, prompted a response from Nettl in which he tried to define his own ethnicity. First, he dealt with the issue of Czechness: “I am not and never have been a Czech”; then he clarified his Germanness: “[I am] a German, [though one] with that racial parenthesis with which all German colleagues are familiar.” Here Nettl clearly endorses a German identity, yet he also refers to his Jewish background and to the fact that, up to the defeat of Nazi Germany in WWII, many German musicologists, including Hans Engel, the author of the review Nettl is responding to, viewed Jewishness as racially incompatible with a German identity. Toward the end of his response, Nettl approaches issues of identity from a different angle. The fact that he was a victim of “the German intellectual history between 1939 and 1945,” he claims, never stopped him, both in Europe and in America, from linking himself to the German cultural community and accomplishing pioneer service for the German culture. Nettl therefore operates with two different levels of Germanness: a racial one, about which he feels insecure because of his Jewish background, and a cultural one, which he fully endorses.

Nettl’s complicated views of Czechness and Germanness closely reflect the complex identity politics in the regions of the present-day Czech Republic during the first half of the twentieth century. Bruno Nettl often describes his father’s attitudes to ethnicity as ambivalent. The present article uses Paul Nettl’s writings, including autobiographical sketches and lecture drafts from his estate at Indiana University and the Czech Radio Archive in Prague, to probe his views on Czech and German cultures and place them in contempo-
raneous cultural and political contexts. I show that certain aspects of Nettl’s national and ethnic views did evolve with the changes in political situation in Central Europe between 1918 and 1945. At the same time, I argue that Nettl in fact stayed committed to a consistent view of the German language and culture as – in contrast to what Gombosi and Engel thought they were finding in Nettl’s first American book – more universal and therefore superior to all other Central European languages and cultures, particularly the Slavic ones.

**German “Identity” in Bohemia**

The difficulty in defining and discussing ethnic identity in the region of what is now the Czech Republic during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been the subject of several recent studies. As cultural theory has shown, identity is a fluid concept, and most identities are fractured and “shift according to how subjects are addressed or represented.” Simultaneously, an important aspect of why Paul Nettl’s identity has been confusing to some commentators has to do, as Chad Bryant reminds us, with the fact that in the multilingual and multicultural Bohemia of that period, national and ethnic identities were not static, inherent categories but represented a matter of choice; “identifications” as opposed to identities. Identifying as a Czech or German (and increasingly also Jewish) Bohemian was therefore dependent for the most part on cultural and political practices in which one chose to participate. The fluidity of ethnic identifications in early twentieth-century Bohemia is also apparent in Paul Nettl’s family background, as presented in two autobiographical essays. Nettl’s short published autobiography appeared in a 1962 bibliographic monograph about Nettl and was edited by Thomas Atcherson, one of his students at Indiana University where Nettl started teaching in 1946. A much longer version of Nettl’s autobiography is preserved in his estate at IU. My edition of this autobiography can be found in the Appendix / Documents; it was probably written in 1949, because in it Nettl writes that he has been in the United State for nearly a decade (he emigrated in the fall of 1939).

Nettl was born in the heart of the so-called Sudetenland, in the North Bohemian city of Hohenelbe (presently known as the Czech Vrchlabí) at the foot of the Riesengebirge/Krkonoše mountains. Nettl’s father, Karl, was a prominent Jewish, German-speaking owner of a paper mill in Hohenelbe/Vrchlabí. In the 1949 autobiography, Nettl acknowledges that his mother was Czech and

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her maiden name was Becková. In an autobiographical memoir about his youth in the Riesengebirge/Krkonoše region from 1960, he also remembers that his mother always spoke German with a Czech accent. It is conspicuous, however, that in the “official” version of the academic autobiography in Atcherson’s 1962 book, the information about his mother’s Czech background is missing. In his introductory essay to Atcherson’s book, furthermore, Nettl’s friend, the German musicologist Friedrich Blume, uses only the German form of his mother’s maiden name, Beck, which downplays her Czech background. In the Vienna and Indiana autobiographical essays, Nettl frequently writes about the German-speaking relatives on his father’s side, but provides no information about the (predominantly) Czech-speaking relations on his mother’s side.

The rhetorical emphasis on German heritage in certain essays by and about Nettl could be viewed as part of the “identification” process: Nettl is not so much tapping into his national and ethnic roots as acting out an identity that he and his family accepted as their own. This process also plays out in Nettl’s approach to the Czech language. Nettl was apparently fluent in Czech, as he points out in one of his autobiographical essays—in the Riesengebirge/Krkonoše memoir, written in Indiana (after his move there in 1946), he claims, in fact, that “even today, when I speak Czech, I could be easily taken for a Czech” (“noch heute könnte ich, wenn ich tschechisch spreche, glatt als Tscheche angesehen werden”). He was also still able to write in Czech in 1959, twenty years after his escape from Prague, as illustrated in the letters he sent to the Czech Mozart researcher Tomislav Volek. At the same time, in his writings Nettl also at times exposes negative and superior attitudes towards the Czech language. In the Riesengebirge/Krkonoše memoir, for example, he explains that this knowledge resulted from his need to speak with his father’s Czech employees, which represents one of many passages that associate Czechs with servant and working classes.

Negative attitudes toward the Czech language are also expounded in Nettl’s manuscript draft “European Culture in Old Prague,” written in Indiana:

12 The essay was eventually published in 1960 in the magazine Riesengebirgs-Heimat. The original article draft is in Indiana University, Cook Music Library Special Collections, Paul Nettl Collection, “Persönliche Erinnerungen und Betrachtungen: Paul Nettl für Herrn Johann Posner,” 8.

13 Friedrich Blume, “Biographische Skizze,” in Ein Musikwissenschaftler in zwei Welten, 2. As Pamela Potter has shown, Blume is a controversial figure, specifically in connection to his studies about music and race during the Nazi period. Despite his problematic publications and activities from the 1930s and 1940s, he evaded scrutiny and criticism and became one of the most prominent figures of post-WWII German musicology. Potter, 253–58.

14 “Persönliche Erinnerungen und Betrachtungen,” 8.

15 One of these letters is published in Milada Jonášová, “V archivu Tomislava Volka jsou i dopisy od... [Part 1],” Harmonie 2018, No. 8 (August 1, 2018), 32. Volek does point out that Nettl supposedly received assistance with Czech grammar from Paul Kling, a Czech-Jewish violinist who survived the Holocaust and served as the principal violinist of the Louisville Orchestra between 1957 and 1977. During that time, Kling also taught the violin at Indiana University.

I remember well that even the knowledge of Czech was considered suspect in German University circles. As a characteristic detail I like to mention i.e., that it was not considered fashionable to pronounce Czech names correctly. There was a German “Kanzleidirektor” Prochaska whose name should have been pronounced Prochaska, with the accent on the first syllable. But an elegant man from the German side would pronounce him Prohaska. It was considered a disgrace in those circles to have knowledge of the Czech language or to know Czech people.

The passage does not necessarily show that Nettl espoused similar dismissive attitudes towards the Czech language as his German academic colleagues in Prague, but neither does it project any sort of distancing from such attitudes. The essay in which the passage appears is filled with nostalgia for the no-longer existent Prague German community (it ceased to exist during and after WWII, when the Nazis first murdered or forced to emigrate the German-speaking Jews and then the Czechs expelled the Germans based on the principle of collective guilt for Nazi atrocities). Nettl’s essay also exudes an attitude of German cultural superiority, especially since in the title he refers to the no-longer existent German culture of Prague as “European culture,” which implies that the remaining purely Czech culture is no longer international but merely national.

**Austrian, Bohemian, German?**

Most German-Bohemian intellectuals and artists in late imperial Austria and in the early years of the Czechoslovak Republic navigated among at least three Germanocentric attachments: to nostalgic memories of a multicultural, yet German-dominated Austria; to the German culture and population of Bohemia (an attitude also referred to as *Landespatriotismus*); and to the pan-German culture and nation. These loyalties are also discussed in Bryant, 12.
Nettl’s first important, internationally acclaimed academic publication represents a case in point: in 1921 his extensive study “Die Wiener Tanzkomposition in der zweiten Hälfte des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts” appeared in the Austrian journal Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, edited by Nettl’s Viennese mentor Guido Adler. The article was accompanied by a volume containing Nettl’s edition of seventeenth-century dances created in the Habsburg dominions of Austria and Bohemia. The musical edition, moreover, appeared in the series Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, which, as Alexander Rehding has explained, was dominated by Germanocentric views since its conception in the nineteenth century.\(^\text{18}\) In Nettl’s own words (see Appendix / Documents), the study was considered a groundbreaking work on the history of the dance suite and was particularly significant for the understanding of the origins of the waltz, which until then was considered a dance of the eighteenth century; Nettl discovered that the waltz had already appeared in the seventeenth century. In his research, Nettl relied on archival documents from Austrian, Bohemian, and Moravian libraries and archives, and his study therefore emphasized the importance of the union of the regions that now belonged to two independent countries for the development of Central European Germanic culture. The pro-German bent of Nettl’s article becomes clear, for example, in his discussion of the composer Paul Joseph Weiwanowsky/Pavel Josef Vejvanovský, a trumpeter and eventually Kapellmeister of the Olmütz/Olomouc archbishop Karl II von Lichtenstein-Kastelkorn at his palace in Kremsier/Kroměříž. Nettl lists several dance compositions by Weiwanowsky/Vejvanovský but does not discuss them in detail because they are works of “a Czech composer” (“da es sich um Werke eines tschechischen Komponisten handelt”).\(^\text{19}\) Bruno Nettl points out, that although his father contributed to the appreciation of Czech music in America primarily in non-academic venues, such as lecture-recitals with his first wife, pianist Gertrud Nettl (née Hutter), “in his European years, [he] did not publish on Czech music, and he did so only very occasionally in America.”\(^\text{20}\)

In 1920, Nettl returned to Bohemia and started working privately at the Prague German University in the hope of receiving a full-time position. Nettl then stayed at the German University until his emigration in 1939, for most of the period as an unsalaried Privatdozent. More concrete motivations for Nettl’s move from Vienna to Prague are unclear, and various versions of Nettl’s autobiographical essays are contradictory. The 1949 Indiana memoir (see Appendix / Documents) presents the move to Prague as an escape from increasing tensions in Viennese musicological circles, specifically between the


\(^{20}\) Private correspondence with Bruno Nettl from August 26, 2019, and Bruno Nettl, Becoming an Ethnomusicologist, 171.
supporters of Guido Adler and a faction around Robert Lach, at one point the
director of the music collections at the Austrian National Library, who later
promoted anti-Semitic ideologies and joined the Nazi party in 1933, although
it was still illegal in Austria. The 1962 memoir does not discuss the enmities
in Viennese musicological circles in great detail, possibly because the memoir
itself appeared in Vienna and was likely aimed at Nettl’s German and Austrian
colleagues. Instead, the 1962 memoir places the responsibility for Nettl’s move
to Prague on his Prague mentor Heinrich Rietsch. According to Nettl, Ri-
etsch, who also started his academic career in the imperial capital and moved
to Prague in 1900 to take Guido Adler’s position at the German University,
had a strong desire to return to Vienna. Nettl claims that Rietsch’s dissatisfac-
tion with Prague was based on his strong German national sentiments and
his hatred for the new Czechoslovak regime after 1918. According to the 1962
memoir, it was Rietsch who supposedly persuaded Nettl to move to Prague
by promising to make him his successor at the Prague German University.
Rietsch nevertheless remained in Prague until his death in 1927, and Nettl
never actually succeeded him.

The move to Prague clearly influenced the direction of Nettl’s research
and publication activities. Though he continued the line of studies focused
on specifically Viennese Baroque music, in the 1920s he also worked on topics
related to eighteenth-century Bohemian culture, together with Jewish musical
history. More specifically, the move to Prague pushed Nettl’s research along
the lines of German-Bohemian *Landespatriotismus*. His studies deal with Bo-
hemian and Moravian topics, but with a focus predominantly on composers,
musicians, and patrons whom Nettl presents and understands as German. One
of the most prominent expressions of Nettl’s German-Bohemian *Landespa-
triotismus* in the late 1920s is his book *Der Prager Kaufruf*, not strictly an aca-
demic publication but an exclusive collectors’ item, published by the Society
of German Bibliophiles in Bohemia in a mere 300 copies. This sumptuously
illustrated monograph brings together reproductions of eighteenth- and early
nineteenth-century engravings of individual participants in Prague’s street
life. In the introductory essay, Nettl explains that the engravings belong to
the tradition of the “Cry,” a type of eighteenth-century illustration, sometimes
of comical nature, depicting common people of European urban centers in
their daily activities, often connected to street commerce (for example, de-
pictions of sausage and pretzel sellers) and other vocations, such as street
music-making (for example, depictions of bagpipers). Nettl also connects
the eighteenth-century interest in urban street life to the rise of the interest

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22 Paul Nettl, *Der Prager Kaufruf* (Prague: Gesellschaft der deutschen Bücherfreunde in Böhmen, 1930).
23 Paul Nettl, *Der Prager Kaufruf*, 5.
in German national culture during that period.\textsuperscript{24} It is conspicuous that Nettl does not in the slightest acknowledge the possibility that some of the folksy aspects of Prague’s street life depicted in the engravings might have been connected to the city’s Czech-speaking population—instead he writes about eighteenth-century Prague as a purely German city.

Nettl’s continual attachment to German cultural nationalism despite changing social and political conditions shows how powerful this ideology was among Central European musicians and intellectuals who came of age in late imperial Austria. More specifically, the historical roots of Nettl’s attachment to Germanness are located in the nineteenth-century ideology of German liberal nationalism, which, as David Brodbeck has summarized, appeared in the 1860s and operated within “a framework of strict German elitism,” as well as with the concept that national identities were not inherent and ethnic but fluid and civic – Austrian German liberals therefore encouraged and expected all non-Germans within the Western part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to accept the “superior” German culture as their own.\textsuperscript{25} Because of its civic (rather than ethnic/religious/particularist) nature, the notion of German cultural superiority attracted many Jews, and Paul Nettl’s biography shows that various aspects of this ideology survived long into the twentieth century. Close parallels to Paul Nettl’s intellectual and cultural viewpoints can be found in the biographies of many earlier Austrian musicians and music scholars, such as the famous Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick and music theorist Heinrich Schenker. Similar to Nettl, Hanslick, as Brodbeck has explained, replaced his initial allegiance to Bohemian \textit{Landespatriotismus} and to his Jewish roots (on his mother’s side) with an attachment to Germanness.\textsuperscript{26} Just a generation older than Nettl, Schenker was born into a Jewish family in Austrian Galicia and first educated within the Polish cultural sphere of the Galician capital Lemberg/Lwów/Lviv. Suppressing Polish national sentiments soon after his arrival in Vienna, Schenker publicly embraced German cultural nationalism while privately continuing to view himself as a Jew. As Martin Eybl points out, Schenker’s “vociferous commitment to Germanness contrasts sharply with that quiet practice [of Jewishness].”\textsuperscript{27} Schenker’s conflicting relationships to Polishness, Germanness, and Jewishness are not dissimilar to Nettl’s intellectual interactions with German, Austrian, Bohemian, and Czech identities, though Schenker died in early 1935 and was therefore spared the experience of the Nazi Holocaust. Both Hanslick and Schenker renounced not only their

\textsuperscript{24} Paul Nettl, \textit{Der Prager Kaufruf}, 5–7.


\textsuperscript{26} Brodbeck, chapter 1.

\textsuperscript{27} Martin Eybl, “Heinrich Schenker’s Identities as a German and a Jew,” \textit{Musicologica Austriaca} (September 21, 2018): “Conclusion,” http://www.musau.org/Parts/Neue-Article-Page/view/54.
Slavic but also their Jewish roots, which once again closely parallels Nettl’s development: in 1915, he converted to Catholicism to join the imperial army, and in 1918 he was re-baptized as a Protestant.28

At the same time, in his 1949 Indiana autobiography, Nettl presents himself as someone who already in the 1920s stood up to anti-Semitism and suffered consequences for it. As Nettl explains, his Prague mentor Rietsch was actually half Jewish, which made him so uncomfortable, that he suppressed his paternal name Löwy and used his mother’s maiden name instead. In addition to his anti-Czech and German nationalist sentiments, Rietsch, according to Nettl, also supported the anti-Semitic student movement at Prague’s German University in 1922 (Nettl’s 1949 Indiana autobiography dates this to 1925). In reaction to the election of Jewish historian Samuel Steinherz as the rector of Prague’s German University in 1922, German nationalist students staged a strike, which also affected musicology classes. According to Nettl, the striking students wanted to prevent Rietsch from giving a regular lecture, and Rietsch supposedly “more than happily submitted to the students’ dictate” (“beugte sich nur allzu gern der Diktatur der Studenten” – see Appendix / Documents). Nettl himself supposedly criticized the students’ actions, which caused estrangement between him and Rietsch. Nettl also adds later that it was the poor relationship with the increasingly nationalismist Rietsch that prevented him from acquiring a professorship in musicology at the University. This account, however, to some extent contradicts his later claim that Rietsch’s successor, Gustav Becking, was chosen for his initially openminded attitude towards the Czechs, which, as Nettl’s account implies, contrasted with Nettl’s own. Yet another point of view appears in the 1962 autobiography, where Nettl does not mention Rietsch’s positive relations with the protesting students and instead writes about the weak Czech government that was unable to support Steinherz. Nettl’s differing accounts about the 1920s therefore raise questions about the exact nature and motivations of his supposed anti-German-nationalist stances. One possible interpretation of the differences between the earlier and later memoirs is that although in his later years Nettl became less sensitive to memories of German-nationalist anti-Semitism in Prague, his anti-Czech viewpoints intensified.

Sudeten-German Identity

In the 1930s, the mixture of various cultural, ethnic, and political allegiances that Nettl operated with in his writings becomes further complicated by his gradual espousal of a Sudeten-German identification. As Eva Hahnová has shown, the term “Sudetenländer” first appeared in reference to German-speak-

28 Paul Nettl’s religious affiliations are discussed in Bruno Nettl, Becoming an Ethnomusicologist, 136 and 191.
ing regions of Bohemian, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia in the late nineteenth century, and in the early twentieth century it transformed into the collective term “Sudeten-Germans” (“Sudetendeutsche”) for the German-speaking population of those regions. After the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the term became associated with a collective identity for German inhabitants of the lands of the former Bohemian crown (now simply viewed as Czech lands). Although Nettl rarely uses the term Sudeten-German in the 1930s, the concept of a collective identity for Czechoslovak Germans becomes prominent in both his academic writings and the educational music-historical programs he prepared for the German Department of Czechoslovak Radio. Czechoslovak Radio started broadcasting in 1923, and German programs for the German-speaking population of the country were added in 1925. Nettl started working with the Radio in 1926 and became the director of music programs there in 1933. All radio programs had to be censored for political content in the first Czechoslovak Republic, and that is why, as Eckhard Jirgens has explained, copies of some texts by Nettl were preserved in the Czech Radio Archive. According to radio programs in the daily press found by Jirgens, the earliest dated contribution by Nettl to the German program, titled “Musik in Böhmen,” was broadcast on February 18, 1926. Nettl’s programs covered a wide variety of topics: music history lectures (e.g., the one about dance music), music historical dramatizations (e.g., a short play about Mozart’s second stay in Prague in October of 1787, or a program about Casanova and Mozart in Prague that contains dialogues between Casanova and Bondini, and Casanova and Mozart), music historical geography (e.g., a travelogue through musically significant locales in Prague’s Old and New Towns), and discussions of current events (e.g., a report on the 1936 Salzburg Festival or a program about Prague’s historical gardens.

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31 This is based on Jirgens’s list of Nettl’s radio presentations in vol. 2 of Eckhard Jirgens, *Der Deutsche Rundfunk der 1. Tschechoslowakischen Republik: Musiksendungen 1925–1938, Vorträge-Artikel-Autoren*, 2. vols (Regensburg: ConBrio, 2017), 495–98. The Czech Radio Archive, however, preserves typescripts of Nettl’s programs that are not listed by Jirgens, possibly because they were not part of the collection of materials submitted to censors. Among these, for example, is a 1937 program that commemorates the 150th anniversary of Leopold Mozart’s death. Typescripts of some programs that Jirgens lists as mentioned in daily press but not preserved in the Radio Archive might in fact be part of the Indiana collection. This is the case of the program “Wenzel Müller und seine Zeit,” which, according to Jirgens, was broadcast on October 17, 1935. Besides the German original, the Indiana collection also contains an English translation of that typescript, which suggests that Nettl used his Prague radio programs as a basis for his lectures in America.
that served as an introduction to the live broadcast of the Prague German Opera’s performance of Mozart’s *La finta giardiniera* in the Waldstein Garden on June 26, 1938).

Nettl’s music historical programs put a prominent emphasis on a new type of sub-category for certain German composers – the German-Bohemian composers, such as Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber, whom Nettl discusses quite often. Biber was born in Bohemian Wartenberg/Stráž pod Ralskem, and although he spent most of his career in Carinthian Graz, Moravian Kremsier/Kroměříž, and in Salzburg, Nettl continually refers to him as a German-Bohemian (“deutsch-böhmisch”) composer and often uses him to support the concept of a unique German-Bohemian cultural identity. This tendency is most prominent in the program “Deutsch-böhmsiche Tonmeister des Barock,” broadcast on November 12, 1933, in which Nettl talks about the music of “our German-Bohemian land” (“unser deutsch-böhmisches Land”). That this German-Bohemian homeland was interchangeable with Sudetenland is illustrated in Nettl’s introductory remarks to the 1938 broadcast of *La finta giardiniera* at the Waldstein Garden. Nettl points out that the Garden had in recent years hosted several performances of Baroque music, including by Biber, whom Nettl this time refers to as a Sudeten-German composer (“sudetendeutscher Komponist”). The crosspollination of “German-Bohemian” identity with the “Sudeten-German” identity in Nettl’s radio programs becomes even more prominent in view of Nettl’s initial biographical study of Biber, which already appeared in 1926 in the collection *Sudetendeutsche Lebensbilder*. Edited by the Bohemian Germanist Erich Gierach and published in Reichenberg/Liberec, the unofficial Sudeten-German capital, the collection claimed other Bohemian musicians for the Sudeten-German cause, including Christoph Willibald Gluck, Johann Stamitz, and Eduard Hanslick.

According to Jiří Vysloužil, in the early 1930s Nettl and other German music critics and historians used the term Sudeten-German merely as “an ideology-free geopolitical term” (“ideologicky nezatížený geopolitický výraz”), but the radio programs and publications from this period in fact point to an ideological attempt to project geopolitical circumstances of post-WWI Central Europe on the culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Vysloužil also points out that in the late 1930s, some German musicologists started us-

32 “Deutsch-böhmsiche Tonmeister des Barocks,” Prague, Czech Radio Archive, PA05942-PA1658, 2. A shortened version of this essay was also published in *Deutscher Rundfunk der Tschechoslowakei* 1933, No. 46 (November 12, 1933), no page n.; both versions are reproduced in JIRGENS, *Der Deutsche Rundfunk der 1. Tschechoslowakischen Republik*, 292–94 and 449–51.


ing the term “Sudeten-German” is connection to a special kind of ethnicity associated with the German population of Czechoslovakia. This tendency is also prominent in Nettl’s writings. Nettl’s identification with Sudetenland became in fact even more prominent after WWII, when he was already living in the United States. One untitled (and probably unpublished) post-WWII lecture manuscript in English from Nettl’s Indiana estate calls for a greater awareness of the Sudeten-Germans and their culture. In the manuscript, Nettl views Sudeten-Germans as a distinct “ethnological group,” into which he includes any German-speaking person born within the borders of the Czech-dominated parts of the post-WWI Czechoslovakia. Nettl’s sympathetic attitude to Sudeten-Germans was no doubt related to the forced expulsion of most German population from Czechoslovakia after WWII. This is apparent in the Indiana lecture, where he repeatedly mentions that the Sudeten-Germans have been “condemned to death” as a distinct group by expatriation from Czechoslovakia.

One early reaction to the expulsion is Nettl’s 1946 article “Twilight of a Famous Opera House” published in Opera News. The article discusses the fate of the New German Theater in Prague, which was occupied by Czech forces during the anti-Nazi uprising in early May of 1945 and turned into an exclusively Czech institution (the theater is presently known as the State Opera). In the article, Nettl outlines the illustrious history of German opera in Prague and decries that the “institution is now withdrawn from the world of art; [its] death knoll sounded when the Russian troops entered Prague.” Although the former German theater was still used for opera performances even under the Czech regime, Nettl claims that it only performed “operettas and plays of communist propaganda,” thus constructing a distinction between the high-minded German institution of the past and the populist Czech institution of the present (the distinction is suggested also by the catastrophic references to twilight and death). Nettl blames the destruction of German culture in Prague on the Nazis, whom he distinguishes from the creators and consumers of Prague’s German culture:

The Nazis had not only mistreated the Czech nation, but also the ancient German culture, whose symbol was the Deutsches Theater in Prague. For almost two hundred years this worthy culture had been carried in Prague by a minority of about thirty thousand inhabitants. It was diametrically opposed to Nazism, and might have heard its death sentence in the Munich pact, when Chamberlain and Daladier betrayed Czechoslovakia to Hitler.  

36 Vysloužil, 159.
37 Indiana University, Cook Music Library Special Collections, Paul Nettl Collection, “We are living in a time,” [1].
Although he wrote the article nearly seven years after his escape from the Nazi regime for the United States, Nettl here, and in a number of other writings, follows a course of thought that was typical in post-WWII Germany. As Pamela Potter has shown, most German musicologists in the post-war period attempted to “separate Nazi ideology from longer intellectual trends influenced by nationalism, völkisch thought, race theories, folklore, social Darwinism, German Idealism, and positivism.”

Nettl also associated with the expatriated Sudeten-German community on a personal level. In the Riesengebirge/Krkonoše memoir, Nettl writes that he regularly exchanges letters with former (Sudeten-German) inhabitants of Hohenelbe/Vrchlabí and Arnau/Hostinné. Nettl also references another memoir, about his time at the Gymnasium in Arnau/Hostinné, which appeared in one of post-war Sudeten-German exile journals. He also claims that he is a subscriber and a regular reader of the exile journal Riesengebirgs-Heimat. Bruno Nettl confirms that his father was in close contact with many acquaintances from the northern Bohemian Sudetenland and surmises that “a good many of [the Sudeten-German contacts of his father] might well have been Nazis or Nazi sympathizers ... [and that] it would have been reasonable on my father’s part to avoid associating with these Sudeten-German exiles, who had found homes in West German cities and, for a long time, agitated in vain for recovery of their homes and properties in Czechoslovakia, publishing books full of nostalgia and sentimental photos, and implying threats of revenge.”

In the US, the government fights discrimination, we even have Negroes in the government and naturally also large amounts of Jews in prominent positions. I am in no way saying this with bitterness, but I would like to bring this to my compatriots’ attention, because I have a good reason to believe, that anti-Semitism is still rampant among Sudeten-Germans. It no longer operates as it did in the time of Henlein. Riesengebirgs-Heimat, which I like to read and which I subscribe to, refers to the Jews only very sparingly. Only rarely does one find a Jewish name. It seems that today the readers of the magazine do not even want to accept the historical existence of Jewishness in the Sudeten-German sector. I love my homeland, about which I dream every day, but I could no longer return to such conditions.

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40 Potter, 253.
Mixed with this admonishment is Nettl’s profession of reverence for the German people and their culture in which he once again rejects any connection between the Nazis and the German culture:

And yet, unlike so many Hitler-emigrants, from the first day of my arrival in the USA, I have done nothing but lived and worked for the German culture. It did not bother me at all, that the Czechs even today claim I am a German nationalist [...] In my house, we speak only German, and I am a member of the American “German Honors Society,” which accepts only those who rendered outstanding services to German culture. [...] This and all of my activities show that I have never stopped feeling and thinking like a German, in contrast to so many other emigrants, who have turned their back on their homeland.44

Paul Nettl presents himself as a member of the Sudeten-German community and partially compensates for his criticism of the Sudeten-German anti-Semitism by his profession of faith in the German culture and by the critique of the Czechs and German emigrants in the United States. Bruno Nettl’s memoir shows that similar attitudes were quite typical for his father: he remembers that he frequently heard his father speak “angrily about Nazism [...] but there was something sacred about the great German and Austrian composers and about literary figures such as Goethe and Schiller, and actually, something sacred about the German language itself.”45

Bruno Nettl also points out that after WWII Paul Nettl embraced German and Austrian musicologists and publishers, including people with serious Nazi pasts, and suggests that part of this embrace may have been opportunistic, because beginning in the late 1940s, his father came to be appreciated and honored in Germany and Austria much more so than in the US.46 These close

45 Bruno Nettl, Becoming an Ethnomusicologist, 162.
contacts with former German and Austrian colleagues, according to Bruno Nettl, may have led to Paul Nettl's estrangement from his former close friend, musicologist, and fellow Jewish emigrant Alfred Einstein, who had been instrumental in helping the Nettl family escape to the United States in 1939 (see Appendix / Documents) and completely severed his ties with Germany and Austria. As Potter has pointed out, Einstein partially blamed Nettl for recommending for publication in *The Musical Quarterly* an article by Robert Haas, an Austrian musicologist of Bohemian origin who had to leave his academic positions after WWII due to his close ties to the Nazi regime. Paul Nettl's close relationship with the exiled Sudeten-German community also suggests that his attitudes may have originated in a genuine sense of nostalgia for his homeland. Perhaps it was the ambiguous status of Bohemia as a site where Germanness was being contested for centuries that strengthened Nettl's continual, particularly in contrast to Einstein, support for certain German scholars and his unsurmountable indoctrination with the ideology of German cultural superiority. Nettl's post-WWII attitudes to Germaness might paradoxically be related also to his own Jewish background and parallel to what Eybl has observed in the writings of Schenker; that is, Nettl perhaps understood “himself explicitly as a Jew, called to save German music.”

**Struggling with Czechness**

Nettl's belief in the superiority of German culture also informed his evolving attitude to Czech culture. Up until the mid-1930s, Nettl did not deal with Czech music in his academic studies, focusing mainly on German-language composers and musicians in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Bohemia, Moravia, and Austria. Manuscript materials from Nettl's Indiana estate and his publications from this period suggest that this lack of interest was not incidental. I have already mentioned his refusal, in his first internationally acclaimed publication, to discuss Weiwanowski/Vejvanovský. Some of the Indiana manuscript materials also suggest that after the creation of Czechoslovakia, Nettl

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47 Bruno Nettl, *Becoming an Ethnomusicologist*, 167. Paul Nettl and Alfred Einstein were still on friendly and collegial terms in 1951, when Einstein sent a letter to Nettl (dated November 3, 1951, and preserved in the Nettl collection in Indiana University's Lilly Library). In the letter, Einstein thanks Nettl for lending him his copy of the 1791 first edition libretto of Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, which Nettl thought to be the only surviving copy. Einstein returned the libretto to Nettl with the letter, and the libretto is still in the music collection at Indiana University.


encountered negative reactions from the then politically dominant Czechs: in the previously mentioned manuscript draft for the lecture about Sudeten-German musical traditions, Nettl writes that his research in Kremsier for his 1921 study of seventeenth-century dance music was cut short “after some time […] by chauvinistic Czech priests.”

The fact that Nettl’s earlier publications show little interaction with the scholarship of Czechoslovak musicologists is complemented by Bruno Nettl’s statement that “he seemed to me never to associate with the Czech-speaking musicologists, although he counted Czech performers and composers among his acquaintances.”

Nettl’s memoirs contain several passages that illustrate the distance between Prague’s Czech and German intellectual communities in the early years of the Czechoslovak Republic. One such passage appears in the discussion of Gustav Becking, in Nettl’s 1949 Indiana memoir. Becking was a German musicologist who became the director of the musicology department at Prague’s German University in 1930. A controversial figure, Becking embraced and promoted German nationalist and Nazi ideologies starting in the mid-1930s, joined the Nazi party in 1939, and became the Dean of the Philosophical Faculty at Prague’s German University in 1941, yet he still advised doctoral dissertations by Jewish students in the late 1930s and performed music by composers banned in the Reich; a Nazi document from 1944, furthermore, views Becking as untrustworthy. On May 8, 1945, Becking was executed by Czech revolutionaries. At the time of his arrival in Prague in 1930 and before the rise of the Nazis in Germany, Becking, according to Nettl, exhibited cosmopolitan and open-minded attitudes in comparison to other members of Prague’s academic circles, presumably including Nettl himself. Nettl also points out that Becking initially found it strange that professors in the same discipline at Prague’s Czech and German universities would not want to have anything to do with one another although they lived and worked in the same city:

I clearly remember, that [Becking] expressed radically leftist-socialist views, that he ridiculed the German, somewhat nationally inclined Professors of Prague, because they were not in the position to get along with the Czechs. It is also correct that to someone who had just arrived in Prague recently it must have seemed strange, that colleagues in the same field lived side by side and had not the slightest in common. A whole world separated the Czechs from the Germans and it seemed to me and others that Becking was the right man to bridge the differences. (See Appendix / Documents)

50 “We are living in a time,” [5]. The phrase “chauvinistic Czech priests” was later rewritten in blue ink as “chauvinistic antagonism.”

51 Bruno Nettl, Becoming an Ethnomusicologist, 171.

Nettl presents similar views about Becking in the 1962 autobiography, though there he suggests that Becking’s friendly relationship with the Czechs was opportunistic from the very beginning of his Prague sojourn:

When he came to Prague, he immediately took the Czech side and pitied us, Prague Germans, because we secluded ourselves from the “state folk” [“Staatsvolk”]. Although one could understand this opportunism to some extent, it was still more than surprising, that he joined the cause of Henlein and the Sudeten-German Nazi party in such a short time. He always knew how to procure an alibi, in that he camouflaged himself as an activist in front of the Czechs and a liberal in front of the Jews.53

Compared to the 1949 memoir, the 1962 statement shifts in several significant details. In 1962, for example, Nettl clearly presents himself as a member of the Prague German academic community that purposefully segregated itself from the Czechs. Unlike the 1949 document, furthermore, the 1962 memoir no longer contains a statement endorsing the need to bridge the differences between Czech and German academics in 1930s Prague. In the 1962 memoir, Nettl expresses more pointed anti-Czech sentiments, possibly because of his bitterness about the expulsion of Sudeten-Germans after WWII and his increasing estrangement from the predominantly Czech-dominated Bohemia.

Nettl’s 1962 view that Becking became a supporter of the Sudeten-German Nazi party quite early, contrasts with his 1949 observation, according to which Becking joined the Nazis only after he saw that the future of Czechoslovakia would be determined by Hitler. At the same time, in both memoirs Nettl approached Becking’s legacy with forgiveness and with a certain amount of selective amnesia, an attitude that became more pronounced in the later version of the autobiography. In the 1949 Indiana memoir, Nettl discusses the discrimination he suffered as a Jew at the German University in the late 1930s and surmises that “it was mainly the Nazi students of Prof. Becking who would belittle me” (“Ich habe das Empfinden, dass es hauptsächlich die Nazi-Schüler Prof. Beckings waren, die mich bei jeder Gelegenheit heruntersetzen wollten” – see Appendix / Documents). At a later point, Nettl claims that in the last period before his emigration to America, Becking’s students would intimidate Nettl’s students by locking and obstructing the doors to classrooms in which Nettl was teaching. Still, Nettl writes that Becking himself “kept in the background, and seems to have later, during the Protectorate, held a kind of protective

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arm over me” (“Becking selbst, von dem ich gleich sprechen werde, hielt sich im Hintergrund und scheint später, als das ‘Protektorat’ errichtet worden war, eine Art von schützender Hand über mich gehalten zu haben“ – see Appendix / Documents). The curious juxtaposition of Becking’s rowdy and hateful students with the reserved attitude of Becking himself is missing from the 1962 memoir, where only the sentence about Becking’s protection remains.54

Because of the increasingly anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi sentiments of large portions of the Czechoslovak Sudeten-German community, the Czechoslovak German anti-Nazis started collaborating more closely with the Czechs in the late 1930s.55 Nettl’s scholarship from this period shows that he started to pay greater attention to the work of his Czech colleagues. Yet this interest in Czechness in fact also brought Nettl to spell out his beliefs about German cultural superiority. A particularly well-known work by Nettl from this period is his 1938 monograph Mozart in Böhmen (“Mozart in Bohemia”). This was an expanded reworking of an earlier book by Rudolph Freiherr von Procházka, first published in 1892. Despite his Czech name, Procházka was a German Bohemian, and his book emphasizes the contributions of German Bohemians to the success of Mozart and his music in Prague. (By the late nineteenth century, such views were heavily contested in the Czech press, and Czech critics and journalists stressed that already by the late eighteenth century Prague was a Czech city, but its inhabitants were forced to speak German.)56 Nettl’s 1938 revision not only updates Procházka’s book by incorporating recent documentary discoveries and reflecting new scholarly approaches but also introduces a pro-Czech element into the book’s narrative. For example, Nettl acknowledges, in contrast to his earlier book Prager Kaufruf, that, although late eighteenth-century Prague had a German character (“Prag hatte zum Großteil deutschen Character”), the majority of the population was Czech (“die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung [war] tschechisch”), and that “in that time people in Prague and Bohemia pursued and cultivated both the Czech and German national consciousness simultaneously.”57

55 One of the most prominent cultural expressions of this collaboration was the 1936 production of Jan Nepomuk Štěpánek’s 1816 bilingual play Čech a Němec, depicting a reconciliation between Czechs and Germans, by an ensemble of actors from Prague’s Czech and German theaters. See Jitka Ludová, Až k hořkému konci: Pražské německé divadlo 1845–1945 (Prague: Academia, 2012), 511–12.
57 Paul Nettl, Mozart in Böhmen (Prague: Neumann, 1938), 70–71. (“Damals [wird] in Prag und Böhmen tschechisches und deutsches nationales Bewußtsein zu gleicher Zeit vom Volk gepflegt und verlangt […]”) Hinting at the tense political situation in his own time, Nettl also remarks with regret that such collaboration was no longer imaginable in the 1930s.
Nettl and Stamitz

Nettl expanded his ideas about Czech influence on Mozart after he emigrated to the United States. In his 1941 *Musical Quarterly* article titled “Mozart and the Czechs,” Nettl presents many eighteenth-century Bohemians associated with Mozart unequivocally as Czechs, including Mozart’s Prague friend, composer Franz Xaver Duschek, and Mozart’s first biographer Franz Xaver Niemetschek.58 In the article, Nettl associated Czechness, as opposed to more general Bohemianness, with the Czech language, as becomes clear from his explanation that Franz Duschek “was of indubitably pure Czech origin,” because as late as 1789, at the age of fifty seven, he had “only a very imperfect mastery of the German language.”59 In 1940, Nettl published his most extensive article on Czech music titled “The Czechs in Eighteenth-Century Music,” which appeared in *Music & Letters*.60 In the article, similar to his later, contested claims in *The Story of Dance Music*, Nettl focuses on the music of Johann Wenzel Stamitz and views him as a specifically Czech, not Bohemian, composer. In the assumption that Stamitz was Czech, Nettl clashes with the views of earlier German studies, such as the one by Robert Haas published in the *Sudetendeutsche Lebensbilder* and many others from after 1938. Those studies presented Stamitz and other composers of eighteenth-century Bohemia as either Sudeten-Germans or simply as “true” Germans.61 The question of Stamitz’s nationality was hotly contested in the tense political atmosphere in Czechoslovakia of the late 1930s, particularly after the publication of a study on the composer by Peter Gradenwitz. Gradenwitz was a German-Jewish musicologist (later active at the University of Tel Aviv), who completed his dissertation on Stamitz under Becking at Prague’s German University in 1936.62 One of his main conclusions was that Stamitz was a German-Bohemian composer, which pleased Sudeten-German and Nazi musical circles (though they were wary of Gradenwitz’s Jewish origin), and infuriated Czech musicologists who believed that Stamitz was Czech and demonstratively spelled his name as “Stamic.” Nettl’s belief in Stamitz’s Czechness contrasts with his own earlier views. For example, in the 1933 radio program “German-Bohemian Music Masters of the Baroque” he mostly avoided the question of whether Stamitz and other Bohemian composers of the mid-eighteenth century were Czechs or Germans, referring to them as Bohemian and Austrian:

59 Nettl, “Mozart and the Czechs,” 335.
61 Several such studies are discussed in Potter, 230.
62 The first volume of the dissertation was published in the same year: Peter Gradenwitz, *Johann Stamitz: I. Das Leben* (Brünn: Rohrer, 1936).
In the eighteenth century, a musical flowering starts in Bohemia, which does not have an equal; one can even say, that [this flowering] is the origin of one specific cultural direction of the eighteenth century, namely *Sturm und Drang*, the direction that precedes classicism and to which one can ascribe the fresh pulsing liveliness of the new symphonies, [...] the special musicality of the musical style of a Stamitz, Richter, both Bendas, even if one cannot speak of a Bohemian national school, since Bohemia and Austria formed a unity in this respect. Instead, what starts to quietly stir in this music is the specifically regional [character].\textsuperscript{63}

In the *Music & Letters* article, Nettl addresses this nationalistic dispute in a footnote where he explains why he believes Stamitz was a Czech, not a German-Bohemian—and paradoxically uses racial criteria favored by Nazi musicologists to justify his views:

> Stamitz's grandfather lived at Maribor in Yugoslavia, a town that has always been inhabited by a predominant number of Slavs and he was called Stamec—a purely Slavonic name. He migrated, however, to Pardubice in Bohemia and there married the daughter of a Czech named Kuhery. She was Johann Stamitz's grandmother. If one denies, therefore, Stamitz's Czech descent on the male side, one must at least admit it in the female line, through which, according to national-socialist theory, the stronger hereditary characteristics are transmitted. In the Deutschbrod baptismal register Stamitz's Christian names are expressly given as Jan Vaclav.\textsuperscript{64}

Nettl's support of the Czech side in his *Music & Letters* article suggests that as a fresh refugee from the recently-occupied Czechoslovakia, and in continuation of his scholarly views from final years in Prague, he to some extent embraced Czech musicological ideologies.

The stay in the United States eventually afforded Nettl with less binary views of eighteenth-century music in Bohemia and allowed him to move beyond ethnic and racial approaches. This is particularly obvious in Nettl's 1957 commemorative lecture on the occasion of the bicentennial of Johann Stamitz's death. In his earlier writings, Nettl felt the need to impose onto


\textsuperscript{64} Paul Nettl, “The Czechs in Eighteenth-Century Music,” 366.
eighteenth-century composers ethnic and national identities that became significant only in the nineteenth century. Stamitz could therefore be either exclusively Czech or German, and in the 1940s Nettl decided to favor the Czech interpretation. In the 1957 essay, by contrast, Nettl writes:

People argue whether Stamitz was a German or a Czech. However, it is pointless to ponder such questions, because he was born, as so many others in this period, into the Austrian “melting pot,” in which various nations amalgamated into a uniform Mixtum Compositum, into an ethnic substance, which represented a unity on its own. The name “Stamitz” is seemingly of Yugoslav origin, since the name of the musician’s grandfather, who lived in Maribor, Yugoslavia, was Martin Stamec. He emigrated to Pardubitz in Bohemia and there he married Elisabeth Kuhey or instead of oder Kuley, a townsman’s daughter. Their son was Anton Stamitz, the composer’s father, who married Rosine, the daughter of Wilhelm Boehm von Lajsbach, a town councilor in Deutschbrod and a former citizen of Prague. I have emphasized specifically a racial analysis, because I wanted to show, how unreasonable it is to label Stamitz the musician as Czech or German.65

To some extent, Nettl here returns to his ideas from the early 1930s, when he also viewed Stamitz as basically Austrian. At the same time, the term “Austrian” seems to be no longer imbued with associations of Germanness for Nettl, and becomes a more general geographical category. He also acknowledges that music history became a source of ethnic conflicts between Czechs and Germans and wants to move beyond it. Central European music historians, by contrast, continued to argue about the nationality of eighteenth-century composers for decades to come. For example, in 1964, Czech musicologist Bohumír Štědroň published an article in which he aimed at proving beyond any doubt that Stamitz was of Czech origin and persuasion.66


Nettl also argues that Stamitz’s music was influenced by the rhythms of Czech folk music and the accents of the Czech language, and that his folk-inspired idiom should be considered one of the main sources of the Classical style – thus suggesting that the new musical idiom appearing in Europe in the mid-eighteenth century had a prominent Slavic source. Similar ideas had appeared in Nettl’s 1938 discussion of Mozart’s music, where he claims that there is a close correlation between Mozart’s melodies and Czech folk songs. The attention Nettl pays in the late 1930s and 1940s to Czech elements associated with Mozart’s experiences in Bohemia contrasts with the majority of Nettl’s earlier scholarly works, including his works on Mozart, in which he focused exclusively on the German culture of Bohemia and Moravia. Thus, it seems that Nettl’s interest in Czechness crystalized only in the later 1930s and 1940s and should therefore be understood as a reaction to the political situation of the period. In his 1940 *Music & Letters* article, Nettl suggests that his ideas respond to the “recent attempts on the part of National Socialist groups to minimize the importance of the Czechs in the musical history of the eighteenth century or indeed to deny it altogether.”

Even in the 1940s, however, Nettl upheld Sudeten-German political perspectives, as the following passage from the *Music & Letters* article makes clear:

> Even today most Germans would undoubtedly declare, if they were free to do so and nationalist propaganda had not poisoned mankind, that they would prefer to live on friendly terms with the Czechs; and it was probably a great mistake on the part of Masaryk to give a national rather than a territorial name to the new state created at the end of the last war.

In the final paragraph of the article, Nettl includes a sentence which suggests that he viewed the Czechs as opposed to the Germans as the Central European aggressors: “The Czechs, never anxious to squeeze into the Germans’ so-called *Lebensraum*, were always a defiant people.”

It was precisely in the Czech-centered publications, moreover, that Nettl most explicitly articulates ideas about the supremacy of German culture. In the 1941 *Musical Quarterly* article, for example, Nettl claims that in the eighteenth century the real Czechs were those of the peasant class, although later he discusses many urban Prague artists and intellectuals, such as Duschek

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67 Nettl also suggests that some of Mozart’s wordplays on names in his famous letter to Gottfried von Jaquin from Prague from January 15, 1787, might be related to his encounters with the Czech language.
and Niemetschek, and refers to them as Czechs. Furthermore, although Nettl claims that Mozart's music influenced many later Czech composers, he does not discuss how earlier composers whom he considers Czech may have influenced Mozart. Instead, he only talks about the influence of Czech folk music on Mozart’s melodies. The reasoning behind the emphasis on eighteenth-century Czech folk music is clarified in the 1940 *Music & Letters* article, where Nettl makes the following distinction between German musical culture and most other cultures of Central and Eastern Europe: “The Czechs, like the rest of the Slavonic peoples of Europe, and also the Hungarians, Rumanians [...], have a peripheral musical culture. Occupying districts on the outskirts of central European culture, they have a musical life much richer in folk art than the Germans, Italian and French, whose cultivated art is much older.” 71 For Nettl, therefore, eighteenth-century Czech culture was a folk-like foil to high-art German culture. Bruno Nettl points out that such beliefs were part of his upbringing: “I myself got the feeling that German culture and language went with the great art music, while the Czech counterparts were particularly rich in folk songs, and also that Czech art music was often derived from the folk.” 72

Paul Nettl’s articles from the 1930s and 1940s operate with a German-Bohemian version of what in nineteenth-century Austria was associated with German liberal nationalism, an attitude similar to what Richard Taruskin has termed “colonialist nationalism.” 73 Taruskin explains that German critics and composers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries deemed some national musical cultures, most prominently the German one, as highly sophisticated, humanizing, and universal, and others as interesting, folk-like, but ultimately merely national, inferior, and therefore dependent on support from the dominant cultural tradition. As Vít Zdrálek has pointed out, moreover, the reason why German scholars of the early twentieth century were much more interested in Slavic and South-Eastern European studies possibly had to do with the fact that Germany fell behind other nineteenth-century powers in acquiring non-European colonies and therefore used Eastern Europe to project its own “orientalist” ideologies and as a region of a cultural and later actual expansion. 74 Potter has provided several examples of how musicologists contributed “to a conceptualization of the East as a German musical and cultural terrain.” 75

Many of Nettl’s articles resonate with this type of nationalist ideology. Nettl, for example, often expresses interest in Smetana and Dvořák, but mainly

75 Potter, *The Most German of Arts*, 153.
because they incorporate elements of folklore into their music. Although he often admits and welcomes that German culture was influenced by Slavic cultures, he also always adds that these Slavic cultures, and specifically Czech culture, were not just influenced but existentially tied to the German culture. One concise statement of this principle appears in Nettl’s English lecture on Sudeten-German music, where he admits that “German culture couldn’t receive its true shape without the Slavic contribution,” and that “Czech culture is impossible without the German one.”

Bruno Nettl often suggests that his father was fascinated with the multicultural character of pre-WWII Bohemia, and that he never returned to Prague in his later years although he often visited Western Europe because “he couldn’t stand the change of Prague from a lively multicultural Mecca to being simply a Czech city dominated by a cold communist government.”

This appreciation for Bohemian multiculturalism, however, was tied to a strong persuasion that Czech culture was inherently inferior to the German culture.

**Nettl and Ježek**

One wonders whether Nettl’s somewhat condescending views of Czech music, which were not unusual in early twentieth-century German musicology, might be linked to the negative attitude with which several post-WWII Czech writers approached Paul Nettl’s legacy. In a 1982 study about Czech jazz pianist and composer Jaroslav Ježek, who emigrated to New York in 1939, Czech musicologist and pianist Václav Holtzknecht accused “a German musicologist, an emigrant from Prague” of preventing the performance of a sonata by Ježek at the 1941 International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in New York and replacing it with a work by “one of his German protégés.” This “musicologist” and “emigrant” must have been Paul Nettl, whose wife Gertrud Hutter-Nettl performed a work by the German-Jewish-Bohemian composer Viktor Ullmann at the 1941 ISCM Festival. The posthumous 2006 memoir of Czech diplomat and writer Miloš Šafránek, who passed away already in 1982, contains an even stronger accusation against Paul Nettl, according to which Nettl went to see the director of the ISCM Festival, Roger Sessions, at Princeton and persuaded him to replace an “outstanding composition [by Ježek] with a banal piano sonata by the Ostrava German Viktor Ulmann [sic]. Mr. Nettl also managed to have [the famous Czech

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76 “We are living in a time,” [2].
77 Bruno Nettl, *Becoming an Ethnomusicologist*, 143.
piano virtuoso) Rudolf Firkušný replaced with a German pianist, who was Nettl's wife.”80 Bruno Nettl points out, however, that it is unclear whether Paul Nettl's attempts to get Ullmann's work on the program in fact caused Ježek's piece to be dropped and that Paul Nettl's help to his wife and his friend Ullmann was in no way “done because Ježek was an ethnically Czech Bohemian, and Ullmann, a German-speaking Bohemian.”81 For Michael Beckerman, this episode illustrates the complex moral issues involved in cultural politics of emigrant communities in wartime America, because in it, Ježek, “a blind and poor Czech jazz pianist, trying desperately to be noticed in the world of New York high culture, and soon to be dead of kidney failure,” was pitted against Ullmann, “a German-speaking Czech anthroposophist of Jewish ancestry several months away from a journey to Terezin [sic] and a final trip to Auschwitz.”82 Beyond the multiplicity of opposing moralistic judgements they elicited, the disparate versions of the story of Nettl's involvement with the 1941 ISCM Festival show that various national groups of emigrants from pre-WWII Czechoslovakia in New York viewed one another with distrust. Nettl's published views of Czech musical culture as peripheral and of the Czech people as defiant and constantly encroaching on the German Lebensraum reflected and probably also fed into this distrust.

**Nettl and Brod**

The alienation from Czech culture that Nettl sought to project in some of his written works should certainly not be viewed as a general condition of pre-WWII German Bohemians. As I have shown, Nettl's attitudes toward Czechness constantly evolved and were often expressed in reaction to specific social, political, and cultural circumstances. A parallel yet contrasting set of ideas about Czech culture from a Bohemian German perspective can be found in the works of Max Brod, another Jewish, German-speaking emigrant from Czechoslovakia, and Nettl's friend and supporter (see Appendix / Documents). In a statement from 1918, Brod expressed a sense of alienation from Czechness, though in much more ambiguous terms than Nettl's categorical anti-Czech statements from the following decades:

> I don't feel as a member of the German nation, yet I am a friend of Germanness and, apart from that, I am culturally related to Germanness through

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80 Miloš Šafránek, *Setkání po padesáti letech* (Prague: Horst, 2006), 227. The statement is part of a chapter titled “Pan-Germanic Musicology,” in which Šafránek accuses German-writing musicologists active in pre-WWII Czechoslovakia, especially Nettl and Gradenwitz (misspelled as Grandewicz), of diminishing the importance of Czech composers in the cultural history of Bohemia. See also, Jaroslav Mihule, “Případ Sonáty pro klavír od Jaroslava Ježka 2,” *Harmonie* 2009, no. 9 (September 11, 2009), 36.


82 Beckerman (accessed November 27, 2019).
language and upbringing, through many of what sociologists [...] call “traditional values” as opposed to “generational values” (inherited values).

I am a friend of Czechness but [I am] in essence culturally alienated from Czechness.83

Whereas Nettl often categorically distances himself from Czechness and continues to espouse a German cultural identity even after WWII, Brod in 1918 already comments on a fascinating mixture of identification with and alienation from both Germanness and Czechness.

Similar to Nettl, Brod’s attachment to Bohemia oscillated between rejection and fascination. This can be seen in the post-WWII correspondence between Nettl and Brod, then settled in Tel Aviv after escaping Prague in 1939. Parts of the correspondence are preserved in Nettl’s Indiana estate and point to Brod’s fluid attitudes toward his former homeland. Brod opens his earliest preserved letter to Nettl, from February 22, 1951, by expressing alienation from Bohemia:

I was very pleased with your letter, especially because I have just read your excellent book about Casanova. Mozart, Bertramka, Prague – all of that was woken up in me. But without any trace of “homesickness”; I regard the whole period as finished and I have so much to do here (even in musical matters), that little time remains for retrospection.84

The feelings of 1951, nevertheless, did not stop Brod from returning to Bohemian and Czech topics in his works in the following decades, such as in his 1962 biographical novel about Karel Sabina, the librettist of Smetana’s The Bartered Bride. The novel attempts to rehabilitate Sabina’s reputation, which was destroyed in the 1870s when it became known that he was a confidant of the Austrian secret police. Pursuing a clear streak of fascination with nineteenth-century Czech culture and politics, Brod’s novel suggests that Sabina collaborated with the secret police half-heartedly and never provided any important information; the collaboration was therefore a ruse, similar to that in The Bartered Bride, where Jeník pretends to sell Mařenka to Kecal so that she has to


Ich bin ein Freund des Tschechentums und im Wesentlichen […] dem Tschechentum kulturfreund.”

marry Vašek, but the barter in fact fits into his larger plan to marry Mařenka himself. Nettl was fascinated by Brod’s novel as he shows in a 1963 review for the *Aufbau* magazine. In a letter from February 16, 1963, Brod thanked Nettl for the review, and added details about the latest Sabina research in Prague:

> Just now, I am reading your nice critique about my Sabina in the *Aufbau*. I thank you very much for your analysis, particularly because you approach the substance of my work and explain the core so clearly. Not every reviewer was as successful! One no doubt needs your special perspective, which was trained throughout your career by working on research projects of a similar nature. [...] It will be of interest to you, that precisely these days I have received an extensive letter from Prague, in which a researcher, who presents himself as an admirer of Sabina, sends transcripts of court records [...]. These show that my “vision” did not miss the mark.

Despite various public and private pronouncements about their alienation from Czech culture, both Nettl and Brod were also continually drawn to it. Nettl’s investment in his German-Bohemian friend’s book about a nineteenth-century Czech librettist once again points to the multifaceted nature of his relationship to Czechness.

**Conclusion**

As Bruno Nettl has pointed out, encyclopedia entries refer to the ethnic (and national, and linguistic, and cultural) background of his father in a wide variety of ways, but mostly avoid discussing Paul Nettl’s Germanness:

> In many music dictionaries in which there is a Paul Nettl entry, he is identified as just “musicologist,” or “American musicologist,” but more frequently, “American musicologist of Czech background” or “Czech birth,” sometimes “Czechoslovakian birth,” and sometimes “Bohemian birth.” Interestingly, the word “German” never does appear, and he is not often identified as Austrian.

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87 Bruno Nettl, *Becoming an Ethnomusicologist*, 162.
Most of these designations are more or less related to one or several aspects of the multicultural background in which Paul Nettl lived and worked. As far as referencing Nettl’s geographical background, one needs to acknowledge that Nettl was born, raised, and spent a significant part of his career in Bohemia, and that Bohemia with its ethnic, national, linguistic, cultural, and religious divisions to a large extent informed his scholarly work; in his most recent article about his father, Bruno Nettl himself settles on calling Paul Nettl a “Bohemian musicologist.” At the same time, Paul Nettl’s commitment to Bohemian, and often also more widely Central European, multiculturalism was tied to and seemed compatible with a troubled relationship to Czechness and to the ideology of German cultural superiority. Thus, the term “Czech” as a reference to the ethnic, national, linguistic, and cultural characteristics of the majority Slavic population of Bohemia does not correspond with how Paul Nettl represented himself in his works. The word “German,” by contrast, should play a prominent role in definitions of Paul Nettl’s identity. It is Nettl’s Germanness that connects various scholarly and cultural activities he pursued in disparate parts of the world, including those in 1940s America as a Jewish refugee from the Nazis. (One cannot help noticing that Nettl’s Jewish background—crucial for his life history—goes unmentioned in his son Bruno’s remarks just quoted.) Paul Nettl’s ideological commitment to Germanness in fact illustrates the enduring power of German cultural nationalism even in the seemingly most unexpected times and locations. As many commentators have pointed out before, Germanness was particularly attractive to national and ethnic outsiders, especially those with a Jewish background. Paul Nettl’s devotion to Germanness is therefore understandable particularly in connection to his position as an outsider in many different periods of his life. Facing difficulties as a German within the Czech majority of Bohemia, a Jew in the Bohemian German community, and a Central European immigrant in America, to name a few instances of alienation, Paul Nettl committed to a belief in the universalism and superiority of German culture, and it was this ideal that helped him find direction and guidance.

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The research for this study was made possible by a grant from the Botstiber Institute for Austrian-American Studies. Many thanks to Manfred Hermann Schmid and Ralph P. Locke for their help with editing the German transcription and the English translation of Paul Nettl's memoir.

Redakční poznámka
České znění článku najdete na internetové adrese www.hudebniveda.cz
An Unpublished Memoir by Paul Nettl

Preface by Martin Nedbal

Paul Nettl must have written this essay in 1949, because in it he writes that he has been in America for nearly ten years; considering that he had arrived in the fall 1939, the autobiography might have been written in the summer of 1949. Nettl also mentions that his mother-in-law is living with his family in Bloomington, IN; Clara Hutter lived there with the Nettls until her death in 1949. The essay is more substantial than the essay published in Thomas Atcherson’s 1962 book Ein Musikwissenschaftler in zwei Welten, though both of them provide similar basic information. At times, however, subtle shifts in perspective are noticeable between the two essays, such as in relation to Gustav Becking (see my article).

The typewritten essay was originally 30 pages long. Additional pages were inserted into the document at a later point; I include these additional pages into the main document. The inserted material is in square brackets and in bold. I have kept Nettl’s paragraph breakdown and text divisions. In my edition of the German original, I also kept Nettl’s punctuation although it often breaks the rules of German punctuation. Nettl refers to many locations in the present-day Czech Republic by their German names, which are rarely used nowadays. As a result, I provide the current Czech names of those locations in square brackets whenever those locations are mentioned first. All of the footnotes are mine.

Paul Nettl’s biography is not only an important historical document, which sheds light on the history of the no-longer existent German-Bohemian community, on the developments of Central European musicology in the early twentieth century, and on the interactions between European and American musicology during and after WWII, but also a gripping story, particularly in its description of Paul Nettl’s suspenseful attempts to escape Czechoslovakia and later the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in 1939.
Preface by Bruno Nettl

I am happy that Dr. Nedbal did some digging in the Indiana University archives and made me aware of this manuscript of memoirs of my father. I don’t think I ever knew about it, and while there is not much in it that was not, at least in a general way, known to me, it clarifies many details from his earlier life, particularly the period between 1930 and 1939, and also provides insight into attitudes that he had at this time. Some of these (in particular his feelings about Germany and Germans) had changed by the time he published his 1962 memoir. I have looked at my records and believe there are only a couple of factual errors. Importantly, Paul Nettl met his future wife, Gertrud Hutter, in 1928, not 1929, and I was born in 1930, not – as implied – in 1931. Also, I believe we departed from Prague, to emigrate, on September 21, 1939, not a day later.

I am very glad to have access to this memoir, because a good many events, as they were related later over the years, changed in detail and in significance, as must be expected in oral transmission.

One may wish to ask why Paul Nettl chose this moment – 1948 – to write about his life. I believe that he felt that he had finally established himself in a position appropriate to his qualifications, after a career dominated by uncertainty – his treatment at the German university of Prague, and his long period of virtual unemployment for some nine years in USA. The satisfaction with which he states his appointment to a professorship with tenure at Indiana University suggests that this was the time to give an account.

I must say that I am surprised to see how little this manuscript tells about Paul Nettl’s immediate family, particularly my mother’s work. In explaining his livelihood in the first seven years in the USA, I think he understates the degree to which the family was supported by my mother’s activities as a piano teacher, part-time at Westminster Choir College, and privately in Princeton NJ. I remember her spending some 40 hours per week giving lessons (she taught a large number of my school friends), and I think my father may be overstating slightly the degree to which his earnings were close to sufficient to help provide the needed support. But already in Prague (1930–1938), my mother spent many hours per week giving private piano lessons. I was raised mainly by my maternal grandmother, who lived with us, and a succession of nannies. I was a bit surprised to have been described as “sickly,” but I now feel that in my earliest years I was rather overprotected.

I was interested in my father’s account of his own prowess as a performer on violin and piano; by the time I was aware of things, he had stopped practicing, but he was well able to play some four-hand piano music with my mother and to play illustrations for his music history lectures on the piano. By the time we came to USA, he had stopped playing the violin.

Two more brief items: The relationship to Gustav Becking. My father had a kind if ambivalent relationship with him and with his legacy. The fact was that Becking got the job in Prague that my father should have had, and he
was eventually very active as a supporter of Konrad Henlein, but my father thought that he was something of a genius – he was impressed by the “Becking curves” that are described in his book (Der musikalische Rhythmus als Erkenntnisquelle, 1928. NB. He has the title wrong), and also believed, I imagine with good reason, that Becking intervened with the Gestapo, in August-September 1939, to permit my family to exit the country even though Paul Nettl was the subject of Gestapo investigation. I myself remember Becking coming to our house off and on when I was perhaps 6 or 7, and looking, with my father, at manuscripts and scores.

And then there are the remarks about differences in personal relationships in old Austria-Hungary and 1940s USA. I do remember my father speaking frequently about these differences in social relationships, but wonder whether there is any objectivity in his viewpoint. It’s important to realize that he came to USA at age 50, too old to develop close friendships – so he thought. I do remember that our Prague friends (individuals, not couples) and maybe relatives would drop by in the late afternoon and chat for fifteen minutes, the kind of thing not common here now. And that one would stop in a café and find friends there, have a cup and move on. It may be, though, that my father’s nostalgic feelings for the past resulted from the disruption of his social life through emigration. But also, some anthropological research on styles of social relationships in different European and Euro-American cultures, also among social classes, might shed light on this.

Vater Karl Nettl aus Grossbock in Böhmen stammend.

Mutter Jenny Nettl, czechischer Abkunft, geborene Beckova aus Horice in Böhmen. Ihr Vater hatte eine Landwirtschaft, während die Eltern des Vaters von Paul Nettl kleine Kaufleute waren.


Paul Nettl, born on January 10, 1889 in Hohenelbe [Vrchlabí], Bohemia.

Father Karl Nettl, from Grossbock [Velká Bukovina] in Bohemia.

Mother Jenny Nettl, Czech origin, born Beckova, from Horice [Hořice] in Bohemia. Her father owned a farm, whereas the parents of Paul Nettl’s father were small merchants.

Father Nettl came from a family with many children. He and his brothers were originally active in the paper business and later founded paper mills, and the name Nettl is even today still mentioned in connection with the paper industry. Before Hitler’s coup, the Nettl family owned eight paper mills in Czechoslovakia.

During the depression period, in 1931 and 1932, Karl Nettl liquidated the firm “Nettl Brothers,” and his brother Anton Nettl took over the firm “Nettl & Co.,” in which Paul Nettl was also a partner. Paul Nettl’s parents then moved to Prague, where they lived until 1941, and then they were deported to Theresienstadt [Terezín].

I had three siblings: two sisters and one brother. The latter, Anton Nettl, went to Australia after the Hitler invasion, where he founded a paper mill. My younger sister Martha, married Neumann, died in Prague in 1941, whereas my sister Margarete Neufeld, who was the elder of the two and a widow after Viennese attorney Dr. Otto Neufeld, lives in Palestine with her son Otto.

I was the oldest among my siblings. At an early age I exhibited musical talent, which was encouraged by my governess (Hanna Koechlin), who came from Elsass and was related to the French composer Charles Koechlin [1867–1950]. Miss Koechlin was an excellent pianist, and I am indebted to her for my first substantial musical impressions. We practiced violin and piano in equal measure. At the ages of 11 and 12, I was already playing simpler symphonies with Miss Koechlin four-hands and fiddled sonatas by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven with my small violin. I was not even afraid of Mendelssohn’s and Beethoven’s violin concertos!

These musical activities were abruptly interrupted when I was brought to the Gymnasium in Reichenberg [Liberec] in 1901, and [switched] to [the one] in Arnau [Hostinné] a year later. Particularly in Arnau, it was difficult to find understanding for anything that did not belong to the study plan at the Gymnasium. Students had to concentrate on Latin and Greek whether they liked it or not. Very soon I developed an interest in German literature. Prof. Karl Wittmann was a stimulating Germanist, who familiarized the students not only with Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe, but also with Novalis, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Wackenroder, and modern literature. Musical interests set in once again


Nach der Matura, 1908, ging ich nach Prag, um dort auf Wunsch meines Vaters Jus zu studieren. Ich war kein allzu eifriger Besucher der juridischen Vorlesungen, hingegen ein ständiger Hörer der Musikwissenschaftlichen von Prof. Heinrich Rietsch, der bald auf mich aufmerksam wurde. Als der dama
lige Assistent des musikwissenschaftlichen Seminars, Dr. Erich Steinhardt, zum Studium nach Berlin ging, wurde ich, ein zwanzigjähriger Student, sein Nachfolger und habe dieses Amt, welches später meine Stellung zu der eines “habilitierten Assistenten” des dann entwickelten musikwissenschaftlichen Institutes ausgebaut wurde, bis zum Jahre 1931 innegehabt.


Prof. Rietsch schlug mit sehr eindringlich die Habilitation zum Privatdozenten für Musikwissenschaft an der deutschen Universität in Prag vor. Um meine Habilitationsarbeit fertig zu stellen, entschloss ich mich also, nach Wien zu gehen, wo ich an der Hofbibliothek, in den österreichischen Staatsarchiven, in den Klöstern und Schlössern Kremsier, Osseg und Raudnitz arbei
when I was 16. I was an autodidact then, and as such, familiarized myself with classical literature for the piano.

Annually at the end of the academic year, the Gymnasium organized a concert, and there I once performed Mendelssohn’s Rondo Capriccioso—naturally from memory—and it was a great success.

After the Matura, 1908, I went to Prague, where I was to study law at my father’s request. I did not attend the law lectures all too eagerly; instead I became a regular attendant of the musicological ones by Prof. Heinrich Rietsch [1860–1927], who soon noticed my interest. When the assistant of the musicological seminar, Dr. Erich Steinhardt [1886–1941], went to study in Berlin, I, at the age of twenty-two, became his successor and held this appointment, which was later converted to the position of a “habilitated assistant” at the then-established musicological institute, until 1931.

In 1913, I graduated with a degree of Doctor of Law degree at the German University in Prague, and in the following year, I became a court trainee at the criminal and civilian court in Prague and at the district court in Hohenelbe, and later also a junior attorney in Vienna. I did not derive much joy from these activities. My main interest was in music and musicology, and thus already in 1915, I completed a doctorate in philosophy with a dissertation about aria forms under Rietsch in Prague. In addition to musicology, I minored in romance languages and literature (Prof. [Emile] Freymond [1855–1918]) and paleography (Prof. [Samuel] Steinherz [1857–1942]). In the philosophical oral exam, I was examined by Professors Christian [von] Ehrenfels [1859–1932], whom I idolized, and Oskar Kraus [1872–1942], with whom I later had a close friendship. One day after my graduation as a Doctor of Philosophy (June 1915), I reported for duty to the training troupe in Trautenau [Trutnov], where I spent nearly a year in military training. In 1916, I went to the Southern, Italian, front and served as a cadet and lieutenant with the tenth army commando on the Carinthian and Tyrolean front. When the armistice was proclaimed in October 1918, I returned to Vienna, and later to Prague.

Prof. Rietsch urged me to pursue a habilitation as a Privatdozent in musicology at the German University in Prague. In order to complete my habilitation I decided to go to Vienna, where I worked in the court library, in the Austrian state archives, as well as in the abbeys and castles in Kremsier [Kroměříž], Osseg [Osek], and Raudnitz [Roudnice]. This research in Lower Austria and Bohemia, which I pursued with the greatest diligence, resulted in an extensive monograph, which appeared in the Studien zur Musikwissenschaft (edited by Guido Adler [1855–1941]) in 200 pages printed in a small font. The title of the work was: “The Viennese Dance Composition in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century.” Musicological critics, especially Alfred

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Noch 1937 kam Adler nach Prag, um mich aufzusuchen. Er war ein warmherziger Mensch,—allerdings von alten Schlag und nicht ohne Sonderlichkeiten. Wie oft hat er mich eingeladen, ihn auf seinen gewohnten Spaziergängen
Einstein [1880–1952] and Joh[annes] Wolf [1869–1947], called [the monograph] a pathbreaking work on the history of the suite. It uncovered the roots of the Viennese dance composition in the Baroque era, particularly the importance of the composer Joh[ann] Heinr[ich] Schmelzer [c. 1623–1680] and many others, whose names had been virtually unknown. Through my studies in archives and of the letters that I found there, I became familiar with the lives of those masters. I focused most on the history of the waltz, which had until then been considered an eighteenth-century dance form. I showed that the first waltzes were written about a century earlier.

I also published a volume of Viennese dance music from the seventeenth century in the Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, also a series edited and supervised by Guido Adler.²

Between 1920 and 1922, there was a great antagonism among the music scholars at the University of Vienna. Guido Adler, the extraordinarily successful Jewish music scholar, who was admired everywhere for his diligence and knowledge, and who founded German musicology together with [Philipp] Spitta [1841–1894] and [Friedrich] Chrysander [1826–1901], was treated with hostility by younger scholars, such as Robert Lach [1874–1958], then the director of the music department of the [Austrian] National Library. I became embroiled in these personal conflicts. As I was initially on friendly terms with Lach, I was asked to decide whose side I wanted to take (Lach or Adler). I had no understanding for the small professional frictions and the envy felt by the party of Adler’s opponents. Since I naturally did not want to become involved in the intrigues, the powerful university clique, to which Lach belonged, showed more and more hostility toward me. This is why I decided to go to Prague and pursue my habilitation there, although I had already secured a position as an amanuensis at the [Austrian] National Library in Vienna.

Lach would have liked to keep me at his side in the Library. I, however, considered Guido Adler a fatherly friend, who was and remained my special adviser and supporter. This friendship lasted into Court Counselor Adler’s final years. In his autobiography Wollen und Wirken, he referred to me as a man “to whom he was bound by special personal relations.”³ Next to Prof. [Rudolf von] Ficker [1886–1954], who was considered as [Adler’s] successor, [Adler] suggested me and [Egon] Wellesz [1885–1974] for the Vienna University position.

Adler also came to visit me in Prague in 1937. He was a warmhearted man—though of the old school and not without peculiarities. How often did he invite me to accompany him during his customary walk through the Vienna

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im Wienerwald zu begleiten! Unsere Hauptgesprächsthemen waren neben rein wissenschaftlichen, auch seine Beziehungen zu Johannes Brahms, Hanslick und Bruckner, und vor Allem auch zu Gustav Mahler, mit dem ihn eine intime Freundschaft von Jugend auf verband.

Manchmal meinte Adler „man müsse doch wieder mal zum Stiebitz in die Weinstube gehen“, wo es einen besonders guten österreichischen Wein gab. Da rief er immer früh an (ich wohnte damals erst eine Zeit lang bei meiner Schwester, dann in der „Pension Amerika,“ deren Besitzerin Frau Bertha Neudörfer war) und seine stereotype Wendung war: „Herr Kollege, es handelt sich um ein Ganserl!“

Leider ist dieser wunderbare Gelehrte und prachtvolle Mensch 1938, als die Nazis Wien eroberten, nicht ins Ausland gegangen, obwohl englische und amerikanische Freunde, vor allem Carl Engel ihm jede Hilfe hiezu anboten. Stattdessen sandte er seinen Sohn Achim Adler nach Amerika, der nun in den Vereinigten Staaten lebt und eine ärztliche Praxis ausübt. Guido Adler aber starb 1941, nachdem ihm seine Gattin Betty im Tode voran gegangen war.


Nach meiner Habilitation hielt ich regelmässig zwei Vorlesungen per Semester: eine Allgemeine über Musikgeschichte und eine Spezielle über ein jeweilig spezielles Thema.

Von 1925 angefangen konnte man leicht merken, dass die deutsche Universität in ein chauvinistisches Fahrwasser geriet. Als der jüdische Professor Samuel Steinherz Rektor der Universität werden sollte, gab es einen schweren Tumult unter der Studentenschaft, dem sich auch die Majorität der Professoren anschloss. Ich erinnere mich wohl, dass ich einmal mit Rietsch den Vorlesungssaal betrat, der bereits von nationalistischen Studenten besetzt war, die Rietsch daran verhinderten, seine Vorlesung zu halten, da die Strike-Parole gegen die Regierung ausgegeben worden war. Rietsch beugte sich nur allzu gern der Diktatur der Studenten während ich mich nicht daran binden liess, meiner Meinung über diese Attitude, die bereits an Hitler’schen Terrorismus gemahnte, Ausdruck zu geben. Seit jener Zeit trat eine Entfremdung zwischen Rietsch und mir ein. Rietsch’s nationaler Paroxismus nahm immer mehr pathologische Formen an, die endlich so weit gingen, dass er z. B. den Studenten verbot, das Wort Musik zu verwenden, da es doch ein Fremdwort wäre!
Woods! The main subjects of our conversations were not only purely academic, but also his relationship to Johannes Brahms, Hanslick, and Bruckner, and especially Gustav Mahler, to whom he was bound by close friendship from a young age.

Sometimes, Adler thought, “we have to go to the Stiebitz Wine Tavern once again,” where they served a particularly good Austrian wine. On those occasions he would call on me (I was at first living at my sister’s and then in the “Pension Amerika,” owned by Mrs. Bertha Neudorfer) and his typical phrase was: “Herr Kollege, es handelt sich um ein Ganserl!”

Unfortunately, this wonderful scholar and magnificent person did not emigrate in 1938, when the Nazis conquered Vienna, although he was offered help by English and American friends, especially Carl Engel [1883–1944]. Instead, he sent his son Achim Adler to America, where he still resides and practices his profession. Guido Adler, however, died in 1941, preceded by his wife Betty.

Prof. Rietsch in Prague, who had himself been a student of Adler, did not have the best relationship with his former teacher. He himself wanted to become the professor in Vienna. The reason why he urged me so avidly to come to Prague was that he did not want to leave the local position unfilled. He wished to leave Prague at any cost, because he had strong German-national views and virtually hated the new Czech regime. Curiously, Rietsch was actually a half-Jew: his father’s name was Löwy. But precisely this seems to be the reason for his exaggerated nationalism, which later intensified to anti-Semitism.

After my habilitation, I offered two classes each semester: one was on general music history and one focused on various special topics.

Starting in 1925, it was easy to see that the German University was becoming more and more chauvinistic. When the Jewish Professor Samuel Steinherz was to become the University Rector, there was a heavy commotion among the students, who were also joined by the majority of the professors. I remember well that one time Rietsch and I entered a lecture hall that was occupied by nationalistic students who prevented Rietsch from giving his lecture, because there was a call for a strike against the government. Rietsch gave in all too happily to the dictatorship of the students, whereas I did not hold back my opinion about such attitudes, which already smacked of Hitler’s terror. Ever since then, a sense of alienation separated me from Rietsch. Rietsch’s nationalistic paroxysms became more and more pathological, and eventually went so far as to prompt him, for example, to ban students from using the word “Musik,” because it was of foreign origin!
Ich wurde auf sein Bestreben nicht zum Privatdozenten für Musikgeschichte, sondern zum „Privatdozenten der Geschichte der Tonkunst“ habilitiert.

Das Ergebnis unserer verschlechterten Beziehungen war die Tatsache, dass ich bis 1938 Privatdozent blieb und nicht zum Professor befördert wurde.


At [Rietsch’s] instigation, I did not habilitate as a *Privatdozent* of “Musik” but as a “*Privatdozent* of the History of ‘Tonkunst’.”

The result of our deteriorating relationship was that I remained a *Privatdozent* until 1938 and was never promoted to professor.

Rietsch was an excellent scholar, who was an authority in the field of older and early modern German song and in the specialized field of medieval and early modern music history. His weaknesses were, however, his nationalistic intractability, which was, without doubt, linked to his Jewish origin—and his passion for composing. He was quite a mediocre epigone of romanticism and wrote a number of Lieder and chamber works. His compositional activities did not prevent him from devoting himself completely to his research. He had an inferiority complex, suffered from low self-esteem, and made many of his colleagues, and also me, the victims of his moods. As a teacher, he was not very strong, and his lectures at the German university were not very relevant. The library was built in a one-sided manner. Rietsch was a somewhat dry person without great imagination. No wonder that most of his students tended to leave for Vienna and Germany. I myself spent most of my vacations in Vienna, where I worked at the court library and in the musicological institute. The truth is that I have always viewed Guido Adler as my teacher. It was he who introduced me to the research methods and made all of the materials associated with the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich* available to me.

And yet, among my later teachers I need to mention Gerhardt von Keussler [1874–1949]. He had a bewitching personality. I met with him already in 1912 and studied music theory and score reading with him. One could learn much more than music from him, particularly in the fields of philosophy, natural sciences, and theology. He was a unique and singular person. With his large figure, his mixture of Baltic and German cultural elements, he was the [stereo] type of a “peripheral German.” His speech had traces of his Baltic origin and his interest in everything human and his high ethics made it immediately believable that he came from a theological family. When he was about to accept the position as director of the Mozarteum in Salzburg, he wanted to make me his assistant. But it did not happen. In Prague’s musical circles, Keussler was adored as a demigod. Although he was not an excellent conductor, his rehearsals were highly interesting, particularly those at the “German Choral Society.” He had enormous knowledge, which he willingly shared with his disciples. I was chosen to comment on his works, and I also wrote program notes about the symphonic works that he performed in Berlin, Breslau, and Prague. Together with Prague lawyer Dr. Otto Adler, the archeologist Prof. Heinrich Swoboda [1856–1926], and other musical enthusiasts of the German Prague, I founded the “Gerhardt Keussler Society,” which was supposed to make it


possible for him to live only for his compositional activities for a time. But he was of a dictatorial nature and could not understand that it was impossible for him to direct the “Gerhardt Keussler Society” on his own. This led to an alienation between him and his friends. Although he had been an avid freemason at one time, to whom humanity was everything, eventually, especially after Hitler came, he retreated from his former Prague friends. He observed the terrible fate of many of his intimate friends, who were mostly Jewish, merely from a distance.

A new phase entered my life when radio achieved greater importance. At first, German broadcasts were merely a subsection of the Czechoslovak radio. It was directed by the “Urania,” which was led by Prof. Oskar [Benjamin] Frankl [1881–1955], who was also the supervisor of the German programs and who brought me closer and closer to radio. Soon I was the musical director of the German broadcasts, and when the famous “Melniker Transmitter” [Vysílač Mělník-Chloumek], the German democratic radio station in Czechoslovakia, was founded in 1937, I was chosen as the director of the music department. The Social Democrats, the Christian-Socialists, and the Agrarians approved of my appointment, because I was completely apolitical, and it was remarkable that even the Sudeten-German Party, which disguised the Nazis, had nothing against me! My position was not easy! I had to take into consideration the Czechs, the German democrats, and the Nazis. Later, however, the Nazis boycotted the German transmitter and no German-blooded artist dared to be heard through the “Melniker Transmitter.” I was attacked on a number of occasions in the Nazi press and was referred to as first-rate cultural vermin. I also remember a caricature from that time. It appeared in the journal Die Zeit and glorified me, together with [Leo] Kestenberg [1882–1962], with a terribly long nose. Even before Hitler’s invasion, there were such strong attacks against me in the Nazi press, that one day I decided to step down from directing the radio station. Because I felt, nevertheless, that I had to put general in front of personal interests, I first asked Max Brod [1884–1968] for his view. It was he who persuaded me to persist in the end. I have the feeling, that it was mainly the Nazi students of Prof. Gustav Becking [1894–1945] who would belittle me. Becking himself, of whom I will speak soon, kept in the background and seems to have later, during the Protectorate, held a kind of protective arm over me.

After Rietsch’s death [in 1927], an interregnum set in for about 3 years. Although I was under no circumstances to become an Ordinarius [i.e., chair professor], I still received a teaching contract and was obliged to present systematic lectures. In reality, I became the head of the musicological department in Prague for three years and was required not only to present lectures, but also to evaluate dissertations and supervise exams. A number of doctoral students worked

on their dissertations with me, including the nephew of Cardinal [Leo] Skrben-
sk[y] [1863–1938], Leo [Heinrich] Skrbensk[y] [1905–?], who later wrote a mon-
ograph about Heinrich Rietsch. In the meantime, there was a “quid pro quo” surrounding the search for the
musicological position. From among three proposed candidates: Robert Haas [1886–1960], Rudolf von Ficker [1886–1954], and Gustav Becking, it was Beck-
ing who eventually received the professorship, especially because he received a warm endorsement in the Faculty from Gerhard Gesemann [1888–1948], his
former colleague in Erlangen. When Becking arrived in Prague from Erlangen, where he had been an associate [“ausserordentlicher”] professor, it seemed that he wanted to revolutionize the entire musical world of Prague. He was relatively young, had a brilliant career ahead of him, his publications were enormously successful, and was very popular. He brought ten students from Erlangen right away, who surrounded him like an iron guard. I remember clearly, that he expressed radically leftist-socialistic views, that he ridiculed the German, somewhat nationally inclined professors of Prague, because they were not in the position to get along with the Czechs. To someone who had just arrived in Prague recently it must have seemed strange, that colleagues in the same field lived side by side and had not the slightest in common. A whole world separated the Czechs from the Germans, and it seemed to me and oth-
ers, that Becking was the right man to bridge the differences. He was, as I have already mentioned, a kind of genius. He grew up in the school of Sievers and Riemann and believed, that music should be considered exclusively from the perspective of the humanities, whereas those of us who studied with Adler and Rietsch could not abandon musicological philology. I must admit, that I was strongly influenced by Becking and especially by his book Der Rhythmus als
historische Erkenntnisquelle [Rhythm as a Historical Source of Knowledge].
Becking introduced his “Collegium musicum” to Prague, and it soon became one of the best musical institutions of the city. I remember, that I once took Henr[y] Prunières [1886–1942], who was then staying in the city, to one such event, and this French musician was deeply impressed by the performance. Becking was in the position to ask the government for financial resources that had been unavailable to Rietsch and myself. He built up the library, bought two harpsichords, and performed predominantly eighteenth-century instru-
mental music, as well as fifteenth-, sixteenth-, and seventeenth-century vocal
music with the “Collegium musicum.” With the vocal Collegium he travelled
around the Sudeten regions, which were by then under complete influence of

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4 This monograph could be [Anonymous], Univ.-Professor Dr. Heinrich Rietsch: Rektor der Deutschen Universität zu Prag, Obmann des Vereines für Kammermusik (Prague: Verein für Kammermusik, [1928]).

5 Gustav Becking, Der musikalische Rhythmus als Erkenntnisquelle (Augsburg: Filser, 1928).


Henlein and the Nazis. Becking soon understood that the future of Czechoslovakia would be decided by Hitler, and that was the reason why he transformed from the “red Gustav” to the “S.A. Man,” who made himself into the cultural exponent of Henlein. It is understandable that from now on, I was even less welcomed at the university, which became more and more Nazi-oriented and was considered a stronghold of Hitlerism. I tried to continue to give lectures as long as it was possible. Becking’s students amused themselves by locking up and barricading the classroom in which [my lectures] took place, so that my students were intimidated. I lost nearly all of [the students], but my name still appeared in the class schedule for 1939, when I had to sign a written statement in which I committed to resign from my academic position.

Between 1927 and 1937, I wrote and published a number of books. Although I had originally been more interested in seventeenth-century instrumental music, later I became more and more enchanted with Mozart’s music. I wrote two books about this master. The first of the two deals with Mozart and Freemasonry.6 Through my cousin, Arthur Nettl [1881–1944], I came into the Freemasonic lounge “Freilicht zur Eintracht” and was an avid Freemason during that period. I discovered, so to speak, eighteenth-century Masonic music and wrote about this subject in various journals. The main substance of my musical-Masonic research appears in my book Mozart und die königliche Kunst. With support of the Masonic-historical organization “Quatuor Coronati Coetus Pragensis,” I also published the Yearbook of World Freemasonry.7

Another of my favorite subjects was old Prague and old Bohemia. This interest together with my Mozart research led to the publication of my book Mozart in Böhmen, which was originally envisaged as a sequel to Rudolf Freiherr von Prochaska’s book Mozart in Prag.8 [Prochaska], who was my dear friend, although he did not support me very much, believed, that I was the only musicologist who could be considered for a new edition of his book, which was to include new research. When it was published in 1938, Prochaska had died.

My work on old Prague led me to the publication of two further works: Alt-Prager Almanach and Hundert Türme, which were published by the Bookshop Karl Steindler & Julius Bunzl-Federn.9 Unfortunately, this generally good bookstore in the Bredauergasse [now Politických vězňů], which could have had a great future, was run to the ground under the amateurish and careless direction of ..., and I lost a fortune.

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6 Paul Nettl, Mozart und die königliche Kunst: die freimaurerische Grundlage der “Zauberflöte” (Berlin, Wunder, 1932).
8 Rudolph von Procházka, Mozart in Prag: zum hundertjährigen Gedächtniss seines Todes, neue billige Ausgabe (Prague: G. Neugebauer, 1899); Paul Nettl, Mozart in Böhmen (Prague: Neumann, 1938).

Mit meinen Eltern lebte ich in einem sehr angenehmen Verhältnis.


I have already mentioned that my parents moved to Prague after the liquidation of the firm “Nettl Brothers.” This was at a time in which my position at the local university was already shattered. At that time, my two cousins, Otto Aron and Benno Nettl, founded a paper cartel. I received the position of an administrative advisor with the title of Director, a nice annual income without much work, and so I was put into a position in which I could prolong my scholarly activities without depending on the charity of the university, which was already controlled by the Nazis. In this period, as I have already mentioned, I also became the director of the music department of the German radio in Prague.

I lived in a pleasant relationship with my parents.

In 1929, I met my current wife, Gertrude Hutter [1905–1952], who is much younger than I. She was a promising pianist, and her presence and artistic interests attracted me to her, and although I was not particularly inclined to marriage, I still felt that this step was correct at that time. I rented a large and expensive apartment, organized large parties, and felt particularly at home in the wealthy German-Jewish circles of Prague. After two years of marriage, our son Bruno was born, who was initially a rather sickly child, but who later, under favorable conditions, developed into an excellent student and a good person.

After the Munich Treaty in September 1938, I felt that I should try anything I could to leave Czechoslovakia. I wrote to some of my acquaintances in America, without receiving satisfactory responses. The atmosphere of the “Second Republic” was oppressive, and the specter of Hitler was rising menacingly. The Jewish question was a particularly popular theme in the press, and anti-Semitism grew to horrific dimensions. Employment opportunities for Jews and people of Jewish origin were steadily declining.

During that time, I received a letter from English Freemason Paul Waller, who was telling me that he had translated my book *Mozart und die königliche Kunst* into English and was searching for a publisher. This provided me with an impetus to travel to England. There was no visa obligation between England and Czechoslovakia at that time. It was naturally necessary to cross the German territory in an airplane so as not to fall into the hands of the authorities, and it was also not easy to procure English money to cover the airfare and the living expenses in London. Through my friends in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was the only ministry that was still under democratic leadership and in which there were many Freemasons, I managed to obtain a permit, which presented and endorsed my trip to England as in the interest
den sei. In diesem Zusammenhang möchte ich die ausgezeichneten Männer Dr. Jindra und Dr. Hartl erwähnen, welche zu meinen besten freimaurerischen Freunden gehörten. [Hartl] war der Übersetzer meiner beiden Mozart Bücher ins Czechische. Der Arme starb später als ein Opfer der Nazibehandlung...


of the Czech state. In this context, I would like to mention the amazing men Dr. Jindra and Dr. [Antonín] Hartl [1885–1944], who were among my best Masonic friends. [Hartl] was the Czech translator of my two Mozart books. The poor man later became a victim of the Nazis...

When I arrived to London by plane on January 5, 1939, Mr. Waller was waiting for me at the Croydon Airport. I was really thinking at that time, that I would settle in England, and wanted my family to follow as soon as possible. The farewell from my wife and child, as well as from the mother-in-law, who all came to the airport with me, was truly painful. By an unfortunate coincidence, the British immigration officer checked my correspondence, which contained, besides the invitation to negotiations in London from my English publisher, the letter from the English musicologist Edward Dent (Professor in Cambridge) [1876–1957], which made it clear, that I intended to stay in England. Neither my pleas, nor Mr. Waller’s interventions helped. After I had arrived to Croydon at 5 o’clock in the afternoon, I had to fly back to Rotterdam on the next plane. In Prague, I had heard stories about similar cases, and I became convinced that I would never succeed in coming to England. This [conviction] became even stronger, when the astrologist Kopp, who had a strong influence on my wife and also my sister-in-law Franzi Klein, prophesied, on the basis of my horoscope, that I would not succeed in escaping Czechoslovakia.

After arriving in Rotterdam, I decided to stay in Holland and received a temporary permit to reside in Amsterdam. There I became acquainted with the German bookseller Hans Rot[h]schild, the brother of the violinist Fritz Rot[h]schild [1891–1975], and thought about settling in Holland and bringing my family as well. It became clear, however, that the difficulties were almost insurmountable. I did not completely give up on the idea to go to England, negotiated further with the Pen-Club in London, whose Prague member I was, and with the committee for assisting Czech refugees, to which I was recommended by Prof. Dent. One day I received a telegram from that committee, which ordered me to come to England by boat. The telegram stated that “the immigration officer will be notified.” Equally full of hopes and fears, I took a night ferry from Vlissingen. When I showed my passport to the British port official, however, I was informed that my entry will not be authorized even this time, because I was already once refused entry. I was sent back on the ship and was accompanied by a type of prisoner’s guard, who guarded me during the ferry trip back. Once in Holland, I had to find out, that my resident permit became void, because I left the country. Unnerved by so much adversity,
nächsten Flugzeug nach Prag zurückzukehren, trotzdem es mir klar war, dass die Okkupation der Czechoslovakie, rep. dessen, was noch von diesem Lande übriggeblieben war, unmittelbar bevorstand.


Während meines Amsterdamer Aufenthaltes hatte ich eine Reihe von Briefen an Präsidenten amerikanischer Colleges und Universitäten geschrieben und angefragt, ob nicht eine Stelle für mich zu haben wäre, die es mir ermöglichen würde, die Czechoslovakie zu verlassen und in die Vereinigten Staaten einzureisen. Meine Sekretärin, Frl. Neubauer, der ich noch heute zu Dank verpflichtet bin, schrieb zahllose derartige Anfragen, die jedoch zum grossen Teil negativ oder gar nicht beantwortet wurden.

I decided to return to Prague with the next flight, although it was clear to me, that the occupation of Czechoslovakia, or what was left of the country, was imminent.

On February 8, I returned to Prague and was greeted by an unusually oppressive atmosphere. Denunciations were common. A former communist, whom I, as the director of the committee for helping democratic refugees, assisted in setting up an existence in Prague, tried to extort thousands of crowns from me, because I helped him get a job on the, so to speak, “black market.” He would have never been able to get a job officially as a foreigner! This “gentleman,” who earlier was a radical communist, appeared, decorated with a large swastika, in my apartment on March 15, following the entry to the German troupes to Prague, and explained that he was a Gestapo official. He tried to extort large sums, and was partially successful. Only thanks to the intelligence and people skills of my wife did the man “calm down.” Later he also “intervened” with my parents in the same way and threatened to denounce that they still employed a German maid. This man, whose name was Schmidt, who came from Dresden, and whom my family treated only with kindness, appropriated the jargon of a “Stürmer” and presented hours-long lectures about racial disgrace and about the German master race.

During my stay in Amsterdam, I wrote a number of letters to the presidents of American colleges and universities, asking whether they could find a position for me, which would allow me to leave Czechoslovakia and enter the United States. My secretary, Frl. Neubauer, to whom I am thankful till the present day, wrote numerous similar inquiries, which for the most part received negative answers or were left unanswered.

In 1927, I, in my position as the secretary for Guido Adler, who organized the great Vienna Beethoven Festival and centennial celebrations, had met, besides Romain Rolland and other international greats, Carl Engel and Oscar Sonneck [1873–1928] from the New York firm G. Schirmer (as well as the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.). Through Carl Engel, I had occasionally written an article for The Musical Quarterly. I turned to him now in my desperate situation and he immediately sent a list of men to whom I was to write. Engel was exceptionally helpful in contrast to, for example, Marcia Davenport [1903–1996], to whom I have years earlier ceded my studies about Casanova and Mozart and who used them as the basis for her own Mozart book.12 Although in the “Acknowledgements” of her book she credited me in the first place, she never responded to me, no matter how often I wrote to her. She must have known that my life was in danger, and could remember that I made my research available to her in an unprecedented way. Carl Engel, however, responded immediately and because of him I first heard about

den Namen Dr. John Finley Williamson, des Präsidenten des Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N. J.

Meine Sekretärin schrieb sofort an ihn und am 16. März, einen Tag nach der Hitlerinvasion, kam ein Kabel an, das man mir in das Sanatorium Dr. Fischer in Velleslavin, wohin ich mich zurückgezogen hatte, telefonisch weitergab: „I hope to help you, Dr. John F. Williamson, Princeton, N. J.“

Ich konnte es gar nicht fassen, dass es mir wirklich glücken werde, der Nazihölle zu entkommen und das gelobte Land Amerika zu erreichen. Ich war umso skeptischer, als ich von dem Horoskop des Herrn Kopp infiziert war!


Dr. Fischer entschied sich für Amerika.

[Extra paragraph replacing the previous sentence on an inserted page: Unterdessen tat meine Frau, was ihr gesunder Instinkt ihr eingab. Sie ging sofort zum Generalkonsul und erlangte auch von dem zuerst recht schwierigen und abgeneigten amerikanischen Beamten das Visum, nicht nur für mich, sondern auch für sich selbst und für unseren Sohn. Gleichzeitig hielt sie aber auch an dem Plan, nach Palestina zu gehen, fest, da sie meinte, man müsste möglicherweise diesen Umweg benützen, um nicht noch einmal eine Pass-Untersuchung der Nazis zu riskieren. Ich hatte meinen Pass ja eben von den „Herren“ zurückbekommen, mit dem Befehl, auf jenem Schiff nach Palestina auszuwandern. Diese „schwere“ Einreise auf einem viel zu kleinen Frachtdampfer, von den Arabern schwer bedroht, hinter dem Rücken der Engländer, war nun auch sehr gefahr voll und so wählten wir in
Dr. John Finley Williamson [1887–1964], the President of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ.

My secretary wrote to him immediately and on March 16, the day after the Hitler invasion, a telegram came, about which I was informed by telephone in Dr. [Oskar] Fischer’s [1876–1942] sanatorium in Velleslavín [Veleslavín], where I was hiding: “I hope to help you, Dr. John F. Williamson, Princeton, NJ.”

I could not believe that I could be so lucky as to escape the Nazi hell and reach the promised land of America. I was even more skeptical because I was obsessed with the horoscope of Herr Kopp!

An opportunity had materialized to illegally travel to Palestine on a miserable Greek boat with 200 Jewish refugees. I had in fact paid for the trip for the three of us, but before I received the exit permit from the Gestapo, I had to present myself, together with thirty other heavily incriminated political refugees, in the Petschek Palace, where I was to be interrogated with the others. I will never forget the six hours, during which I had to wait there, in the course of which I was ordered to the basement, in which the notorious shootings took place. My wife waited in pouring rain outside of the palace and thought she would never see me again. Fortunately, the interrogation went well, and we prepared for the trip to Palestine, which we were supposed to embark on in the next few days. Each of us prepared a bag-pack with 30–40 kilograms of belongings. We could not take any money and our passports had been taken away. Those were our plans for the trip to Palestine. On the other side, America was beckoning, but I still thought it better to emigrate to Palestine, because I felt it was more favorable to leave the land as quickly as possible, because my arrest seemed to be a matter of days—hours, perhaps! The American opportunity, however, was so tempting, and I myself was absolutely no longer in the position to see clearly and make decisions. I therefore laid our life, i.e., the decision about our escape, in the hands of my friend, Prof. Dr. Fischer, the famous psychiatrist, who was later murdered by the Nazis.

Dr. Fischer decided for America.

[Extra paragraph replacing the previous sentence on an inserted page: In the meantime, my wife did what her healthy instincts told her to do. She went immediately to the consul general and demanded a visa not only for me but also for herself and our son from the American official, who was quite difficult and reluctant. At the same time, she also pursued the plan to go to Palestine, because she thought, we would possibly have to use this detour, so as not to risk another passport control by the Nazis. I also received my passport back from the “gentlemen,” who ordered me to emigrate to Palestine on that boat. This “difficult” trip by a cargo steamer, which was too small, threatened by the Arabs, behind the back of the English, was also...]
Gottes Namen doch den direkten Weg, der uns vorgezeichnet schien, vom Augenblick an, da wir das berühmte, seltene, blaue Non-Quote-Visum in der Hand hielten.]

Und nun begann eine Kette von Laufereien, Hoffnungen und Enttäuschungen. Meine Vermögensangelegenheiten mussten bereinigt werden, meine Beteiligung an dem Geschäft meines Vaters und Bruders musste einwandfrei liquidiert sein, und zwar in der Weise, dass nichts von meinem ehemaligen Vermögen übrigbleiben sollte.


Im Ganzen und Grossen muss ich sagen, dass sich die czechischen Beamten im Allgemeinen gut benahmen. Dies drückte sich auch günstig darin aus, dass man mir bewilligte, einen grossen Teil meiner Bibliothek und einige meiner Bilder auszuführen.


Als wir dann endlich unsere Pässe erhalten hatten und am folgenden Tag Prag verlassen sollten, entdeckte ich dass die Gestapo mir wieder einen Besuch abgestattet hatte, um mich zu verhaften, weil ich eine Radiosendung des Präsidenten Benes aus London gehört hatte,—eine Sünde auf die Todesstrafe gesetzt war. Ich beschloss deshalb, nicht zu Hause, sondern bei meinem Freund Schablin zu übernachten, war aber doch jeden Moment meiner Verhaftung gewärtig.
quite dangerous, and so we decided, in God’s name, for the direct route, which seemed predestined to us from the moment when we received the famous, rare, blue Non-Quota Visa.

And now began a long series of running about, hoping, and being disappointed. My financial matters needed to be cleared up, my partnership in the company of my father and brother had to be liquidated unobjectionably, in a way so that nothing would be left from my former fortune.

It lasted months before we gathered our passports and exit permits. In the meantime, I was twice summoned by the Gestapo, or rather the financial tax office, and the possibility that I would be taken to a concentration camp hung upon a thread. A Czech servant of my father denounced me to the Gestapo for 30 crowns, he testified that I smuggled a large amount of Czech money to Holland. My physical state was quite alarming in those days, and it was only thanks to my wife’s presence of mind that the Nazis came to see that my case was an unjustified denouncement. To some extent, it seemed that the proper Gestapo official found amusement in exposing the Czech informer.

All things considered, I have to say that the Czech officials generally treated us well. This [good treatment] fortunately also resulted in the decision that allowed me to export a large part of my library and some of my paintings.

After the beginning of the war, our departure was postponed even further, also due to the fact that the Hamburg-America line cancelled ocean crossings. We could now only use foreign shipping companies. At that time, I sent a telegram to my friend Dr. Alfred Einstein, as well as to Frau Helene Karst and Rudolf Goldschmidt and asked them whether they could help me obtain the tickets. Einstein answered first and immediately paid three ocean-transit tickets at the price of $400 for us. Also, the other two friends offered help. When the war broke out, there were naturally stringent regulations, and we had to apply for the exit permit once again. All of us waited in line for about 20 hours to get the passports. Incidentally, [during the waiting period] we had to stand to attention without stirring and were constantly yelled at and hit by the Nazi animals.

When we finally received our passports and were about to leave Prague the following day, I found out that the Gestapo had paid me another visit in order to arrest me, because I had listened to a radio broadcast of president Benes [Beneš] from London,—a crime punishable by death. I decided not to go home but to spend the night at my friend’s Schablin, and I still expected to be arrested any moment.

[Extra paragraph on an inserted page: Unvergesslich das letzte Beisammensein mit meinem sehr guten Freund Dr. Paul Eisner und seiner Frau, mit denen mich seit vielen Jahren enge Beziehungen verbanden, unvergesslich auch der letzte Abend, nachdem ich meine Eltern verlassen hatte, mit meiner Familie, der Schwester meiner Frau und deren Mann, bei unseren lieben Freunden Sommer! Unser Zug ging um zwölf Uhr nachts.]

Als ich dann von meiner Schwiegermutter, meiner Schwägerin und meinem Schwager, sowie von einigen Freunden, und natürlich von Trude und Bruno abgeholt wurde, um zum Franz-Josephs-Bahnhof zu gehen, war ich der Einzige, der sich nicht von meinen Eltern verabschiedete...

Am Bahnhof erwartete ich jede Minute meine Verhaftung und dasselbe war der Fall, als wir die Protektoratsgrenze überspritten. Doch nichts dergleichen geschah, und wir wollten schon erleichtert aufatmen, aber nein: An der holländischen Grenze angekommen, erfuhren wir, dass wir erst 24 Stunden vor Abgang des Schiffes holländisches Gebiet betreten durften. Da aber die Abfahrt des Schiffes völlig ungewiss war und die Engländer alle Schiffe untersuchten und viele zurückwiesen, wurden wir zu unserer allergrößten Aufregung gezwungen nochmals nach Deutschland zurückzufahren. Zuerst ging es nach Reine [sic], wo man uns mit sehr scheelen Augen ansah und wo wir jeden Augenblick unsere Verhaftung und Abführung ins Konzentrationslager fürchten mussten. Dann ging es nach Münster, wo wir stundenlang im verdunkelten Bahnhof sassen. Hotels waren nämlich für Juden nicht zugänglich! Endlich erfuhr meine Frau von einem jüdischen Rechtsanwalt, Dr. Simon, den ich telefonisch anrief und der gleich sieben Personen unserer Reisegesellschaft (dazu gehörte die Familie Löwy aus Eger) bei sich aufnahm. Die Generosität der Familie Dr. Simon werden wir niemals vergessen! Von ihren rationierten Lebensmitteln teilten sie Alles redlich mit uns. Inzwischen rief ich bei der holländischen Behörde an und so gelang es uns, nach drei Tagen die holländische Grenze zu passieren. Es fiel mir wirklich ein schwerer Stein vom Herzen, als wir nun tatsächlich freies Land betrat...
I spent the last day of our stay in the homeland partially at my parents’, partially at the shipping company. I will never forget how shaken my parents were when I told them, that I was leaving that very day! They did not want to and could not believe it until the last moment, since within four weeks three of their children emigrated ... I told them that I did not intend to say an official goodbye to them but to simply walk out of the room when the time came.

[Extra paragraph on an inserted page: (Also) unforgettable (was) the last meeting with my very good friend Dr. Paul Eisner (1889–1958) and his wife, who had been my close friends for years, (equally) unforgettable (was) the last evening, after I left my parents, with my family, the sister of my wife and her husband, at our friends the Sommers! Our trains departed at midnight.]

When I was later picked up to go to Franz Joseph train station by my mother-in-law, my sister-in-law and my brother-in-law, as well as by some friends, and naturally by Trude and Bruno, I was the only one who did not say goodbye to my parents...

I expected to be arrested any minute both at the train station and when we were crossing the border of the Protectorate. But nothing like that happened, and we already wanted to breathe more easily, but no: at the Dutch border we found out that we could enter the Dutch territory only 24 hours before the departure of the ship. Since the departure of the ship was not known and since the English searched all ships and turned many of them back, we were forced to return to Germany, which made us extremely uneasy. At first, we went to R[h]eine, where we got evil looks and feared to be arrested at any moment and deported to a concentration camp. Then we went to Münster, where we sat for hours in a dark train station. The hotels were at that point no longer accessible for Jews! Eventually, my wife found out about a Jewish attorney, Dr. Simon, whom she telephoned and who immediately took up seven people from our travelling company (this included the Löwy family from Eger [Cheb]). We will never forget the generosity of Dr. Simon’s family! They generously shared all of their rationed provisions with us. In the meantime, I called the Dutch authorities, and we managed to cross the Dutch border three days later. I was extremely relieved when we finally entered a free land!

[Alternative version of the previous two paragraphs on inserted pages: I felt quite uneasy when we were later picked up by my mother-in-law, my sister-in-law, and my brother-in-law, together with Alice {Herz Sommer, 1903-2014} and Poldi {Leopold} Sommer {1905–1945}, who accompanied us to the Wilson train station. We still expected I would be arrested any moment both at the station and when we were crossing the border of the Protectorate. But nothing like that happened, and we were ready to breathe

Dr. Simon war der einzige, noch aktive Anwalt im Ort für „jüdische Rechtsfragen“. Er hatte dadurch das, was man gute Beziehungen zur Gestapo nannte, und auch noch eine grössere Amtswohnung. Ich rief ihn noch um halb eins Uhr nachts an und die Familie Simon nahm uns sogleich auf. Acht fremde Menschen in jener Zeit! Die Generosität der Familie Dr. Simon werden wir niemals vergessen! Von ihren rationierten Lebensmitteln teilten sie Alles redlich mit uns.

Man durfte nur 10 Mark über die Grenze mitnehmen, aber zum Glück hatte ich ein paar holl. Gulden in Holland [the inserted page variant: in Amsterdam] stehen, die sich aus Honoraren für Artikel, welche ich für die Amsterdamer Zeitung „Der Telegraaf“ und anderen, aus dem Erlös für Bücherverkäufe (durch Herrn Rothschild) zusammensetzten. So konnten wir ein paar Wochen ungestört in Holland verbringen. Übrigens halfen auch die Flüchtlingscomités in Rotterdam und Amsterdam, sowie meine Freimaurer Freunde, unter denen ich die Herren deVries und Bankier Fränkel nennen möchte. Ich wüsste gern, was mit diesen beiden wirklichen Brüdern geschehen ist...
more easily—but no: at the Dutch border we found out that we could enter the Dutch territory only 24 hours before the departure of the ship. Since the departure of the ship was not known and since the English searched all ships and turned many of them back, we were forced to return to Germany, which made us extremely concerned. At first, we went to Rhine, where we got evil looks and feared to be arrested at any moment and deported to a concentration camp. Someone told us to split our refugee group to be less conspicuous, and eight of us were taken to Münster, where we sat for hours in a dark station. The hotels were not accessible for Jews! The only lit space was the station restaurant, where we could buy tea and some dry bread. The children were completely exhausted, we put them to sleep on a few chairs that we brought together next to our table. Besides the three of us, there were other members of our refugee group there, as well as two scary looking men, who were constantly staring at us. I stood up impulsively, unable to stay there in the unbearable situation. The women woke up the sleeping children, and our small group, half-drunk with over-exhaustion, started moving through the waiting room and station hall. My wife stayed behind a little; she thought about what to do, and at that point she saw someone whom she immediately took for a guardian angel—it was the mustachioed, red-nosed face of an old station guard wearing a red cap. She immediately found him trustworthy and asked him for advice, explaining that we could not find accommodation, because we were so “unlucky” as to be non-Aryans. He gave her the address of a Jewish attorney, for whom he had earlier worked as a driver. “A very fine man,” he remarked.

Dr. Simon was the only still-active attorney for “Jewish legal matters” in that place. That is why he had what could be called good relations with the Gestapo and also still a larger apartment. I called him at half past midnight and the Simon family took us up immediately. Eight strangers in that time! We will never forget the generosity of Dr. Simon’s family! They shared all of their rationed provisions with us.

We could only take 10 marks across the border, but fortunately I had at my disposal a few Dutch guilders in Holland [inserted page variant: in Amsterdam], which I put together from the honoraria for the articles that I wrote for the Amsterdam newspaper Det Telegraaf and others, and from the proceeds of the sale of books (through Herr Rothschild). Thus, we could spend a few undisturbed weeks in Holland. Also, the committees for refugees in Rotterdam and Amsterdam were able to help, together with my Masonic friends, among which I would like to name Herr DeVries and the banker Fraenkel. I would like to know what has happened with these true brothers...
In Rotterdam wohnten wir bei einer Familie Seckbach, die sich ausserordentlich freundlich zu uns benahm.


In Rotterdam, we lived with a family Seckbach, who treated us with unusual kindness.

The passport-devil was playing further tricks on us in Holland: the American “Non-Quota Visa,” which was obtained with so much effort in Prague—especially thanks to Trude’s persistence, expired before we even had an exit ship, and our American journey was once again in question. The visa was, however, fortunately renewed when Dr. Williamson sent a telegram confirming my position at the Princeton Choir College. And thus, we left Rotterdam on October 22 on board of the ship “Staatendam.” There were numerous boat accidents in the Canal, which made a great and terrifying impression, especially on Bruno, as did the rescue practices on board of the ship. From Southampton, our journey continued smoothly, and we arrived in Hoboken on October 31, 1939. Mr. Baldini, an employee of Westminster Choir College was waiting for us there together with the cellist [George] Barati [1913–1996], and they took us to Princeton by car. During the first few days, we lived in Dr. Williamson’s house and enjoyed his family’s hospitality. A few days later, I went to New York for the first time and saw skyscrapers and the confusing life on Times Square.

We moved to a new place in the house of a piano tuner, in which we rented a small “two-room apartment” for one year. From there, we moved into a larger apartment, 80 Nassau Street, and then into a nice house on the same street. I had a very small income and we had to get by in the most modest way. The income was based on a fund that was created for us by the students and professors of Westminster Choir College. During that time, Dr. Carlton Sprague Smith [1905–1994] and Mr. Mark Brunswick [1902–1971] were very helpful. Dr. Sprague Smith was once recommended to me in Prague by Guido Adler, his teacher. He introduced me to Mark Brunswick, who provided me with two grants, one from the Musicians’ Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Scholars, one from the Oberlaender Trust Fund. This made our beginnings a lot easier, particularly in the following school year, when I was already teaching at the College and Trude became a temporary piano instructor, for which she was not paid, however.

Dr. Rice, one of the most influential men in New York, whom I met through the Williamsons, introduced me to Olin Downes [1886–1955], the first music critic of the New York Times, and thanks to him I got into the very favorable position to write a larger number of articles for the above-mentioned newspaper. Thanks to this, my name soon became more and more well-known and I received commissions from other newspapers and journals, for example from Musical America, Musical Courier, Christian Science Monitor, etc. These
Dr. Ralph Wood (damals Instruktor für Deutsch an der Princeton University) unterstützte wurde, der meine Arbeiten übersetzte. Auch die Malerin Carola Hauschka, die einer alten deutschen Familie entstammt, hat eine ganze Reihe meiner Artikel übersetzt und in der ersten Zeit meines Aufenthaltes in Amerika sich als wahre Freundin bewährt.


activities were supported by Dr. Ralph Wood (who was then an instructor of
German at Princeton University), who translated my work. The painter Caro-
la Hauschka [1883–1948], who came from one of the oldest German families,
translated a number of my articles as well, and proved herself to be a true
friend during the first period of my stay in America.

I heard from my parents until 1941, and even after the war started, bits of
news would arrive here and there through the Red Cross. Later, in the fall 1942,
I received a message through the Red Cross, in which my sister-in-law Franzi
Klein wrote that both of my parents had died in Theresienstadt. My father,
who was severely ill, was brought and lifted to the train bound for Theresien-
stadt on a stretcher, and this also happened at the destination. He died there
eight days later. My mother lived for another half a year and died in her room,
which she shared with my aunt Judith Nettl. I received no more letters and
mementos from them.

The entry of the United States into the world war had a serious impact on
me personally: the New York publisher Greystone Press, which commissioned
a book about the history of dance music from me, thanks to the mediation of
my friend Paul Stefan [1879–1943] (who immigrated to the United State in 1941
with his wife Yella), collapsed just at the time when I was ready to hand in the
finished manuscript after a whole year of work on the book. The translator of
the book was Frau Judith Heller, to whom I want to express my deepest grati-
tude for her efforts. I had to look for other ways of having the book published.
It was not easy! Various publishers came to mind, but adverse circumstances
repeatedly precluded the completion of a contract. I had a number of unpleas-
ant experiences. On top of that, I received a three-month termination notice
from Dr. Williamson, because the student body was reduced by 50 percent
(due to the draft). I was soon somewhat compensated, nevertheless, because
I was hired by the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia, where I commuted
once a week, to give 2 to 3 hours of instruction. It was Dr. Wilbur K. Thomas
[1882–1953], the secretary of the Carl Schurz Foundation, who arranged that
position. Mr. Johan Grolle, the director of the school, also hired my wife as
a piano instructor, and she worked there for three years in conjunction with
her position in Princeton. Because my teaching activities were now quite
limited, I focused even more on writing articles and books. This might have
been in 1942, the year in which I also met my friend Margaret Bush, who later
became an excellent assistant and collaborator. She lived through all the disap-
pointments and eventual triumphs connected to my books. The “Dance Book”
finally found its publisher in Dr. Dagobert Runes [1902–1982], the director of
the Philosophical Library, New York, where it was published in 1947, after it


had already appeared two years earlier in Spanish translation in Espasa Calpe
in Buenos Aires.\textsuperscript{13} Other books, such as “Luther and Music,” the book of “Musical Documents,” “Casanova,” “The National Anthems of the World,” etc., were
created and were published mostly here and in South America.\textsuperscript{14} In Mrs. Frida
Best I found an understanding translator.

In 1945, I was offered a position as Professor of Music History at Indiana
University. I turned it down at first, but when the offer was repeated in the
following year, I accepted it and relocated to Bloomington, Indiana, in 1946
with my family. Since then, I spend all my vacations in New York, where I love
it and where I have a number of personal and professional ties. Since July 1,
1946, my mother-in-law, who was fortunately rescued from the Theresienstadt
hell, lives with us.

The uncertainty of life in America is connected to the fact that one needs
to be constantly on the lookout professionally. Nerves and muscles must be
constantly tightened, and it is impossible to have a single moment in which
one can have a breather without feeling guilty about it. Life here is in many
ways more pleasant and comfortable than in Europe, but in other aspects it
is not only more difficult, but also more dangerous. What I find the most dif-
ficult to bear is the lack of professional security. From the income it is possible
to live comfortably, but not save up a lot. In my age, there is no retirement
insurance, and one has to worry about becoming a burden to one’s children
and friends in case one cannot find work due to illness or some other reason.
After nearly ten years in America, I nearly lose the ability to compare the old
European life with that in the “new world.” I am aware of the nice youth in
a certainly happier time but also grateful for the life in a land where everyone
can move and live freely, although I realize that all the advantages of this land
are available more to the wealthy than to the poor. The youth has certainly
enormous opportunities, although they are no longer available in the same
measure to everyone, unlike thirty or forty years ago. I am particularly happy
to be in America for the sake of my son! I myself found work and recognition,
a not-completely comfortable life, friends, and stable health. America is a land
of great opportunities, and when one knows how to overlook the small things
that tend to annoy us and to accept the people as they are, one can be halfway
satisfied, “happy,” even if one is not exactly “glücklich”! I have never for a mo-
ment regretted leaving the “old world.”


Today, America is the focus point for world events and [the center] of modern civilization. In New York as well as in San Francisco, it is possible to meet old friends, meet new valuable people from all over the world, and with a little bit of imagination, it is possible to achieve something even at the age of sixty. In my profession I have basically achieved what in Europe was enormously difficult. I am a full professor (Ordinarius) at one of the largest American universities, and I can say that I am esteemed among my colleagues and students. The teaching responsibilities (about 10 hours a week) do not strain me too much. The students are mostly quite receptive. They admire European culture, which is somewhat alien to them, and they are exceedingly ambitious. The material side of things plays certainly a large role. Everyone wants to receive a “degree” in order to find a “job” that would guarantee life support. I view the fact that musicology has become a means to make a living as one of the many wonders of America. I have also achieved a lot of success with my books and articles. About one hundred critiques of my book The Story of Dance Music have reached me, and the larger portion of these acknowledges the large amount of information that the book presents to its readers. It is certainly not written in perfect English, but the reviewers are for the most part generous enough to forget the language idiosyncrasies and focus on the content. I mention this because it is characteristic of Americans. With my book Luther and Music, I entered a completely new spiritual realm. I have been interested in Protestantism for a long time and have for years belonged to the Lutheran church. In America, I started to pay attention to religious questions once again, mainly because of my position at Westminster Choir College, and I attempted to provide a depiction of the relationship between Lutheranism and German music history, and in this endeavor, I followed the philosophical ideas of Wilhelm Dilthey [1833–1911]. I am proud that in his review, Prof. Otto Piper, one of the leading theologians in America and in the whole world, claimed that the book has also provided an important incentive to theology.\footnote{Otto Piper, “Luther and Church Music, by Paul Nettl. Translated by Frida Best and Ralph Wood. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia (1948). IX, 174 pp. $2.25,” The Princeton Seminary Bulletin 42, no. 3 (Winter 1949): 45–6.}

In recent months, I have also started to deal with Mozart once again. A lengthy essay on Mozart’s Veilchen will appear as an introduction to a facsimile edition of this beautiful Lied, published by Storm Publishers.\footnote{Paul Nettl, Das Veilchen: The History of a Song (New York: Storm Publishers, 1949).}

Another short book focuses on Melchior Grimm, and in about a year the Philosophical Library should publish my Book of Forgotten Musicians.\footnote{Paul Nettl, Der kleine Prophet von Böhmisch-Brod: Mozart und Grimm (Esslingen: Bechtle, 1953); Paul Nettl, Book of Forgotten Musicians (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951).} My work on an Encyclopedia of Music and a Beethoven Dictionary are unfortunate-
wärts. Der Tag ist leider zu kurz für Alles, was man tun möchte und man ist selbst oftmals ein wenig zersplittert.


Man trifft Hunderte von neuen „friends“, aber diese Freundschaft ist mehr oder weniger nur an der Oberfläche. Man ist immer freundlich, zuvor-kommend, man hört selten etwas Unangenehmes, aber man darf nicht überraucht sein, wenn man auf die harte Wirklichkeit stösst, die man auch lächelnd serviert bekommt und lächelnd akzeptieren muss! Das ist eben auch Amerika ... Wo sind die Stammtische der Freunde im „Café Lloyd“ oder im Wiener „Heinrichshof“? Wo ist das gemütliche Beisammensein und die anregende Unterhaltung in der Freimaurerloge? Die Freimaurerei spielt hier eine grosse Rolle, aber sie lässt sich mit jener in Europa doch nicht vergleichen. Tausende von Logen sind über das ganze Land verteilt und alle haben eine einheitliche Mitgliedschaft, bestehend aus Kleinbürgern, denen das freimaurerische Erlebnis und die Mystik der Initiation völlig fremd sind. Dafür wird sehr viel charitas geleistet, doch auch Wohltätigkeit ist wiederum völlig unpersönlich, da sie nur im Grossen geübt wird.

Ich fasse es als meine Aufgabe, die alte europäische Kultur hier weiter zu pflegen und sie in Büchern, Aufsätzen, Vorlesungen, weiter zu geben. In dieser Hinsicht fühle ich mich als Pionier mit allen Freunden und Leiden des Pioniertums...

Paul Nettl
ly progressing slowly. The days are unfortunately too short for everything one would like to do and I am also often a little scattered.

What I truly miss [in America] is the ability to study primary sources. With sadness do I remember my work with such sources in the Raudnitz Castle in Bohemia, in the archbishopric archive in Kremsier, in the state archive in Vienna, etc! American libraries are without doubt amazing. I can say that nearly anything that was published in Europe in the last 150 years can be found and studied in all the largest libraries in this country. The interlibrary loan is organized in the best possible way. And yet, it is impossible to replace the research pleasure and excited expectation, with which I sat in the great libraries in Prague (Strahov) or in Osseg or Tepl [Teplá] and awaited a great discovery—which often did not happen!

One meets hundreds of new “friends,” but these friendships are more or less superficial. People are always friendly, approachable, seldom do they say anything unpleasant, but no one is surprised to be confronted with the harsh reality, which is often served with a smile and which has to be accepted with a laugh! That, too, is America... Where are the meetings with friends in Café Lloyd or in the Viennese Heinrichshof? Where is the comfortable get-together and the exciting conversations in the Masonic lodge? Masonry plays an important role in America, but it cannot be compared to what it meant in Europe. There are thousands of lodges sprinkled around the country and all of them have a steady membership, consisting of petits bourgeois, to whom the Masonic experience and the mysticism of the initiation remain completely alien. At the same time, they do a lot of charity work, yet this charity is completely impersonal, because it is practiced only at large.

I see it as my task to further the practice of the old European culture in America and to pass it on in books, lectures, [and] presentations. In this respect, I feel like a pioneer, with all the joys and sufferings of pioneering...

Paul Nettl

Transcribed and Translated by Martin Nedbal
Bruno Nettl (1930–2020)

Martin Nedbal

Bruno Nettl, a celebrated American ethnomusicologist, was an honored native of Prague. His mother, Gertrud Nettl (née Hutter), was a prominent Prague pianist, and his father, Paul Nettl, was a prolific musicologist at Prague’s German University. The Nettls escaped to the United States in 1939, several months after the Nazi occupation, during which many of their relatives perished.

In 1946 Bruno Nettl moved with his parents and his maternal grandmother, a Theresienstadt survivor, to Bloomington, Indiana. He received his PhD from Indiana University in 1953. In 1964, Nettl became a professor at the University of Illinois, where he eventually became Professor Emeritus of Music and Anthropology.

Nettl’s ethnomusicological field research focused on the musical cultures of Native Americans, Iran, and India. Nettl’s writings continue to shape the methods of American ethnomusicology and serve as a foundation for the discipline’s history. His most influential books are the three editions of The Study of Ethnomusicology, Heartland Excursions (1995), and Nettl’s Elephant (2010).

Nettl always embraced his Bohemian heritage. He taught classes on Czech music and took Czech language courses in his retirement. A number of his autobiographical essays discuss his childhood experiences in pre-WWII Prague. His last book, Becoming an Ethnomusicologist (2013), devotes two of five chapters to his parents and is a treasure trove of information about Prague’s German-Jewish community. Nettl visited Prague several times after the fall of communism, and was awarded the Jan Patočka Memorial Medal in 2008.

I first contacted Bruno Nettl in May 2018, before my trip to Indiana University to study the estate of Paul Nettl. Bruno Nettl did not know what exactly was in that estate; he hinted that his relationship with Paul Nettl and his second wife was estranged toward the end of his father’s life. I also visited Nettl in Illinois on March 13, 2019, one day before his eighty-ninth birthday and two days before the eightieth anniversary of the Nazi occupation of Prague. We kept in touch in the following months, and he looked forward to seeing his father’s autobiographical essay in print.
Česko-americký muzikolog Paul Nettl prožil začátek kariéry v Praze, v roce 1939, po nacistické okupaci Československa, však emigroval do Spojených států. Článek se zabývá Nettlovými spisy o české historii a kultuře, přičemž do výzkumu zahrnuje jeho vědecké články, přednášky pro širokou veřejnost a autobiografické studie. Uváděné materiály zahrnují anglické a německé texty, publikované články, nepublikované rukopisy a strojopisné texty uchované v Nettlově pozůstalosti na Indiana University, ale i strojopisné záznamy rozhlasových pořadů z archivu Československého rozhlасu. Tyto materiály ozřejmují komplikované problémy národní a národnostní identity v Československu ve období před 2. světovou válkou i uvnitř evropské vystěhovalecké komunity ve Spojených státech po válce. Z výzkumu vyplývá, že Nettl navzdory nebo snad právě díky svým českým a židovským kořenům, projevoval celoživotní přiklon k doktríně německé kulturní nadřazenosti, že toto jeho ideové nastavení vlastně souznělo s jeho přiklonem k multikulturalismu, a že jeho postoje vůči specificky české kultuře kolísaly v závislosti na politické situaci ve střední Evropě mezi odmítáním a váhavým přítakáním. Některé z těchto proměnlivých postojů souvisely i s Nettlovým židovským původem i s dalšími faktory, jež z něho činily celoživotního outsidera, jakožto Němce žijícího v předválečném Československu, Žida v německojazyčném českém prostředí, a středoevropského emigranta v Americe. Autor článku v této souvislosti spořádá k závěru, že v kontextu společenských a politických zvratů zasahujících do Nettlova života i života jeho rodiny představovalo ideové východisko hlásající německou kulturní nadřazenost stabilizující prvek a zároveň i jakousi absolutní, nezpochybnitelnou hodnotu.

Součástí článku je i anotovaná edice Nettlových dosud nepublikovaných pamětí. Sepsal je koncem 40. let 20. století v Indianě a obsahuje řadu dříve neznámých podrobných údajů týkajících se nejen Nettlova životopisu, ale i dějin středoevropské muzikologie a kulturního života pražské německojazyčné komunity před druhou světovou válkou.
Bohemian-American musicologist Paul Nettl spent an early part of his career in Prague but emigrated to the United States in 1939, after the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. This article examines Nettl’s writings on Bohemian history and culture, including his scholarly articles, lectures for the general public, and autobiographical essays. These materials include both English and German sources, published articles, unpublished manuscripts and typescripts preserved in Nettl’s estate at Indiana University, and typescripts of radio programs from the Czech Radio Archive. These materials illuminate the complex issues of national and ethnic identity in pre-WWII Czechoslovakia and within the post-WWII Central European emigrant community in the United States. The examination shows that despite, or perhaps because of, his Bohemian and Jewish roots, Nettl exhibited a life-long commitment to the doctrine of German cultural superiority, that this ideology was in fact compatible with his commitment to multiculturalism, and that his attitudes to specifically Czech culture fluctuated, depending on the political situation in Central Europe, between a rejection and a hesitant acknowledgment. Some of these fluctuating attitudes were also connected to Nettl’s Jewishness and other elements that made him a life-long outsider—as a German in pre-WWII Czechoslovakia, a Jew in the German-Bohemian community, and a Central European emigrant in America. This article argues that within the social and political upheavals affecting Nettl and his family, the ideology of German cultural superiority represented a stabilizing element and an absolute, unquestionable value.

The article also includes an annotated edition of a previously unpublished memoir by Nettl. The memoir was written in Indiana in the late 1940s and contains a number of previously unknown details not only about Nettl’s biography, but also about the history of Central European musicology and the cultural life of Prague’s German community before WWII.

**Key words:** Paul Nettl; Bruno Nettl; Gustav Becking; Heinrich Rietsch; Czechoslovak musicology; Sudeten-German music; Germanness; Stamitz; Biber; Czechoslovak Radio

Vater Karl Nettl aus Grossbuck in Böhmen stammend.

Mutter Jenny Nettl, tschechischer Abkunft, geboren Beckova aus Morice in Böhmen.

Ihr Vater hatte eine Landwirtschaft, während die Eltern von Paul Nettl kleine Kaufleute waren.


In der Depressionzeit 1931 und 1932 wurde die Firma "Brüder Nettl", deren Inhaber Karl Nettl war, liquidiert und die Firma "Nettl & Co.", der ursprünglich auch Paul Nettl als stiller Teilhaber angehörte, ging in den Besitz seines Bruders Anton Nettl über. Die Eltern Paul Netttls übersiedelten damals nach Prag, wo sie bis 1941 lebten, und dann nach The
teresienstadt deportiert wurden.

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Ich war der Älteste unter meinen Geschwistern. Schon frühzeitig machte sich meine musikalische Begabung bemerkbar, die hauptsächlich durch eine Erzieherin (Hanna Koechlin), die aus dem Elsaß stammte und mit dem französischen Komponisten Charles Koechlin verwandt war, gefördert wurde.

Fräulein Koechlin war eine ausgezeichnete Pianistin und ihr verdanke ich auch die ersten musikalischen Eindrücke. Violine und Klavier wurden gleichmäßig gepflegt. Mit 11 und 12 Jahren spielte ich schon viertägig mit Fräulein Koechlin einfache Symphonien und fiedelte auf mein

In meinem 12. Lebensjahr wurde ich in die männlichen Chor der Kirche St. Michael eingesetzt.