

MUSIC IN MAINZ AND FRANKFURT

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This essay started with the intention of being a brief acknowledgement of the magnificent violinist Edith Peinemann born in Mainz in 1937 who, at first, taught by her father who was in one of the Mainz orchestras.

Today, Mainz has a population of about 197,778 and over 16,000 have a second home in the city.

It is on the west side of the Rhine in the province of Rhineland-Palatinate. Frankfurt International Airport is 26 miles away by commuter railway.

Mainz has a magnificent cathedral, the Theodor Heuse Bridge, Museum of Ancient Seafarers, the Gutenberg Museum, rococo churches and Roman remains. There is the Iron Tower and the Wool Tower.



Old buildings in Mainz.

Frankfurt is also known as Frankfurt am Main the largest city in the province of Hesse and the fifth largest city in Germany situated on the Main river. It is a centre for finance. In 2010 the population was about 688,249. It has museums dealing with modern Art, Jewish history, natural history, world culture, sculpture and German architecture. There is the Frankfurt Festival for three days which attracts about 3 million people with live bands, dance shows, crafts, jewellery, clothes and foods from all over the world. It is a city with skyscrapers including the Commerzbank Tower at 850 feet, the tallest building in Europe.

Among the well-known people who were born there are the film composer Hans Zimmer, the actress Susan Blakeley, Anne Frank, Johann Wolfgang Goethe and the composer Graham Reynolds.

Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts was established in 1938 and caters for 850 students with 400 staff including 60 professors.

Frankfurt had a music teaching facility since 1879 known as the Hoch Conservatory with famous teachers like Clara Schumann, Joachim Raff, Bernhard Sekeles and Engelbert Humperdinck. Students have included Hans Pfitzner, Edward MacDowell, Percy Grainger, Hindemith, Ernst Toch, Norman O'Neill, Balfour Gardiner, Roger Quilter, Cyril Scott and students such as Otto Klemperer and Hans Rosbaud.

Others connected with the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts include Hartmut Holl (born 1953) a superb accompanist, Edith Peinemann, Helmut Rilling (1933) the organist and conductor, Daniel Roth (1942) the organist, Hans Zender (1936) conductor



The Old Opera House, Frankfurt. Reconstruction completed in 1981 following heavy damage during WWII. Today it functions as a concert hall.

and composer, Ruth Ziesak (1963) soprano and pianist, Beat Furrere (1983) composer and pianist, Julia Fischer (1983) violinist and has played the piano in Greig's Piano Concerto, Jiri Starek, the conductor.

Frankfurt was bombed during World War II in 1942, 1944 and 1945. About 5,5000 were killed and the Medieval city centre was destroyed. Mainz was also bombed and General Patton destroyed 80% of city centre. The Bishop of Mainz formed an organisation to help Jews to escape.

Mainz has a history. Attila the Hun attacked it in 431, St Boniface was its bishop from 745 to 753. Athanasius Kircher studied there from 1625 to 1628, Pope Joan was born there, Johann Gutenberg, the inventor of the printing press, lived there as did the artist Hans Backoffen, Napoleon invaded it in 1797, Bernhard Schott founded the music publishing house in 1770, Swastikas were put up in 1933, Marc Chagall designed blue glass windows in St Stephan's Church in 1978.

The composer Johann Jakob Froberger was born in Stuttgart in 1616 and from the 1650s have strong links with Johann Philipp von Schonborn, the Elector-Archbishop of Mainz and was a friend of Kircher.

The composer, Peter Cornelius (1824-1874) lived and died in Mainz.

As we have said. Mainz is 26 miles from Frankfurt to the east. In Northern Germany, Hamburg is 158 miles north west from Berlin. From Berlin to Munich in the south is 223 miles. Munich to Frankfurt is about 318 miles. Frankfurt to Cologne is about 95 miles and Cologne to Hamburg is about 221 miles. Berlin to Dresden is about 102 miles and Dresden north west to Leipzig is about 64 miles. All these centres have a rich musical history.

The Mainz Chamber Orchestra was founded by Gunter Kehr in 1956 and they made excellent recordings in the 1960s of music by Bach, Telemann and other composers of this age. Kehr was born in Darmstadt on 19 March 1920 and died in Mainz in 1989.

Let us look at some of the musicians who taught in Frankfurt.

Ivan Knorr

He was born in Mewe in Germany on 3 January 1853 and studied at the Leipzig Conservatory. He taught composition in what is now called the Ukraine but, in 1883, settled in Frankfurt becoming the director of the Hoch Conservatory in 1908. He taught Bernhard Sekeles Ernest Bloch, Vladimir Sokalsky, Ernst Toch and Hans Pfitzner. Knorr died in Frankfurt on 22 January 1916.

Lazzaro Uzielli

He was an Italian pianist and teacher born in Florence on 4 February 1861 and taught at Frankfurt between 1883-190 He had been a pupil of Clara Schumann. He died in Bonn on 8 October 1943

Adolf Rebner

There is no reliable information available other than he was both a violinist and teacher of the violin.

Clara Schumann

She was born Clara Wieck in Leipzig on 13 September 1819 and the story of her father preventing her marrying Robert Schumann but they did marry on 12 September 1840. She was dedicated to Robert despite his inherited mental illness and she was a friend of Brahms. She was an accomplished pianist and often accompanied Joachim. At first, she admired Liszt but became hostile to him. She was unreasonable in her hatred and prejudice for Bruckner and Wagner and conveyed this to her students in Frankfurt. She died on 26 March 1896.

Joachim Raff

He was born in Lachen, Switzerland and was befriended by Mendelssohn and became Liszt's assistant at Weimar. Raff was a friend of Hans on Bulow. From 1877 he was the first director at Frankfurt where he died in 1882. He was a prolific composer and there is new interest in his work. His Symphony no 5 is splendid. He wrote 11 symphonies, two violin concertos, two cello concertos, a piano concerto, eight string quartets and much else.

Bernhard Sekeles

He was born of a Jewish family in Frankfurt on 20 March 1872. In 1894-1895 he was third Kapellmeister at the Stadtheater in Mainz. In 1896, he became a teacher in Frankfurt and director there from 1923-1933. He introduced a jazz class there the first such class anywhere. He taught Cyril Scott, Theodor Adorno, Hindemith, Rosbaud and Erich Schmid

Skeles died in Frankfurt on 8 December 1934.

James Kwast

He was born on 23 November 1852 and was a student of Carl Reinecke in Leipzig and Kullak in Berlin. Kwast taught at Cologne before moving to Frankfurt. His daughter, Mimi, married Hans Pfitzner. Kwast died on 31 October 1927.

Engelbert Humperdinck

He was born on 1 September 1854 in Siegburg in the Rhine province. He is noted for his opera Hansel and Gretel. He studied in Munich with Lachner and Rheinberger. He admired Wagner for his genius. He was appointed professor in Frankfurt in 1890 and became head of music in Berlin in 1900. He died on 27 March 1921.

Alfred Hoehn

He was an outstanding pianist born on 20 October 1887 in Oberellen. He studied with Eugen d'Albert and Busoni. Hoehn edited Beethoven's works for Schott. Among his famous concert performances were of Brahms' Piano Concerto no 1 under Max Fielder and Rachmaninov's Second under Hans Rosbaud. Hoehn died on 2 August 1945.

Arnold Mendlessohn

He was an grandson of Moses Mendlesohn. Arnold was born in 1855 and originally trained as a lawyer but became director of music at Darmstadt. When in Frankfurt he taught at the University. He wrote three symphonies and died in 1933.

And some of the students

Hans Pfitzner (1869- 1949)

He was born in Moscow on 5 May 1869 but the family moved to Frankfurt in 1872 as that was Hans' father's home town. Hans studied with Ivan Knorr for composition and with James Kwast for piano. He later married Kwast's daughter, Mimi.

Pfitzner was a kappellmeister at the Berlin Theatre and then head of the Strasbourg Conservatory from 1908. But political upheavals created difficulties for him and he lost his livelihood. He felt the Germans had slighted him. His wife died in 1926 and his son Paul, who had meningitis, was put into institutional medical care.

This composer was not an easy man to deal with. He tried to accept Nazism and had a visit from Hitler but he seemed to have a strange view about the Jews and their culture.

Germany embraced Richard Strauss and Pfitzner was overlooked, although he wrote five operas,

four string quartets and other chamber works, three cello concertos, a violin concerto, a piano concerto, three symphonies and songs. His music is full of interest but he was far too conservative in a changing world. He died on 2 May 1949.

Edward MacDowell (1860-1908)

He was born in New York City on 18 December 1860. One of his teachers was the Venezuelan pianist Teresa Carreno, The family moved to Paris and from there MacDowell went to study the piano with Carl Heyman and composition with Raff in Frankfurt.

When Liszt went to Frankfurt, MacDowell showed him some of his compositions including a transcription for piano of one of Liszt's Symphonic Poems.

MacDowell had many problems and, in 1904, he was run over by a Hansom Cab which increased his mental disorder and dementia. His wife, Marion, cared for him and many friends and the Mendlessohn Glee Club supported him financially. His wife set up the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough New Hampshire and her husband died on 23 January 1908. He wrote a lot of piano music and two piano concertos.

Cyril Scott [see separate article](#)

Percy Grainger (1882-1961)

This Australian composer was born on 18 July 1882. He studied in Frankfurt between 1901 and 1914 but was difficult with his teacher Ivan Knorr. Grainger collected folk music, was a concert pianist and a friend of Delius and Grieg. He went to live in the USA in 1914 and was for a time professor of music in New York. His upbringing as a child was dominated by a dictatorial mother Rose. She eventually committed suicide in 1922 by jumping from an eighteenth storey window. A little while later Cyril Scott told Grainger that Rose has spoken to him from beyond the grave and on the astral plain. Grainger was incensed by this nonsense.

Grainger was a normal red-blooded male who was known to be sex crazy. He indulged in sadomasochistic acts enjoying sexual pleasure through pain and humiliation.

He wrote some delightful arrangements and original compositions

Henry Balfour Gardiner

He was born on 7 November 1877 and schooled at Charterhouse. His Frankfurt studies were with Knorr and Uzielli. He collected folk songs from Hampshire, taught music at Winchester in 1907 but gave up composition in 1925 because he was so self-critical and spent the rest of his life on his farm in Dorset dealing with afforestation. He was a very generous man paying for a private performance of Holst's The Planets and he purchased the house at Grez-sur Loing for Delius to live in. Most of his music is lost but he did write two symphonies. He died on 28 June 1950.

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Hindemith was one of the most versatile of all composers. He was born in Hanua near Frankfurt in 1895 and entered the Hoch School and studied with Adolf Rebner for the violin and composition with Arnold Mendlessohn and Bernhard Sekeles. He was the second violin in the Rebner Quartet and the Deputy Leader of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra from 1914. In 1921 he formed the Amar Quartet. In 1921 and 1922 he composed two sexually charged operas Die Nusch Nuschi and Santa Susanna. He visited Egypt and Turkey. Ankara owe much to him. He was denounced by the Nazis. He became an American citizen in 1946 but in 1953 returned to Europe to live in Zurich. He was a magnificent viola player premiering Walton's Viola Concerto which Elgar called shit. Hindemith wrote much for the viola and almost every instrument including the hecklephone. He was a brilliant composer, played many instruments, a first class orchestrator and a competent conductor. He died on 28 December 1963 in Frankfurt.

Norman O'Neill (1875-1934)

He was born on 14 March 1875 studied in London with Arthur Somervell and Ivan Knorr in Frankfurt (1893-1899). He was a homosexual and the love of his life was Eric Stenbock a writer of decadent filth and macabre fiction who was an opium smoker and a very unpleasant man. He died as a result of one of his drinking bouts in 1895. Four years later, O'Neill married Adele Rucket in 1899 mainly to cover up his homosexuality which was then a crime. He was associated with the Haymarket Theatre in London and treasurer of the Royal Philharmonic Society from 1918. He taught harmony and composition at RAM and died in London on 3 March 1934.

Ernst Toch (1887- 1964)

He was born in Leopoldstadt, Vienna to a Jewish family on 7 December 1877. He studied medicine at Heidelberg and music at Frankfurt (1909 -1913). His Chamber Symphony in F won the Frankfurt-Mozart in 1906. In World War I, he served in the Army for four years on the Italian Front. After Hitler came to power he sought exile first in Paris and then in London

He was invited to New York where he went in 1935. He composed seven symphonies, two violin concertos, a cello concerto, seven string quartets and other chamber music, four operas and film music. He died in Santa Monica on 1 October 1954

Roger Quilter (1877- 1953)

He was born to Sir William Quilter in Hove on 1 November 1877. He studied in Frankfurt in the 1890s. He was an excellent composer of songs. His homosexuality brought on mental illness and he died on 21 September 1953.

Ernest Bloch

He was born in Geneva on 24 July 1880 of a Jewish family. He studied at the Brussels Conservatory where his teacher was the celebrated Eugene Ysaye. He studied composition at Frankfurt with Knorr in 1900 and 1901. Bloch settled in the USA and became an American citizen in 1924. He was the first music director at the Cleveland Institute until 1925 when he became the director of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He wrote symphonies in C sharp minor, the Israel Symphony, Sinfonia Breve, Symphony for trombone and orchestra, Symphony in E flat, the gorgeous Schelomo for cello and orchestra, a Violin Concerto, the opera Macbeth, five string quartets and more. He died in Portland, Oregon on 15 July 1959

Vladimir Sokalsky

He was born in Heidelberg on 24 April 1863 where he graduated with a law degree. He studied with Knorr in Frankfurt and was an authority on Beethoven and Grieg. Sokalsky wrote a village opera, many songs and a Symphony in G minor. He died of typhus on holiday in 1919 in Sevastopol.

Otto Klemperer

He was born in Breslau on 14 May 1885 of a Jewish family and died in Zurich on 6 July 1973. He studied at Frankfurt and at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin with James Kwast and Hans Pfitzner. He became friends with Mahler and had posts in Hamburg (1910-1912), Barman (1912-1913), Strasbourg Opera (1914-1917) Cologne Opera (1917- 1924) Wiesbaden Opera (1924-1927) and Kroll Opera, Berlin (1927-1931).

To avoid the Nazis, he went to the USA. In 1939, he had surgery for a brain tumour and was partly paralysed thereafter. Because of his erratic behaviour he was confined to a mental institution.

After the war, he returned to Europe and worked with Budapest Opera from 1947 to 1950 but he could not abide communism and became an itinerant conductor. He became principal conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra in 1959.

He composed six symphonies, nine string quartets, an opera and songs.

As a conductor he was very Teutonic and his performances were often very slow. Someone has said that he was a great musician but not a great conductor.

Hans Rosbaud

This man was a very fine conductor. He was born in Graz, Austria on 22 July 1895. He studied composition with Bernhard Sekeles and Alfred Hoehn for piano. In 1921, he was the director of the new Mainz School of Music and, in 1928, chief conductor of Hessischer Rundfunk SO in Frankfurt. The year 1941 saw him as music director in Munster and in 1945 music director in Munich. The South West German Radio Orchestra employed him from 1948 in Baden-Baden. He premiered many important works by Bartok, Schoenberg, Hartmann and others. At eight days notice he premiered Schoenberg's Moses and Aaron. He was brilliant in all genres. He died in Lugano on 29 December 1962.

(see [CD review of Ginette Neveu on this site](#))

But to return to Edith Peinemann. She was born in Mainz in 1937 and was first taught by her father. She won first prize at the ARD International Competition in Munich in 1956. Other winners of prizes in the violin section of this annual competition have included Igor Ozim, Konstanty Kulka, Ernst Kovacic, Eugen Sarbu, Oliver Charlier and Christian Tetzlaff. She made her American debut at Carnegie Hall in 1965. She has given master classes at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Indiana University at Bloomington, Kasatsu Festival in Japan and the Lucerne Conservatory. From 1976 she was professor of violin at Frankfurt. In 2005, she was the international president of ESTA, the European String Teacher's Association.

Her recordings are few. There is the Dvorak Concerto, Prokofiev 1 and a sensational performance of the Berg conducted by Rudolph Kempe.

I have heard and marvelled at her solo Bach and Bruch's first concerto with the BBC Philharmonic conducted by Gyorgy Lehel in which she avoided the usual mawkishness.

Along with Ginette Neveu she is the best.

And, before we leave Frankfurt, we should recall that the great Telemann worked there from March 1712 to about 1721 with his other duties at Eisenach.

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