

Austria's Memory Turn on Display: Music Exhibitions as Pathways out of Oblivion

Angelica Pinna



All content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Received: 30/06/2024

Accepted: 20/09/2024

ORCID iD Angelica Pinna: [id 0009-0003-0783-9394](https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0783-9394)

Institution (Angelica Pinna): University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna

Published: 10/12/2024

Last updated: 10/12/2024

How to cite: Angelica Pinna, Austria's Memory Turn on Display: Music Exhibitions as Pathways out of Oblivion, *Musicologica Austriaca: Journal for Austrian Music Studies* (December 10, 2024)

Tags: [Austrian identity](#); [Austrian studies](#); [Cultural memory](#); [Curatorial practices](#); [Exhibitions as media](#); [Media of memory](#); [Memory turn](#); [Music displays](#); [Music exhibition](#)

This paper presents selected findings from my PhD research on remediations of musical heritage in Vienna since the 1990s, conducted at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw). I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the curatorial staff members of various exhibitions who generously shared their time and insights, providing valuable contributions to my research. I am also deeply grateful for the feedback from my supervisor Andrea Glauser and the early brainstorming sessions with my colleague Juan Escobar Campos, both of which helped shape this paper.



Abstract

In the 1980s and 1990s, Austria underwent a significant reevaluation of its historical, cultural, and identity consciousness. The interplay between political and public debates at the local level and scholarly shifts at the global level led to a *memory turn*. Concurrently, the “new museum” redefined its functions in and for the community as a space of memory, and museum practices adjusted to the recognition of the representational and mediated character of histories and memories. Musical culture and heritage, long intertwined with Vienna’s and Austria’s identity through the well-known associations “Musikstadt” (city of music) and “Musikland” (land of music), played a crucial role in shaping and later challenging the country’s political and cultural narratives.

In this article, I explore how music exhibitions in Vienna have been used as media of memory over the past decade. Using examples from three diverse institutions, I discuss key curatorial approaches to reflecting and mediating Austria’s national past and historical consciousness, particularly its responsibilities in National Socialist crimes, and to restoring silenced and forgotten histories. These approaches encompass biographical storytelling, oral history and direct testimonies, sensory and emotional engagement, musical performance, mediation of institutional history and object research, and provenance research. Overall, drawing from Jan Assmann’s concept of *potentiality*, the article emphasizes the potential of music exhibitions and underlying curatorial practices as powerful media and acts of memory, respectively, capable of recovering individuals and stories from oblivion and transforming histories, symbols, and acts of historical violence into sources of reconciliation and reparation.

Introduction

Austria's engagement with its past underwent a profound transformation starting from the late-1980s, particularly with respect to its complicity in Nazi crimes, the historical events of World War II, and its post-war self-portrayal. This period marked a pivotal shift in the collective memory of the nation and a departure from traditional narratives that had long shaped national and cultural identities, including their interrelations with notions of musical culture and heritage. This shift was catalyzed by factors at both the local and global levels, including the scandal known as the "Waldheim-Affäre" (Waldheim affair),^[1] which sparked debates and directed public attention to Austria's wartime history, and the looming threat of losing Holocaust survivors alongside their direct testimonies. Additionally, broader scholarly shifts, particularly in the fields of cultural history and Austrian studies, and the emergence of new theoretical vocabularies such as that of memory studies fostered a widespread *memory turn*.^[2] Simultaneously, the paradigm of the "new museum" emerged, redefining the role of museums in and for the community as "spaces of memory," with museum practices adjusting to the recognition of the representational and mediated character of histories and memories.^[3]

In this evolving context of critical reflection and public awareness, academic scholarship in Austria and abroad began to interrogate prevailing narratives of Austrian history and identity, challenging idealized historical "truths" and national myths such as the so-called *Opfermythos* (victim myth), which presented Austria as the first victim rather than an accomplice of Hitlerite aggression.^[4] This introspective journey also had far-reaching implications on images and notions of Austrian musical culture and heritage. The historically and politically rooted interplay between musical culture and heritage on the one hand and Austrian cultural, national, and transnational identities on the other, epitomized by the associations "Musikstadt" (city of music) and "Musikland" (land of music), became a focal point for reflection and redefinition.^[5] The images of Vienna and Austria as the "City of Music" and "Land of Music," respectively, came to be seen not merely as innocuous clichés but as tools of identity building and cultural policies. Precisely by virtue of this (re)discovered political and cultural intertwining, music, musical culture, and heritage have recently emerged in museums and exhibitions as tools and lenses for the reexamination of Austrian identity, historical reckoning, and attempts at posthumous justice.

In this article, I explore how music exhibitions have served as media of memory in Vienna over the past decade. First, I situate music exhibitions within the broader context of memory studies, laying the theoretical foundations for a concept of exhibitions as media of memory and emphasizing their role in constructing and mediating historical narratives. Subsequently, I examine exhibitions and installations by three diverse institutions, namely the House of Austrian History, the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, and the Commission for Provenance Research, thereby shedding light on different curatorial approaches implemented to reflect and mediate Austria's National Socialist past and post-war consciousness by reference to its musical culture and heritage. These approaches, considered as acts of memory, encompass biographical storytelling, oral history and direct testimonies, sensory and emotional engagement, musical performance, mediation of institutional history and object research, and provenance research.

Specifically, I emphasize how these institutions have employed the exhibition as a medium to destabilize and overturn narratives and ideas of history previously consolidated within cultural memory as well as to restore silenced and forgotten stories, give a voice to victims, and offer them resilience and posthumous justice. Furthermore, by using Jan Assmann's notion of *potentiality*, I highlight the potential of music exhibitions and underlying curatorial practices as

powerful media and acts of memory, respectively, capable of recovering individuals and stories from oblivion and transforming histories, symbols, and acts of historical violence into sources of reconciliation and reparation.

Music Exhibitions as Media of Memory

Over the past decade, specialized scholarship has increasingly explored the interrelations between music exhibitions and cultural memory, particularly within popular music museums and exhibitions.^[6] Several studies have highlighted recurring curatorial approaches aimed at appealing to visitors' lived experiences, nostalgically evoking personal memories while also fostering a sense of community.^[7] This article, however, adopts a different perspective on exhibitions and memory by considering the employment of music exhibitions as tools for historical reckoning and revision of dominant national narratives within the context of Austria's memory turn. By viewing exhibitions as media of memory, it examines exhibitions aimed at restoring forgotten or suppressed histories within cultural memory, tracing them back to specific political and historical contexts. This perspective involves a dual understanding of memory: on the one hand as the individual and collective memories of marginalized, oppressed, and persecuted people, and on the other hand as the collective memory and identity of a nation whose constructed nature calls for critical reassessment.

The concept of music exhibitions as media of memory I propose is based on analogies between the characteristics of cultural memory and the operational dynamics of exhibitions as media. Particularly prominent in German-speaking scholarship, cultural memory is understood as a collective form of memory shared by one or more communities, intricately tied to cultural identity.^[8] The media and memory scholar Astrid Erll illustrates the characteristics of cultural memory as selective, constructed, and mediated, involving the interplay between individual and collective levels and an engagement with the past in the present.^[9] By selecting, interpreting, and mediating, memory produces certain constructed versions of the past while necessarily excluding others. According to Jan Assmann, cultural memory is always institutionalized and mediated by specialized carriers, such as curators, whereas communicative memory is non-institutionalized and passed down directly through successive contemporary generations. While the former relies on cultural objectifications and is therefore always mediated, the latter pertains to oral history.

Museums and their exhibitions function as institutions of cultural memory and operate in ways analogous to memory. When conceptualizing an exhibition, curators select and mediate certain objects and narratives, thereby excluding other objects, perspectives, and stories. This selective process, involving both tangible and intangible aspects of the exhibition, mirrors memory's operation, where remembering inherently implies forgetting. Furthermore, exhibitions construct and mediate narratives by interpreting and displaying artifacts within specific frames of reference, highlighting certain aspects of them, influenced by cultural, social, and institutional contexts.

The selective, constructive, and mediating features of memory and exhibitions as media shed light on their opposite: exclusion and oblivion. Wherever something is displayed, narrated, or represented, something or someone else is inevitably left out, denied representation. However, exhibitions and their curators can draw on an array of artifacts from collections or loans, as well as diverse narratives and interpretations. Consequently, the inherent oblivion and exclusion in

remembering, also employed by exhibitions as media of memory, can be transformed into restorative and reparative acts by means of Jan Assmann's modes of cultural memory: *potentiality*, which represents a "total horizon" of possibilities, and *actuality*, whereby the objectivized meaning is put into perspective.^[10]

The performativity of memory is pivotal in the transition from potentiality to actuality. Similar to heritage and identity, memory is performative, as it is continuously renegotiated, re-enacted, and reconstructed in response to concurrent social contexts, as well as the collective and individual needs of the present. Exhibitions, as media of memory, provide a performative space where hegemonic versions of national history, heritage, and cultural memory can be contested and reaffirmed, asserting their political essence and *potentiality*.

The examples in this article stem from a broader study conducted on music-related exhibitions set up in Vienna from the 1990s to 2023, focusing on contemporary curatorial practices and their mediations of musical culture and heritage. Employing a combination of empirical and historical methods, the study involved the textual-narratological analysis of exhibitions,^[11] the identification of curatorial concepts,^[12] and historically informed contextual interpretations. By exploring the underlying curatorial concepts and the impact of contextual factors influencing these practices through selected examples, this article highlights how curatorial approaches to music, musical culture, and heritage can consolidate, re-interpret, or subvert hegemonic historical narratives and constructs.

Memorializing Austrian History

The establishment of the Haus der Geschichte Österreich (House of Austrian History, HdGÖ) in 2018 is a notable institutional manifestation of the above-described changing context in academic discourse and museum practices, particularly reflecting the shift toward viewing history as constructed and mediated rather than objective. Marking the hundredth anniversary of the Austrian Republic with the introduction of universal suffrage, while also commemorating eighty years since the *Anschluss* (Austria's annexation to Germany) and the November pogrom, its inauguration underscored a collective urge to engage with contemporary Austrian history.

The idea of establishing a museum dedicated to the country's contemporary history had been contemplated for decades. Already in 1946, Austrian President Karl Renner proposed the creation of a museum for the First and Second Republic. Although the project was interrupted after his death, the intention persisted, with its concept adapting to the contextual changes of constructed and perceived national identities and attitudes toward nationalism, culminating in the eventual foundation of the HdGÖ. During the 1990s, amidst public retrospective reflections on national past and identities as well as on the transnational roots of Austria as a potential member of the European Union,^[13] the project was revived. Various proposals were explored, such as the establishment of a "House of Tolerance" or a "Museum of the Second Republic," and in 2000 the creation of an online museum was considered. Finally, in 2015, Federal Minister for Art and Culture Josef Ostermayer unveiled the plan for a House of Austrian History to be located in the Neue Burg, the most recent building of the Hofburg (former imperial palace) in Vienna.^[14]

Built upon a new concept of "history laboratory,"^[15] the HdGÖ was established by law in 2016 as part of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Austrian National Library, ÖNB) and first opened for eighteen months as an "active and open discussion forum for historical and contemporary

issues.”^[16] Its mission is to serve as a platform that “reflects the plurality of Austrian society” (“die Pluralität der österreichischen Gesellschaft spiegeln”),^[17] exploring themes such as “images of history, identity debates, and gender relations” (“Geschichtsbilder, Identitätsdebatten und Geschlechterverhältnisse”).^[18] This new format, enhanced with modern multimedia and interactive exhibition designs, emerges from a multi-perspective and non-objectivist view of history, catering to a diverse and plural audience. At the same time, it responds to and actively engages with the self-perceptions of the various communities it aims to serve through continuous dialogue.

The HdGÖ deliberately rejects the conventional role of a national museum, opting instead to deconstruct the very idea and symbols of nationalism. This deconstruction—which also touches upon the role and exploitation of music in these dynamics—aligns with a contemporary conception of history intertwined with memory studies, significantly influenced by members of the academic board of the HdGÖ. This approach emphasizes the critical re-examination and public presentation of controversial topics related to National Socialism, antisemitism, persecution, extermination, and other forms of racism and discrimination.^[19]

Alma and Arnold Rosé: Only the Violins Remain

The contemporary approach to critically addressing Austrian national history notably involves—and arises from—recognizing Austria’s complicity in the Nazi crimes, coupled with an active commitment to commemorating its victims. These were driving forces behind the establishment of the HdGÖ, reflecting one of the institution’s objectives since the first steps of its conceptualization.^[20] This premise sets the stage for the museum’s first special exhibition, devoted to the Jewish violinists Alma and Arnold Rosé. The exhibition was set up in an open space on top of two staircases in the Neue Burg, reserved for temporary exhibitions and renamed “Alma Rosé Plateau” on that occasion. As underlined in the exhibition catalog,^[21] the location was particularly significant for this exhibition’s thematic focus given its proximity to the vestibule of the Sammlung Alter Musikinstrumente (Collection of Historical Musical Instruments) in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (Vienna Museum of Art History), from which it is separated by a large glass door, and, on the other side, the commonly known “Hitler Balcony.” From that balcony, overlooking Heldenplatz, Adolf Hitler delivered his speech celebrating the completion of Austria’s annexation into Nazi Germany on March 15, 1938. Because of its position as a site of memory in the collective consciousness, this particular location and its history contributed uniquely to the exhibition’s narrative, fostering proximity and empathy as well as further serving to contextualize the presented content.

Titled *Alma and Arnold Rosé: Only the Violins Remain*,^[22] the exhibition was conceived as a traveling exhibition consisting of a few tangible, replicable elements. It featured sixty-one music stands, each with a clipped spotlight, that served as platforms for the exhibition panels. Printed on the panels, reproductions of historical documents and photographs accompanied by written texts recounted the story of how the father and daughter were persecuted and ultimately victimized by the National Socialists. An insightful depiction was given of their lives and successful careers in Vienna and abroad before the *Anschluss*, followed by the tragic unraveling of events: Arnold’s suspension and forced retirement from the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, his and Alma’s escape from Vienna, Arnold’s exile in London, Alma’s search for refuge in the Netherlands and Switzerland until her deportation to Auschwitz, and the efforts of her brother

Alfred and friends to rescue them.

Within the Plateau (see figure 1), an atmosphere of reverence and commemoration was evoked by the presence of the black music stands, the absence of musicians, and the spotlighted texts and photos in black and white or sepia tones. At the center, the announcement poster of a concert with Alma Rosé and her Wiener Walzermädel in Copenhagen (1936) stood out with its red shades, surrounded by the music stands grouped in circles. Positioned centrally, it symbolized Alma's pivotal role as conductor of the women's orchestra in Auschwitz and in saving the lives of its members.^[23] Among the array of images displayed in the exhibition, this one captures Alma's self-assurance as she holds her violin, her gaze meeting the sight of the visitor. Her look exudes confidence and pride, reinforcing the portrayal of Alma as a woman and musician who maintained her dignity and commanded respect, even in the face of deportation and imprisonment.

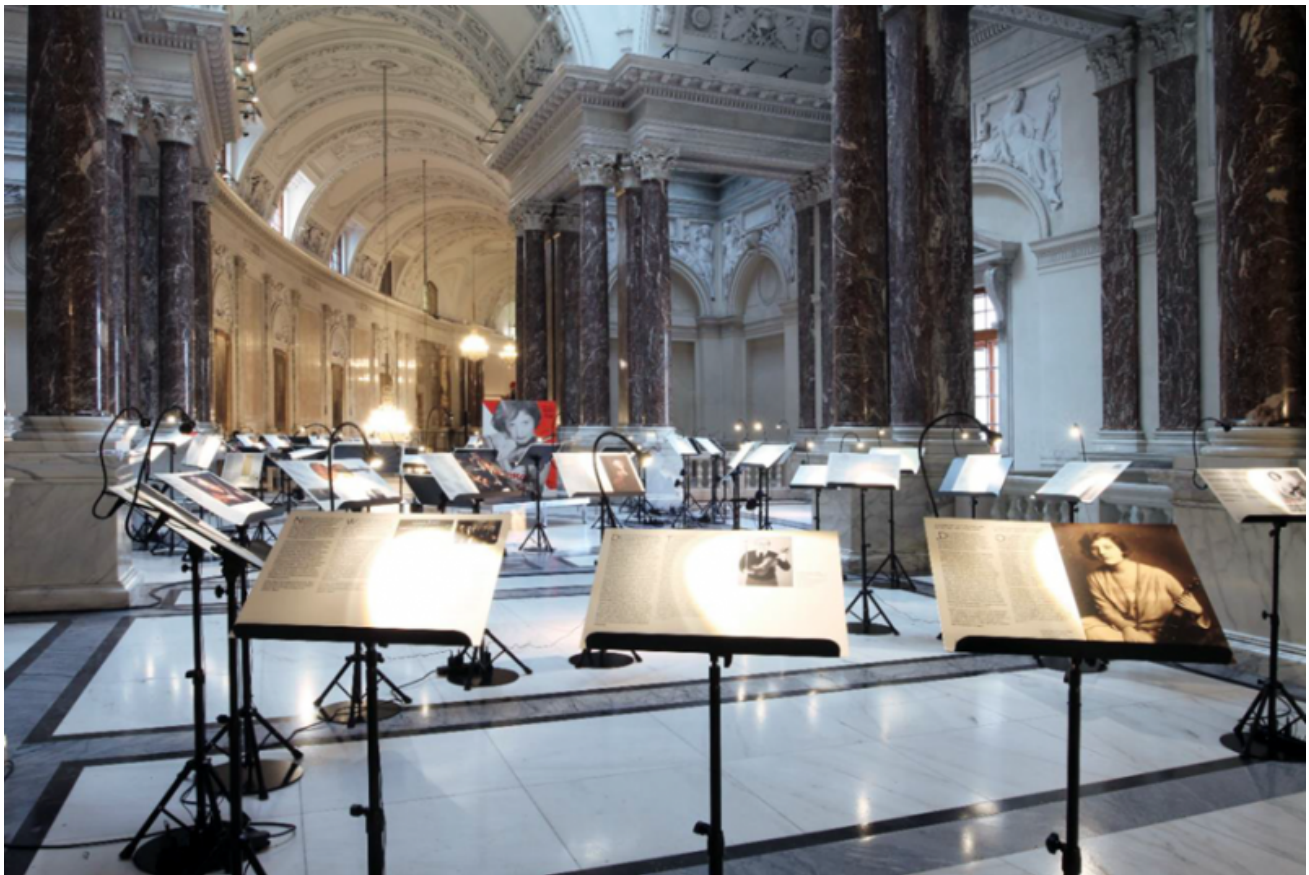


Figure 1: exhibition *Alma and Arnold Rosé: Only the Violins Remain* in the Alma Rosé Plateau of the House of Austrian History. © Markus Guschelbauer/HdGÖ

The curatorial approach excluded the most frequent imagery of Holocaust victims in states of extreme suffering and dehumanization. Instead, it is informed by a biography of the Rosé family edited in 2001 by Richard Newman^[24] and the testimony of one of Alma's fellow musicians in Auschwitz, the cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, whose own interview is integrated into the exhibition. In an excerpt of the interview (see video 1), Anita Lasker-Wallfisch specifically addresses the theme of dignity in Auschwitz, offering a personal counter-perspective to prevailing depictions.^[25] As in Newman's book, the use of direct testimonies of Anita Lasker-Wallfisch and other members of the women's orchestra in the exhibition aimed to redress the narrative surrounding Alma, following the release of a controversial book and its film adaptation.^[26] This approach not only seeks to honor Alma's legacy but also strives to present a more nuanced and respectful representation of her and her fellow musicians, highlighting their strength and dignity. By prioritizing direct testimonies and allowing victims to voice their own

stories, the exhibition avoids reducing them to mere subjects of external or institutional narratives.

Video 1: interview excerpt, Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, *Würde in Auschwitz (Dignity in Auschwitz)*, interview by Michaela Raggam-Blesch, Haus der Geschichte Österreich, <https://vimeo.com/402161852>

This emphasis on plural individual perspectives over an authoritative institutional narrative is also reflected in the reduced focus on traditional museum objects. In the exhibition, historical objects are not physically present on display; instead, they are either photographically reproduced on printed panels or evoked through storytelling. Among these recounted objects are various recognitions, including the watch given to Arnold by Emperor Franz Joseph and the Stradivari violin he acquired with the support of Countess Mysa von Wydenbruck-Esterházy. These objects encapsulate the public recognition and appreciation of the two musicians before their marginalization and persecution. Their stories also highlight the emotional ties to the instruments that motivated Alma to save her father's violin at any (financial) cost, the ruthlessness of the Nazis' spoliation of Jewish properties, the survival of these precious legacies, the restitution of Alma's violin to his father after her death, and Arnold's despair, which eventually led him to sell both violins.

The physical absence of the two violins in the exhibition serves as a poignant reminder of their owner's persecution, exile, and death. Yet, this absence also signifies their enduring spirit, which survived the Nazi terror and keeps Alma and Arnold Rosé's memory alive. The afterlife story of their violins, recounted in the exhibition, symbolizes a form of redemption through music. The continuous use of these historical violins by musicians who owned them after the Rosés ensures that their purpose extends beyond preservation in museums.^[27] Notably, the performative return of Alma's Guadagnini violin in Vienna accompanied her commemoration during Newman's book launch in 2001. This symbolic act was echoed at the HdGÖ, where the violin was played during a concert on the seventy-fifth anniversary of Alma's death, on April 4, 2018.^[28] Thus, the two instruments are not preserved as historical objects or precious artworks in traditional museums. Instead, they are viewed as carriers of memories and narratives. Through their continuous use by musicians, they become media for conveying a wide range of stories, from personal experiences to broader collective histories. In this way, they mediate not only music and emotions but also the stories of victims and perpetrators, creating new collectivities around their enduring legacy.

The Voices

Before the Rosé exhibition, to mark eighty years since the *Anschluss*, a sound installation commissioned by the HdGÖ to the Scottish artist Susan Philipsz resonated on the Heldenplatz from March 2018 to May 2019, twice a day.^[29] The installation *The Voices* was the museum's first public message before the completion of its construction. It aimed to "honour the voices silenced by the Anschluss and stress the importance of shaping the present in accordance with democratic principles."^[30]

The Voices presents a unique motif through which the originating theme was expressed, namely glass. Philipsz chose glass for its proximity to the human voice and its association with fragility and historical events. Thus, glass served both as a symbolic reference and a material element to create the installation:

From the beginning, I was thinking a lot about crystal metaphors, the “Reichskristallnacht,” the crystal chandeliers hanging in the interior of the Neue Burg, crystal microphones from the 1930s and crystal set radios, which people would gather round to listen to events unfolding. In the end, I have decided to use the very simple technique of rubbing the rim of crystal glasses to create four tones that are in dialogue with each other. The sounds are ethereal and abstract but there is also a tension present that is palpable but undefined. The tones are slightly discordant and the act of rubbing the glasses creates a set of vibrations that could at any moment shatter the glass.^[31]

Alongside glass, the historical and architectural significance of the location guided the conceptualization of the installation. The Heldenplatz became a signifying and constitutive element, being the setting of the installation and the space of encounter between the institution and its audience and passersby and among people. Its historical connotation, known to locals and informed tourists alike, added context and oriented the interpretation and emotions triggered by the glass sounds toward multivocality, absence, tension, and cross-temporality. Additionally, the balcony and the temporary building hosting the parliament on the Heldenplatz were integrated into Philipsz’s work, embodying their symbolic value (the parliament as a sign of today’s democracy) and association with historical collective memory (the balcony as “the symbol of Austria’s complicity in Nazi crimes”).^[32]

The use of sound was a deliberate choice by the museum to avoid overlapping with the existing dominant visual reference associated with the Heldenplatz and the Hitler Balcony. This led to hiring Philipsz for her recurrent use of this medium. In turn, Philipsz’s preference for sound was driven by its capability to evoke emotions beyond traditional modes of communication. Unlike visual representations, artworks, and verbal expressions, diffused sound permeates its environment, as it is hard to ignore and is effortlessly received. It connects the public and the institutional space, the individual memory and collective past, as well as memories and experience in the making, all in a unique way.

Although *The Voices* may not conform to the conventional idea of “exhibition,” it offered a transformative and sensory perception of a site of memory, integrating both the physical location and the historical time of remembrance. By using sound instead of visual imagery, the installation highlighted the nuances and the complexities of historical narratives in a way that transcended traditional museum displays, fostering commemoration through sensory experience. The choice of glass as both a conceptual and sound material relied on its associations within collective memory, connecting with the emotions the installation aimed to evoke.

Recalling Voices, Reflecting the Institution

Educational institutions bear a profound responsibility in confronting Austria’s historical role during the National Socialist era. Since the early twenty-first century, the mdw: Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien (University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna) has taken steps to fulfill this duty. Responding to the broader societal imperative to reflect on this historical period and the role played by educational institutions, the university has established research centers and launched projects dedicated to investigating its complicity under National Socialist rule. By delving into its archives, it has uncovered the stories of professors, staff, and students who faced persecution and expulsion. This rigorous self-examination underscores the university’s commitment to acknowledging and reckoning with its past, as well as fulfilling its broader social

responsibility. Among the measures taken are concerted efforts to commemorate exiled musicians and their music. In two instances, research teams have adopted the exhibition format to present their findings, making this critical historical examination accessible to a wider audience.

Exilarte

The first instance is represented by Exilarte, originally founded as a charity organization by Gerold Gruber in 2006 and later integrated into the mdw as the “Exilarte Center for Banned Music” in 2016. With a mission to serve as a “center for the reception, preservation, research and presentation of composers, performers, musical academics and theatre artists who were branded as ‘degenerate’ during the years of the ‘Third Reich,’”^[33] Exilarte aims to fill a critical gap in Austrian musicology by reclaiming a suppressed “multi-faceted cultural inheritance.”^[34] Prior to adopting the exhibition medium, Exilarte pursued its mission through a variety of activities, including concerts held at prestigious venues such as the Konzerthaus and the Musikverein, as well as on international stages. The performing activity was accompanied by the organization of and participation in conferences and symposia, the creation of a database of ostracized musicians,^[35] and the production of CDs featuring the works of marginalized composers. Additionally, its activity has interlaced with the museums of the Wien Holding on several occasions, through performances at the Haus der Musik (House of Music) and an enduring collaboration with the Jüdisches Museum Wien (Jewish Museum Vienna).

In 2016, Exilarte inaugurated its first exhibition, housed at the University of Music and Performing Arts premises at Lothringerstrasse 18, Vienna. Entitled “I Return to Vienna When I Compose,” the exhibition, now permanent, draws its name from a quote by Robert Fürstenthal, whose promising music career was disrupted by the Nazi regime. Dedicated to exploring “the lost musical legacies and the tragic fates of musicians persecuted by the Nazis,”^[36] the exhibition features a sequence of vertical panels, one for each commemorated musician. Each board includes a reproduced photo and a summarized biography (see figure 2). These panels are interspersed with video screens and headphone stations showcasing music examples, alongside displays of CDs and publications by Exilarte. Among those featured are former students and individuals who were denied admission to music education institutions due to their Jewish heritage, exiled musicians who continued their careers abroad, and others who returned to Austria after the war. The exhibition, regularly updated with recent research findings, takes a biographical approach, thereby shedding light on the personal stories behind the musicians’ careers and highlighting the void and collective loss resulting from the suppression of their music.

At the core of Exilarte’s mission and activities lies the restoration of voices and music, which can be viewed as a remembering act. Throughout the temporary exhibitions, historical documents and items from musicians’ estates received by the center over time contribute to making forgotten histories tangible by recounting individuals’ persecution, exile, and resettlement. The exhibition becomes a platform for these musicians to reclaim their voices through the several quotes reported on the walls and panels. Alongside their voices, their music is taken out of oblivion. Initially performed in concerts and on CDs, these works can be heard in the exhibition through headphones juxtaposed with the biographic panels. These two curatorial approaches, namely the biographical storytelling and the integration of musical samples, diminish the otherwise typical authoritative character of the institutional narrator, posthumously granting

musicians the opportunity to express themselves through their own voices and music.

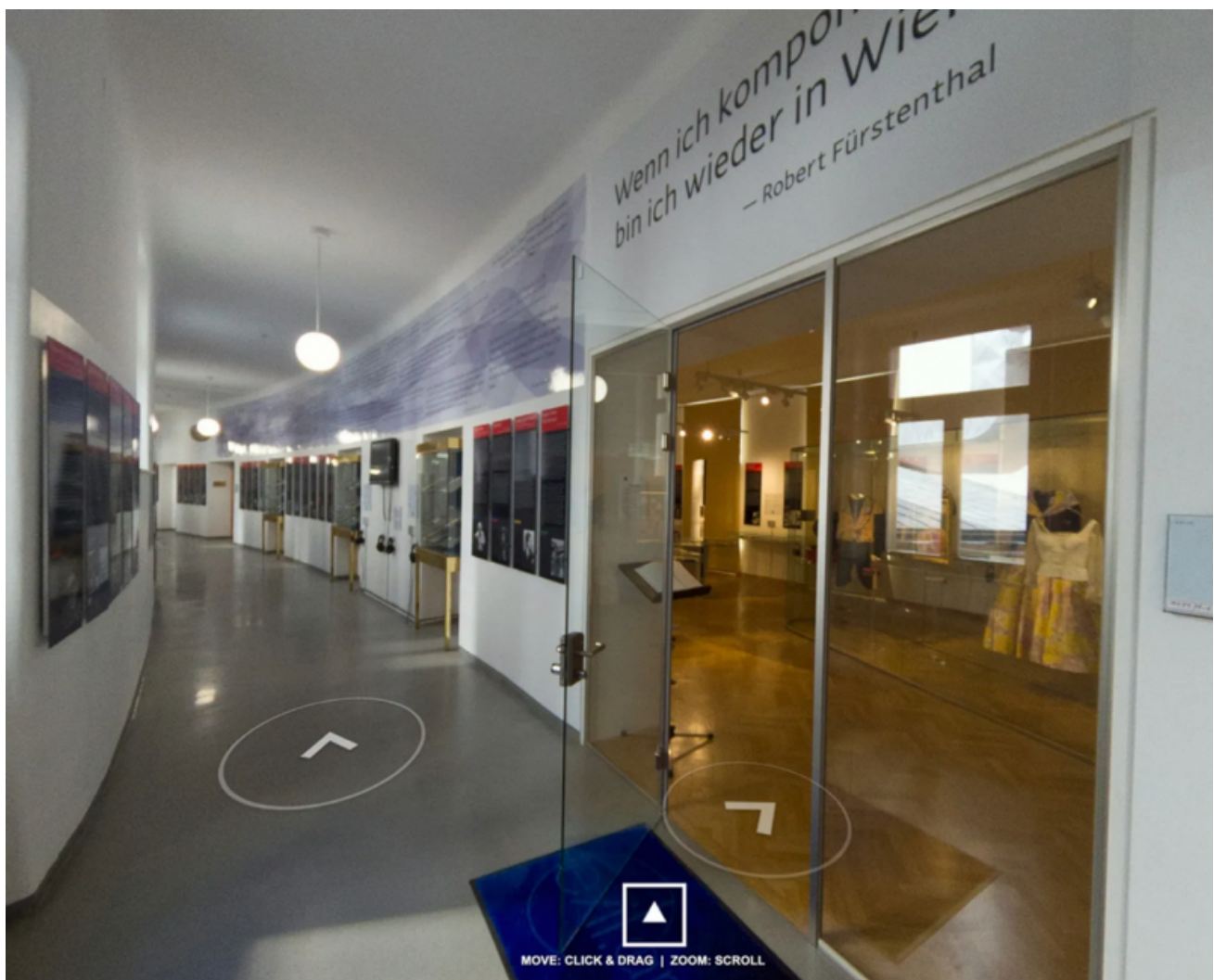


Figure 2: link to a virtual tour through the Exilarte permanent exhibition and the temporary exhibition “My Song For You: Marta Eggerth and Jan Kiepura Between Two Worlds” (October 2020 to June 2022); produced by the Exilarte Center at the mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, https://ausstellungen.exilarte.org/kiepura_eggerth_2022/index.html.

Klingende Zeitgeschichte in Objekten: If These Objects Could Speak

The second example of the use of the exhibition at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna as a medium of reparation and memory derived from a research project of the same name, *Klingende Zeitgeschichte in Objekten* (If These Objects Could Speak),^[37] whose inauguration marked the eighty-fifth anniversary of the November pogrom in 2023. As suggested by the original title and declared by the project team, the exhibition—which ran until July 2024 and now remains accessible as an online catalog^[38]—was intended as “history in objects,”^[39] which underscores a double significance and interpretation. On the one hand, it is reminiscent of contemporary theoretical perspectives on object-based research, referring to the histories and memories carried by and enclosed in objects that the research team has *disclosed*. On the other hand, it can be viewed under the light of the display approach employed in the exhibition,

whereby each of the numbered information panels, or stations, was either inspired by or commented on through objects. The latter, intended in a broad sense to include historical documents, were either reproduced and printed on panels or displayed in the original in glass showcases.

The twenty exhibition “stations” chronologically recounted aspects of the institution’s history, examining its cooperation with Nazi rules and the denazification measures implemented from 1946 on. The exhibition also critically addressed other iconic institutions and figures of Vienna’s musical life, such as the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Clemens Krauss, challenging traditional hegemonic and uncritical narratives.^[40] Through the display of rediscovered and critically examined materials from the University Archive, this exhibition highlighted forgotten individuals with biographical excerpts and covered-up institutional past, including systems of social exclusion such as the so-called *Gesundheitsstammbuch* (Family Health Record).^[41] Additionally, it provided evidence of how music production and music education in the Nazi era were influenced by the NS ideology.^[42] Finally, it drew attention to the question of confiscation, spoliation, and restitution using the example of a Rosenberger fortepiano, which first came into the possession of the Kunsthistorisches Museum and later into that of the mdw after being confiscated from the Roman Catholic community of the “Teutonic Order.” After its provenance was clarified, the fortepiano was restituted and is now on permanent loan at the university.^[43]

Both exhibitions at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna exemplify the adoption of the exhibition as a medium for communicating research activities and findings in unconventional ways. While both serve as media for expressing the university’s revised institutional identity and mission, they differ in their use of the exhibition medium and are shaped by varied material and social factors, including their location and accessibility. Exilarte occupies a dedicated space on the second floor of the university building on Lothringerstrasse 18, ensuring the permanence of the main exhibition along the corridor, with additional space for temporary exhibitions in an adjacent room. Albeit not intensively trafficked, its location adjacent to the Konzerthaus and its proximity to the Musikverein contribute to its accessibility by the general public. In contrast, the exhibition *Klingende Zeitgeschichte in Objekten* was physically integrated into the campus library, primarily frequented by students. Marked by a common thematic and chronological thread, materialized through architectonic elements, the exhibition extended from the library foyer, across the staircase, and into the reading rooms on the first floor, maintaining a cohesive yet independent structure at each station. This design ensured easy accessibility and encouraged chance encounters with the exhibition while browsing through the library’s bookshelves.

Given their location and institutional affiliation, the primary audience of both exhibitions is inevitably the university’s community. The employment of the exhibition format at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna serves as deliberate mediation of its historical past and institutional identity, responding to the contemporary imperative for all Austrian institutions to embrace social responsibility in critically reflecting on historical memory. By bringing institutional research findings out of the archives and specialized literature and into public view through exhibitions, the university addresses and takes responsibility for past injustices, while demonstrating a contemporary shift toward fostering remembrance. These initiatives also aim to raise awareness among students, faculty, and staff by appealing to their shared institutional experience. In doing so, the exhibitions contribute to shaping or revising a collective memory within the university community before engaging with the broader public.

Provenance Research between the Depot and the Display

Biographical research and storytelling, musical performance and oral history, sensory engagement, and investigation into institutional history are some of the main strategies currently used and transposed into exhibitions for reflecting on and restoring forgotten stories and silenced voices. Another memory act performed at the institutional level stems from the research on the provenance of objects conducted in museums and other collections, regulated by the Art Restitution Act of 1998, last amended in 2023.^[44]

The introduction of regulated provenance research in Austria was a symptom of the country's memory turn and increased global awareness about Nazi-looted artworks in the late 1990s.^[45] The legislative framework was initiated following the inaugural meeting of the Commission for Provenance Research in March 1998, convened by then Minister of Education Elisabeth Gehrer.^[46] Its passage in December of the same year coincided with the endorsement of the Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art by Austria and forty-three other governments.^[47] The Art Restitution Act responds to the context of the confrontation of the Republic of Austria with its own past and its active role in Nazi crimes, which included confiscation, spoliation, and looting. It mandates the assumption of responsibility and commands the systematic investigation of federal collections and other properties, ensuring the identification and return of "movable artworks and cultural objects" illegally or unfairly acquired during and after the Nazi period.^[48]

As evidenced by the Rosé family's efforts to conceal and protect their Stradivari and Guadagnini violins, as well as the case of the Rosenberger fortepiano, musical instruments, along with other musical objects and entire instrument workshops, were targeted for appropriation by the Nazis for various reasons: their value as artworks and historical artifacts, their potential to be sold or traded for profit, and their symbolic importance in asserting cultural dominance. Forms of appropriation included outright confiscation from Jewish families and businesses, forced donations or sales at undervalued prices, and the expropriation of entire workshops to dismantle the Jewish cultural presence and exploit their assets for the regime's benefit, for example by enriching its collections.

For these reasons, prominent collections of musical instruments such as those held by the Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM) and the Technisches Museum Wien (Vienna Museum of Science and Technology) have been thoroughly examined by provenance researchers, and the results disclosed in dossiers, publications, and contributions during international conferences.^[49]

At the KHM, proactive efforts in this direction preceded the legislative act. Early in 1998, Herbert Haupt, then director of the Museum Archive, initiated investigations into the provenance of objects acquired by the KHM between 1938 and 1955.^[50] This activity laid the groundwork for the ongoing systematic research of the museum's collections by ministerial provenance researchers, and in 2009 the timeframe of acquisitions under scrutiny was extended from 1933 to the present. During the planning phase of the HdGÖ, the search for looted instruments in the KHM's Sammlung Alter Musikinstrumente (SAM) intensified,^[51] as it became clear that the opening of the former would have consequences on the state of the latter. Eventually, the changes were limited to the shift of the access to the SAM from the main entrance of the Neue Burg to the entrance of the Weltmuseum (World Museum). However, that period was characterized by a general discontent at the SAM, whose staff feared the collection would be displaced. Various petitions were raised, including one signed by members of the CIMCIM (ICOM International Committee of

Museums and Collections of Instruments and Music) and sent to Minister Ostermayer.^[52] The political argument between the HdGÖ and the KHM concerned the contract to use the space in the Neue Burg but was interlaced with broader political debates and interests. In this delicate context, in which the SAM found itself in the spotlight, the attention of researchers led to further tensions, questioning the legitimacy of the official independence of the collection in 1939 as well as the acquisition and conservation state of the collection of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Society for the Friends of Music, GdM) in Vienna by the SAM.^[53]

Provenance research at the SAM has been conducted by Monika Löscher since 2009. However, because provenance researchers are not part of the museum staff, their findings and inquiries are given limited space in the exhibition. The permanent exhibition of the SAM, on the other hand, overtly emphasizes the collection's contribution "to the cultural identity of our country and internationally to Austria's outstanding position as 'Land of Music,'"^[54] thereby reproducing an idea of national musical heritage aligned with a canon of music composition and musical instrument making.

The overshadowing of untold and silenced stories by the hegemonic narratives presented in exhibitions reflects the dual function of museums as storage facilities and sites of remembrance, exemplifying Assmann's concepts of potentiality and actuality. Löscher has highlighted the symbolic violence inherent in the current practice of relegating restituted instruments to museum depots, essentially perpetuating the violence of the past:

At the present stage of provenance research, most of the restituted artifacts are stored in the museum depot and now have little material value. Unlike the instruments removed from celebrated collections, they do not attract much attention and live in the shadows of the SAM's holdings. Yet their marginal status makes drawing attention to the lives and tragic fates of their original owners even more imperative—each time that the name of a former owner falls into oblivion represents a symbolic death, and, to quote Horkheimer and Adorno, "the dead suffer a fate which the Jews in olden days considered the worst possible curse: may you perish from remembrance."^[55]

Amidst this prevailing trend, there is one notable exception where the memories and stories of confiscation and looting find expression through the exhibition medium. At the Technisches Museum Wien (TMW), the outcomes of provenance research have been documented in the first exhibition of its kind, titled *Inventarnummer 1938* (Inventory number 1938) since 2015.^[56] Within an independent exhibition area enclosed by wooden walls and ceilings, artifacts currently under investigation are displayed behind glass windows, together with reproductions of documents about their provenance, until a resolution is reached. A screen displays the story and investigation results of concluded research, including the cases of objects that were restituted or legally re-purchased by the museum. One of these cases is the Walcker organ, acquired by the TMW in 1994, whose provenance was found to be unobjectionable.^[57] The displayed slides show the organ's current location in the museum's Banquet Hall, followed by a photo of it in the villa of its former owner, Willibald Duschnitz, which was restituted to him in 1950 along with the organ. Duschnitz then sold the instrument in 1955.^[58]

In 2018, the museum documented in a video (see video 2) the removal of the Sternberg musical instruments from the exhibition *Inventarnummer 1938*, leaving behind an empty showcase. The story of Sternberg is told in a biographical text placed next to the display, alongside a delivery note of the "Europa-Musikinstrumenten-Gesellschaft." This was the name of the music store owned by the Jewish merchant Theodor Sternberg before he was forced to flee to Hungary after the *Anschluss*.^[59] Following the exhibition format for each object on display, another text

summarizes the state of the provenance research on the instruments. After Sternberg's escape and the Aryanization of his business, the TMW had agreed to purchase the eighteen instruments on loan since 1936. However, profiting from his exile and the difficult circumstances, the museum paid less than a third of their value. After the restitution of the musical instruments on a mandate by the Art Restitution Advisory Board in 2007 and a long search by the Jewish Community of Vienna and the Israelite Religious Community in the USA, the instruments were finally restituted to Theodor's son in 2018.

Video 2: Technisches Museum Wien, "The Restitution of the Sternberg Musical Instruments," 2018; video: Monika Rabofsky, Technisches Museum Wien mit Österreichischer Mediathek; <https://vimeo.com/278996583>

In the exhibition *Inventarnummer 1938*, objects become hinges for memories and stories of injustice. They offer the chance to delve into the stories of their owners and foster reflection about a collective responsibility towards them. The responsibility consists of acts of acknowledgment, restitution, and remembrance. The core concept of the exhibition turns out to be reparative, aiming to condemn and overturn the practices that took these objects from their rightful owners. On top of that, it aims to abolish itself by returning the objects, ideally resulting in only empty showcases. Unlike the act of storing, where lootings and their victims remain forgotten, here the objects and their biographies are showcased to highlight the injustices their owners endured and the complicity of the museum. Upon approval of restitution, these objects are removed from the museum, leaving behind an absence in a place where they never rightfully belonged. This time, the absence is turned from oblivion into posthumous justice.

Conclusion

The examples discussed in this article illustrate how cultural institutions in Vienna have responded to a memory turn in Austria. Guided by overarching policies like the Art Restitution Act and their own initiatives, these institutions have endeavored to reflect on Austria's National Socialist past and revise its post-war consciousness, seeking reparation, restoration, and posthumous justice for the victims of Nazism through exhibitions as media of memory.

The Haus der Geschichte Österreich, the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, and the Commission for Provenance Research, institutions that mediate and shape cultural memory, have employed diverse strategies and curatorial approaches that serve as acts of memory, reflecting their diverse historical and institutional backgrounds, overarching organizational structure, and current mission. These approaches encompass biographical research and storytelling, integration of direct testimonies and oral history, sensory and emotional engagement, musical performance and restoration of suppressed and forgotten music, and mediation of institutional history and provenance research.

In instances such as *Arnold and Alma Rosé: Only the Violins Remain* and *Exilarte*, the biographical mode plays a significant role in restoring expression, individuality, and dignity to victims of National Socialism. By incorporating personal narratives through quotes and direct testimonies, these exhibitions shift from authoritative history-making toward a more nuanced and respectful representation of the individuals affected. This approach underscores the acknowledgement of the importance of personal narratives and memories in understanding historical events while fostering deeper emotional connections with the audience. In contrast to the common strategy of

listing victims' names, which quantifies the damage of persecution and extermination in collective terms, the biographical approach pursues remembrance and justice of individuals.

As a form of individual expression, the integration of oral history uniquely connects the exhibition medium with communicative memory. By displaying interviews with Holocaust survivors, exhibitions extend the temporal outreach of these memories and, through their authoritative power, aim to restore them to cultural memory. Exilarte also offers posthumous expression to exiled musicians through biographical storytelling, the display of quotes and estates, and the revival of banned and forgotten music through live and recorded performances. The integration of recorded music into the exhibition helps to rediscover and reclaim cultural heritage from oblivion, emphasizing the contributions and the impact of the displacement of exiled musicians while leveraging music's emotional power.

The juxtaposition of silence, voice, music, and sound constitutes another strategy employed in addressing the experiences of exiled, persecuted, marginalized, and murdered individuals, particularly musicians. Sensory and emotional engagement, as pursued with the soundscape of *The Voices*, helps to create a transformative perception and immersive experience of sites of cultural memory, fostering a deeper emotional connection to historical narratives and commemorative events. Susan Philipsz's approach demonstrates the use of sound, symbolic materials, and conceptual elements such as glass to evoke historical metaphors and associations, creating a multisensory and multivocal narrative that transcends consolidated imageries of sites of collective memory.

Sites of memory and institutional spaces of exhibitions, like the Hitler Balcony and the Heldenplatz, or the Technisches Museum Wien as a representative of the museum institution, can serve as symbolic references and counterpoints to past atrocities. Publicly reflecting on institutions' complicity with Nazi crimes at the sites of memory associated with those events constitutes another act of reparation and remembrance. The mediation of institutional history research through exhibitions also serves as a tool for communicating the institutions' revised missions and values to their members and the broader public, as exemplified by *Klingende Zeitgeschichte in Objekten*. Likewise, the systematic investigations into the origins and ownership histories of collection objects conducted by ministerial provenance researchers publicly address issues of spoliation and restitution, highlighting injustices perpetrated by the museums and fostering a more ethical curation of collections.

Throughout these exhibitions, historical objects play different roles depending on the curatorial concept, either serving as primary sources for presented narratives or being retrospectively selected to illustrate a topic. They can serve as primary sources for storytelling, thematic hinges, or visual cues that attract the attention of users in a non-museum space, as in *Klingende Zeitgeschichte in Objekten*. The originality of these objects is rarely emphasized; instead, they are presented as media for personal stories, remembrance, and justice, aligning with the "new museum" principles that prioritize narrative and memory over the centrality of objects. Even the absence of these objects in the museum setting can serve as a powerful memorialization. This can be achieved by ensuring the functionality and a performative afterlife of musical instruments to symbolize the enduring legacy of their former owners. Similarly, publicly removing objects from museums and documenting their journey towards restitution can overturn the injustices associated with their past and act as a reparative gesture. In these ways, symbols of historical violence are turned into sources of reconciliation and reparation.

In conclusion, the curatorial approaches examined in this article illustrate how music exhibitions

have been used as media of memory in connection with Austria's memory turn over the past decade. Notably, the examples discussed demonstrate the potential for exhibitions to act on the performativity of heritage and memory, transcending hegemonic narratives and the traditional focus on tangible objects and instead fostering a multi-perspective and reflective cultural memory. By remembering marginalized, oppressed, and forgotten individuals and communities and by voicing silenced narratives and personal experiences, they embody Assmann's notion of moving from *potentiality* to an alternative *actuality*.

Music, musical heritage, and culture, by virtue of their intrinsic connection to politics, emotional appeal, and ability to resonate with individual and collective experience, emerge as favored media and themes for fostering reflection on hegemonic and authoritative narratives. While challenges remain, particularly in avoiding the homogenization of victims or marginalized groups and individuals and in privileging certain narratives at the expenses of others, exhibitions as media of memory have the potential to voice and restore further silenced narratives and marginalized communities. Ultimately, these efforts should foster ongoing critical reflection on hegemonic musical and cultural narratives.

References

1. The "Waldheim-Affäre" takes its name from the former UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim. It began in 1986 during the presidential election campaign in Austria, when allegations surfaced about Waldheim's involvement with the Nazi regime during World War II. For more on the "Waldheim-Affäre" and its impact on Austria's self-perception, see Ruth Wodak, Peter Nowak, Johanna Pelikan, Helmut Gruber, Rudolf de Cillia, and Richard Mitten, *"Wir sind alle unschuldige Täter": Diskurshistorische Studien zum Nachkriegsantisemitismus*, Suhrkamp Taschenbücher Wissenschaft 881 (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1990); and [Demokratiezentrum Wien, "Waldheim-Debatte,"](#) last modified September 2021. ↑
2. The concept of memory turn refers to the shift in focus toward memory in historical and cultural studies and the recognition of how societies remember and construct the past. In Austrian scholarship, this shift is prominently represented in the works of Heidemarie Uhl and Ruth Wodak. In this article, I refer to a "widespread memory turn" that extends beyond scholarly reflection to include public debate, commemoration, and consciousness. ↑
3. [Jens Andermann and Silke Arnold-de Simine, "Introduction: Memory, Community and the New Museum,"](#) *Theory, Culture & Society* 29, no. 1 (2012): 4-7. ↑
4. For an overview of the origins of the narrative of the victim, which dominated the post-war period, and its derivation from the *Moscow Declaration*, see [Heidemarie Uhl, "Victim Thesis,"](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
5. Martina Nußbaumer and Cornelia Szábo-Knotik have conducted extensive studies on the topoi "Musikstadt" and "Musikland": Cornelia Szábo-Knotik, "Musikstadt Wien als Topos kultureller Identifikation in der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Musik zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen und Slavko Osterc: Sammelband von der Internationalen Musikwissenschaftlichen Konferenz der Slowenischen Musiktage 1995*, ed. Primož Kuret (Ljubljana: Festival Ljubljana, 1996), 277-300; Cornelia Szábo-Knotik, "Mythos Musik in Österreich: Die Zweite Republik," in *Memoria Austriae I: Menschen, Mythen, Zeiten*, ed. Emil Brix, Ernst Bruckmüller, and Hannes Stekl (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), 243-70; Cornelia Szábo-Knotik, "Selbstinszenierung und Handelsbilanz: Die (Re-)Konstruktion Österreichs nach 1945 mittels Musik," in *Musik-Wissenschaft an ihren Grenzen: Manfred Angerer zum 50. Geburtstag*, ed. Dominik Schweiger, Michael Staudinger, and Nikolaus Urbanek (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), 355-82; and Martina Nußbaumer, *Musikstadt Wien: Die Konstruktion eines Images*, Rombach-Wissenschaften /

Edition Parabasen 6 (Freiburg i.Br.: Rombach, 2007). Fritz Trümpi discusses the exploitation of the topic during National Socialism to marginalize Jews in Fritz Trümpi, "Der 'Musikstadt Wien'-Topos als Instrument der nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssicherung," in *Guido Adlers Erbe: Restitution und Erinnerung an der Universität Wien*, ed. Markus Stumpf, Herbert Posch, and Oliver Rathkolb, Bibliothek im Kontext 1 (Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2017), 31-44. ↑

6. See, for example, Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandy, and Raphaël Nowak, "Curating Popular Music Heritage: Storytelling and Narrative Engagement in Popular Music Museums and Exhibitions," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 31, no. 4 (2016): 369-85; and Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandy, and Raphaël Nowak, "The Sound of Music Heritage: Curating Popular Music in Music Museums and Exhibitions," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 22, no. 1 (2016): 70-81. Contributions to the topic are also found in "Popular Music, Cultural Memory, and Heritage," ed. Andy Bennett and Susanne Janssen, special issue, *Popular Music and Society* 39, no. 1 (2016). ↑
7. See, for example, Marion Leonard, "Staging the Beatles: Ephemerality, Materiality and the Production of Authenticity in the Museum," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 20, no. 4 (2014): 357-75; Alcina Cortez, "The Curatorial Practices of Exhibiting Popular Music in Portugal at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century: An Overview," *Portuguese Journal of Musicology* 2, no. 2 (2015): 297-323; Charles Fairchild, "Understanding Exhibitionary Characteristics of Popular Music Museums," *Museum & Society* 15, no. 1 (2017): 87-99; Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandy, and Raphaël Nowak, *Curating Pop: Exhibiting Popular Music in the Museum* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019); *Musik ausstellen: Vermittlung und Rezeption musikalischer Themen im Museum*, ed. María Del Mar Alonso Amat, Elisabeth Magesacher, and Andreas Meyer, Edition Museum 53 (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2021); Andreas Meyer, "Music Exhibitions in Local Settings: Sites of Cultural Memory?" *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 45 (2022-24): 3-21. ↑
8. Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125-33. ↑
9. Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, trans. Sara B. Young, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). In her compendium of memory studies, Erll draws on theories such as Maurice Halbwachs's *Mémoire Collective*, Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne, Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire*, and Aleida and Jan Assmann's Cultural Memory. ↑
10. Assmann, "Collective Memory," 130. ↑
11. For the textual-narratological analysis, see del Mar Alonso Amat, Magesacher, and Meyer, *Musik ausstellen*. ↑
12. The identification of curatorial concepts drew on the method described in Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandy, and Raphaël Nowak, "Curatorial Practice in Popular Music Museums: An Emerging Typology of Structuring Concepts," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 23, no. 3 (2020): 434-53. ↑
13. For a detailed discussion on Austria's endeavor to join the European Union and its transnational identity, see *Austrian Historical Memory and National Identity*, ed. Gunter Bischof and Anton Pelinka, Contemporary Austrian Studies 5 (London: Routledge, 2017); Katherine Arens, *Vienna's Dreams of Europe: Culture and Identity Beyond the Nation-State*, New Directions in German Studies 13 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017); Otilia Dhand, *The Idea of Central Europe: Geopolitics, Culture and Regional Identity*, Tauris Historical Geography Series 12 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018); and Cornelia Szabó-Knotik, "'Liegst dem Erdteil Du inmitten, einem starken Herzen gleich': How Central and/or European Is Austria's Cultural Identity?" accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
14. The decision was announced in 2014, accompanied by the nomination of an international academic advisory board of thirty-one members and the presentation of an implementation plan. See Oliver Rathkolb, Elisabeth Heimann, Richard Hufschmied, Manfred Rauchensteiner, and Heidemarie Uhl, "Umsetzungsstrategie für das Haus der Geschichte Österreichs: Ideen und Entwürfe des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Beirates," ed. Oliver Rathkolb (Vienna, 2015). ↑
15. A preliminary market and feasibility study, which included online and face-to-face surveys with a share

of the Austrian population, revealed the need for the new potential institution to distance itself from the conventional educational archetype commonly associated with the term “museum.” The concept of “history laboratory” was therefore proposed by the working group Haas & Lordeurop in 2009, cited in [Rathkolb et al., “Umsetzungsstrategie,” 41n17.](#) ↑

16. [Ibid., 6.](#) Original wording: “ein aktives und offenes Diskussionsforum für historische Fragestellungen und Themen der Gegenwart.” ↑
17. [Ibid.](#) ↑
18. [Ibid.](#) ↑
19. [Ibid., 55–58.](#) ↑
20. [Ibid., 57–58.](#) ↑
21. *Nur die Geigen sind geblieben / Only the Violins Remain: Alma & Arnold Rosé*, ed. Michaela Raggam-Blesch, Monika Sommer, and Heidemarie Uhl (Vienna: Haus der Geschichte Österreich, 2019), 7–9. ↑
22. *Alma and Arnold Rosé: Nur die Geigen sind geblieben / Only the Violins Remain*, Haus der Geschichte Österreich, November 10, 2018 to May 12, 2019. ↑
23. Women who were admitted into the women’s orchestra of Auschwitz received relatively better treatment within the concentration camp. This included improved living conditions and exemption from some of the most grueling labor duties. Most importantly, they were spared the gas chamber. ↑
24. Richard Newman, in collaboration with Karen Kirtley, *Alma Rosé: Wien 1906/Auschwitz 1944; eine Biografie*, trans. Wolfgang Schlüter (Bonn: Weidle, 2002). ↑
25. The transcript of the interview with Anita Lasker-Wallfisch by Michaela Raggam-Blesch is included in Raggam-Blesch, Sommer, Uhl, *Nur die Geigen*, 39–47. ↑
26. The controversies surrounded the book written by one of the members of the women’s orchestra, Fania Fénelon, and Arthur Miller’s movie adaptation. Anita Lasker-Wallfisch and other former members of the orchestra had protested against the denial of “some of the human qualities and dignity,” which catalyzed the “rediscovery of Alma Rosé” in the mid-1970s–80s: Raggam-Blesch, Sommer, Uhl, *Nur die Geigen*, 30–38. ↑
27. For an exhaustive discussion about conservation, preservation, and functionality of musical instruments in museums, see [Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, “Preserving Functionality: Keeping Artefacts ‘Alive’ in Museums,”](#) *Curator: The Museum Journal* 62, no. 3 (2019): 403–13. ↑
28. On the occasion of Alma’s eightieth birthday, on April 4, 2024, the exhibition opened in the Marmor Hall and Balcony corridor of the Vienna State Opera. This is a significant step and act of recognition and remembrance, especially if we consider that Arnold’s bust, sculpted by Anna Mahler-Fistoulari, Gustav Mahler’s daughter and Arnold’s niece, was gifted by the Anglo-American Music Society to the Vienna State Opera but only displayed at the Theater an der Wien, rather than in its more prominent and representative location. ↑
29. [Haus der Geschichte Österreich, Jahresbericht 2018–2019 \(2019\), 35.](#) ↑
30. Raggam-Blesch, Sommer, and Uhl, *Nur die Geigen*, 7. ↑
31. [Haus der Geschichte Österreich, “‘A Collective Experience of Listening’: Susan Philipsz in Conversation with Eva Meran,”](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
32. [Nadine Blumer, “The Voices: A Sound Installation by Susan Philipsz,”](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
33. [Delaney Hanon, Jacqueline Lewy, and Michael Haas, “10 Years of Exil.Arte 2006–2016,” 2016.](#) ↑
34. [Exilarte Center at the mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, “Mission Statement of the Exilarte Center,”](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑

35. "exil.arte international database of compositional estates" (online database under construction), accessed June 29, 2024, http://www.exilarte.at/musical_estates.html. ↑
36. [Exilarte Center at the mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, "Permanent Exhibitions,"](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
37. Full title: *Klingende Zeitgeschichte in Objekten: Die mdw* im Austrofaschismus, Nationalsozialismus und Postnazismus* (If These Objects Could Speak: The Resonance of Contemporary History; the mdw* during Austrofascism, National Socialism, and Post-Nazism), mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, November 9, 2023 – ongoing. ↑
38. [mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, *If These Objects Could Speak: The Resonance of Contemporary History: Virtual Catalog*,](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
39. [mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, "Project description,"](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
40. [mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, "4. Clemens Krauss' having conducted a Goldmark piece in 1934 was presented as \(questionable\) evidence of his denazification," in *Virtual Catalog*,](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
41. [mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, "8. The 'Gesundheitsstammbuch' as a measure of hereditary and racial biology,"](#) in *Virtual Catalog*, accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
42. See, for example, station 6, [mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, "6. 'Folk Song' and 'Battle Cry': An example of 'ideological' practicality in music education," in *Virtual Catalog*,](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
43. [mdw: University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, "14g. Restituted Nazi-looted property: The fortepiano of the 'Teutonic Order,'" in *Virtual Catalog*,](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
44. The Art Restitution Act was first amended in 2009 to include "other movable cultural assets" alongside "works of art" and extend the investigations to all federal properties rather than only federal collections: [Bundesgesetzblatt für die Republik Österreich, Jahrgang 2009, Teil I. Bundesgesetz: Änderung des Bundesgesetzes über die Rückgabe von Kunstgegenständen aus den Österreichischen Bundesmuseen und Sammlungen,](#) issued on November 23, 2009. ↑
45. For the origins of the Commission for Provenance Research in Austria and its global catalyzers, see [Monika Löscher, "Provenance Research in the Collection of Historic Musical Instruments in Vienna: Background, Configuration, and Practice," in *Private Passion—Public Challenge: Musikinstrumente sammeln in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Dominik von Roth and Linda Escherich \(Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net-ART-Books, 2018\), 195–204.](#) ↑
46. [Ibid., 196.](#) ↑
47. [Ibid.](#) ↑
48. [Bundesministerium Kunst, Kultur, öffentlicher Dienst und Sport, Kommission für Provenienzforschung, "Provenance Research and Restitution in the Austrian Federal Collections,"](#) accessed June 29, 2024. ↑
49. The conference "The Spoliation of Musical Instruments in Europe 1933–1945," held at the Philharmonie de Paris in 2022, for example, featured contributions from provenance researchers active in the two Viennese museums. ↑
50. [Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, "Provenance Research."](#) ↑
51. [Löscher, "Provenance Research," 197.](#) ↑
52. [ICOM, International Council of Museums, *CIMCIM Bulletin*, 2016, no. 1, 14; ICOM, International Council of Museums, *CIMCIM Bulletin*, 2017, no. 1, 12.](#) ↑
53. This is particularly evident in Stephan Turmalin's publication, *Die Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien während der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus* (Vienna: Mandelbaum,

2018), which includes a preface by historian Oliver Rathkolb. Turmalin's work questioned the legitimacy of the acquisitions of instruments of the GdM by the SAM during the National Socialist era and the lack of contemporary reflection on the narratives surrounding the formation of the collection. This critique, which was not well received by the staff of the SAM, led to a public rebuttal, published on the collection's webpage: [Rudolf Hopfner, Beatrix Darmstädter, and Alfons Huber, "Stephan Turmalin's *Die Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente des KHM in Wien während der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus* \(The KHM Collection of Historic Musical Instruments in Vienna under National Socialism\), Vienna, 2018: A Rebuttal," Vienna, 2018.](#) ↑

54. Original wording: "[trägt] zum kulturellen Selbstverständnis unseres Landes und international zu Österreichs herausragender Position als 'Land der Musik,'" from the collection's mission statement, found on the wall of one exhibition room in the Marble Hall Vestibule of the Neue Burg (facing the Alma Rosé Plateau of the Haus der Geschichte Österreich). ↑
55. [Löscher, "Provenance Research," 204.](#) ↑
56. [Christian Klösch, *Inventarnummer 1938: Provenienzforschung am Technischen Museum Wien*, Technisches Museum Wien 4 \(Vienna: TMW Editions, 2015\).](#) ↑
57. [Ibid., 110-11.](#) ↑
58. [Ibid.](#) ↑
59. [Ibid., 63-66.](#) ↑