

Professor emeritus Dr. Andrew D. McCredie AM FAHA

Tintorettostraße 1/II
80638 München
Germany
Tel/FAX 089/1782325

Musician Exiles in Australia

Under the general title "Musiker-Exil in Australien", a colloquium was organised from May 3rd to 5th at the Zentrum für zeitgenössische Musik (Centre for Contemporary Music) at Dresden (founder Professor Udo Zimmermann). It was the first ever event to present Australia's role as a recipient land for musicians who either voluntarily or involuntarily sought refuge or who were deported there in the years 1938 to 1941, the high point of the holocaust period (1933-45) and in the early stages of the Second World War.

No less than four composers and music scholars, all of them long identified with Australian musical life and development, participated in this event. The composers, originally refugees or deportees, were George Dreyfus and Felix Werder, both of Germano-Judaic origins. They delivered papers and were presented in two "portrait chamber music concerts", the works including George Dreyfus' Sextet for Wind Quintet and Didgeridoo, as well as a new Song cycle and a composition for saxophone quartet and percussions by Felix Werder. The scholars included Professor Alphons Silbermann of Cologne who pioneered the first Music Sociology at the NSW State conservatorium of Music during the directorate of Sir Eugene Goossens (1947-56), and the expatriate Professor of Musicology at Adelaide University Andrew D. McCredie, now resident in Munich. Professor Silbermann addressed the colloquium, retrospectively denying any immediate influence of German-speaking exiles on Sydney's musical life during the war and the early post-war years and pointing to their difficult way to recognition. Professor McCredie delivered a detailed paper on the present state of research concerning the exile of musicians in Australia.

Dr. Albrecht Dümling, the director of Musica Reanimata Berlin, who had toured Australian universities in 1995, had conceived and organized an interdisciplinary programme that was expanded by eyewitness contributions, e.g. Walter Kaufmann's reading of his fictionalized experiences on the notorious deportation and refugee ship "Dunera", or Professor Klaus Loewald's report of the cultural life in the internment camps, such as that at Tatura in Victoria.

Another noteworthy feature of Dr. Dümling's comprehensive programming were lectures on various aspects of musical life in Sydney, the challenge of multiculturalism in musical life, the broader cultural history of German migration to Australia, the investigation of exile literature in Australia as well as a discussion on the terminological refinement on concepts of deportation, exile and emigration. Attention was also drawn to a new Australian focal point provided through the establishment in

1994 of the Jewish Musical Archive and research centre at Monash University. Professor Johannes Voigt presented an overview of German cultural emigration to Australia from 1838 onwards, Professor Gerhard Stilz an analytical and bibliographical survey of German exile literature in Australia. Professor Hanns-Werner Heister deliberated on the ideological precepts underlying the revisionist tendencies in the terminology of exile, Professor Wolfgang Benz reported on the problems of deportation, emigration and refugee status, Dr. Albrecht Dümmling on Berlin musicians in Australia.

The distinguishing mark of this conference was indeed its combination of musical performances and the multidisciplinary view of music within a broader cultural context embracing historiography, literary theory and history, as well as the sociology of emigration and refugee status.