Georgian Triangle Lifelong Learning Institute

March 25, 2021 – Session 1:

Human Migration and Music

Barbara Young, Presenter

In the early 20th century large numbers of European artists left the devastating conflagration in their native countries and emigrated to the U.S., influencing and enriching the art they found in their new home, and in turn being influenced by it and their new geography.

In this lecture, we explore the effect of exiled composers, writers, and directors on classical and popular music, and on the young movie industry in Los Angeles during the 1930’s and 40’s.

The creative intensity that arose in Berlin in the 1920’s, in music, art, theater, and film, was driven out and extinguished there by the Nazi regime, but that fire of aesthetic productivity migrated to Los Angeles in the 1930’s and 40’s where it found a new home. Scores of immigrants, fleeing the upsurge of European fascism, transformed Southern California into one of the capitals of world culture.

Today, we explore a handful of these composers, and their time, in both audio and video, looking at and listening to composers who migrated to California and transformed music and film scores in Hollywood. Here are a few YouTube examples for several more music migrants not covered in the Week 1 presentation.

Ernest Toch <https://youtu.be/4wqT4HtK2sI> Geographical Fugue

Miklos Rozsa <https://youtu.be/9L_z2OcL8-U> Ben Hur Suite

Ernst Zeisl <https://youtu.be/sxtxWxBwX5M> Songs for Barbara

Max Steiner <https://youtu.be/N_Z4DmualTc> Gone With the Wind

Franz Waxman <https://youtu.be/5UkwEF9DjLY> A Place in the Sun

F. Chopin <https://youtu.be/ByhwHJ5nRv0> B. Huberman violin