

Fragmented Encounter

Piecing together the life and music of Schönberg's student Ernst Bachrich

Beginning in 1924, Schönberg formed the idea of a “Life Story in Encounters.”¹ In 1944, this project took form in a fragmented collection of notes in which he listed the names of friends, publishers, relatives, artists, musicians, critics and students. The names span from well-known to names that are only known through their relationship to Schönberg. Schönberg included Ernst Bachrich in the list of his students about whom he intended to write.² In 1944, Bachrich was unknown in the United States, but he had been instrumental in the Society for Private Musical Performances in Vienna, had music published and performed internationally, had performed on the BBC Radio, and had held opera positions in Austria and Germany.³ After his death in a concentration camp in 1942, however, his life and work were mostly forgotten and the record reduced to fragments.

My interest in Bachrich started around a dozen years ago when I found a few pieces for cello by him. At that time, I found that he was a pupil of Schönberg's, but I could not find much more information. Over time, I found Bachrich's other extant scores, newspaper reviews and announcements, letters, postcards, programs, posters, short – usually specific – mentions of him in secondary literature, and a couple of photographs.⁴ While none of the documents or pieces of information seemed substantial on its own to me, each of them was exciting to find and, when taken together, I felt I was beginning to see a larger picture of his life and musical contributions. The fragments started to form a kind of mosaic. While it is not a complete picture of his life and musical

1 Lebensgeschichte in Begegnungen (1924) (ASSV 5.3.8.9.).

2 Arnold Schönberg: [Lebensgeschichte in Begegnungen] (~1944) (ASSV 5.4.), [Inhalt] (ASSV 5.4.2 | Arnold Schönberg Center, Wien [T42.03]).

3 Matthew Vest: Ernst Bachrich, in *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit*. Edited by Claudia Maurer Zenck, Peter Petersen and Sophie Fetthauer (Hamburg 2018), https://www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00002845 (27.02.2024).

4 My research on Ernst Bachrich was supported by a Walter Gerboth Award from the Music Library Association and a Research Grant from the Librarians Association of the University of California.

contributions, I will share the traces of his biography that I have been able to uncover. I'm intrigued in particular by the stories that his self-published scores tell – and when they leave the story incomplete. Who printed them? How were the paper and printing materials sourced? Under what conditions were they dispersed? How did they end up where they are at present?

Ernst Bachrich was born in Vienna on May 30, 1892 to Isidor Bachrich and his wife Julie, born Eisler. I have not found any documentation that he is related to the well-known Viennese Bachrich family of musicians: Sigismund, the opera composer and Albert, the jazz musician. Bachrich enrolled in the Law Faculty at the University of Vienna from 1911 to 1915, but he did not graduate from there, presumably he received his doctorate in law from another institution.⁵ His time as a student of Schönberg is easily the most documented part of his life. After studying law, music increasingly took a more prominent role and by age 22 in 1914 several of his chamber performances had been noted in the press. Through the mid-teens of the 20th century he continued to study music, first with Carl Prohaska and Carl Lafite in 1916/17, and from June 1916 on with Arnold Schönberg.⁶ In 1918/19, he participated in Schönberg's composition seminar and he was instrumental in the Society for Private Musical Performances from its very beginning. He was in attendance in June 1918 when Schönberg worked out the plan for the society.⁷ Bachrich continued to have instrumental roles in the society as he served as the secretary and as one of the most utilized preparers and pianists.⁸

While Bachrich was a student of Schönberg's he composed *Sonate für Klavier*, op. 1, but it wasn't published until 1933. A copy of the *Sonate* survived in his publisher Doblinger's archive and was republished in 2015.⁹ Schönberg's influence is apparent in some of the harmonies. It moves fluidly between consonance and dissonance and between having a clear tonality to using an extended harmonic language. The *Sonate*, and many of his other chamber compositions have been issued in a recent CD from EDA.¹⁰

Towards the end of their teacher-student relationship, there may have been tension between Schönberg and Bachrich. In 1921 Bachrich performed Schönberg's *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* with Erika Wagner. Berg wrote to Schönberg of the premiere, "*Your songs, sung by Wagner, [...] were very beautiful*

5 Thomas Maisel, Archiv der Universität Wien, email message with author, March 17, 2017.

6 Art. Dr. Ernst Bachrich, in *Das Jahrbuch der Wiener Gesellschaft. Bibliographische Beiträge zur Wiener Zeitgeschichte. 1929* (Wien 1929), 29.

7 Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt: *Schoenberg. His Life, World and Work* (New York 1978), 252.

8 Ibidem, 254.

9 Ernst Bachrich: *Sonate für Klavier* (Wien: Doblinger 2015).

10 *Ernst Bachrich: Music for Piano Solo, Violin Sonata, Songs*. Lola Rubio (soprano), Anna Christin Sayn (violin), Alexander Breitenbach (piano) (compact disc, EDA 2019).

[...] *Bachrich was impossible.*¹¹ Schönberg replied, “[...] *Too bad Bachrich accompanied. Couldn’t you have waited for Steuermann?*”¹² A few days later, Bachrich wrote to Schönberg, “*I think I owe you this detailed explanation*” and offered his point of view on the rehearsals.¹³ It’s not clear how his explanation was received. While working on a Schönberg biography in 1972, Stuckenschmidt wrote to Trauneck about the possible “revolution” towards the end of the society and added that he had recently met with Rudolf Kolisch, who believed that Bachrich was in opposition to Schönberg at that time.¹⁴ I think it is important to acknowledge, though, that this information is being relayed 50 years later and second-hand. Unfortunately, the few details we have about this relationship aren’t enough to produce a full picture.

Although the documentation available after his studies with Schönberg is reduced, I was able to continue to piece together Bachrich’s musical contributions through letters, periodicals and his published compositions. The entries in the 1928/29 *Jahrbuch der Wiener Gesellschaft*¹⁵ were likely the major source for all subsequent biographical mentions, including the 1938 American publication *The MacMillan Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians*.¹⁶ The *Jahrbuch* gave a few details beyond his studies: Bachrich served in his first professional music post as a choral director at the Volksoper Wien from 1920 to 1925. There he worked with the then-famous conductors Fritz Stiedry and Felix Weingartner. He was also a guest conductor at the Hakoah Orchestra (from 1920 to 1925) as well as in Munich and Paris (in 1924/25). In 1921, Bachrich was considered for a position as a principal solo rehearsal pianist and choral director at the Metropolitan Opera House, a position that ultimately was not filled.¹⁷

Periodical reviews from the period directly after his studies with Schönberg tell of his ability as a musician and composer. A 1921 review described Bachrich as “*immensely subtle*” and a “*consummate pianistic companion*,”¹⁸ which contrasts with Berg’s assessment to Schönberg earlier that year. In 1923 he helped play Berg’s *Wozzeck* for Erich Kleiber at Emil Hertzka’s request, which led to its first production.¹⁹ The next year, Bachrich was both a featured

11 Alban Berg to Arnold Schönberg, January 21, 1921 (The Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Music Division [Arnold Schoenberg Collection] | [ASCC 20035](#)).

12 Arnold Schönberg to Alban Berg, January 25, 1921 (handwritten letter; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Musiksammlung [F21.Berg.1321/232] | [ASCC 601](#)).

13 Ernst Bachrich to Arnold Schoenberg, February 18, 1921 (The Library of Congress, see fn. 11 | [ASCC 18911](#)).

14 Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt to Joseph Trauneck, July 3, 1972 (Arnold Schönberg Center, Wien [Internationale Schönberg-Gesellschaft collection]).

15 Art. Dr. Ernst Bachrich, see fn. 5, 29.

16 Albert Wier: Art. Ernst Bachrich, in *MacMillan Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians* (New York 1938), 98.

17 John Pennino, Metropolitan Opera Archives, email message with author, December 15, 2015.

18 Kunst und Wissen, in *Arbeiter-Zeitung* 33/29 (January 30, 1921), 7, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=aze&datum=19210130> (27.02.2024).

19 Alban Berg to Arnold Schoenberg, November 14, 1923 (The Library of Congress, see fn. 11 | [ASCC 20106](#)).

composer in and an executive of a concert organized by the Austrian section of the International Society for Contemporary Music [Österreichisches Komitee der Internationalen Gesellschaft für neue Musik].²⁰

Bachrich's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, op. 2, was composed in 1925 or earlier and published by Doblinger in 1931. A performance at a Grevesmühl-Quartett concert in 1932 was reviewed in the April edition of *Die Musik*. Carl Heinzen noted that it was a "very fine piece, without any concession, which requires two virtuosos to be performed, both musically and technically."²¹ It was also performed in Czechoslovakia by Markéta Kubínová and Jan Kaláb on April 10, 1935.²² The University of Texas Library purchased a copy of this score from frequent Bachrich collaborator, Paul Pisk, in 1953.²³

In 1925, Doblinger published Bachrich for the first time, establishing a relationship that would last until 1933. *Drei Gesänge*, op. 3, were performed by Ružena Herlinger on the 10th of October 1925,²⁴ and a review called him "accomplished" and deemed the songs a "beautiful success."²⁵ A copy of *Drei Gesänge* was preserved by the National Library of Israel, in the collection of prominent music critic Adolf Weißmann.²⁶ Bachrich's *Duo*, op. 5, was published by Doblinger in 1926 and was his second work published by them. It was one of his most frequently performed pieces during his lifetime, and is one of only two pieces professionally recorded before the CD by EDA.²⁷ Berg corresponded with Zemlinsky about a performance of Bachrich's *Duo* at a Sedlak-Winkler Quartet concert in February 1926.²⁸

Portraits: Drei Klavierstücke, op. 6, were composed in 1927 and published by Doblinger in 1930. The only extant copy of this work survived in the Anton Webern Collection at the Paul Sacher Foundation.²⁹ The third movement, labeled "Improvisation über eine amerikanische Volksweise" was, in fact, based on Steven Foster's "Old Folks at Home" or "Swanee River," a minstrel theater song.

20 Theater, Kunst und Musik, in *Reichspost* 31/335 (December 6, 1924), 8, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=rpt&datum=19241206> (27.02.2024).

21 Carl Heinzen: Ernst Bachrich: Sonate für Violine und Klavier, op. 2. Verlag: Ludwig Doblinger, Wien, in *Die Musik* 24/7 (April 1932), 540–541, <https://archive.org/details/DieMusik24jg2hj1932/page/540/mode/2up> (27.02.2024).

22 Milan Balódy: *Život a dílo Emanuela Ambrose (1885–1955)*, Master's Thesis (Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci (2017), 132, http://theses.cz/id/2rxlx1/Balody_ivot_a_dlo_Emanuela_Ambrose.pdf (27.02.2024).

23 Ernst Bachrich: *Sonate für Violine und Klavier* (Wien: Doblinger 1931) (University of Texas Libraries, Austin).

24 Konzerte, in *Wiener Salonblatt* 56/21 (October 18, 1925), 13, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wsb&datum=19251018> (27.02.2024).

25 Kunst und Wissen, in *Arbeiter Zeitung* 38/295 (October 27, 1925), 8, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=aze&datum=19251027> (27.02.2024).

26 Ernst Bachrich: *Drei Gesänge* (Wien: Doblinger, 1925) (National Library of Israel, Jerusalem).

27 *Rare Chamber Music. Vol. 1*, Jansa Duo (compact disc, ARS 38 067, 2009).

28 Alban Berg to Alexander Zemlinsky, February 24, 1926; published in Alexander Zemlinsky: *Briefwechsel mit Arnold Schönberg, Anton Webern, Alban Berg und Franz Schreker*. Edited by Horst Weber (Darmstadt 1995), 317–318 (Briefwechsel der Wiener Schule 1).

29 Ernst Bachrich: *Portraits. Drei Klavierstücke* (Wien: Doblinger 1930) (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel [PSS AW PM 2006]).

Bachrich's arrangement of the song demonstrated his ability to reimagine existing works by other composers, something he would return to throughout the rest of his career.

In 1928, Bachrich became the conductor at the State Theater in Düsseldorf³⁰ and introduced Berg to British audiences by performing his Opus 1 on the BBC Radio.³¹ By 1931, Bachrich was both on the artistic board and a conductor at the State Theater in Duisburg.³² Many performances by Bachrich and of his music are noted in the press from 1928 to 1933. While most were in Austria, Germany and England, an April 1930 concert in Florence by pianist Helene Herschel included his work.³³ *Prelude*, which was dedicated to Herschel, was composed in 1929, engraved in Italy (likely because of Herschel), and published by Doblinger in 1930. Beginning in 1917, Bachrich and Herschel studied with Schönberg at the Seminar for Composition at the school of Eugenie Schwarzwald in Vienna.³⁴ The dedication and publishing of *Prelude* over a decade later demonstrates that Bachrich had long-term musical relationships with fellow Schönberg students. This was his first published work without an opus number, even though he continued to use them after it. I don't see the pattern of why he uses numbers for some works and not for others, but this is quite a short piece. He may have felt that it didn't merit an opus number.

Amid rising anti-Semitism, Bachrich left his posts in Germany in 1932. His career had been gaining momentum, and while it was more difficult to document his life between 1933 and 1938, the remaining evidence suggested that he continued to be active in the music community in Vienna. In late 1934 two new political works were performed in Vienna: his arrangement of *Wiener Blut*, op. 9, triggered great applause at a concert in August,³⁵ and in September his lost work *Der Letzte Appell*, which was dedicated to the *Österreichischer Heimatschutz*, was performed at a war commemoration concert.³⁶ *Wiener Blut*, published in 1933, is a rather straightforward and nostalgic arrangement of

30 Biographien aus der Wiener Schule, in *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Aufführung in der Wiener Schule. Verhandlungen des Internationalen Colloquiums Wien 1995*. Edited by Markus Grassl and Reinhard Kapp (Wien, Köln, Weimar 2002), 554 (Wiener Veröffentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte 3).

31 Jennifer Doctor: *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922–1936: Shaping a Nation's Tastes* (Cambridge 1999), 150.

32 Biographien aus der Wiener Schule, see fn. 29, 554; *Deutsches Bühnen-Jahrbuch 1931*. Edited by Genossenschaft Deutscher Bühnengehöriger (Berlin 1931), 392.

33 Theater und Kunst, in *Wiener Zeitung* 227/88 (April 15, 1930), 8, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wrz&datum=19300415> (27.02.2024).

34 Album *Dem Lehrer Arnold Schönberg* (1924) (Arnold Schönberg Center, Wien | ASCI PH4818, PH4828).

35 Tagesbericht. Von den Kurkonzerten, in *Badener Zeitung* 55/70 (September 1, 1934), 6, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=bzt&datum=19340901> (13.05.2024).

36 Tagesbericht. Von unserem Kurorchester, in *Badener Zeitung* 55/72 (September 8, 1934), 4, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=bzt&datum=19340908> (27.02.2024).

the Strauss Waltz and was recorded by Claude Cymerman and Nai-Yuan Hu in 2003.³⁷ The “Heimatschutz” was a paramilitary and anti-democratic organization primarily aligning with and supporting right-wing politicians and political movements. Of *Der Letzte Appell*, a reviewer noted “*this hymn with its heartfelt tone and its singable melody will soon be sung by all Austrians loyal to their fatherland.*”³⁸ Without further documentation, it is difficult to clearly comprehend Bachrich’s intended message in what was likely his most directly political work.

Between 1933 and 1937, Bachrich composed 4 works for voice. Like *Portraits*, the only copy of *Psalm* survives in the Anton Webern Collection at the Paul Sacher Foundation. *Osterblüte*, *Sonnenhymne*, and *L’Angelus* were preserved in National Library of Israel – the latter two were owned by singer Stella Falticzek. The poem “*Osterblüte*” was written by Greta Bauer-Schwind, a poet from Brno, and published in her collection *Licht und Erde* in 1936, after the song was composed.³⁹

Die Frühen Verse is a deceptively simple monodrama that Bachrich dedicated to Alban Berg on the occasion of his 50th birthday in 1935. The only extant copy is preserved in the Berg estate papers at the Austrian National Library.⁴⁰ The vocal part was published as a lithograph while the full score remained a manuscript. The poem was by the same poet as “*Psalm*,” Emil Arnold-Holm, the pen-name for a still unidentified Jewish Viennese poet. Arnold-Holm may have been Arnold Ascher, who was murdered in a Gestapo prison in 1938. Bachrich’s musical style was reserved in this work. It opens with a Viennese trichord, which becomes the major harmonic element for the first and last thirds of the work. Named for the Second Viennese School, the Viennese trichord can be voiced in multiple ways and includes a fourth and a tritone. The speaker is notated without note heads on the center line of a five-line staff without a clef. This notation style is appropriately more similar to Berg’s *Wozzeck* than Schönberg’s *Pierrot lunaire*. While his late style was more reserved, Bachrich continued to interact with the Second Viennese School, both socially and musically, during a time when the members were under political attack and suppression.

During this time some of his songs and chamber pieces were performed on the radio in Austria; he helped develop and produce a new music series, and he directed operas at the Volkshochschule Wien. Of the production of *Carmen* in January 1938, the reviewer wrote:

37 *Vienna Revisited*. Nai-Yuan Hu (vl), Claude Cymerman (p) (compact disc, EMI 5577142, 2003).

38 Tagesbericht. Von unserem Kurorchester, in *Badener Zeitung* 55/72 (September 8,

1934), 4, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=bzt&datum=19340908> (27.02.2024).

39 Greta Bauer-Schwind: *Licht und Erde: Gedichte* (Berlin 1936).

40 Ernst Bachrich *Die Frühen Verse: Melodram nach Emil Arnold Holm*, op. 15, n. d. (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Musiksammlung [F21.Berg.253]).

As always, Ernst Bachrich was amazing at the piano. With his two hands, which truly do enough work on the keyboard, he holds the entire performance tightly together, directs the soloists and the choir, and his playing leaves nothing to be desired in terms of vigor.⁴¹

On the evening of March the 12th, 1938 Bachrich was set to direct *Der Barbier von Sevilla* at the Volkshochschule Wien, a performance that was most likely cancelled.⁴² Earlier that day, Nazi troops had marched into Vienna, and Germany had announced the Austrian Anschluss. After that, Bachrich was officially blacklisted. In 1936 and 1938 his name was included in the antisemitic dictionary *Judentum und Musik*.⁴³ In 1939, his name was crossed out with a red line in the *Verzeichnis der Mitglieder und Tantiemenbezugsberechtigten der staatlich genehmigten Gesellschaft der Autoren, Komponisten und Musikverleger*,⁴⁴ and in 1940 he was listed in both the *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik*⁴⁵ and communications regarding expulsions from the Reichsmusikkammer.⁴⁶

Yet, there is evidence that Bachrich resisted being blacklisted. In 1938, his *Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven* was published by Goll.⁴⁷ The only extant copy of this work is held by the Austrian National Library's Department of Music. The published work bears no date or plate marks. I couldn't locate an announcement of its publication or find it listed in the *Musikalisch-literarischer Monatsbericht*. I was able to approximate its date of publication based on its premiere and a letter to Joseph Marx found in Marx's estate papers in the Austrian National Library's Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts. In the letter, dated May 23, 1938, Bachrich writes:

Dear distinguished maestro, despite the unfavorable times I dare to send you, Honorable Councilor, my Beethoven Variationen, which were published recently, and which compelled your words of appreciation and praise on the occasion of the performance last autumn. Your friendly benevolence, in word and writing, gave me great pleasure at that time. Hopefully you will still find some enjoyment with the Variations that are now in print.⁴⁸

41 Theater und Kunst, in *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* 72/24 (January 25, 1938), 10, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nwg&datum=19380125>.

42 Theater und Kunst, in *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, March 9, 1938, 10, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nwg&datum=19380309>.

43 Hans Brückner, Christa Maria Rock: *Judentum und Musik mit dem ABC jüdischer und nichtarischer Musikbessener* (München 1936) 30, (München ⁵1938), 23.

44 Published by Staatlich genehmigte Gesellschaft der Autoren, Komponisten, Musikverleger, Wien (Wien 1937), 4 (Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Wien).

45 *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik*. Edited by Theo Stengel and Herbert Gerigk (Berlin 1941), 21 (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts der NSDAP zur Erforschung der Judenfrage 2).

46 Ausschlüsse aus der Reichsmusikkammer in *Amtliche Mitteilungen der Reichsmusikkammer* 7/2 (February 15,

1940), 8 (Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde [R 56-II/22]).

47 Ernst Bachrich: *Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven* (Wien: Goll n. d.) (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Musiksammlung [MS59799-4]).

48 Ernst Bachrich to Joseph Marx, May 23, 1938 (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Sammlung von Handschriften und alten Drucken [Autogr. 801/28-1]).

The performance to which Bachrich referred must have been the last public performance of his work – and the only public performance of the *Variationen*. The performance at the Vienna Konzerthaus on October 18th, 1937, was the first chamber music program sponsored by the Austrian Composer’s Association led then by Paul Pisk and later by Bachrich and Friedrich Wildgans.⁴⁹ The publication of the *Variationen*, therefore, would have fallen between the October performance and the May letter.

Bachrich opened the letter with an acknowledgement of the political climate in which he wrote: “despite the unfavorable times,” but makes no further comment to that theme. His style with Joseph Marx was formal and he made his respect for him abundantly clear by using the honorific title “Hofrat.” By May 1938 Marx’s position must have been obvious – but his anti-Semitism may have been too. In a letter to Franz Schreker in 1933 Marx wrote, “*And as far as the Jewish matter is concerned, I explained to a Jew just a short time ago that they themselves are the ones who encouraged all matter of anti-Semitism with their absolutely indescribable actions.*”⁵⁰ Despite both the “unfavorable times” and the unfavorable new leaders of the Austrian musical elite, Bachrich sought to promote his music privately with his letter to Marx.

The notation and layout of the *Variationen* are well done, but the dynamics and expressions are set in an unusual text font. The interior of the cover lists earlier works by Bachrich available through Doblinger and another now lost work that was also available (presumably through Goll), *Kleine Ouverture*. A comparison to a few other works published by Goll in this period make it clear that while they didn’t have a “house style” for covers or fonts, they typically had an “A.” and a “G.” surround the plate numbers and utilized just one engraving company. It seems likely to me that Bachrich had this work engraved himself prior to its publication by Goll. This arrangement wasn’t uncommon, for instance, Berg paid for *Wozzeck* to be engraved before Universal published the work.⁵¹

There is another, rather peculiar, piece related to Bachrich that was published by Goll. The title page of the *Neun Klavierstücke* by Richard Eisler indicates that they were issued from his estate by Ernst Bachrich.⁵² A copy of this work exists in the Research Library in Olomouc, Czech Republic. Richard Eisler was not closely related to the composer Hanns Eisler, but may have been related to Bachrich’s mother, whose maiden name was Eisler. I was not able to find any other record of a musician by that name, but I did locate a record

49 Erster Kammermusikabend des Österreichischen Komponistenbunds, October 18, 1937; Online-Database Wiener Konzerthausgesellschaft, <https://konzerthaus.at/concert?eventid=11249> (27.02.2024).

50 Michael Haas: *Forbidden music. The Jewish composers banned by the Nazis* (New Haven 2013), 210.

51 Patricia Hall: *Berg’s Wozzeck* (New York 2011), 49.

52 Richard Eisler: *Neun Klavierstücke* (Wien: Goll 1934).

in the Austrian State Archive for a Dr. Richard Eisler who died in 1921.⁵³ The date, 1923, on the cover seems to corroborate this story. Eisler died in 1921 and Bachrich edited and published his piano pieces two years later. Except, the pieces were published in 1934 according to the *Musikalisch-literarischer Monatsbericht*.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the plate number is inconsistent with Goll: it is E.B.1. This seems to indicate a strong connection to Bachrich and that there may have been more publications planned with him and this engraver. I have found no evidence for any Bachrich publications with Goll until the *Variationen* in 1938 and that publication does not have this style of plate number. This leaves many questions unanswered: Are these pieces works by Bachrich, Eisler, or someone else? Why was the date of publication on the title page misleading? If it was to make it less clear that it was published in 1934, why was it announced in the periodical? The answers to these questions are still quite unclear to me.

In 1939 Bachrich self-published his *Sonate für Violoncello und Klavier*.⁵⁵ On the front cover, he reserved his copyright (a right he could not have legally supported in 1939), and gave the year of publication and his district in Vienna – the Leopoldstadt, which as a former ghetto had long been characterized by a Jewish population and after the “Anschluss” of Austria became a forced collection point for Viennese Jews (Figure 1). The score and part were nicely done and printed on quality paper, but they were lithographs, not engravings. A lithograph was quicker and less expensive to produce than an engraving. The cover had an attractive design that responded to contemporary aesthetics, but the font choices may give some further clues. Two of the fonts, Bachrich’s name and the title of the work, are modern, sans-serif fonts very similar to the Block Berthold typeface designed by Hermann Hoffmann in 1908. The Opus number and the copyright information are in a Roman typeface, but the rest of the text is in fraktur or blackletter type. The typeface used is Tannenberg, which was developed in 1933 by Erich Meyer and was popular in Germany and Austria. For some time, blackletter fonts were seen as distinctly German, and Roman fonts were not. The official opinion would reverse later on, but in 1939, blackletters were prized by the Nazis and it was illegal for Jewish people to use them in publications. Bachrich’s use of it might have been an aesthetic one, or it might have been used to send a signal. Bachrich was working to make his music available and, by making published copies, a copy of this score has survived. This publication also opens questions. Who was helping him publish? Who was

53 Richard Eisler, Personalstandesausweis, 1896–1921 (Oberlandesgerichtsrat am Landesgericht, Wien [AT-OeStA/AVA Justiz JM Präs. A 137.54]).

54 Friedrich Hofmeister: *Musikalisch-literarischer Monatsbericht* 106/11 (November 1934), 197, <https://archive.org/details/Musikalisch-literarischerMonatsbericht1934> (27.02.2024).

55 Ernst Bachrich: *Sonate für Violoncello und Klavier*, op. 12 (Wien 1939); Copy in author’s possession.

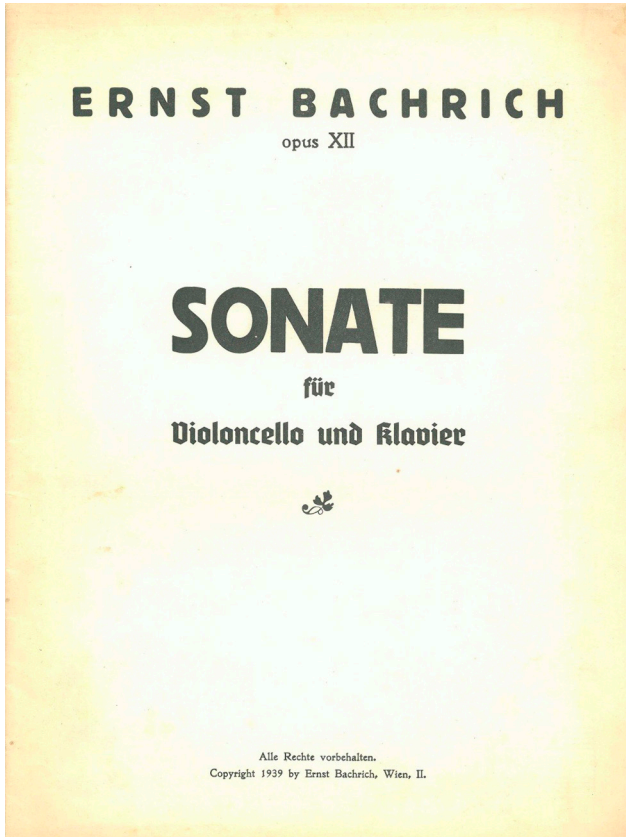


Figure 1: Ernst Bachrich: *Sonate für Violoncello und Klavier*, front cover

copying the music? How were the paper, ink and publication materials sourced? Unfortunately, there are only a few clues to help answer these questions.

On July 20, 1939, Georg Schönberg, Arnold's son and a composer and music copyist, wrote a heartbreaking letter to composer Max Deutsch. In the letter, Georg thanked Deutsch for a monetary gift and carefully referenced his efforts to get visas for his family and the possibility of selling some of his father's paintings abroad to help finance his family's survival. Towards the end of the letter he mentioned that he had been getting some small jobs from Bachrich – but they did not pay enough to cover living expenses.⁵⁶ While it isn't certain that Georg Schönberg copied the *Sonate* for Bachrich, it is likely that he was involved in the publishing of some of Bachrich's late pieces.

⁵⁶ Georg Schönberg to Max Deutsch, July 20, 1939 (The Library of Congress, see fn. 11 | [ASCC 23349](#)).

I have found copies of six other pieces that were self-published: *Psalm für mittlere Stimme und Streichquartett*,⁵⁷ *Osterblüte für Gesang und Klavier*,⁵⁸ *Elegie für Violoncello und Orchester*,⁵⁹ *Die Frühen Verse*,⁶⁰ *Sonnenhymne für mittlere Stimme und Orchester*,⁶¹ and *L'angelus. Bretonische Volksweise*.⁶² None have a date of publication, they were all composed after 1933, and all but one are lithographs. These works currently reside in quite geographically diverse institutions: the Austrian National Library, the National Library of Israel, the Paul Sacher Foundation, and Stony Brook University. *Osterblüte* is engraved in a manner strikingly similar to the *Variationen*, with the dynamics and expressions in the same unusual fonts, leading me to believe that they were likely engraved by the same person or company. The other five pieces are all carefully done lithographs. The similarity in clefs and notational style lead me to believe that they were all copied by the same person. Two of the pieces are signed by the copyist with an “A W” and one piece is signed with a symbol that seems to include an “A” (Figure 2). The paper quality for these was the lowest of the extant scores. Care was taken with them, but the lower quality materials and manner of publishing might indicate that they were among the last published works by Bachrich. However, at least one of the works, *Die Frühen Verse*, was printed for Berg’s 50th birthday in 1935. Additionally, *Elegie* was performed with orchestra in 1934 and 1935 – the first work from this group I know to have been publicly performed – and may have been published prior to its performance. Also, his *Osterblüte* and *Psalm* may have been published before performances in 1936. Bachrich may have collaborated with the same copyist to release these scores over a long period of time. It would make sense for him to have hired Georg Schönberg throughout the period, but the “A W” signature makes that less likely. Yet again, I am left with more questions.

Even in his “Registry of Jewish Assets,” Bachrich didn’t shy away from making a point. The document was first completed on July 12, 1938, and lists all of his possessions, including his piano and music library. In it he underlines “copyrights” and adds “music compositions banned in Germany.” He strikes through the space allotted for a value.⁶³ I am sure that he knew that his work would have no value to the Nazis, but he refused to either let it go without

57 Ernst Bachrich: *Psalm für mittlere Stimme und Streichquartett*, n. d. (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel [PSS AW PM 2007]).

58 Ernst Bachrich: *Osterblüte für Gesang und Klavier*, n. d. (National Library of Israel, Jerusalem).

59 Ernst Bachrich: *Elegie für Violoncello und Orchester*, op. 14, n. d. (Stony Brook University Libraries, Stony Brook).

60 Ernst Bachrich: *Die Frühen Verse: Melodram nach Emil Arnold Holm*, op. 15, n. d. (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Musiksammlung [F21.Berg.253]).

61 Ernst Bachrich: *Sonnenhymne für mittlere Stimme und Orchester*, op. 11, n. d. (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Musiksammlung [MS55026-4]).

62 Ernst Bachrich: *L'angelus: Bretonische Volksweise*, n. d. (National Library of Israel, Jerusalem).

63 Ernst Bachrich: *Vermögensmeldungen, 1938* (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Wien [File No. 12496]).

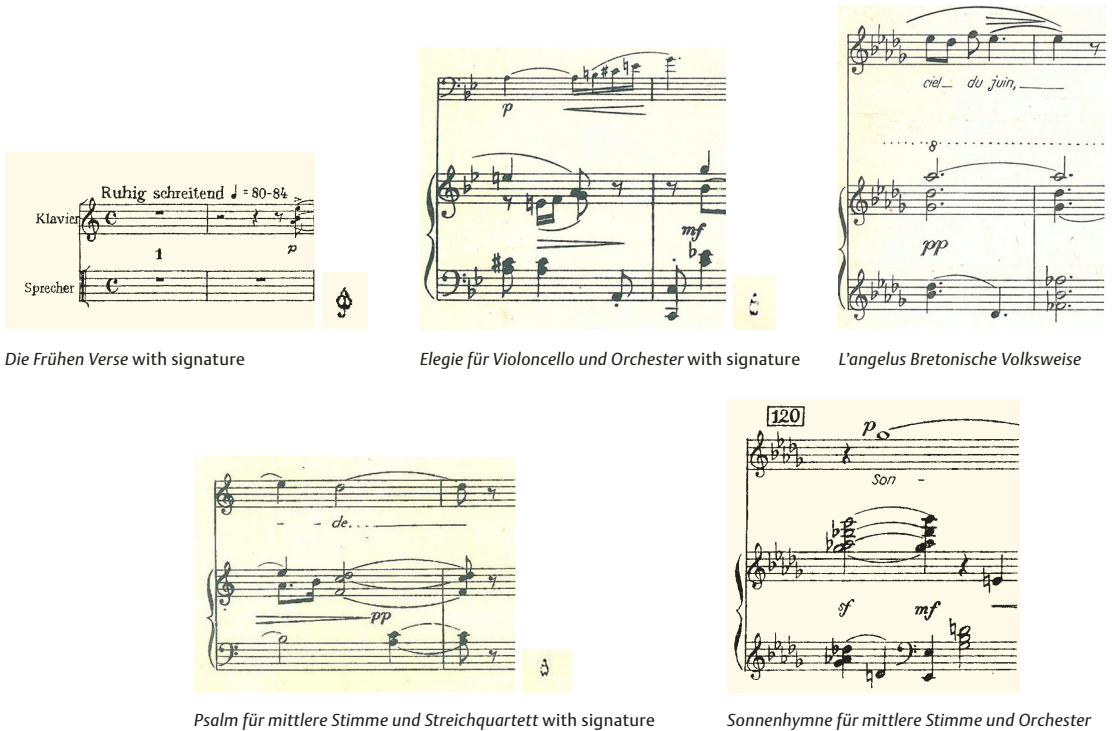


Figure 2: Score excerpts of copies of Ernst Bachrich's works with the signatures of the copyists, where available.

notice or allow it to be as severely undervalued as the rest of his belongings. On May 15, 1942, Ernst Bachrich was deported from Vienna to the Izbica ghetto located in German-occupied Poland. He was murdered on July 11, 1942 in the Lublin concentration camp. After his death, his work was mostly forgotten, except for a few references to high-profile performances and premieres.

Of his 26 known original compositions and arrangements, only 19 are fully or partially extant. Two pieces are reduced to fragments: single parts to larger chamber works. While grappling with this loss, I have considered presenting the fragments unaltered as symbols of censorship and erasure. I have also considered two ways of developing replacements for the missing parts: to make the works simply performable or to make them somewhat whole again and attempt complete reconstructions. For example, I have only been able to locate one piano part of a two-piano version of *Faust Waltzer aus Gounod's "Margarethe" nach Liszt*.⁶⁴ I believe that a new piano part can be constructed to

64 Ernst Bachrich: *Faust Waltzer aus Gounod's "Margarethe" nach Liszt*, n. d.

(Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Musiksammlung [F55.H.Weber.114]).

make the work performable. If completed, it would contribute to his body of arrangements, or re-compositions of existing works. This one being particularly fascinating because it is based on Liszt's reimagining of Gounod's Waltz.

Similar to these incomplete works, Schönberg's encounter with Bachrich cannot be fully realized. It is difficult to imagine what Schönberg might have written about Bachrich. What would he have written about how the Society ended? Would he have remembered him as opposition or as a less desirable collaborator or performer? By the time he wrote the notes in 1944, Schönberg may have known about Bachrich's murder or musical activities since 1933, but Schönberg would have most likely focused his writing on their encounter – of the period when Bachrich was his student.

The reality that what we have from Schönberg is this fragment of his autobiography – primarily a list of names of people he intended to write about. And what we are able to know about Bachrich is also fragmentary. While many of the questions about Bachrich's life and self-publishing efforts may never be answered fully, my hope is that a close reading of the extant publications and sources sheds some light on the extraordinary efforts he took to preserve and disperse his work. I also see an opportunity to continue a broad investigation of self-publishing music print culture and to continue examining blacklisted and suppressed composers in interwar Europe in order to return them towards their rightful places among musicians in Central Europe.

