

BOOK REVIEW

Italian Jewish Musicians and Composers under Fascism: Let Our Music Be Played

edited by Alessandro Carrieri and Annalisa Capristo, Cham, Switzerland, Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, xiv + 210 pp., \$129.99 (softcover and hardcover), ISBN 978-3-030-52933-8.

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Attention to Italian antisemitism under Fascism has grown in the last decade. *Italian Jewish Musicians and Composers under Fascism: Let Our Music Be Played* contributes to this important discourse from the specific and fascinating angle of Jewish musicians and composers. At the same time, this edited volume offers a superb contribution to multiple fields of research, including culture under Fascism, migration and exile studies, and Jewish Italian history. The first three chapters provide useful background for scholars who may not be experts in anti-Jewish persecution or music criticism, but the volume also brings together new archival research that will be of great value for experts.

The introduction, by the editors Alessandro Carrieri and Annalisa Capristo, starts with the exclusion of Jewish musicians after the Racial Laws and the rest of the volume shows the way these policies influenced not only Italian music and culture, but also the countries where many of these musicians fled to – for instance, the United States, Brazil, and Australia. Chapter 2, by the important scholar of Fascism and Jewish history Michele Sarfatti, provides an overview of Jewish persecution from 1938 to 1941, setting the stage for the other chapters. In Chapter 3, Luca Lévi Sala focuses on Italian music criticism, explaining how shifting ideologies changed rhetoric about music, leading to stronger expressions of cultural violence and antisemitism in the 1930s.

The following five chapters present different specific cases that cover a varied range of how music was produced, played, considered, and listened to in Italy of the 1930s and 1940s. The chapters offer multimedia explorations, with analyses of cinema, radio, theatre, marionette theatre, opera, concert halls, internment camps, and newspaper criticism. The attentiveness throughout the volume to the multiple ways music was circulated reveals the, at times surprising, breadth of the topic. Many of the cases provide evidence for the introduction's claim that 'in Italy, unlike in other European countries, anti-Jewish sentiment was present in a greater degree in the government's program than it was in the thought and behaviour of the general population' (p. 11).

Illuminating the oscillatory attitude to jazz in Fascist Italy, Camilla Poesio's Chapter 4 explores the frequent gap between Fascist propaganda and what people of the time enjoyed. Contributing to the growing debates about racism in Italy, she draws attention to how the Racial Laws added antisemitic tones to anti-Black racist attitudes towards jazz. With a detailed investigation of the exclusion of Jewish audience members from

season subscriptions to La Scala, Anna Capristo's Chapter 5 offers a case of policies that went beyond the legal Fascist requirements with a study of music listeners, a growing field. She emphasises the vagaries of international reporting on Italian antisemitism and the international reaction to La Scala's exclusion of Jews, with for instance the Catholic Austrian conductor Erich Kleiber repudiating his contract to conduct *Fidelio* for the opera house, because of their policies.

Chapter 6 focuses on the exile of Jewish Italian intellectuals and Chapter 7 on the internment of non-Italian Jews in Italy. Both chapters reveal the new international connections and transnational productions prompted by the displacement of Jews in the 1930s and 1940s. In Chapter 6, Alessandro Carrieri charts Gualtiero Volterra's exile in Australia, where the pianist later suffered because of being Italian, showing the complex and unusual position of Jewish Italians who faced prejudice as Jews in some countries and as Italians in others. Carrieri also examines in detail Renzo Massarini's arrival and life in Brazil. The composer was discussed in Portuguese and Italian publications, the latter of which did not mention why he had to leave Italy, indicating how Fascism influenced Italian culture outside Italy. Raffaele Deluca's Chapter 7 analyses Kurt Sonnenfeld's musical development while in the Ferramonti, one of at least 48 internment camps established in Italy. In his conclusion, Deluca describes the difficulty of Jews in Italy returning to normality after the war, showing that the Fascist period was not merely a parenthesis.

In Chapter 8, Erik Levi turns to a well-trod topic, relationships between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy between 1933 and 1945, from the new angle of music. As with art and literature, the chapter contrasts Hitler's conservative policies with those of Mussolini, who permitted unconventional musical productions. Levi shows how the Italian media highlighted Fascist Italy's enlightened attitudes as superior to Nazi Germany's. The chapter includes an in-depth analysis of the German performances of Gian Francesco Malipiero's *La favola del figlio cambiato*, which caused Joseph Goebbels' consternation: 'One issue that may well have embarrassed the Ministry of Propaganda was the realisation that the German translation of Pirandello's libretto had been made by Hans Ferdinand, an Austrian Jew' (p. 180). The chapter sheds light on the range of intersecting conversations about music happening between Italy, Germany, and Austria at the time, including the nationalist battles for great cultural figures, like Mozart, that connected the three countries.

The term 'under-researched' appears repeatedly throughout the volume and many of the chapters contain questions about history that have not yet been investigated, pointing to future research. It provides another example of the growing number of important works in Palgrave's 'Italian and Italian American' series that are widening Italian studies. This innovative, multi-disciplinary, and engaging volume both adds a great deal to numerous areas of transnational research and also suggests how much work there is still to be done on culture under Fascism and on Jews in Italy.