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Gideon Klein's String Trio: A Study

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GIDEON KLEIN’S STRING TRIO: A STUDY

By

Robyn Clair Savitzky

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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GIDEON KLEIN’S STRING TRIO: A STUDY

Robyn Clair Savitzky

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This essay explores Gideon Klein’s identity through a study of the String Trio he composed at Terezín, a Nazi concentration camp outside of Prague. How did labels placed on this work influence his identity and music? How do modern classifications affect the music today? Works composed in concentration camps are often labeled “Holocaust music.” Today, such works are frequently programed in memorial concerts, a framework which lends itself to an oversimplified understanding of music’s role in the Holocaust. Through examining Klein’s String Trio within a performance and musicological context, this essay aims to answer questions about identity in music and addresses specific performance and programming suggestions.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Czech, Jewish, and German identity is a highly complicated subject, on which volumes of scholarship exist.¹ In the Czech lands, from its early history through the end of World War II, Czech and German identities clashed fiercely. Often caught between these two cultures and identities, the Jewish community struggled to find its place. During World War II, the racial policies of Nazi Germany further complicated these issues of nationality and identity. The Nuremburg laws officially defined who was Aryan and who was Jewish, based on heritage. These laws therefore classified people in a manner incongruent with how they categorized themselves. Naturally, the musical nationalism of composers at the time of the Holocaust is equally or perhaps, more complex, making this subject incredibly rich and fascinating. In this regard, the distinguished Jewish music scholar Philip Bohlman notes:

Such works do not portray nationalism mono-chromatically. They raise questions about the relation of national identity to other forms of identity. On a particularly tragic level, we witness the search for identity in the powerful works of Jews incarcerated and later murdered in concentration camps.²


Gideon Klein is one of many composers whose identities were the subject of scrutiny.³ The events of the Holocaust devalued and prematurely ended his life. Klein was a prisoner at the Terezín concentration camp outside of Prague.⁴ During his internment, he continued to compose a variety of musical works. Scholars have focused primarily on the vocal works composed and performed at Terezín and less on the instrumental music from the camp.

Using theoretical frameworks of nationalism and cultural identity, my essay seeks to explore how Klein expressed his national identity in the String Trio he composed at Terezín. How did the categorical labels, which the Third Reich placed on this work, influence his identity and music? How do these labels and modern classifications affect the perception and understand of this music today? Through examining Klein’s String Trio within a performance and musicological context, this essay aims to answer questions about identity in music as well as address the ways in which we may begin to reframe our approach to music from this enigmatic moment in time.

**Justification and Importance**

There are innumerable ironies and complexities surrounding music of the Holocaust and the cultural and musical life at Terezín. While there is a great deal of scholarship concerning the vocal works composed and performed at Terezín, there is comparatively less study regarding the string chamber works produced there. This essay

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³ Other frequently studied composers interned with Klein include Pavel Haas, Hans Krasa, and Viktor Ullmann.
⁴ Theresienstadt in German. Throughout this study, I use the Czech Terezín.
focuses on just one of the numerous pieces that Klein and other composers wrote while incarcerated at Terezín.

On a personal note, as a Jewish string player passionate about chamber music, this topic is deeply meaningful to me. This essay represents an intersection of my scholarly, artistic, and personal interests. During my undergraduate studies at New York University, I spent the fall semester of 2006 studying in Prague. While there, I took a course on modern Jewish history that covered the complex history of Czech Jewry. In Prague, I first learned about and visited the Terezín camp. Surprised when confronted with the paradoxical cultural life at the camp, this sparked great curiosity in me about the composers and musicians interned there.

**Review of Related Literature**

There is an extensive body of scholarship written about music in the Holocaust, specifically about cultural life at Terezín. Understandably, there is a deep fascination with the act of music making in such times of terror. Through extensive research and survivor testimony, scholars have established that music existed in various forms throughout Nazi concentration camps. However, Terezín’s unique role as a propaganda tool in the Nazi war machine permitted, and even encouraged, a deeper cultural life at the camp. Despite the anomalous situation concerning sanctioned cultural activity, conditions at Terezín were similar to other concentration camps. Overcrowding, disease, hunger, and death were commonplace. While Klein was deeply involved in the vast cultural activities, not all who were imprisoned there were able to participate in these events. Moreover, Terezín ultimately served as a transition camp for Jewish prisoners on their way to extermination.
camps. I discuss the specific details of the establishment of Terezín as a concentration camp and the Nazi propaganda operation in Chapter 3.

Important sources for this study include historical accounts of musical life at Terezín, scores, and recordings. First published in 1984, Joža Karas’s seminal book *Music in Terezín, 1941-1945* inspired scholars to conduct additional research through the 2000s, and the author published a second edition of the book in 2008. Karas’s book chronicles musical life in the camp and profiles various composers and musicians who were active there. *Music in Terezín* laid groundwork for even deeper research, and brought attention to many lesser-known cultural figures. While Karas’s book remains “the definitive work” on music at Terezín, it depicts mostly positive views of musical life at the camp. Recent scholars have challenged this representation of culture at Terezín.

Amy Lynn Wlodarski’s chapter “Musical Memories of Terezín in Transnational Perspective” addresses the narrow lens through which scholars and musicians have viewed musical life at Terezín over the last two decades. Wlodarski stresses that memorial performances of, and a great deal of scholarship about, music from Terezín perpetuate a mythologized “image of the camp in our cultural memory, where it serves as a symbol of musical humanism and Jewish strength.”

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8 Ibid, 58.
Francesca Haig’s 2013 article “Introduction: Holocaust Representations Since 1975,” addresses the ways in which representations of the Holocaust have changed over the last decades.\(^9\) Haig discusses the concept of Holocaust piety:

In her 1996 book, *Mourning becomes the Law*, Gillian Rose coins the term "Holocaust piety" in a discussion of Spielberg's *Schindler's List*. Claims for the "ineffability" of the Holocaust are mobilized, she argues, to aid in the construction of sacralized, oblique representations that "protect us from understanding" or engaging with the Holocaust experience in its complexity.\(^10\)

While themes of redemption continue to underscore many representations of the Holocaust across disciplines, scholars increasingly question this piety, bringing awareness to the problems surrounding the “memory industry.”\(^11\) Memorial concerts that capitalize on the redemptive narrative surrounding works from Terezín fit within this problematic industry.

While Michael Haas’s 2013 book *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by Nazis* primarily focuses on German-Jewish musicians, the author does touch upon composers from Terezín whose Czech orientation dominates their music. Of the Terezín composers, Haas writes:

The important composers working in Theresienstadt – Pavel Haas, Gideon Klein, Hans Krása and Viktor Ullmann – have become fairly well known, and their works are becoming a regular feature of the concert repertoire. All, with the exception of the younger Klein, were en route to becoming established composers before internment. Klein’s genius was one of the many tragic miracles of Theresienstadt, his brilliance not becoming evident until he was imprisoned and long after his death.\(^12\)

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\(^10\) Ibid.

\(^11\) Ibid.

\(^12\) Haas, 270.
The author goes on to discuss the Czech elements of both Kráša’s and Haas’s writing. Although Klein is absent from this portion of the chapter, the following is relevant to Klein and this study: “Czech music was a product of what Max Brod – journalist, composer, Janaček translator and Kafka biographer – called 100 per cent Czech, 100 per cent German and 100 per cent Jewish.”

Czech musicologist and composer Milan Slavický’s book *Gideon Klein: A Fragment of Life and Work* pieces together the biographical details of Klein’s short life, sheds light on his personality, and lists the composer’s lost and surviving works. *A Fragment of Life and Work* also includes English translations of brief essays Klein wrote as a student and at Terezín.

In the 2002 German language book *Studien zur Instrumentalmusik von Gideon Klein*, Paul Schendzielorz provides an overview of Klein’s instrumental works from the composer’s years in Prague and Terezín. Schendzielorz contextualizes these works as a product of Klein’s Czech orientation and the various musical styles permeating early 20th century Europe, including impressionism, the high expressionism of the Second Viennese School, and the specific means by which Bartok utilized folk music.

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In 2006, the journal *Tempo* published Robin Freeman’s “Excursus” on Gideon Klein, Viktor Ullmann, and other composers at Terezín. In the article, Freeman rails against the commonly held conceptions about the composers interned at Terezín:

The literature on the Terezín composers has been, on the whole, tendentious, seeing them primarily as ‘Jewish martyrs to Nazism’ when it would be unwise to ascribe any collective political ideology to them. It is only now really becoming understood that the high tradition of Moravian music, descending from Janáček through Hába, was a victim first of the camps and then of the indifference of a Soviet client state set up on the ruins of a Nazi protectorate.

Additional resources on Terezín history and the musical culture there include the online archives and holdings of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem, and The Jewish Museum of Prague. I also use journal articles and dissertations on violinists who performed in the camp and music in concentration camps. Galit Gertsonzon Fromm’s 2012 document “Musical Expressions in Times of Uncertainty: A Study of Gideon Klein's Songs Opus 1 (1940)” explores Klein’s musical expression during the uncertain time before his transport to Terezín.

There are a number of other recent theses and dissertations concerning music at Terezín. Isidora Kabigting Miranda’s 2011 thesis “Art and Artifice: The Limits of Creativity and Identity in Operas from Theresienstadt” investigates operas by two other

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17 Ibid, 38.


composers interned at Terezín, Viktor Ullmann’s *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* and Hans Krása’s *Brundibár*. Miranda’s aim to “strike a balance between careful analyses of each [work] in their own terms and the new meanings they have subsequently adopted as artistic works documenting a phenomenon of survival” is a goal I also strive to meet throughout my study.21

In Nir Cohen’s 2014 Working Paper “Gideon Klein: Life and Music,” the author contextualizes Klein’s music within the Czech musical tradition. Cohen provides biographical information on Klein and details regarding the composer’s time at Terezín. The paper includes overviews of Klein’s piano sonata and vocal music, as well as the string trio. Additionally, the author was able to access primary sources and inspect elements of a score that included erased markings for a string trio with variations on a Hebrew theme that Klein began and subsequently abandoned.

Another important resource is The OREL Foundation, whose website has many articles from scholars currently conducting research on works produced at Terezín. Part of the organization’s mission is:

> To encourage interest in and, especially, the performance of works by composers suppressed as a result of Nazi policies from 1933 to 1945 in order to allow the greater musical community of today and tomorrow the opportunity to determine the place of these composers and their works in the history and canon of twentieth-century music.22

In Michael Beckerman’s 2010 article for the Orel Foundation entitled “What Kind of Historical Document is a Musical Score? A Meditation in Ten Parts on Klein's Trio,” the

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author explores the questions that arise when attempting to interpret information found within the trio.\textsuperscript{23}

In an article published in 2000, authors Jascha Nemtsov and Beate Schroder-Nauenburg explain one factor in the revival of many forgotten musical works written by Jewish composers in concentration camps: “The German post-war generation, burdened with a sense of guilt for crimes they did not commit, shows a particular interest in the investigation and revival of the exterminated Jewish culture.”\textsuperscript{24} The authors assert that from the 1990s-2000, musicologists in Germany turned their attention to persecuted Jewish composers:

> At the Music Academy in Stuttgart and at the Center of Contemporary Music in Dresden extensive archives were founded containing scores, records, and literature about Jewish composers. These materials are the basis for concert programs, festivals, and CD recordings. Research projects about particular composers were carried out and the results were published in the series "Verdrängte Musik" [Repressed Music] by von Bockel in Hamburg. The music publishers Schott (Mainz) and Bote & Bock (Berlin) printed complete editions of the composers from Terezín. In Berlin the association “Musica Reanimata” was founded, whose purpose is the rediscovery of works by persecuted composers. In Hamburg, Freiburg, and Dresden research activities for ostracized music and music in the Holocaust were established.\textsuperscript{25}

Following the initial resurgence of interest in “repressed” or “degenerate” music, and the successive recordings, publications, and performances of such works through the 1990s, this music remains largely marginalized.

Nemtsov and Schroder-Nauenburg further explain that while the context of the


\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
Terezín works attracted audience interest in Germany and other countries, there were soon adverse consequences:

What had a favorable effect at the beginning soon proved to be an obstacle. Although the critics uniformly judge these compositions to be of high musical value, the works have not yet found their proper place in the general concert repertory. In the awareness of the music manager this music is inextricably linked to its original history and so it remains reserved largely for the area of memorial music.26

One goal of this essay is to contextualize Gideon Klein’s string trio in order to shed light on its place in 20th century music, and to provide some suggestions for presenting the work outside of the scope of memorial music. Viewing music from the Holocaust exclusively as music of ‘spiritual resistance’ is both limiting and problematic. In order to recontextualize Klein’s trio, one must gain a deeper understanding of both his musical and cultural background. To this end, in addition to scholarship regarding Klein and music written at Terezín, I also use literature relating to theories of nationalism that pertain to both Czech cultural identity and music. Significant scholars on these subjects include Michael Beckerman, Philip Bohlman, and Pamela Potter.

The German-centric Model of Nationalism

Since Willi Apel’s classic Harvard Dictionary article on nationalism, scholars have perceived nationalism as a phenomenon of nations on the center and peoples on the periphery, the dominant, “superior” German nation and culture, and those who react against it.27 While this is an extremely narrow and limiting model, it is exceptionally

26 Nemtsov and Schroder-Nauenburg, 97.

relevant to the historical moment when Nazi Germany’s racial classifications
criminalized Czech and Jewish identity.

Pamela Potter has traced the roots of German musicology, uncovering its anti-
Semitic trends, predating Hitler’s rise to power.28 Over the course of the 18th and 19th
centuries, through literary channels, writings about music, and later, music itself, music
and Germanness became synonymous.29 Hitler politicized the Germanness of music in
the extreme. The Third Reich labeled most modernist music and art as “entartete Kunst,”
or degenerate art. Utilized as an instrument of propaganda, this term was reserved for
work by Jewish artists or any art that was produced by someone considered politically
undesirable, “racially impure,” or un-German. Atonal music and jazz were both targeted
genres. The Nazi regime aimed to degrade all facets of modern culture because Hitler
saw modernism as a symptom of national decline.30 In reality, however, jazz was
immensely popular among German soldiers and persisted throughout the war.
Additionally, modernist and serial composers continued to succeed due to their political
standing with the Reich.31 These contradictions represent the arbitrary nature by which
members of the Third Reich established what they deemed acceptable aesthetic values.

Even in the 21st century, there is extra meaning ascribed to the music of the
Holocaust. Bohlman asserts that “the music of the Holocaust has been transformed by the

28 Pamela M. Potter, Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic

29 Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, “Germans as the ‘People of Music’: Genealogy of an
Identity,” in Music and German National Identity, eds. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1-35.


neglect of musical scholars at the end of the twentieth century into the music of the exotic Other.”

The personal identities of the composers did not match the propaganda of the Third Reich, nor do they necessarily match the nationalistic identities ascribed to them by scholars. It is important to ask, as the renowned musicologist Richard Taruskin does in his *Grove Dictionary* article on nationalism: “First, who is doing the distinguishing? And second to what end?”

Often, German-Jewish identity is the primary focus of studies pertaining to cultural identity in the Holocaust. Wlodarski’s states:

> When stripped of their citizenship and ability to perform freely, many German Jews experienced a form of traumatic disenfranchisement that ultimately alienated them from a culture they had considered theirs. At Terezín, this cultural dislocation continued with policed repertory lists and the assembly of a polyglot Jewish community that performed in at least three primary languages: German, Czech, and Hebrew. As a result, many Jewish survivors describe the war as a time of personal crisis, in which they were forced against their will to redefine themselves ethnically, religiously, and culturally.

What of the non-German Jews incarcerated at Terezín? Regardless of nationality, the prisoners must have grappled with their various, multifaceted identities under conditions of racial persecution and imprisonment.

**Labels and Representations of Art Music from Nazi Concentration Camps**

The label of “Holocaust” music or “Concentration Camp” music does not always provide an accurate description of music composed during this time and in these

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34 Wlodarski, 69.
locations. The composers and musicians who wrote and played music at Terezín (and other camps) had complex and varied backgrounds; the music they composed and performed reflected their diverse experiences. In Shirli Gilbert’s book *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps*, the author states that she specifically excludes music from Terezín due to the problematic way in which the camp “has come almost exclusively to represent musical activity in the ghettos and camps.”[^35] It is my hope with this limited study to challenge the current way in which so many mythologize music produced in concentration camps. Additionally, Gilbert addresses the rhetoric of music from Nazi camps as ‘spiritual resistance,’ stating that her study: “Challenges the widespread and simplistic conception of music as spiritual resistance, a conception based on unrealistic assumptions about inmate solidarity and the possibility of resisting Nazism’s calculated policy of dehumanization.”[^36] While Gilbert’s case studies are from non-Terezín camps, this essay aims to achieve a similar goal, in encouraging contemporary performers to reevaluate the way in which they present music of the Holocaust.

In addition to the categorical labels of “Holocaust music” or “Concentration Camp music,” many CDs and concert performances of this music continue to carry the labels of “degenerate” or “suppressed.” Italian pianist Francesco Lotoro conducted extensive musicological research in order to produce a CD encyclopedia of music composed in concentration camps between 1933 and 1945.[^37] While this CD series does not


[^36]: Ibid, 3.

categorize the works contained within them as “Concentration Camp” music, the liner notes specify that the music composed includes: “Operatic and symphonic works, chamber music, instrumental music, piano music, Lieder and chorale music, cabaret, jazz, religious hymns, popular and traditional music.” Additionally:

The composers were imprisoned, deported, murdered — some even survived — but all were of different national, social and religious backgrounds. They suffered different fates in prison, transit and labor camps, concentration and death camps, POW camps [...] and military prisons.38

This essay explores Gideon Klein’s unique circumstances; specifically relating to the string trio he composed at the Terezín concentration camp.

38 Lotoro.
Jewish Identity in the Czech Lands

Klein’s music can be situated within the historic setting of the Czech lands, where Celtic, Germanic, and Slavic tribes first settled in the 8th and 9th centuries. Jews lived in the Czech lands as early as the 10th century. By the 11th century, Prague emerged as a major center of Ashkenazi culture. The status of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia paralleled the Jewish situation elsewhere in Europe. Countries ghettoized and often expelled Jews within their borders. Though they did endure significant persecution, Jews living in the Czech lands also experienced times of relative tolerance and increased freedoms.

From 1637-1781, the Czech people went through a period of major Germanization under Habsburg rule. During this time, the only official language was German, a regulation that lasted until the 19th century. In 1781, Emperor Joseph II abolished serfdom. This step led to the Germanization of the Jews; they were required to adopt German family names, which they chose from lists. In 1788, the government mandated Jews to serve in the Austrian army. In 1850, Joseph II abolished the ghettos and, by 1861, Jews had the opportunity to own land.

With the closure of the ghettos, the process of assimilation began. Jews had to decide whether they wanted to assimilate as German or Czech. The trend at this time was to speak German, since many Jews spoke Yiddish, a language derived from German. A very small number of Zionists left for Israel. Generally, Zionism was less pervasive in
Bohemia and Moravia than elsewhere in Europe. Jews in the Czech lands did not experience the same level of persecution as in Poland and Russia where pogroms were widespread and commonplace. Therefore, there was not a strong desire to leave Bohemia and Moravia.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, during the Czech National Revival, a major movement surfaced to reclaim the Czech language. Due to Germanization, only peasants and the illiterate spoke Czech. This undertaking resonated with many in the Jewish community who wished to be nationally Czech, and Jewish only by religion. Consequently, the Jewish community printed the first Czech language prayer books in 1884.

The Czech National Revival was a unique national movement in that it did not seek autonomous nationhood from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Instead, its goals were to elevate the Czech language and culture, as well as gain rights within the empire. The Czech lands did not obtain autonomy until the conclusion of World War I in 1918.

Jewish identity in the Czech lands remains a complex topic. From the late 1960s through the early 1980s, the Jewish Publication Society of America released three volumes titled *The Jews of Czechoslovakia: Historical Studies and Surveys.*

Within these volumes, scholars chronicle the role Jews played in various aspects of Czechoslovak history. Musicologist Paul Nettle’s chapter is especially pertinent. Nettle’s essay details Jewish musicians active in cultural life from the 17th century

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through 1968. Nettle addresses a handful of Czechoslovak Jewish composers who both perished in, and survived concentration camps. Gideon Klein appears only in a footnote.

Due to the rapid shift from Nazi to Soviet control at the end of World War II, Czechoslovakia had little time to process the events of the Holocaust. Since the Velvet Revolution, researchers have been able to access previously unavailable records and reports more readily. Accordingly, scholars are now questioning the narrative of Czechoslovakia’s First Republic government during the interwar period, as well as investigating the Holocaust’s role in Czech and Slovak history and cultural memory.

**Early Life - 1941**

Gideon Klein was born in 1919, one year after Czechoslovakia gained independence. The youngest of four siblings, Gideon was born into an assimilated Czech-Jewish family in Přerov, Moravia. The Klein family appreciated cultural values and, when young Gideon showed an aptitude for music, the family decided that he should receive the best academic and musical education. In order to achieve this objective, Klein moved to Prague and lived with his older sister Eliška, who was already studying there. Eliška’s studies in Prague also indicated that the family was progressive and wanted the best education for their children.

In September of 1938, the same year of Klein’s graduation from grammar school, England, France, Italy, and Germany signed the Munich Agreement, allowing Hitler to annex the area of the Sudetenland, which covered the borderlands of Czechoslovakia in

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41 In 1989, peaceful protests dubbed The Velvet Revolution lead to the end of Communist rule in Czechoslovakia.

which many ethnic Germans resided. Though the intention of this agreement was to appease Hitler, the Reich proceeded with plans to invade Czechoslovakia. In 1939, shortly following the Austrian Anschluss, which annexed the country as part of Germany, the German army invaded Czechoslovakia and established the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

The German establishment of the Protectorate meant the implementation of the Nuremburg laws restricting Jewish rights. Initially, in 1939, Klein studied musicology at Charles University and composition at the Prague Conservatory with Alois Hába, but the following year, laws closing Czech institutions and excluding Jews from education ended Klein’s studies. In October 1940, Jews could no longer leave the Protectorate. In September 1941, all Jews were required to wear the yellow badge. The Nazis banned Jewish composers, playwrights, and musicians from public performance. A handful of professional artists did not let these prohibitions deter them, and for a short while, they found ways to perform publicly. Klein continued to give piano performances under the pseudonym Karel Vránek. This was a dangerous activity, as it put both the Jewish performers and the gentile concert organizers and attendees at risk.43

In late January 1940, Klein gave his final public appearances. A culture of clandestine performances emerged; these secretive concerts foreshadowed cultural life in Terezín. From 1940-41, Klein gave concerts privately. During this period, he, his sister, and a handful of others taught music lessons to children at the Jewish Orphanage in Prague.44 In addition to halting Klein’s public concertizing, due to the ban on Jewish

43 Karas, 4.
44 Ibid., 16.
travel, the young artist was unable to take advantage of a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London. By late 1941, Jews could no longer own many items, including musical instruments.

**Transport to Terezín - Death**

In December 1941, the SS deported Klein to Terezín as part of a group known as the second building command, charged with setting up the camp for thousands of prisoners to come. When families arrived at the camp, husbands, wives, and children were separated. Klein illegally provided education for the children. Slavický explains: “In addition to political guidance, which at the time seemed to him primordial, he organized for his wards literary evenings, reciting from memory Czech and world poetry, lectured on music etc.”45 Over the next three years, Klein was a driving force in the artistic activities at Terezín. I discuss Klein’s impact on cultural life at the camp in Chapter 3.

On October 16, 1944, the SS deported Klein and many other musicians interned at Terezín to Auschwitz. Upon arrival at the death camp, Klein survived “selection” and, unlike many of his fellow musicians on the transport, did not die in the gas chambers there. Instead, he was included on another transport to Fürstengrube, a subcamp of Auschwitz. At this forced labor camp, he faced harsh prison conditions and hard physical labor. After about three months, as the eastern front advanced, the SS lead about 1,000 Jewish prisoners on a “death march” westward, leaving behind ill and weak prisoners. Conflicting survivor testimony leaves an unclear picture of the exact events leading to

45 Slavický, 16.
Gideon Klein’s death. It is likely that the SS shot Klein on January 27, 1945 during liquidation of the camp.\textsuperscript{46}

**Compositional Output**

Fortunately, most of Klein’s Terezín works survived the war. Before his transport to Auschwitz, the composer gave his manuscripts to his girlfriend at Terezín, Irma Semtka, who survived. Klein’s sister also survived and after liberation, Irma gave the compositions to Eliška in Prague. For many years, scholars only had access to Klein’s Terezín works, so the common belief was that he emerged as a composer at the camp. While it is true that the young artist grew substantially as a composer during his time at Terezín, the discovery of his pre-war compositions informed the way in which we view Klein’s compositional development. In 1990, a friend of the Klein family discovered “a suitcase that had remained unopened since the war—and in this suitcase were almost all Klein's compositions from the period preceding Terezín.”\textsuperscript{47} Before and during his imprisonment, the composer wrote woodwind and string chamber music, works for piano, and vocal pieces.

Milan Slavický divides Klein’s compositional output into three stages. He defines the first period as 1929-1938 before Klein’s formal instruction. The second, 1939-1940, when he briefly studied with professor Alois Hába at the Prague Conservatory and


\textsuperscript{47} Slavický, 28.
learned about more complex compositional approaches. Klein’s third period took place during the composer’s internment at Terezín (1942-1944). Slavický explains:

Klein's composition reached its peak in the Terezín ghetto, where he spent almost three years, from the age of 22 to 24, and matured as both man and musician. In the feverish cultural life and in that uncertain time with its constant threat of death, creative personalities were no doubt also stimulated by a subconscious desire to create as much as possible, to express to the full their artistic convictions and to leave behind clear artistic testimonies. It goes without saying that Klein had to limit his choice of scoring (in Terezín he could write only for the piano, for vocal and chamber ensembles).

During Klein’s second compositional stage, he wrote five works for strings: *Four Movements for String Quartet* (1938), *Duo for Violin and Cello* (1938-1940), a quarter-tone *Duo for Violin and Viola* (1940), *Preludium for Solo Viola* (1940), and *String Quartet, Op. 2* (1940-41). While at Terezín, he composed a Fantasy and Fugue for string quartet in addition to the String Trio.

Böte & Bock first published and made Klein’s works available as a print collection in 1993. Subsequently, numerous ensembles and soloists have recorded the works. A list of recordings of the String Trio appears in Appendix A at the end of this document.

Before his internment, the composer often collaborated with top-tier string players in Prague, serving as the pianist for various trios, quartets, and quintets. He consulted his

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48 Slavický, 28.

49 Ibid.

string-player friends regarding the virtuosic possibilities on their respective instruments.\textsuperscript{51}

Overall, Klein’s works for strings demand a high level of technical facility.

CHAPTER 3
TEREZÍN

Establishment as a Concentration Camp

First built by Emperor Josef II between 1780 and 1790 as a garrison town to protect the Czech lands from Prussian invasion, the Nazis established Terezín as a concentration camp for mostly Czech and German Jews during World War II. In October 1941, the Reich discussed ghettoizing the Jews of the Protectorate and decided to build a transition camp at Terezín. The SS appointed a group of Czech rabbis and other Jewish leaders to run the camp. This group, known as the Altestenrat (Council of Elders), hoped that “resettlement” within Czech boarders meant protection from transports to the already established concentration camps in the East. In November of the same year, the first transports from Prague to Terezín began. Unfortunately, soon after the establishment of Terezín, the SS began deporting prisoners from Terezín to harsher concentration camps and death camps.

The initial transport carried 242 young Jewish men known as the Aufbaukommando or AK (building command). The SS required these young men to set up the existing barracks of the fortress town to accommodate thousands of Jews. Until their arrival at Terezín, the Nazis misled the deportees to believe that they could return to their homes on the weekend. The detainees also believed they would earn money that

52 Ironically, the Habsburg Empire destroyed Czech autonomy in 1621 and subordinated the Czech lands for the subsequent 300 years.

53 The Nazi operation established Auschwitz in 1940. The SS deported most of the Jewish prisoners from Terezín to Auschwitz where they died in the gas chambers.
would be sent to their families. Instead, the SS subjected the prisoners to abuse. They had to sleep on bare floors for the first nights and had no provisions from the Nazis.\textsuperscript{54} Protectorate Jews may have been more likely to believe these lies because of the aforementioned sense of security they felt in Bohemia and Moravia, despite the increasingly restrictive racial laws.

The Terezín camp was unique in its role in Hitler’s “Final Solution.” Initially conceived as a transition and labor camp, later the Nazis deceptively called it a “spa” for older distinguished German Jews. In fact, many prominent German Jews paid large sums of money to retire to the “Terezín Spa.” This deception fueled the prior cultural clash between Czech and German prisoners at Terezín. Due to international pressure, the camp evolved into the “model” settlement and propaganda tool for which many remember it today. While music existed in many Nazi concentration camps, cultural activities at Terezín were unlike the music and art at other camps.

Throughout its years of operation, deportations were a defining characteristic of life at Terezín. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, between January 9, 1942 and October 22, 1942:

The SS and police [deported] 42,005 people, most of them Jews residing in the Protectorate, from Theresienstadt to killing sites, killing centers, concentration camps, and forced-labor camps in the Baltic States, Belorussia, and the Generalgouvernement. 224 are known to have survived the Holocaust (one half of one per cent of those deported).\textsuperscript{55}


Additionally, from October 26, 1942 to October 28, 1944:

German SS and Police deport approximately 46,750 Jews from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 27 transports. Approximately 23,670 had been residents of the so-called Greater German Reich and 18,500 residents of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Perhaps 3,450 survive.\(^{56}\)

The SS gave the Jewish Administration orders regarding the numbers, age groups, and nationalities of prisoners to deport. It was up to the self-administration to determine which prisoners to send to the East. For some time members of the AK, as well as artists used to bolster the facade of the camp as a model Jewish settlement, were immune from transport.

**Propaganda Film and Red Cross Visit**

The artists and musicians of the camp provided the services needed to stage both a Red Cross visit and a propaganda film. In September of 1943, the Nazis arrested about 500 Danish Jews and transported them to Terezín where they arrived the following month. This deportation raised questions within the international community and ensuing pressure led the Germans to permit a delegation from the Red Cross to visit the camp in June 1944. In order to prepare for this visit, the SS hastened deportations in order to alleviate overcrowding and “beautified” the camp. The Nazis had the prisoners plant gardens and renovate the barracks. They mounted plays, musical performances, and lectures for the Red Cross delegates\(^{57}\)

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The SS also transported the famous German-Jewish actor Kurt Gerron to Terezín where they coerced him to produce a propaganda film, meant to show neutral nations that the Nazis were treating Jews well in their “resettlement.” The Nazis did not air this film during the war; small fragments of the footage remain. In an article about the propaganda film, the Holocaust scholar Natasha Drubek notes that:

Other German films shot in ghettos or camps have no original sound—they rely on the ideological voiceovers. This makes the Theresienstadt film an exception. The camera benevolently records the faces and voices of the inmates that later in the final cut will be exploited. These images and sounds were provided by people, the majority of whom by that time had been sent to the gas chambers. This filmmaking procedure is completely in line with the Nazi concept of maximum utilisation [sic] of the Jewish prisoners, even after their death.58

**Klein’s Impact on Cultural Life at Terezín**

Rafael Schächter, a composer, pianist, and choral conductor, was a part of the first transport to Terezín (AK I). As Nick Strimple notes: “Informal evenings of music-making began in the barracks virtually immediately, with the inmates singing folksongs together, an activity that may have been organized by Schächter.”59 In December of 1941, shortly after the first deportation from Prague to Terezín, Klein spent three days in internment until his transport to Terezín as part of the AK II. This second building command included 1,000 young, single Jewish men. Despite the bleak conditions, as one of the earliest prisoners of the camp, Klein joined forces with artists such as Schächter and was a driving force in the cultural and educational life of Terezín.

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The deportees were only permitted to bring about 110 pounds of belongings. Some members of the second Aufbaukommando were able to smuggle contraband instruments into Terezín. Although Klein did not bring any instruments into the camp via the transport, he performed on a legless piano. Contradictory accounts about the arrival of this piano at Terezín exist. To accommodate the influx of Jewish prisoners, the Nazis forcibly removed Czech residents living in the region. It is possible that the prisoners discovered the piano in the camp, or they may have secretly brought it there from a local abandoned residence.

Because the Nazis imprisoned so many prominent cultural figures at Terezín, a rich cultural life quickly developed there. At first, secret performances, concerts, and shows took place.\textsuperscript{60} When the Nazis discovered these events, they did not forbid them. Instead, on December 28, 1941 the SS officially mandated them “so-called ‘Kameradschaftsabende’ (evenings of fellowship), and this encouraged their rapid upsurge.”\textsuperscript{61} By 1942, the evenings of fellowship evolved into an extremely well organized Freizeitgestaltung (Administration of Free Time Activities), which the SS command formally authorized.\textsuperscript{62} Officially condoning these activities was one of the ways in which the Nazis propagandized Terezín.

Members of the Free Time administration had better living conditions and were exempt from hard labor. The Self-Administration appointed Klein director of the instrumental music department within the Freizeitgestaltung. His piano performance and

\textsuperscript{60} These initial pre-Freizeitgestaltung performances, rehearsals, and meetings were not sanctioned and were rather dangerous.

\textsuperscript{61} Karas, 12.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
compositional talents were in high demand. In addition to giving immensely popular recitals and composing original works, he arranged a variety of national and Hebrew folk songs for the ever-growing choral groups.

Although the SS considered the myriad cultural activities occurring at Terezín “degenerate,” and forbid such art throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, these happenings occurred nightly in the concentration camp. While the SS encouraged these artistic endeavors and used them as a means to deceive the international community, they did not closely monitor the artists and musicians.

Excepting a handful of works and performances, the prisoners maintained a great deal of artistic freedom.63 The artists performed lectures, plays, cabarets, and concerts for audiences of fellow prisoners. Although the cultural life at Terezín was vast and impressive, the activities were not available to all of the prisoners there:

Indeed, many people in the ghetto looked askance at the very idea of concerts and other presentations; others, wishing to attend performances, were forbidden to do so. Generally, and often, in the face of starvation, disease, lack of sanitation, abusive psychological and physical circumstances, and the constant daily deaths, resentment came frequently to the fore. An awareness of the causes of potential and actual social strife had an impact on the cultural activities, including music, and may not have necessarily served the interests of everyone.64

63 While the self-administration questioned Rafael Schäcter’s decision to perform Verdi’s Requiem due to the implications of Jewish prisoners singing a Catholic text, he and his choir persisted and presented numerous performances. The administration did stop the production of a play that directly mocked Hitler.

CHAPTER 4
OVERVIEW OF KLEIN’S TRIO

Form and Musical Language

Klein completed his string trio for violin, viola, and cello on October 7, 1944, nearly three years after his initial imprisonment and nine days before his deportation to Auschwitz. The trio is in three movements: “Allegro,” “Variace na téma Moravské lidové písne” (Variations on the theme of a Moravian Folksong), and “Molto vivace.”

Though the middle movement is the only directly programmatic part of the trio, Movements I and III have a distinctively Czech character. These outer movements have a lighter character that contrasts with the bleaker theme and variations. Combined, the outer movements are shorter than the slow, elegiac middle movement. The two brief, spirited movements serve as a frame for the central theme and variations.

Movement I

In the first movement, Klein uses drone-like figures in the lower strings and melodic material that features scalar passages and often uses trills. The composer’s use of drones and trills in this movement calls to mind associations with Moravian folk music. The movement is in 3/4 and develops thematic material within a three-part form.

The violin and viola establish an ostinato with spiccato sixteenth notes and pizzicato eighth notes respectively (Example 4.1). In measure three, the cello enters with a four-bar disjunct modal melody (Example 4.2). In mm. 7-10, the ostinato pattern drops to the viola and cello while the violin takes over the melody. The texture thickens as all
three voices play double stops in mm. 11-14 (Example 4.3). In measure 14 there is a

*ritenuto* into the second theme area.

**Example 4.1:** Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, measure 1.\(^{65}\)

![Example 4.1](image)

**Example 4.2:** Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, mm. 3-6.

![Example 4.2](image)

**Example 4.3:** Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, mm. 11-12.

![Example 4.3](image)

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\(^{65}\) All musical examples from *String Trio* by Gideon Klein: Exclusive sub-publisher for Western-Europe, Israel, U.S.A., Canada, Mexico, South America, Japan & Australasia: © Copyright by Helvetica & Tempora SPOL S.R.O. Praha © Copyright 1944 by Bote & Bock Musikverlag GMBH Boosey & Hawkes/Bote & Bock GMBH & Co., Berlin. Reprinted by permission.
In this next theme area, beginning at measure 15, the viola and cello carry on an ostinato figure, which uses the same rhythmic motive (four sixteenth notes followed by a half note) and a similar downward contour as the final bar of the first theme. This ostinato is less active; the half notes serve as a drone-like figure. The violin enters in measure 17 with thematic material developed out of the first melodic statement; this theme has a narrower range than the first (Example 4.4).

**Example 4.4:** Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, mm. 17-21.

Ten measures into the second thematic material, the viola takes over the theme with a one-bar solo, which then leads into a fortissimo cannon-like section on the second theme material for five bars (Example 4.5).

**Example 4.5:** Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, mm. 26-28.
At measure 32, there is another two bar intro, or transition, using the initial ostinato in the viola and cello (Example 4.6).

**Example 4.6: Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, measure 33.**

This transition leads to an extended, developmental section where the violin plays fragments from the first theme area for eight bars (Example 4.7).

**Example 4.7: Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, measure 34.**

In the following 11 bars, mm. 41-51, Klein subverts the established rhythmic feeling of three by alternating between a 3/4 and 6/8 feel (Example 4.8).

**Example 4.8: Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, mm. 46-47.**
The composer uses fragments from each of the thematic areas throughout the remainder of the movement, concluding with the violin and viola on a quiet drone, and the cello with two final, bitonal pizzicato chords (Example 4.9).

**Example 4.9: Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, mm. 78-80.**

![Example 4.9: Klein, *String Trio*, movement I, mm. 78-80.]

**Movement II**

In the second movement, Klein uses a folksong entitled “Tá kneždubská věž” (The Kneždub Tower). The English translation of the opening text is:

The Kneždub tower is high,
A wild goose flew up to it

Go Janicek, get the rifle
Aim it at the tower
He shot the goose

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67 Beckerman, “Meditation.”
Although it is impossible to know Klein's reason for picking this folksong, the text is rife with symbols. Beckerman writes: “The song offers suggestive images of a tower, wild geese, and a heartfelt farewell, and these we cannot ignore in trying to imagine what Klein might have wanted to communicate.”\textsuperscript{68} Additionally, the composer conveys a deep sense of a tragedy through his distortion of the main theme (Examples 4.10 and 4.11).

**Example 4.10: Klein, *String Trio*, movement II, mm. 1-4.**

![Example 4.10: Klein, *String Trio*, movement II, mm. 1-4.](image)

**Example 4.11: Klein, *String Trio*, movement II, mm. 153-156.**

![Example 4.11: Klein, *String Trio*, movement II, mm. 153-156.](image)

\textsuperscript{68} Beckerman, “Meditation.”
Beckerman questions the timeline of this composition and whether Klein was making a statement about his impending transport to the death camps. Many scholars have asserted that while transports from the camp to the East were commonplace, and a defining character of life at Terezín, the prisoners were largely unaware of what awaited them. Contradictory survivor testimony makes it impossible to know what exactly the Terezín inmates knew, and when. Whether the composer was cognizant of his fate seems irrelevant. After his imprisonment at Terezín under deplorable conditions and after witnessing so much death, sickness, and suffering, the composer had a great deal of tragedy to express. The following statement describes the staggering number of deaths at Terezín:

The appalling overcrowding, sanitary conditions and malnourishment led to the spread of diseases amongst the population of the ghetto. In 1942, 15,891 people died in Theresienstadt, half of the ghetto’s population. More than 155,000 Jews passed through Theresienstadt until it was liberated on May 8, 1945; 35,440 perished in the ghetto and 88,000 were deported to be murdered.69

Klein used a folksong from his native region that contains themes of freedom and death. After the initial statement of the theme in Movement II, the variations quickly depart from the original melody. The harmonies become more dissonant and the theme grows significantly less recognizable. A strong feature of the folksong is a dotted figure (sixteenth note-dotted eighth) that is reminiscent of Bartók. Klein uses this figure throughout the variations. The first variation lasts for 12 measures. The character is quieter and builds to a climax six bars in (measure 16). The cello plays two bars of the dotted figure while the viola and violin enter with a new melody without the dotted

figure. The cello joins the violin and viola, completing a statement of this melody in all three voices.

In the 20-bar second variation *Ancora piú mosso*, the cello brings back the dotted figure, this time tied to a quarter note, while the violin and viola play a pizzicato eighth-note countermelody atop the cello line. Klein begins to further vary the rhythm by including eighth-note triplet and quintuplet figures. The third variation is 19 measures long and is marked *Allegro feroce*. The composer varies the rhythm even more with the meter alternating between 5/8 and 4/8. This variation also utilizes quicker, sixteenth-note scalar passages.

The meter in variation four, *Andantino*, remains in 5/8. It is comprised of two repeated eight-bar phrases in a piano dynamic, marked *espressivo* in select moments for the viola and cello. The fifth variation, *andante mesto*, lasts for 20 measures and is in 3/4. The violin begins with a poignant syncopated melody; the viola and cello punctuate beats two and three with pizzicato chords. The violin brings back the dotted figure while the viola and cello play underlying pizzicato triplet and straight eighth-note figures. In measure 87, ten bars into this variation, the cello “interrupts” with a solo marked *con sordino*, and *con gran espressione quasi improvisator senza rigore*. This interruption leads back to the dotted figure from before. Beckerman speculates that this interruption refers to Verdi’s Requiem:

In the end, none of us can say precisely what the cello interruption in Klein’s Trio means. I have ideas: that it is a setting of one of the lines from Verdi’s Requiem, which Klein accompanied for dozens of rehearsals and performances, perhaps the Libera me with its descent to eternal death; that it represents a nod towards the Jewish Mourners Kaddish in other words, that it is a prayer for the dead.70

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Variation six, *Allegro scherzando*, returns to the initial 2/4 meter and exclusively uses pizzicato eighth notes in all three voices. Klein staggers the entrances and contour of the lines. The next variation begins with four bars of sixteenth-note triplets alternating between the upper strings and the cello. As they trade off the triplet figure with the cello, the upper voices again play the dotted eighth-sixteenth note figure. This brief section transitions into another stretto-like pattern of running sixteenth notes with some interjections of the dotted figure in the violin.

Harsh drones in the lower strings accompany the folksong when it returns in the final variation marked *Grave*. The end of the movement, which lacks any sense of harmonic resolution, closes in a suspended state.\(^7\)

**Movement III**

The final movement, *Molto vivace*, brings the listener back into the realm of a more lighthearted folk dance in duple meter, with asymmetrical meters inserted periodically. Throughout this movement, there are capricious solos, which again utilize fast scalar material, on top of offbeat pizzicato and drone-like textures. Once more, Klein’s writing recalls Moravian folk dances. The composer develops two main themes within a three-part form.

The first theme appears in the violin with sixteenth-note and quarter-note figures beginning in measure 5 (Example 4.12). Klein transitions from the first theme to the second using rapid, descending scales traded between the voices. In measure 51, the viola

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has the first statement of the second theme, an 11-bar statement marked “burlesco” (Example 4.13).

**Example 4.12, Klein, *String Trio*, movement III, mm. 5-7.**

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Example 4.12, Klein, *String Trio*, movement III, mm. 5-7.
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The burlesco theme has a more conjunct contour and longer note values. The violin takes over the theme in measure 63 while the viola and cello play a chromatic quarter-note passage underneath (Example 4.14).

**Example 4.13, Klein, *String Trio*, movement III, mm. 52-58.**

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Example 4.13, Klein, *String Trio*, movement III, mm. 52-58.
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**Example 4.14, Klein, *String Trio*, movement III, mm. 63-65.**

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After the violin statement, there is a brief, stretto-like transition back to the first thematic material (Example 4.15).
After the transition, the cello plays the first theme, which is then fragmented and varied throughout the voices. Again, in mm. 168-170 a brief, rapid scalar transition leads to a return to the second theme (Example 4.16). The piece ends with a short coda that incorporates fragments of both themes.

Expression of Czech National Identity

In most every Klein biography, whether in books about the composers at Terezín, encyclopedic entries, or within CD liner notes, authors identify the composer’s main
musical influences as the “prevalent musical trends in Czechoslovakia at the time—the Viennese chromaticism of Schoenberg and Berg, and the national, folk-based style of Janáček. The string trio belongs to the latter world.”

Klein utilizes material reflective of his Moravian roots. At Terezín, the composer began writing a string trio based on a Hebrew melody, yet abandoned that work. Many assert that while some of the composer’s earlier works from his first compositional period do utilize Jewish themes or titles, Klein’s Judaism had little impact on his composition. Klein had a secular Jewish upbringing and like many other Czechoslovakian Jews of the period, likely identified primarily as Czech and secondarily as Jewish.

The preexisting cultural schism between Czechs and Germans did not vanish at Terezín. Although all prisoners endured the same harsh conditions of the camp, the national groups remained largely separated. German and Czech lectures, plays, operas, cabarets, and concerts occurred in different locations or at varied times. According to interviews with Paul Kling, a survivor and violinist at the camp profiled in Aleeza Nmirovsky Wadler’s 2003 doctoral essay, the German and Czech groups did not intermingle much. Kling remembers Klein as the official pianist of the Czech activities, asserting, “Everything about Klein was a Czech thing.” Kling also states that of the musicians who composed at Terezín “Klein’s music was most influenced by Moravian Folk Music.”


74 Wadler, 52-3.

75 Ibid., 55.
Regarding Klein’s self-understanding and influences, Beckerman notes:

Klein knew exactly who he was, or at least as much as anyone else, and he certainly knew where he was; and Janáček was a critical part of his identity in that time and place. And that is a primary reason why his Trio, mixing elements from so many different worlds, is one of the great works to come out of Terezín, or any other place.\textsuperscript{76}

In his essay from the camp titled “On the so-called political education of young people,” Klein explains the cultural clash between adults who wished the children to have an education in Hebrew and in Judaism. Many of the children, largely steeped in Czech culture, had no connection to this kind of education.\textsuperscript{77} His prose helps the reader to understand his liberal, assimilated political orientation.

\textsuperscript{76} Michael Beckerman, “Klein the Janáčkian,” 31.

CHAPTER 5
PERFORMANCE AND PROGRAMMING SUGGESTIONS

Performance History

While many recognize Klein’s String Trio as a masterwork, artists perform and record the work almost exclusively as memorial music. This practice of presenting music written at Terezín in this manner proves problematic:

According to the historian Wolfgang Benz, there is a long-standing 'myth of Theresienstadt' that has been built up through the many memorial concerts and performances of 'Music from Theresienstadt'. This myth carries with it a tremendous danger of 'fictionalizing the historical place'.

Exclusively programming the piece as memorial music propagates an overly simplistic narrative of cultural life in Terezín and prescribes specific “meaning” behind music composed in concentration camps. This limits how audiences can experience the trio. Once one knows the circumstances under which Klein composed the piece, these seem inseparable from the work itself. Regardless, performers can avoid perpetrating the stigma surrounding Terezín by interpreting the trio not only as a product of Klein’s internment, but also as a product of his 20th century cultural and musical understanding.

It is important to review the trio’s history, its reception, and how scholars, performers, and audiences understand the piece. While Klein did present a number of his compositions at Terezín, sources conflict regarding whether musicians performed the string trio at the camp. While the trio is absent from Slavický’s list of Klein’s works

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performed in Terezín, Louise Mary O’Sullivan cites survivor testimony describing a string trio performance in her thesis entitled “Selected Performances and Compositions of the Theresienstadt Ghetto (1941-1945): An Examination of Music, Memory and Survivance.”

Previous transports from Terezín during the fall of 1944 took away many of Klein’s close string-playing colleagues with whom he frequently collaborated. Slavický asserts that Klein composed the trio for musicians who were less technically skilled than his regular collaborative partners were.

The first post-war performance of Klein’s trio occurred at a concert on June 6, 1946 by the Přítomnost association in Prague. The composer’s former professor Alois Hába introduced this concert and members of the Czechoslovak Quartet performed the trio. It is difficult to imagine what the first interpreters of the trio thought of the work. Would the performers and audience have been familiar with the Moravian theme of the second movement? What, if any, extra meaning did they ascribe to the music?

After these initial performances of Klein’s music in post-war Czechoslovakia, the composer’s works did not receive attention again until the late 1960s. Slavický’s list of selected post-work performances of Klein’s works shows that in 1968 members of the Kohon String Quartet first performed the trio in the United States. Perhaps the group


80 Slavický, 50.


82 Ibid, 120.

83 Ibid, 121.
was able to obtain the music due to the brief Prague Spring of that year. From the 1970s onward, especially since the mid-1990s when Böte and Bock published Klein’s works in a complete print collection, groups in France, Israel, the United States, and beyond have performed and recorded the trio. The Boosey & Hawkes website lists 44 performances of Klein’s trio since 1999 to date. The archive lists only two performances in the United States. While the work has certainly received more than two performances in the United States, and over 44 total, it is interesting to note that performances in Germany are abundant and that the trio is probably better known in Europe.

In 1990, Vojtěch Saudek, editor of Klein’s works in print, arranged *Partita for String Orchestra* after Klein’s string trio. Perhaps Saudek chose the title to refer to Martinů’s *Partita for String Orchestra* composed in 1931. The Sächsisches Kammerorchester Leipzig premiered Saudek’s arrangement under the baton of Israel Yinon on January 1, 1991. Since its premier, there have been at least 81 additional performances of *Partita*. Like the string trio, the select performances listed are predominantly in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, with some in the United States, Israel, and South Korea. Various youth orchestras have also performed this work globally.

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Performance Suggestions

As previously stated, Klein wrote this work for players who did not have the same technical facility as the musicians with whom he was accustomed. It is impossible to know what the result would have been had Klein composed the trio for his more advanced colleagues. Nevertheless, while the work is relatively straightforward, it is not without its challenges. The trio is accessible for advanced student groups as well as professional ensembles. The main difficulties include the rhythmic complexity and some awkward passages. Additionally, tuning can prove challenging at times due to Klein’s utilization of bitonal, chromatic, and polytonal sections.

In the first movement, the bowed, sixteenth-note ostinato figure that appears first in the violin and later in the viola can be somewhat awkward. For the viola figure, it is helpful to play this figure on the string, with a small amount of bow, and in second position. While Klein indicates a spicatto bow stroke for the violin, the viola is marked détaché. For the second theme, keeping the bow on the string helps to facilitate clarity in the stretto-like entrances and give adequate power to the sixteenth-dotted eighth-note figure.

Movement II, is it is the bulk of the trio, poses the most challenges. The movement is demanding musically and the transitions from variation to variation require attention. Although most variations have a fermata on the bar line separating one from the next, allowing time for the performers to shift character as well as set tempos and dynamics, each transition from variation to variation requires adequate preparation and communication. In the third variation, the meter shifts from 4/8 to 5/8 necessitate consideration. Likewise, the transition from running sixteenth-note triplets to straight
sixteenth notes in measure 123 requires careful subdivision. In the final variation, balance can prove problematic from measures 139-144. While all three voices are marked piano, if not balanced correctly, the violin may struggle to overcome the dense texture of the chromatic double stop drones in the viola and cello. The lower strings may wish to play with less presence until the group dynamic reaches forte in measure 144.

The third movement poses some additional rhythmic challenges. Similar to variation three in the middle movement, the transition between 4/8 and 5/8 may be problematic. Measures 126-138 comprise the most difficult section of the third movement. Rapid shifts in meter from 5/8 to 6/8 to 4/8, with accents that can confuse the pulse, prove especially challenging. Furthermore, the sixteenth-note passage in the violin and viola in measures 27 and 28 requires slow practice for rhythmic accuracy, intonation, and clarity of the line. Performers should also abide by the subito dynamics to maximize the effect of Klein’s writing.

Errata

In preparing this work for performance, I came across two errors present in the published score of Klein’s trio. In measure 53 of Movement I, the viola E♮ should be a quarter note instead of an eighth note (Example 5.1).

Example 5.1, Klein, String Trio, movement I, m. 53.
In measure 172 of Movement III, the C♮ in the violin should be a C♯ (Example 5.2).

**Example 5.2, Klein, *String Trio*, movement III, m 172.**

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**Programming Suggestions**

String quartets represent a great deal of the exceptional works found in the vast repertoire belonging to string chamber music. Overall, there are fewer string trios, and of the existing works for violin, viola, and cello, only a handful are exceptional. Klein’s trio is historically fascinating, and there are many accounts affirming that both audiences and performers enjoy the work. In order to take Klein’s trio out of the realm of memorial music and contextualize the work within the string chamber music repertoire, performers could program the piece alongside other string trios. Examples include Beethoven’s trios and Dohnányi’s *Serenade* for violin, viola, and cello. Another approach is to program the piece with other Czech chamber works by composers such as Dvořák, Smetana, Janáček, Martinů, Hába, and Novák. One could expand this category to include other European composers such as the pioneers of the Second Viennese School (Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg), whose influence on Klein is apparent in some of his other compositions.\(^\text{88}\)

Performers can also program Klein’s trio with works by Bartók, Stravinsky, and beyond.

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\(^{88}\) The Schoenberg influence is especially apparent in Klein’s Piano Sonata, also composed at Terezin in 1943.
Performers, historians, and musicologists often classify Terezín works as “Holocaust music,” a label that conveys messages that may or may not have been inherent at the time of the works’ inception. The term “Holocaust music” carries connotations of despair and oppression as well as Jewish identity. While this music was indeed composed under horrific conditions, the composers wrote these pieces in order to maintain some semblance of normalcy, and to sustain themselves both artistically and spiritually. As Viktor Frankl illustrates in *Man’s Search for Meaning*, those who maintained intellectual, spiritual, or artistic pursuits were those who managed to survive the atrocious conditions of concentration camps longest; the loss of hope was literally deadly.\(^89\) Klein was an ambitious young artist with a promising career, looking towards a post-war world. His drive and immense contributions to cultural life at Terezín sustained him and inspired other “residents” of the camp.

Before World War II, major Czech cities such as Prague and Bruno were vibrant, fertile places for innovation.\(^90\) National Socialism interrupted the Czech musical trajectory. It displaced and destroyed many of the personalities who spearheaded Czech cultural activities:

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\(^{89}\) Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Salt Lake City, UT: Beacon Press, 2006), 75.

The Munich Pact (1938), the formation of the independent Slovak state (1939) and the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia (1939) complicated and progressively limited Czech musical life, which during World War II was conducted within the framework of Hitler’s Reich (1939–45). The inter-war avant garde was dispersed and individual European national cultures were isolated.\textsuperscript{91}

Fortunately, increased interest in so-called ‘degenerate’ music lead to the discovery of many works thought to be lost, and in Klein’s case, it illuminated his creative personality and informed our understanding of the young pianist and composer. Sadly, the way in which this music has been framed since the upsurge of study in the 1990s is more often than not, as “Holocaust music.” Using this umbrella term leads to oversimplification of the events that transpired during the Holocaust. Furthermore, framing Klein’s string trio and other Terezín works in this way perpetrates misleading myths about the circumstances under which creativity takes place. By reimagining and re-contextualizing the string trio as music in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century Czech musical idiom as well as acknowledging its historical place and time, we can continue to honor Klein’s memory in a light divorced form the circumstances of its composition.

\textbf{Suggestions for Further Research}

As previously stated, there is far more research regarding the vocal works composed and performed at Terezín than string chamber works. In the future, I plan to study Klein’s other works for strings. Klein’s pre-war string works and the \textit{Fantasy and Fugue} for quartet composed at Terezín deserve further scholarly investigation. Additionally, I hope to research Viktor Ullmann’s third string quartet in the context of Ullmann’s life, identity, and specific worldview. There are numerous other string pieces

\textsuperscript{91} Pukl and Smaczny.
composed by prisoners at Terezín and other camps that merit re-contextualization and deeper study. How did the unique circumstances, identities, and personalities effect the compositions of other musicians in concentration camps? How can contemporary scholars and performers best represent the composers and their music?

Future related studies might benefit from a recently announced library project. In April 2015, the Prague Post reported that the Prague library plans to digitize the works of many Czech Jewish authors and musicians including “the works of the generation of the so-called Theresienstadt composers.”92 When complete, this project will allow scholars and performers to readily access the works of these cultural figures.

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_____. *Chamber Music from Theresienstadt*. Hawthorne String Quartet. Channel Classics CCS 1691. 1991. CD.


APPENDIX A

RECORDINGS OF KLEIN’S STRING TRIO

*Indicates a recording of the Partita for String Orchestra, arranged from the trio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamber Music from Theresienstadt 1941-1945</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Channel Classics</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>Böhmen &amp; Mahren: Music of Jewish Composers*</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Koch Schwann</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gideon Klein: Chamber Music</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplifting Discoveries from a Generation Lost: Music of Composers Who Died in the Holocaust</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Centaur</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forbidden, Not Forgotten (Suppressed Music from 1938-1945)*</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Empire Music Group</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forbidden Music: Music from Theresienstadt</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Nimbus Records</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pieces For Violin, Viola And Violoncello</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Gnosis Brno</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Orchestra Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra; Martinu: Memorial to Lidice; Klein: Partita for Strings*</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Ondine</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beethoven, Klein, Purcell: String Trios And Fantasies / Goldberg-trio Bonn</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>CAvi-Music</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZ Musik: Encyclopedia of Music Composed in Concentration Camps (1933-1945), vol 10/24</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>MusikStrasse</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nash Ensemble: Brundibár Music by Composers in Theresienstadt (1941–1945)</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Hyperion</td>
<td>2013</td>
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