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Covert Sonics:

Music and Acoustemologies of American Psychological Warfare

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Musicology

by

Danielle Stein

2026

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Covert Sonics:

Music and Acoustemologies of American Psychological Warfare

by

Danielle Stein

Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2026

Professor Mark L. Kligman, Co-Chair

Professor Robert W. Fink, Co-Chair

This dissertation examines how music and listening became instruments of American psychological warfare. Centering the Office of Strategic Services' MUSAC Project during the Second World War, it traces the institutional organization of covert musical persuasion and the postwar persistence of personnel and cultural expertise. MUSAC connected American intelligence, British clandestine broadcasting, commercial recording networks, and émigré artists to produce music for German soldiers and civilians under concealed Allied sponsorship.

Drawing on archival correspondence, production records, lyrics, scores, recordings, and reports of listening, I reconstruct the relationships among institutional directives, musical decisions, broadcast circulation, and evaluations of efficacy. I develop strategic listening as a method connecting musical analysis, institutional history, semiotics, and acoustemology. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis illuminate how institutional priorities shaped the selection, transformation, and sequencing of musical materials.

I argue that MUSAC made entertainment itself a medium of psychological warfare. Familiar repertories, rewritten texts, vocal personae, and gendered address were coordinated to redirect attachments to home, intimacy, and cultural memory toward disaffection with Nazi leadership and continued fighting. Jewish émigré participation is situated within particular careers, antifascist commitments, and artistic claims to American belonging. Mobilizing artists and cultural practices repudiated by Nazi institutions enacted an anti-entartete reversal. Women's administrative and creative labor likewise expands the account of musical authorship to include operational decisions and institutional coordination.

Distinguishing persuasive design from demonstrated effects, I examine how reports of listening became institutional knowledge and claims of operational success. Postwar personnel histories and comparisons with later clandestine broadcasting examine how cultural expertise and practices of listening operated across changing intelligence institutions. I propose an acoustemology of strategic warfare to explain the recursive relationship among cultural knowledge, sonic intervention, and institutional listening: institutions drew on cultural experience to construct musical operations, then interpreted accounts of listening to assess those operations and consider further uses. The supplementary research spreadsheet documents 304 recording entries and their personnel, repertory, and classifications.

The dissertation of Danielle Stein is approved.

Raymond L. Knapp

Martin Daughtry

Mark L. Kligman, Committee Co-Chair

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University of California, Los Angeles

2026

Table of Contents

List of Figures viii

List of Tables x

List of Musical Examples xi

Selective Glossary and Acronyms xii

Acknowledgments xvii

Vita xix

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Wilderness of Mirrors 1

I. From Information to Morale Operations 8

II. Terms and Scope 18

III. Music in War and International History 20

IV. Sound Violence and the Problem of Listening 26

V. Clandestine Radio and the Missing Musical Object 28

VI. An Archive Built by Secrecy 30

VII. Strategic Listening 33

VIII. Production Trace and Reception 36

IX. Evidence and Efficacy 37

X. Dissertation Architecture 39

Chapter 2: Dramatis Personae: The People of MUSAC 43

I. Administration and Intelligence 45

II. The Musical Creators 55

III. The Performers 64

Conclusion 80

Chapter 3: Creating Musical Warfare: The Organization and Production of MUSAC 82

I. Morale Operations and the Logic of Clandestine Radio 82

II. From Doctrine to Demand: The Origins of MUSAC 86

III. Building the Civilian Production Network: J. Walter Thompson, Mohawk, and the Mechanics of Cover 94

IV. Secrecy by Design: Clearance, Cover Stories, and Compartmentalization 99

V. Selecting the Voices: Recruitment, Audition, and Operational Suitability 104

VI. From Intelligence to Score: The MUSAC Creative Workflow 110
VII. Into the Studio: Irving Miller, the NBC Musicians, and the Recording Sessions.....119
VIII. From New York to Clandestine Broadcast 127
Conclusion: From Production System to Psychological Weapon 131
Chapter 4: Designing the Weapon—Music, Voice, and the Acoustic Masquerade 134
I. Designing for the German Listener: Morale, Credibility, and Psychological Vulnerability 136
II. Entertainment as Camouflage 141
III. Authenticity and the Problem of Credibility.....148
IV. Double Meanings and Indirect Address 152
V. Voice, Gender, Celebrity, and Recognition 161
VI. "Lili Marleen": From Military Ritual to Reusable Cue.....174
VII. "Wie lange noch?": From Intimate Accusation to Multimedia Campaign 184
VIII. Satire, Operetta, and Broadcast Implementation 198
Chapter 5: Hearing the Weapon: "Comebacks," Listener Agency, and the Evidence of Musical Efficacy 211
I. "Pleasant Pieces of Music": From Designed Weapon to Returned Evidence.....211
II. Coordinating Campaigns, Producing "Comebacks" 217
III. Listening After Exposure.....221
IV. "I Am Like the Westwall": A Campaign Theme Across Media 227
V. Das Neue Deutschlandlied: Anthem, Counterfeit Collectivity, and Recognition.....234
VI. From Listening to Meaning: The Listener as Co-Producer.....243
VII. From Wartime Evaluation to Institutional Memory.....247
VIII. Termination and the Postwar Planning 252
Chapter 6: MUSAC Resonances.....255
I. Project Sunset: Propaganda Content, Attention, and Secrecy 255
II. From Demoralization to Reeducation 259
III. DND and the Limits of Covert Reconstruction 262
IV. Assets and Personnel after the OSS.....265
V. Musical Sponsorship and Later Clandestine Radio 273
VI. The Uneven Survival of Musical Knowledge 283

Conclusion: An Acoustemology of Strategic Warfare 285
I. Musical Construction and Strategic Knowledge 287
II. Gendered Musical Persuasion 292
III. Acoustical Agency, Attention, and Persuasion 297
IV. Jewish Musical Labor and the Knowledge of Exile 301
V. Evidence, Secrecy, and Institutional Memory 306
VI. What MUSAC Contributes 308
War and MUSAC Project Timeline 317
Appendix A: Corpus and Classification Method 324
Appendix B: Selected Musical and Cross-Media Campaign Materials 328
Appendix C: Recordings and Broadcast Sources 344
Appendix D: Selected Documents Framing the Project and Its Afterlife 346
Bibliography 353

List of Figures

Figure A.1. "MUZAK Table of Songs," summary and classification key. 325

Figure B.1a. Front-cover artwork for "Wie lange noch?" The counterfeit commercial design credits "Friedrich Lindner," labels the piece a langsamer Foxtrott, and presents a Berlin Ufaton Verlag identity. 329

Figure B.1b. Working manuscript for "Wie lange noch…?!" headed "Words and Music by Eddie Zinder." 330

Figure B.1c. Opening score page of "Wie lange noch…?! Lied und langsamer Foxtrott," bearing the counterfeit 1944 Berlin Ufaton Verlag imprint and the printed credit "Friedrich Lindner." 331

Figure B.1d. "Songs Received from MEDTO," November 28, 1944. The memorandum lists "Wie Lange Noch" by Zinder and states: "This is not identical with the 'Wie Lange Noch' written by Weill." 332

Figure B.2a. Das Neue Deutschland page headed "Wie lange noch…," July 15, 1944. 334

Figure B.2b. Selected "Wie lange noch?" leaflet contrasting "Soldaten" and "Parteibonzen": "Wie lange noch zwei verschiedene Helden?" 335

Figure B.3a. Die Blitzbühne, Program III, "My Dear Waldemar," p. 6. "Fanfare (Lili Marlene)" introduces the final letter. 336

Figure B.3b. Die Blitzbühne, Program III, "My Dear Waldemar," p. 7. "Accordian - Lili Marlene" precedes the soldier's farewell after the collapse of his expected homecoming. 337

Figure B.4a. MUSAC German lyric sheet for Greta Keller's "Ich bin wie der Westwall," recorded September 28, 1944 under the source title "Come With Me, My Honey," record no. 12 339

Figure B.4b. Archival English translation, record no. 12a, for Greta Keller's "Ich bin wie der Westwall." 340

Figure B.5a. MUSAC session sheet showing Marlene Dietrich's Session 9, August 16, 1944, including "Lili Marlene." 342

Figure B.5b. MUSAC lyric sheet for Marlene Dietrich's "Lili Marlen," August 16, 1944, record no. 6. 343

Figure D.1. Concluding page of Lothar Metzl's MUSAC terminal report, forwarded May 7, 1945 347

Figure D.2. William J. Donovan to Lester O'Keefe, May 10, 1945. 349

Figure D.3a. Stacy B. Lloyd Jr. to Col. K. D. Mann, "Use of DND for Education of German People," June 1, 1945, p. 1 351

Figure D.3b. “Use of DND for Education of German People,” June 1, 1945, p. 2. 352

List of Tables

Acronyms and source abbreviations xv

Exile and institutional formation 1933 to 1943 317

From a writing request to recording production 1944 318

Changing pressure and changing address late 1944 to March 1945 319

Surrender closure and institutional transition 1945 320

Postwar continuities and comparisons 1947 to 1981 322

Table A.1. Historical classification codes transcribed from Figure A.1. 326

Table A.2. Selected recording entries and chapter-verified German titles. 326

List of Musical Examples

Musical Example 5.1. Edmund Lindner, “Das Neue Deutschlandlied,” surviving sixteen-bar melody sheet. 237

Selective Glossary and Acronyms

Aligned with the current chapter set

Selected terms clarify the dissertation's argument, production system, and sources. Definitions reflect their use in the revised chapters and complement definitions at first use.

Analytical terms

Acoustemology. Steven Feld's formulation of sound and listening as ways of knowing. It directs attention to knowledge made through acoustic experience.

Acoustemology of strategic listening. This dissertation's formulation for the recursive relationship among knowledge of listeners, musical and broadcast decisions, transmission, and evidence of listening returned to the institution. The archive documents this process unevenly; it does not establish a complete feedback cycle for every recording.

Acoustemology of strategic warfare. This dissertation's broader category for how military and intelligence institutions produce, organize, and operationalize knowledge through practices of sounding and listening.

Acousmatic listening and false attribution. Acousmatic listening means hearing a source without seeing it. Black broadcasting adds an attempted attribution to a different apparent source. Singer, transmitter, apparent speaker, and institutional sponsor must be distinguished; concealing production does not establish that a listener accepted the proposed attribution. (Ch. 4, III.)

Acoustical agency. A person's situated capacity to shape an acoustic encounter, including access to a receiver and its controls, the ability to redirect attention, and possibilities for interpretation or refusal. Military discipline, shared listening, work, danger, and prohibitions could constrain these capacities. (Ch. 5, III and VI; Conclusion, III.)

Administrative authorship. The coordinating work through which personnel connected intelligence, approvals, lyrics, performers, and recordings. The dissertation uses the term for operational labor that shaped musical production, including Rhoda K. Hirsch's work across offices. (Chs. 2–3; Ch. 5, II; Conclusion, IV.)

Auditory regimes and acoustic territories. Daughtry's terms for structures and spaces organizing wartime listening. They help describe the acoustic field within which an institution attempts to know and intervene.

Belliphonic. Daughtry's term for the acoustic world generated by armed conflict, including the listening practices through which people interpret and inhabit that world.

Calibrated perceptibility. This dissertation's term for adjusting how political purpose becomes audible in a performance while sustaining the credibility of its apparent speaker. It describes the construction of persuasion, not proof of a listener's response. (Conclusion, III.)

***Entartete Musik* and the *anti-entartete* reversal.** *Entartete Musik* ("degenerate music") names the Nazi category of cultural exclusion discussed in the chapters. The dissertation's *anti-entartete* interpretation identifies the redirection of particular artists and cultural practices excluded by Nazi institutions into work against the regime. It locates their expertise in training, careers, artistic affiliations, exile, and antifascist commitments. The reuse of a work does not establish its creator's participation in or knowledge of MUSAC. (Ch. 1, central argument; Chs. 2–3; Conclusion, IV.)

Gendered address. The construction of relationships among apparent speaker, lyrical role, voice, performer persona, and imagined listener through gendered expectations. Singer gender, vocal technique, and performer type are distinct dimensions.

Music as weapon. An actors' category and an analytical term for music deliberately constructed for hostile persuasion. Lyrics, musical form, arrangement, voice, and placement can conduct that work within entertainment. Designed persuasion and demonstrated reception remain different forms of evidence.

Nattiez's tripartition. A distinction, developed with reference to Molino's semiology, among poietic processes of making, the material trace those processes leave, and esthesic processes of constructing meaning. In MUSAC, a score, recording, or script can be a trace; listener meaning need not reproduce the makers' intentions. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis ask different questions about relations among materials. (Ch. 1, VIII; Ch. 4, opening.)

Paradigmatic analysis. Comparison of recurrent or analogous units and their transformations, associated here with Ruwet and Nattiez. This dissertation extends the question to related phrases, song versions, cues, and the alternatives made available through institutional selection and production. (Ch. 4, opening, II, VI–VIII.)

Strategic listening. Both the institutional practice reconstructed here and the dissertation's method: following how listening is imagined, solicited, interpreted, and made operational through cultural expertise, musical analysis, and mediated reception evidence.

Syntagmatic analysis. Examination of how units acquire significance through combination and succession. Applied here to musical phrases, scripted cues, and broadcast items, it distinguishes a disc's band order, a script's designed sequence, and a recorded transmission. (Ch. 4, opening, II, VI–VIII.)

Theoretical grounding: Chapter 1, methodology and theory sections; Chapter 4, opening and Sections II–III, on semiotic analysis and source attribution; Conclusion, discussions of Feld, Daughtry, Nattiez, and situated listening. Full citations appear in those chapters.

Projects and musical or broadcast terms

Aspidistra. The transmitter at Crowborough used for the soldiers' station. Distinguish the transmission site from the PWE production studios at Milton Bryan.

Black propaganda. Material falsely attributed to a source other than its actual sponsor, often presented as originating within the target society. "Black" describes attribution, not necessarily false content.

Die Blitzbühne. MUSAC's recorded German-language variety programs, combining sketches, dialogue, songs, and musical cues within staged situations.

Comebacks. Reports of encounters with propaganda, collected from sources such as monitoring, enemy documents, prisoner interviews, and press references. They became institutional evidence; recognition alone does not demonstrate changed belief or conduct.

Compartmentalization. The restriction and division of operational knowledge among offices and participants. Creative participation, security clearance, and knowledge of a recording's eventual use did not necessarily coincide. McIntosh's retrospective studio recollection and wartime memoranda preserve different perspectives on those limits. (Ch. 3, IV, especially nn. 49–55.)

Contrafactum. A new text fitted to existing music; plural, contrafacta. MUSAC often adapted familiar tunes through German lyrics while also shaping arrangement and performance.

Cover. The outward explanation or apparent identity concealing an operation's actual sponsorship or purpose. It could organize a contract, performer brief, or broadcast source.

Crooning. An intimate mode of microphone-mediated singing. It is a vocal practice, not a synonym for singer gender or professional performer type.

Diseuse. A performer whose delivery gives particular weight to words, spoken inflection, and the boundary between speech and song; used here especially in the analysis of Lenya.

Electrical transcription. A recording prepared on disc for broadcasting. MUSAC distributed recordings on sixteen-inch transcription discs; a disc, recorded side, title, and session are different counting units.

Gray propaganda. Material whose sponsorship or source is obscured or left ambiguous. Historical usage overlaps imperfectly with the categories of white and black propaganda.

MUSAC. The OSS Morale Operations project producing German-language musical recordings for clandestine broadcasting in 1944–45. The dissertation uses MUSAC consistently; MUZAK, MUSACK, and other archival spellings remain in quotations and document titles. Chapter 1 reports Mauch's gloss "musical action"; it is attributed to that source rather than treated as an official acronym expansion. Distinguish the project from the Muzak company and the broader Pancake operation. (Ch. 1, Terms and Scope, n. 26.)

Muzak. The commercial recording organization and New York studio facilities used by MUSAC. Archival spellings vary; distinguish the company from the intelligence project.

Pancake. The broader joint British-American radio operation to which MUSAC contributed recordings, associated with Soldatensender Calais/West. It was not simply another name for MUSAC.

PBHISTORY and PBSUCCESS. CIA operation names used in Chapter 6. PBSUCCESS supported the overthrow of Guatemala's government in 1954; the subsequent PBHISTORY operation collected and exploited captured documents for intelligence and propaganda. Metzl's documented assignment was to PBHISTORY. (Ch. 6, V; Conclusion, VI.)

Soldatensender Calais and Soldatensender West. Successive names of the Allied black-radio soldiers' service supplied with MUSAC recordings. Its apparent German identity concealed its British-based production and transmission.

Westwall. Germany's western defensive system, known to the Allies as the Siegfried Line. Its promise of invulnerability became a changing target of MUSAC and related MO materials.

White propaganda. Material openly attributed to its sponsor. The term identifies provenance rather than guaranteeing truthfulness.

Acronyms and source abbreviations

These are selected abbreviations used in the chapters or their source apparatus.

Short form	Expansion or use in this dissertation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COI	Office of the Coordinator of Information
DND	Das Neue Deutschland; the MO newspaper and purported German peace movement, linked to music, print, and other campaign media
ETO	European Theater of Operations
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service; the monitoring organization discussed in Chapter 6's Radio Quince de Septiembre case
FDN	Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense; Nicaraguan Democratic Force
IWM	Imperial War Museums; repository for recordings cited in the dissertation
MO	Morale Operations; the OSS branch responsible for subversion and psychological warfare
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OWI	Office of War Information
PWD	Psychological Warfare Division; the Allied organization mentioned in MUSAC's evaluation and possible occupation work
PWE	Political Warfare Executive; British wartime organization
R&A	Research and Analysis; OSS branch
RG	Record Group; archival designation, as in RG 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services
SI	Secret Intelligence; branch designation in OSS and postwar transition records
SSU	Strategic Services Unit
USIA	United States Information Agency
USO	United Service Organizations

MUSAC classification codes

NOP — No Propaganda Content; SS — Slightly Slanted; PSat — Propaganda Content, Satirical; PS — Propaganda Content, Serious. These are the historical lyric-content categories in the "Table of Songs." NOP does not establish that a recording had no psychological-warfare function. Here SS is a corpus code, not a reference to the Nazi organization.

Classification source: "Table of Songs," 1–10, accompanying Lothar Metzl's report forwarded May 7, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, Sections V and VIII, Chapter 1's discussion of the corpus, and Appendix A.

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My family supported and championed this work throughout my doctoral studies. My father, mother, and brother read drafts, listened to countless research stories and findings, and offered encouragement through its many stages. I am grateful for the time and attention they gave so generously and for the enthusiasm with which they shared in the work as it developed.

My late grandmother sustained me through the early years of this program with regular calls, listening to my research discoveries and difficulties. I called her from the archives: she was my first living archive of the Second World War, and her memories of working for the Navy helped me understand women's roles in it. Her encouragement and the musical history she shared with me helped inspire this research.

My approach to research owes much to the women who kept our family archive: my grandmother, my great-aunt, and my mother. Long before computers, they preserved our family's documents, researched in libraries, and pursued knowledge through networks of people. Their resourcefulness and depth of knowledge continue to inspire my wonder. They taught me to trace documents through networks of people whose labor often goes unseen and, most importantly, to listen.

VITA

Danielle Stein received a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance and Education from San Diego State University and a Master of Music in Voice Performance from California State University, Northridge. At the University of California, Los Angeles, she earned a Master of Arts in Musicology and the Candidate in Philosophy designation.

Her research examines music, political persuasion, and clandestine broadcasting, with particular attention to the Office of Strategic Services' MUSAC Project. Her work also encompasses Jewish musical cultures, archival research, and digital approaches to recorded music.

At UCLA, she has taught courses addressing music and politics, film music, and the relationships among music, technology, and science, and served as Assistant Director of the Early Music Ensemble. Her work with UCLA's Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience has included developing the Discography of Recorded Jewish Music through archival metadata research, database design, and visualization.

Stein has presented research at meetings of the American Musicological Society, Society for American Music, and American Studies Association, as well as conferences devoted to Jewish music, sound, and warfare. She served as Managing Editor of ECHO: A Music-Centered Journal and developed curriculum for Los Angeles Opera's Opera for Educators program.

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Danielle Stein

Chapter 1

Covert Sonics: Music and Acoustemologies of American Psychological Warfare

Introduction: The Wilderness of Mirrors

> "An important conclusion may be drawn from the success of this operation. Muzak [MUSAC] has proven the pulling power of professional entertainment in psychological warfare. . . . Professional entertainment can serve not only as bait for propaganda. If used properly, it can be made into propaganda itself and become a strong weapon of psychological warfare."[1]
>
> —Lothar Metzl, final report on the OSS MUSAC Project, 1945

The MUSAC Project was an American psychological warfare operation that adapted and recorded music for clandestine broadcasts to German soldiers and civilians during the Second World War. The broadcasts presented this Allied musical production within the guise of a

[1] Lothar Metzl, "MUSAC terminal report," forwarded by David Williamson on May 7, 1945, unpaginated, closing assessment, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Reproduced in Appendix D, figure D.1.

German soldiers' station, concealing the institutions directing its use. Its songs were designed to weaken German soldiers' and civilians' confidence in Nazi leadership and their support for continuing the war. Lothar Metzl's final assessment condensed the project's premise into a single proposition. Professional entertainment could attract listeners to propaganda, but it could also be remade as propaganda and employed as a weapon in its own right. This distinction mattered to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the American intelligence and special operations agency established in 1942 during the Second World War and a predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Music helped secure attention and establish a clandestine station's credibility; its lyrics, arrangements, vocal personae, and emotional trajectories also worked upon the listener's understanding of the war. Persuasion was designed into the entertainment itself. Metzl's declaration of "success" also identifies a central historical question. How did music move from professional entertainment into psychological warfare, and how did the OSS recognize and document what it had accomplished? This dissertation follows that movement through musical production, broadcasting, reported listening, and institutional evaluation. The concluding page of Metzl's terminal report is reproduced in Appendix D, Figure D.1.

The OSS[2] developed MUSAC in 1944 through its Morale Operations Branch in cooperation with the British Political Warfare Executive (PWE), established in 1941 to coordinate Britain's political propaganda abroad. Their collaboration belonged to the wider Allied effort to weaken Germany's capacity to continue fighting by undermining morale and confidence in Nazi leadership. Both organizations employed "black" propaganda, concealing Allied sponsorship so that messages could appear to originate within the societies they targeted.

[2] For institutional acronyms and source abbreviations, see "Selective Glossary and Acronyms."

For MUSAC, the partnership connected British experience in clandestine German-language broadcasting with the recording facilities and émigré musical expertise available in the United States. The OSS organized the production of recordings in New York, while the PWE incorporated this material into broadcasts transmitted from Britain. This cooperation made musical production part of a shared psychological warfare effort: songs could sustain the credibility of an apparently German station while carrying persuasion within their rewritten lyrics and performances. Over the following months, the project produced more than three hundred recordings for clandestine broadcast to German soldiers and civilians; a retrospective report gives a total of 312. For MUSAC's wartime operation, the songs circulated on sixteen-inch discs prepared for broadcast use.[3] Lyricist Lothar Metzl fitted new German texts to popular melodies; Rudolf Goehr and other arrangers adapted music for the project, while Kurt Weill contributed through a specific wartime composition and the reuse of his repertory; émigré performers supplied voices selected for their linguistic, regional, theatrical, and affective capacities; and an institutional network connecting OSS offices, the J. Walter Thompson Company, Muzak's New York studios, British propagandists, recording engineers, couriers, and radio personnel moved the songs from directive to broadcast. The recordings were sent to the PWE's *Soldatensender Calais*, later *Soldatensender West*, a black radio service that addressed its audience in the guise of a German soldiers' station. The programs combined news, sport, entertainment, rumor, and demoralizing material. Music helped hold these parts together because it could sound ordinary even when its production and provenance were not.

---

[3] History Project, Strategic Services Unit, *War Report of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services)*, vol. 1 (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), 219; "MUSAC over Soldatensender," undated project summary, in "MUSAC Project with Straight Lyrics and Photographs of MUSAC Artists," Book II, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2287, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

MUSAC therefore depended on more than lyrics. Its planners needed listeners to recognize a tune without recognizing the operation behind it. They needed a performance to sound culturally and linguistically plausible while carrying a text composed elsewhere. They needed the radio station to sustain the fiction of proximity and insider knowledge, even though the programs were assembled in Britain and the musical recordings were produced in the United States. These conditions made arrangement, accent, vocal persona, orchestration, repertory, timing, and sequence parts of both the operation's cover and its persuasive construction. A familiar voice could make an accusation sound intimate; an altered refrain could turn remembered pleasure into a judgment about present sacrifice. The musical object did not simply transmit a stable message from sender to receiver. It passed through acts of borrowing, translation, recomposition, performance, recording, shipment, programming, transmission, recognition, and institutional interpretation. At each stage its identity and possible meanings changed.

This dissertation argues that MUSAC designed musical psychological warfare through the coordinated use of cultural expertise, intelligence, and expressive form while concealing its Allied sponsorship. The project joined an intelligence bureaucracy to the labor of exiled artists, commercial media workers, and British radio personnel, then organized their knowledge around an imagined act of enemy listening. Recruiting this expertise also brought established professional relationships and commercial production practices into the operation, giving the OSS access to the people and institutions through which musical plans could become recorded sound. Familiar melodies and voices were redesigned to secure attention and credibility while redirecting memories of home, intimacy, pleasure, betrayal, and wartime loss toward disaffection with the regime and continued fighting. Its musical objects and the larger system that produced

them must therefore be studied together. Decisions about genre, timbre, accent, gender, sentiment, and recognition became operational decisions about how to make a political judgment feel plausible, memorable, or personally addressed.

Throughout this dissertation, *weapon* identifies both an actors' category and an analytical account of music deliberately constructed for hostile persuasion. OSS personnel used the term to authorize work, explain budgets, praise collaborators, and interpret results. I reconstruct how musical choices gave that purpose audible form and how the office assembled evidence of its effects. Uncertainty about reception does not erase the evidence of persuasive design. Production records establish what MUSAC made and circulated; comebacks document encounters with its wider broadcast and campaign environment; evaluations show how those encounters became judgments of efficacy. Reading these materials together makes the project's accomplishments visible while keeping a reported act of recognition distinct from a demonstrated change in belief or conduct.

The MUSAC case also unsettles familiar histories of music and state power. Studies of wartime music have explained mobilization, broadcasting, national representation, repertorial policy, and musical labor. Histories of cultural diplomacy have shown how governments, musicians, intermediaries, and audiences negotiated the meanings of publicly sponsored exchange. Histories of intelligence and clandestine radio have reconstructed agencies, stations, cover arrangements, targets, and propaganda tactics. MUSAC sits at the intersection of these literatures, where their usual units of analysis become unstable. Its authorship was distributed and at times concealed. Its musical texts were borrowed, retitled, rewritten, rearranged, recorded, fragmented, and placed under false provenance. Its audience could recognize the music while misrecognizing its source. Its reception survives principally through monitoring, interrogation,

rumor, enemy warnings, and reports written by institutions with reasons to demonstrate effectiveness.

The gap lies at the intersection of musicology and intelligence history, where musical decisions become part of a covert operation and covert practices shape musical meaning. I address it through *strategic listening*, an integrated method drawn from institutional history, close musical analysis, semiotics, acoustemology, and archival criticism. The method follows how institutions imagined listeners, how cultural workers translated those expectations into music, and how broadcasts and reports brought listening into the operation. Its contribution is to connect processes that the adjacent literatures usually examine separately.

Kurt Weill articulated one antecedent to this practice on December 12, 1941, when he wrote to Robert E. Sherwood about enlisting German and Austrian émigré artists in radio-borne "cultural attack" against Nazi Germany.[4] MUSAC later realized some of the possibilities contained in that proposal, but the relationship is more complex than the movement of an idea from a composer into a government program. Weill belonged to a dispersed community of émigré artists who had already developed political, theatrical, linguistic, and musical ways of addressing German-speaking audiences. The OSS did not merely employ their art. It classified their accumulated experience as usable knowledge. Chapter 2 reconstructs that field of expertise and shows why MUSAC cannot be reduced to a single originator, even when particular figures supplied decisive ideas or materials.

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[4] Kurt Weill to Robert E. Sherwood, December 12, 1941, quoted in David Farneth, Elmar Juchem, and Dave Stein, eds., *Kurt Weill: A Life in Pictures and Documents* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2000), 208.

Jewish émigré participation in MUSAC was shaped by histories of artistic belonging, political exclusion, and antifascist commitment. The artists examined here had already contributed to German-speaking cultural life and pursued new professional and civic affiliations through art in the United States. Kurer and Metzl's refugee theater collaborations, Metzl's antifascist radio work, and Weill's American self-identification make these activities visible. Such histories help explain the cultural knowledge, working relationships, and political commitments that made particular contributors attractive to an American wartime operation. I read their artistic and political work as a practice of belonging through which they established a place in American public life and directed their experience against fascism. MUSAC enacted an anti-entartete reversal: artists and cultural practices repudiated by Nazi institutions became resources in the struggle against the regime.[5]

This history begins during the Second World War and follows the project beyond its formal termination. Personnel, reports, operational vocabularies, production practices, and knowledge of musical persuasion survived through changing institutional arrangements. Chapter 6 traces those continuities through the people and records that carried wartime expertise forward and through later clandestine stations that adapted covert broadcasting to new political and technological conditions. It places this history beside the overt postwar histories of occupation, reeducation, cultural presentation, and musical diplomacy.

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[5] The biographies, artistic affiliations, and MUSAC roles of Kurer, Metzl, Goehr, and Weill are reconstructed in Chapter 2, with recruitment examined in Chapter 3. The distinction between participation and the reuse of existing works is developed in Chapter 2 and Conclusion IV. On Weill's Jewish background and political engagement, see Neil W. Levin, "Kurt Weill," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, accessed October 1, 2026, https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/kurt-weill.

The War and MUSAC Project Timeline brings the project's formation, recording activity, and institutional ending into a common chronology; composition, recording, shipment, and transmission remain distinct events.

The phrase "wilderness of mirrors" is useful here because it names a problem of knowledge as much as a practice of deception. It became associated after the war with CIA counterintelligence chief James Jesus Angleton, who drew it from T. S. Eliot's "Gerontion" to describe a world in which evidence could always be another layer of misdirection.[6] I use the phrase as an analytical frame, not as MUSAC's wartime code or the self-description of its staff. In black radio, the mirror was audible. A German song could return to German listeners in an altered form; an American production could present itself as local speech; a familiar voice could make a false source seem intimate; and a listener's reported recognition could return to the institution as evidence of "success." The archive repeats this structure. It preserves the project through records created to manage secrecy and through retrospective reports created to make the operation legible and valuable. Reading MUSAC requires attention to what these records disclose, what they were designed to do, and what they cannot establish.

I. From Information to Morale Operations

The institutional history of MUSAC began before the OSS existed. In July 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt met with Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and William J. Donovan to discuss the European war, fifth-column activity, and British capacities for subversive warfare. Donovan subsequently traveled to Britain, where he studied intelligence and

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[6] The phrase derives from T. S. Eliot's "Gerontion" and was later associated with James Jesus Angleton's description of counterintelligence. See Michael Holzman, *James Jesus Angleton, the CIA, and the Craft of Counterintelligence* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 10.

special operations, including radio and black propaganda. After returning, he recommended a centralized American service that could collect and analyze information while developing subversive capabilities.[7] Roosevelt created the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) on July 11, 1941, with Donovan as coordinator and Robert Sherwood directing its Foreign Information Service.

The COI brought together functions that did not remain institutionally compatible. Officials disputed the relationship among information, propaganda, intelligence, and military command, as well as the proper boundaries between public persuasion and concealed intervention. In June 1942, Roosevelt divided the organization. The Foreign Information Service moved into the newly created Office of War Information (OWI), which became responsible for attributable or "white" propaganda, while the OSS continued under the Joint Chiefs of Staff with foreign intelligence and special operations functions.[8] The split never produced a perfectly clean separation in practice, but it established different institutional conditions for musical work. The OWI publicly identified the American source of its broadcasts. The OSS could conceal sponsorship, falsify provenance, and coordinate media with other operational activity.

The debate carried the memory of the First World War. Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information (CPI), established in 1917 under George Creel, coordinated government news, sustained domestic morale, administered voluntary press censorship, and developed

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[7] Lawrence C. Soley, *Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA Subversive Propaganda* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 52–56; William J. Donovan, "Memorandum of Establishment of Service of Strategic Information," June 10, 1941, 3–4, CIA-RDP84-00022R000200100014-7, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp84-00022r000200100014-7. Soley also cites the memorandum in the President's Secretary's File, box 141, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[8] History Project, Strategic Services Unit, *War Report of the OSS*, 1:26–27.

foreign publicity through an extensive network of media and speakers.[9] Its scale established a precedent for federal management of mass persuasion, but its reputation also made *propaganda* a politically fraught term in the United States. Interwar writers consequently argued over whether democratic persuasion could be distinguished from coercion and deceit.

Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* examined how publics act through mediated "pictures" of a world they cannot encounter directly, while Edward Bernays's *Propaganda* described the organized management of collective attitudes.[10] Their arguments differed in purpose and politics, but both treated modern public life as dependent on institutions capable of selecting, framing, and circulating symbols at scale. MUSAC would later put a related premise into clandestine form. Its audience could not verify the origin of a broadcast directly, and the operation sought to manage the pictures and feelings attached to familiar sounds.

During the years before and during the Second World War, communication research, foundations, universities, and government offices became increasingly entangled. Harold Lasswell directed War Communications Research at the Library of Congress and developed systematic approaches to propaganda analysis. Lippmann participated in wartime networks concerned with propaganda and psychological warfare. Historians, political scientists, psychologists, linguists, and area specialists entered the COI and OSS, where academic knowledge was reorganized around intelligence and operational problems. These developments matter to MUSAC because they created an institutional setting in which a lyric, accent, style, or

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[9] "Records of the Committee on Public Information," Record Group 63, National Archives, accessed October 1, 2026, https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/063.html; George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920).

[10] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), 15–16, 29–30; Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1928), 52.

listener profile could be treated as analyzable evidence and converted into a directive.[11] William L. Langer headed Research and Analysis, while his brother Walter C. Langer supplied psychological expertise through his analysis of Hitler.[12]

This intellectual prehistory should not be mistaken for a single line of descent from a theorist to a recording. MUSAC did not apply one settled theory of persuasion. Its files contain competing assumptions, pragmatic revisions, transatlantic negotiation, and judgments made by people with different professional vocabularies. The relevant continuity lies in the institutional confidence that specialists could know an audience at a distance and design symbolic materials around that knowledge. Strategic listening tests that confidence against the production process and the limits of the surviving evidence.

Morale Operations, established within the OSS in 1943, specialized in subversion, rumor, forged materials, black radio, and other forms of psychological warfare. A shared conception of psychological warfare linked attacks on morale to the interruption of physical action. A British Political Warfare Executive document included in the exhibits to the history of OSS and preserved in Donovan's personal papers targeted the will "to make the machines, to man the machines and to pull the trigger," defining its object as the destruction of enemy morale. Ladislas

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[11] Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Knopf, 1927); Dominique Trudel, "Revisiting the Origins of Communication Research: Walter Lippmann's World War II Adventure in Propaganda and Psychological Warfare," *International Journal of Communication* 11 (2017): 3724–26, https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/6881. For Lasswell's Library of Congress appointment, see *Guide to the Harold Dwight Lasswell Papers*, MS 1043, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, "Biographical/Historical," 4, https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1043.

[12] William L. Langer, the historian, headed the OSS Research and Analysis Branch. His younger brother Walter C. Langer, a psychoanalyst, worked for the same component and prepared the OSS psychological analysis of Adolf Hitler. See Central Intelligence Agency, "A Psychological Analysis of Adolph Hitler by Walter Langer," CIA Museum, accessed October 1, 2026, https://www.cia.gov/legacy/museum/artifact/a-psychological-analysis-of-adolph-hitler-by-walter-langer/.

Farago's postwar account recalled a comparable aim in naval psychological warfare: Cecil H. Coggins sought to "paralyze the fingers . . . that pulled the triggers."[13] Such phrases presented psychological operations as a form of action capable of reducing the need for direct force. They also obscured the distance between a planned stimulus and an observable result. MUSAC emerged within this institutional language, where a record could be called a weapon before its effects were known.

The project took shape during the spring and summer of 1944, as the OSS office in London, working with the PWE, asked Washington to supply "a flow of recordings of American songs with German Lyrics."[14] The request arose from a programming problem. *Soldatensender Calais* needed material that would attract and retain German servicemen while protecting the station's false identity. The PWE produced the station's live programs at Milton Bryan in Bedfordshire and sent them through the powerful Aspidistra transmitter at Crowborough in Sussex. The distinction between studio and transmitter matters: the illusion of a proximate German military service depended on a production network distributed across places its listeners could not see.[15]

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[13] Political Warfare Executive, "The Meaning, Techniques and Methods of Political Warfare," n.d., 3, in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 3, *The Foreign Information Service*, tab H, copy no. 98, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; Ladislas Farago, *Burn After Reading: The Espionage History of World War II* (New York: Walker and Co., 1961), 277–78.

[14] Lothar Metzl, MUSAC terminal report, opening page, enclosed with David Williamson to Col. K. D. Mann, "Musac Project," May 7, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland; matching opening page of "Muzak," in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 6, MO Branch, tab N, box 99B, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

[15] Soley, *Radio Warfare*, 124; Lawrence C. Soley and John S. Nichols, *Clandestine Radio Broadcasting: A Study of Revolutionary and Counterrevolutionary Electronic Communication* (New York: Praeger, 1987), 49.

British and American planners specified the sonic conditions of credibility. "Our voices and accents must have foreign character," one cable instructed. "We do not want American accents but on the other hand typical American arrangements are in order. For example Harry James with a good German lyric and pure Austrian or north German voice."[16] The instruction joined qualities that might otherwise appear contradictory. Contemporary American dance-band arrangement could signal novelty and entertainment, while the German text and regionally legible voice were meant to protect the station's cover. Authenticity did not reside in any one component. It was assembled from a calculated relation among style, language, performance, and the source the listener was invited to imagine.

Metzl was particularly suited to this work. A Jewish Viennese writer and lyricist who had fled Nazi-occupied Austria, he had participated in New York's Refugee Artists Group and helped create cabaret-inflected productions featuring Jewish émigré performers.[17] He knew how satire, sentiment, theatrical address, and musical memory could be made to work across languages and political dislocation. Rudolf Goehr, an Arnold Schoenberg student serving in the United States Army before his transfer to the OSS, supplied arrangements, and Weill contributed to selected campaigns.[18] Performers brought their own histories of cabaret, opera, radio, film,

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[16] Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable (paraphrase), June 15, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, tab H, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

[17] "Lothar Metzl," *Austrian Soldiers in Foreign Armies*, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War, accessed October 1, 2026, https://austriansoldiers.lbg.ac.at/bio/lothar-metzl/?lang=en. See also Chapter 2.

[18] Arnold Schönberg Center, "Goehr (Rudolf) Collection (G5)," biographical note, accessed October 1, 2026, https://schoenberg.at/de/sammlung/bestaende/sondersammlungen/satellite-collection-g5; Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, sec. 2(b), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. See also "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, n.d., "OSS/New York," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park.

and exile. MUSAC's bureaucracy treated these biographies as a reservoir of distinctions: an accent could place a voice; a repertory could summon a social world; a style could suggest generational, regional, or political belonging.

The production system also relied on commercial expertise. The OSS used cover arrangements involving the Mohawk Trading Corporation, coordinated work through the J. Walter Thompson Company, and recorded much of the material at Muzak's New York facilities. These were not incidental logistical solutions. Advertising personnel, studio workers, and radio professionals knew how to compress a message, reproduce a style, sustain attention, and move recorded entertainment through a modern media system. Chapter 3 shows how the OSS assembled these forms of labor into a concealed production chain and how administrative acts—contracts, budgets, clearances, review procedures, labels, shipments, and cables—became part of the musical operation.

Coordination in Washington was equally important. Katherine "Kay" Halle's branch-wide reporting work and Rhoda Klinger Hirsch's direction of MUSAC in Washington connected personnel, intelligence, and creative production. These women were also central to the research through which this dissertation took shape. Much of the history reconstructed here became accessible through Hirsch's and Halle's files at the National Archives at College Park, which provided some of the most productive routes into MUSAC's dispersed documentation. Women whose administrative contributions remain largely invisible in existing histories thus became essential guides through the archive. Following their correspondence and reports allowed me to

recover relationships across offices and understand how musical work depended on the people who selected, routed, and retained its institutional knowledge.[19]

The administrative work documented in these files connected musical planning to studio production and the circulation of completed recordings. Between July 1944 and April 1945, MUSAC sustained a recording program whose output was distributed on durable sixteen-inch discs.[20] The songs ranged across current American popular music, sentimental ballads, parodies, and materials created for coordinated campaigns. Metzl's texts repeatedly addressed homesickness, wartime exhaustion, shortages, betrayal, and sexual infidelity. An OSS training manual described black radio's "trump card" as intimacy, and MUSAC's planners used female voices and sentimental conventions to imagine access to the private lives of soldiers and civilians.[21] Gender functioned here neither as a detachable theme nor as a simple representation of women. It structured the operation's theory of vulnerability. The project assumed that a feminized voice could sound like home, promise pleasure, provoke suspicion, or make absence

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[19] On Halle's family and career, see Frank E. Wrenick, "Halle, Katherine Murphy," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, Case Western Reserve University, last updated October 6, 2023, https://case.edu/ech/articles/h/halle-katherine-murphy; "Halle, Manuel," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, Case Western Reserve University, accessed October 1, 2026, https://case.edu/ech/articles/h/halle-manuel; and Shapell Manuscript Foundation, "Kennedy and the Arts: His Unprecedented Invitation of Scholars, Artists, Writers, and Thinkers to His Inauguration," accessed October 1, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/kennedy-invites-humanities-leaders-to-inauguration/. See Chapter 2, "Katherine 'Kay' Halle" and "Rhoda K. Hirsch," for the distinction between Halle's branch-wide reporting work and Hirsch's responsibility for MUSAC in Washington. Hirsch's role is documented in "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, sec. (c), container 172; Rhoda K. Hirsch to Lothar Metzl, "MUSAC Project," August 4, 1944, container 171, folder 2278; and Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," January 3, 1945, container 172, folder 2295; all in Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. On Halle's branch-wide coordination and debriefing work and Hirsch's MUSAC liaison role, see Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 56–57, 59.

[20] History Project, Strategic Services Unit, *War Report of the OSS*, 1:219; "MUSAC over Soldatensender," Book II, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2287.

[21] Office of Strategic Services, Morale Operations Section, "Black Radio," in *MO Principles Outlined in Eleven Lectures*, 1944–1945, 24, copy no. 2 of 2, folder 2116, container 158, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

audible. Chapter 4 tests those assumptions against the music itself, examining how text, melody, arrangement, vocal grain, pacing, and broadcast placement could reinforce or frustrate the strategic design.

The source repertory gives this network another dimension. Marlene Dietrich recorded a German version of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II's "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top." Greta Keller's September 28, 1944 session included adaptations of "Jenny," originally composed by Weill with lyrics by Ira Gershwin, and Irving Berlin's "Easter Parade." Such choices connect Jewish contributions to American popular music with the construction of a German-language broadcast repertory. Naming the original composers and lyricists makes those histories legible even when MUSAC replaced the words, changed an arrangement, or obscured a song's provenance. Chapters 4 and 5 follow these relations through the individual musical objects.[22]

The station's programming placed these songs within a larger rhythm of fact, entertainment, and deception. Sports results and credible news could establish a habit of listening; familiar music could hold attention; rumors or altered reports could then enter under the cover of that habit. The music was therefore both content and infrastructure. It helped create

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[22] For the corresponding MUSAC recordings and source-song comparisons, see Chapters 4 and 5 and Appendix C, "Recordings and Broadcast Sources." The MUSAC session register, "Session #18 (Double Session)," September 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2286, "All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, lists Keller's "Jenny" and "Easter Parade" on record 12 (front), cuts 2 and 3, respectively. In the same folder, the MUSAC lyric sheet "Schlittenfahrt" (English title "Surrey with the Fringe on Top") names Marlene Dietrich as singer and gives August 23, 1944, record 7. The session register, "Session #11 (Double Session)," August 23, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277, lists "Surrey with Fringe on Top" as Dietrich's third selection. See also the matching session sheet. For their authorship, see Mark N. Grant, "Lady in the Dark: An Appreciation," Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, accessed October 1, 2026, https://www.kwf.org/appreciations/lady-in-the-dark-an-appreciation/; and "Easter Parade," in "Behind the Songs," Irving Berlin, accessed October 1, 2026, https://www.irvingberlin.com/behind-the-songs. See also "Session #18 (Double Session)," September 28, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 139, container 155, National Archives at College Park.

the listening situation in which other propaganda became plausible, while some songs carried their own insinuations through new lyrics and performances. This double function explains Metzl's distinction between entertainment as "bait" and entertainment remade as propaganda.

The OSS also sought evidence of how its broadcasts were heard. Staff collected monitoring reports, captured enemy documents, newspaper references, prisoner-of-war interviews, surveys, and warnings against illicit listening as "comebacks." Elizabeth P. McIntosh describes MUSAC's use of nostalgia to encourage war weariness and defection, and OSS project summaries reported that German prisoner-of-war interrogations attested to the programs' popularity. McIntosh's interview in *A Woman at War* also recalls German prisoners' attachment to Dietrich's voice. David Williamson's February 1945 memorandum also cited a German war reporter's account of soldiers' preference for Allied broadcast music as evidence of MUSAC's success.[23] The office's selection and preservation of such material made it documentary evidence for assessing the operation. Chapter 5 reads these returns alongside one another to reconstruct the importance of music to attention, the choices listeners made, and the ways those encounters informed institutional judgments of success.

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[23] McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 57–58; "Example of an MO Music Project—'Pancake' over Radio Soldatensender," n.d., "Operations," OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, container 88; "MUSAC over Soldatensender," n.d., "Operations," in "MUSAC Project with Straight Lyrics and Photographs of MUSAC Artists," Book II, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2287; both in Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. David Williamson to Edward Cushing, "Musac," February 5, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park. The German war reporter passage also appears in Lothar Metzl's MUSAC terminal report ("Muzak"), in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 6, MO Branch, tab N, box 99B, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. See also Elizabeth McIntosh, interview, in *A Woman at War: Marlene Dietrich Remembered*, ed. J. David Riva (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 89–94. For a broader estimate of the station's reach, see Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 205, 287n43. Laurie reports the Twelfth Army Group's claim that 90 percent of prisoners of war taken in summer 1944 listened regularly to Soldatensender. The figure concerns reported listening to the station as a whole; it does not isolate MUSAC recordings or measure their persuasive effects.

The project ceased in the final weeks of the European war. *Soldatensender West* ended its broadcasts in the final days of April 1945. On May 10, Donovan thanked Lester O'Keefe for his collaboration in producing a "psychological weapon which played its part effectively."[24] The OSS itself was dissolved on October 1, 1945. Some functions and records passed through the Strategic Services Unit and other successor arrangements before the Central Intelligence Agency was created in 1947. MUSAC's conclusion was therefore both an ending and an administrative problem: the organization that had authorized the project disappeared, while people, records, and lessons remained available for reassignment and reuse. Chapter 6 follows the redistribution of that expertise through the institutions and careers that carried it beyond the OSS.

II. Terms and Scope

The archives and scholarship use *white*, *gray*, and *black* propaganda to distinguish relations among a message, its sponsor, and its apparent source. White propaganda identifies its origin. Gray propaganda obscures or ambiguously represents it. Black propaganda presents one side's production as speech originating from another, often from within the target society.[25] Historical usage was not wholly consistent, and the categories describe provenance more reliably than they describe tone, truth, or effect. A black broadcast could include accurate news, and a white broadcast could mislead. *Soldatensender Calais/West* depended on this separation between factual content and fraudulent attribution.

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[24] William J. Donovan to Lester O'Keefe, May 10, 1945, "Withdrawn Records," OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, Entry A1-210, box 429, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Reproduced in Appendix D, figure D.2.

[25] History Project, Strategic Services Unit, *War Report of the OSS*, 1:211; Soley and Nichols, *Clandestine Radio Broadcasting*. The OSS's institutional history explicitly distinguishes white propaganda, which acknowledges its source, from black propaganda, which disguises its source and permits governmental disavowal.

I use *covert* to emphasize concealed sponsorship and *clandestine* to emphasize concealed activity or transmission, while recognizing that OSS and later records often treated the terms more loosely. MUSAC's recordings were intended to be widely heard. Secrecy concerned the arrangements that produced and circulated them, while the station's claimed German identity concealed their Allied sponsorship. I retain *psychological warfare* and *morale operations* as historically situated institutional categories. I use *psychological operation* when discussing a bounded project designed to influence a target audience. None of these terms guarantees that influence occurred.

The surviving files refer to the project as MUSAC, MUZAK, and MUSACK, with greater variation in the early documentation. MUSAC became more standardized as the operation developed, although alternative spellings continued to appear. Mauch glosses the name as "musical action," while its spelling also recalled the Muzak company whose studios supported the recordings.[26] I use MUSAC throughout this dissertation for consistency, preserving original spellings in direct quotations and archival document titles. This dissertation does not use *music as weapon* as a transhistorical definition of music. It asks how particular institutions and cultural workers made that claim actionable during a specific war. The object of study is thus broader than a repertory and narrower than every political use of music. It is the institutional and musical system through which the OSS designed, produced, circulated, and evaluated recorded entertainment for black radio between 1944 and 1945, together with the system's documented antecedents and postwar survivals.

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[26] Christof Mauch, *The Shadow War against Hitler: The Covert Operations of America's Wartime Secret Intelligence Service*, trans. Jeremiah M. Riemer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 154.

III. Music in War and International History

MUSAC becomes legible through several substantial bodies of scholarship, but it does not fit comfortably within any one of them. Musicologists have shown that music during the Second World War was embedded in institutions, labor systems, technologies, racial formations, gendered expectations, and arguments about national culture. Historians of diplomacy have traced the role of musicians and musical institutions in international relations before, during, and after the war. Scholars of sound and violence have made listening central to accounts of conflict, detention, trauma, and power. Historians of propaganda and clandestine radio have reconstructed the strategic uses of false attribution and the infrastructures that sustained them. These literatures establish the conditions for this dissertation. Their intersection also reveals the problem that MUSAC poses.

Christina Baade and Annegret Fauser demonstrate that wartime broadcasting and musical mobilization were neither marginal to the war effort nor reducible to official slogans. Baade's *Victory through Harmony* reconstructs how BBC policy, popular music, musical labor, gender, race, class, and competing definitions of national culture shaped wartime broadcasting in Britain. Fauser's *Sounds of War* follows the mobilization of musical life in the United States across government, military, civic, and artistic institutions, showing how repertories and performers participated in the production of a national war culture.[27] Their work makes it possible to ask who organized wartime sound, whose expertise counted, which musical practices acquired public value, and how radio mediated those decisions. MUSAC extends those questions into black

[27] Christina L. Baade, *Victory through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Annegret Fauser, *Sounds of War: Music in the United States during World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

propaganda. Here, the institution regulating the music could not be publicly acknowledged, and the national identity of the performance was deliberately made uncertain.

Kate Lacey's *Feminine Frequencies* supplies the German history of gender, radio, and the public sphere that complements these accounts of wartime mobilization. She shows how women's programming, scheduling, and debates about broadcast speech helped organize radio's movement between public authority and private life. Women appear in that history as producers and speakers as well as an audience imagined by broadcasters. Her account of the *Plauderei*, the scripted impression of informal conversation developed in women's programming, establishes a genealogy for radio's intimate institutional voice.[28] This history changes how MUSAC's gendered address can be understood. Its female performers entered a medium in which familiarity and private speech already carried public and political work. I place MUSAC within that history and examine what happened when an Anglo-American clandestine operation used émigré voices and popular songs to make its address sound personally and culturally proximate. Women as radio listeners, women as performers, and women imagined as links between home and front remain related but distinct positions in this account. Allison McCracken's history of crooning adds a related account of how recording technology, vocal production, and gendered expectations made intimacy a professional technique. Read together, these histories allow the analysis to distinguish a singer's gender from the vocal manner, persona, and social relation through which a performance addressed its listener.[29]

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[28] Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 3–15, 193–98, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.10335.

[29] Allison McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing: Crooning in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), esp. 74–125.

Carol A. Hess places the musical statecraft of the 1930s and 1940s within the Good Neighbor policy and the broader ambitions of Pan-Americanism. *Representing the Good Neighbor* shows that musical exchange joined aesthetic judgment to diplomatic, commercial, and ideological projects, while performances and their reception constructed relations of similarity, difference, cosmopolitanism, and hierarchy.[30] Hess is crucial to the prehistory of MUSAC because she demonstrates that the Roosevelt administration's investment in musical influence did not begin with Cold War cultural diplomacy. The contrast is equally instructive. Good Neighbor programs depended on visible partnership and public claims of hemispheric relation. MUSAC addressed an enemy population through disavowed sponsorship and a counterfeit German voice.

Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht's *Sound Diplomacy* reaches further back, recovering a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history of German-American relations made through music, emotion, touring musicians, institutions, informal networks, and what American audiences recognized as "German" culture.[31] Her account matters to this dissertation in two ways. First, it demonstrates that musical influence did not originate with government programs and did not flow only through state officials. Musicians, presenters, patrons, critics, and audiences could produce durable international attachments that exceeded diplomatic policy. Second, it makes emotion historical. German music acquired cultural authority through embodied performance and repeated acts of listening, not because music carried an automatic or universal diplomatic force. MUSAC entered this much older transatlantic field. It turned

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[30] Carol A. Hess, *Representing the Good Neighbor: Music, Difference, and the Pan American Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3–24.

[31] Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1–19, 40–65.

accumulated associations with German and Austrian repertories, voices, and performers into raw material for a clandestine operation.

The relationship is therefore one of branching development: musical diplomacy continued alongside the development of music as a weapon of psychological warfare. MUSAC pursued this latter possibility through the deliberate reworking of songs and performances for covert persuasion. Gienow-Hecht's musicians acted as informal cultural representatives whose power could escape the state. MUSAC's artists were placed inside a state operation that concealed the state's presence. The project depended on precisely the kind of emotional and cultural recognizability that *Sound Diplomacy* historicizes, but it redirected those attachments toward deception and demoralization. This comparison also guards against a reductive account of instrumentality. Music could be selected for a strategic purpose without remaining under the sponsor's control once it sounded.

The postwar literature shows further transformations. Amy C. Beal's *New Music, New Allies* begins with American occupation and reeducation programs after 1945, then follows the institutions, cultural officers, West German radio stations, festivals, and exchange networks that supported American experimental music through the Cold War.[32] Beal is especially important at this dissertation's temporal hinge. Her history begins where MUSAC's broadcasts ended, but the objects and political situations differ. MUSAC used popular familiarity and false German provenance against a wartime enemy. The networks Beal reconstructs promoted American experimental music through occupation policy and, increasingly, through West German

[32] Amy C. Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

institutions whose patrons and broadcasters exercised their own agency. Reading the two histories together clarifies changes in sponsorship, repertory, institutional visibility, and the political meanings assigned to radio after the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Danielle Fosler-Lussier and Emily Abrams Ansari similarly complicate any simple model in which Washington chose a musical message and foreign audiences received it. In *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy*, Fosler-Lussier follows officials, performers, presenters, impresarios, and audiences through the State Department's Cultural Presentations program. She shows that musical diplomacy acquired different uses and meanings for the people who made it possible, and that the language of influence had to be negotiated through budgets, institutions, relationships, and local reception.[33] Ansari's *The Sound of a Superpower* and her work on an "epistemic community" of American composers show that composers did more than submit to government policy: they helped formulate ideas about musical Americanism and the role music should play abroad.[34]

These studies provide close methodological neighbors for MUSAC. Fosler-Lussier's attention to intermediaries and contested reception supports this dissertation's refusal to treat communication as a message delivered intact. Ansari's composers offer a model for understanding cultural workers as participants in policy formation rather than passive instruments of the state. MUSAC nonetheless changes the terms of both accounts. Its cultural

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[33] Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 4–12.

[34] Emily Abrams Ansari, *The Sound of a Superpower: Musical Americanism and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Emily Abrams Ansari, "Shaping the Policies of Cold War Musical Diplomacy: An Epistemic Community of American Composers," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 1 (2012): 41–52, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2011.01007.x.

experts frequently worked anonymously or behind cover, and they designed performances that purported to arise from the target culture rather than represent an acknowledged American nation. The émigré artists' political commitments also resist a single institutional meaning. Their work could function at once as antifascist resistance, paid government labor, displaced cultural memory, and material for an operation whose final form they did not fully control.

Gienow-Hecht's edited collection *Music and International History in the Twentieth Century* explicitly asks historians to treat music as part of international history rather than as an ornament to it.[35] This dissertation takes up that invitation in a case where music's political status was intentionally hidden. MUSAC does not simply illustrate a diplomatic or military history already knowable from other sources. Musical choices helped determine whether a station sounded plausible, how it addressed a listener, and what kinds of memory and affect the operation could mobilize. At the same time, the project cautions against equating a government's musical investment with musical power. The capacity to commission and transmit a record was not the capacity to fix its meaning.

Taken together, the scholarship on war and diplomacy establishes that state-sponsored music was institutional, negotiated, and historically contingent. Its principal cases, however, usually begin from visible sponsorship, public performance, or an acknowledged national representative. MUSAC begins from the opposite condition. Sponsorship had to disappear. Performers could impersonate enemy culture. Familiarity mattered because it could make false provenance credible. The dissertation therefore adds a concealed wartime dimension to the

[35] Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, ed., *Music and International History in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015).

history of musical statecraft, one in which the techniques of an intelligence operation became constitutive of musical meaning.

IV. Sound Violence and the Problem of Listening

Another body of scholarship makes it possible to hear MUSAC as part of war without assuming that all wartime sound operates in the same way. J. Martin Daughtry's *Listening to War* names the "belliphonic" as the field of sounds generated by armed conflict and the listening practices through which wartime actors learn to survive, interpret danger, and inhabit violence. His account broadens war's sonic history beyond music written about battle or performed for morale. His concepts of auditory regimes and acoustic territories connect wartime listening to relations of power and the spaces in which sound is encountered. These concepts place listening inside the production of wartime knowledge. MUSAC brings into that inquiry the institutional practices through which knowledge of listeners informed musical persuasion and accounts of listening returned as intelligence.[36] Jessica A. Schwartz's *Radiation Sounds* likewise shows how music and listening can register imperial and military power where official regimes of secrecy make crucial processes difficult or impossible to perceive.[37] Her work is particularly important for a project whose archive is structured by classification and whose political presence was designed to remain inaudible as American presence.

Cusick's studies of music and detention demonstrate the need to specify institutional control over acoustic exposure. MUSAC's broadcasts present a distinct historical problem,

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[36] J. Martin Daughtry, *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3–5, 16, 37–38, 80, 210–12, 215, 219, 277.

[37] Jessica A. Schwartz, *Radiation Sounds: Marshallese Music and Nuclear Silences* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 5.

examined here through their own production and reception evidence.[38] Anna Papaeti has described the lateness with which music research engaged the long history of music, violence, terror, and detention.[39] These interventions require musicologists to examine the institutions, bodies, technologies, and power relations that make a musical practice harmful.

Soldatensender West could not normally compel its intended audience to remain tuned in, so musical pleasure and familiarity helped recruit the participation on which persuasion depended. That participation was also the site of intervention: nostalgia could turn attention toward lost security, satire could diminish military authority, and an intimate voice could recast continued sacrifice as betrayal. The broadcaster's inability to monopolize the acoustic environment did not make the music politically passive. Nor did it give German listeners unrestricted freedom: military discipline, shared receivers, prohibitions, and the threat of punishment shaped their access.

This dissertation therefore treats listening as both an object of strategy and a site of contingency. OSS and PWE personnel imagined habits of enemy listening, but they could not occupy the listener's position. They relied on cultural experts, target analyses, monitoring, and interrogation to approximate it. The audience, meanwhile, did not become passive because a station had a strategic design. Listeners could tune away, attend selectively, recognize the deception, value accurate news while rejecting commentary, enjoy a performance for reasons

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[38] Suzanne G. Cusick, "Music as Torture/Music as Weapon," *TRANS: Transcultural Music Review* 10 (2006), https://www.sibetrans.com/trans/articulo/152/music-as-torture-music-as-weapon; Cusick, "Towards an Acoustemology of Detention in the 'Global War on Terror,'" in *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, ed. Georgina Born (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 275–91.

[39] Anna Papaeti, "On Music, Torture and Detention: Reflections on Issues of Research and Discipline," *Transposition*, special issue 2 (2020), https://doi.org/10.4000/transposition.5289.

unrelated to its new text, or repurpose the broadcast within their own social worlds. Listening was the point at which the operation sought access and the point at which control became least secure.

V. Clandestine Radio and the Missing Musical Object

Histories of propaganda and clandestine broadcasting supply the operational account that musicology alone cannot provide. Lawrence C. Soley's *Radio Warfare* traces the institutional development and strategic uses of international broadcasting, while Soley and John S. Nichols's *Clandestine Radio Broadcasting* distinguishes white, gray, and black stations and follows covert transmissions from the 1930s through the postwar period.[40] Their work begins from the evidentiary difficulty of the medium: the source and location of a clandestine broadcast are secret by definition, station identities can be fabricated, and surviving accounts frequently depend on the institutions that operated or monitored them. This literature supplies a history of stations, sponsors, targets, political objectives, and tactics without which MUSAC's records would be unintelligible.

Broader institutional histories make that operational context still more precise. Michael Balfour's comparative history of British and German wartime propaganda situates the organizations, policies, and publics within which the PWE developed its practice. Clayton D. Laurie reconstructs the American propaganda campaign against Nazi Germany across its public and covert institutions, and Nelson MacPherson places the OSS London office within the

[40] Soley, *Radio Warfare*; Soley and Nichols, *Clandestine Radio Broadcasting*.

structures of Anglo-American intelligence liaison.[41] Together, these studies establish the administrative conflict, doctrine, and inter-Allied coordination on which MUSAC depended. At their scale, however, music necessarily appears as one medium or tactic among many. They do not ask how the construction of a melody, arrangement, accent, or vocal persona could itself become an operational decision.

Yet in operational histories, music often remains programming, atmosphere, or bait for the spoken propaganda that follows. MUSAC demonstrates that these functions were themselves operational. Repertorial selection could position a station socially and nationally. Accent and vocal style could support or fracture its cover. An arrangement could mediate between American novelty and German plausibility. A familiar melody could preserve enough of an earlier identity to make the substituted text legible, but it could also recall meanings that planners had not chosen. Sequence could determine whether a song sounded like entertainment, commentary, or evidence of insider access. Music was not an interchangeable container for words; it helped produce the relation among station, source, and listener on which black radio relied.

At the intersection of musicology and intelligence history, the stable "work" and the stable "operation" both become difficult to locate. Which object is the MUSAC song: the borrowed melody, the lyric sheet, the arrangement, the studio performance, the disc, the live radio sequence, or a listener's remembered fragment? Who is its author: the original songwriter, Metzl, Goehr, Weill, the singer, the engineer, the propaganda planner, or the institution that controlled circulation? Where does the operation end: with transmission, with a listener's

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[41] Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War, 1939–1945: Organisations, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979); Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996); Nelson MacPherson, *American Intelligence in War-time London: The Story of the OSS* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

response, with the report that translated that response, or with the later office that retained the report as precedent? These are not terminological puzzles external to the history. They describe the system the OSS built.

The historiographical gap lies in the relation between these processes. The musicological studies discussed here explain musical form, performance, mediation, listening, war, and diplomacy; intelligence and communication histories explain covert institutions, deception, radio infrastructure, and psychological operations. MUSAC requires these accounts to be brought together because changing a lyric or a voice could also change an operation's cover, while an administrative decision could alter a song's authorship, circulation, or apparent source. The method developed here synthesizes and extends tools from these adjacent fields to follow a mutable musical object through a covert operation and back into the institution as evidence. Its originality lies in reconstructing those relations as part of the history of the music itself.

VI. An Archive Built by Secrecy

The method of this dissertation developed in response to the form of the evidence. MUSAC did not survive as a unified collection containing directives, scores, recordings, scripts, personnel records, transmission logs, and listener responses. Its traces are dispersed across the National Archives at College Park, the United States Army Heritage and Education Center, the Imperial War Museums, and the CIA's online Reading Room, with related materials embedded in office histories, correspondence, administrative files, and the records of cooperating institutions. Between 2015 and 2019, I created more than six thousand archival images of records connected to the project and the offices around it. The corpus includes project reports, cables, memoranda, lyric sheets and session documentation, personnel dossiers, propaganda directives,

budgets, contracts, shipping records, monitoring summaries, captured materials, prisoner-of-war interviews, and retrospective histories.

This dispersal is not merely an inconvenience imposed on a complete past. It records how clandestine work was organized. Compartmentalization separated knowledge among offices and participants. Cover organizations obscured the relationship between a government sponsor and commercial collaborators. Security review and later declassification altered what remained available together. Some files preserve only a reference to an attachment or recording that is no longer present. Others contain retrospective summaries whose confidence and coherence exceed the uncertainty of the contemporaneous correspondence. The archive therefore gives unusually detailed access to parts of MUSAC's production while leaving the broadcast event and private listening comparatively fragile.

Lia Brozgal's concept of the *anarchive* provides a useful way to understand a historical object whose evidence survives outside a single authorized collection. The anarchive does not restore an original completeness. It gathers relations among scattered traces and attends to the institutional conditions that shaped their preservation and dispersal.[42] Lauren F. Klein's work on archival silence and data visualization similarly directs attention toward networks of communication and labor that conventional archival description can obscure.[43] For MUSAC, this means following secretaries, liaisons, engineers, performers, advertising personnel, and shipping routes as well as the named officers who authored final reports.

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[42] Lia Brozgal, *Absent the Archive: Cultural Traces of a Massacre in Paris, 17 October 1961* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 24–27, 31–33.

[43] Lauren F. Klein, "The Image of Absence: Archival Silence, Data Visualization, and James Hemings," *American Literature* 85, no. 4 (2013): 665, https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-2367310.

Saidiya Hartman's "Venus in Two Acts" remains an essential account of the violence through which archives produce both knowledge and silence, and of the ethical difficulty of writing where the record has denied a subject's life.[44] The historical and ethical conditions of Hartman's archive differ from those of an OSS operation. Her attention to how archival gaps are produced nevertheless sharpens the questions I ask of MUSAC's dispersed records: what kinds of labor became difficult to recover, which acts of classification separated related materials, and where a missing relation survives in another office's files. I follow those relations through the available traces, treating the production of absence as part of the operation's history.

This approach also shapes how declassification is read. A released document is not transparent simply because a classification stamp has been crossed out. It remains an artifact created for a particular office, audience, and administrative purpose. A cable may compress conflict into a directive; a final report may turn uncertain results into a persuasive institutional history; a personnel file may translate cultural biography into security and utility; a "comeback" may make a mediated listener response serve as an evaluation metric. I read these documents both for the information they contain and for the actions they performed inside the organization.

The scale of the corpus required a data-assisted inventory. I organized information from more than one thousand archival images in a structured dataset and used Tableau to identify patterns in personnel, repertory, lyrical topics, gendered address, emotional appeals, production dates, and institutional circulation. The current session-based song index contains 304 recording entries, including rerecordings; it is not a census of unique songs, surviving audio masters, or confirmed broadcasts. Its fields combine retained OSS classifications with my research and

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[44] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14, https://doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-1.

coding. “No Propaganda Content,” for example, preserves an institutional designation, while the gender and origin fields support later analytical questions. This distinction allows the archive’s own categories to be studied without treating them as a complete account of what the music did. Appendix A explains the unit of count and the distinction between historical classifications and research coding, reproduces the operation’s classification key, and supplies a small sample of case-study entries from the research dataset. The complete cleaned dataset is retained as a separate supplementary research file. Aggregation reveals repeated choices, but their persuasive construction still requires returning to lyrics, scores, recordings, scripts, and production correspondence.

VII. Strategic Listening

Strategic listening names both a wartime practice and the analytical method through which I reconstruct it. As a practice, it encompasses the efforts of institutions and cultural workers to understand, solicit, and evaluate listening. As a method, it joins institutional reconstruction to close musical analysis, archival criticism, and mediated reception analysis. Nattiez’s tripartition supplies a vocabulary for relating production, the material trace, and listener meaning; acoustemology makes it possible to ask how sound and listening became forms of knowledge. Each approach answers a different part of the same historical problem.

Institutional reconstruction establishes who commissioned, prepared, reviewed, and circulated a recording. It also reconstructs how cover arrangements and compartmentalized work concealed those relationships from listeners and limited what participants knew about the operation. Musical analysis then examines what happened to the source song in that process, including how performance and broadcast sequence changed its address. Archival criticism

situates each surviving trace within the office and purpose that produced or preserved it, while reception analysis follows reports of recognition, enjoyment, suspicion, and response. Moving among these forms of evidence connects a musical choice to its operational setting and to the uses made of it by listeners and evaluators. The practices that follow organize that inquiry.

First, the offices listened *for* a target. Research reports, monitoring, prisoner interviews, cultural dossiers, and the knowledge of émigré personnel were used to construct an account of German and Austrian taste, speech, regional identity, morale, domestic life, and radio habit. This was institutional listening: a selective practice that translated heterogeneous people into actionable categories. Its products reveal as much about Allied assumptions as they do about the populations those reports claimed to know.

Second, MUSAC's cultural workers listened *as if from* the target's position. They evaluated whether a lyric could be sung naturally, whether an accent would sound local or foreign, whether an American arrangement would remain credible, whether a melody carried usable associations, and how much alteration a familiar song could bear. Their expertise did not provide unmediated access to an audience. Exile, political opposition, generational difference, class, professional training, and the passage of time shaped what they could hear. Yet the project depended on their capacity to anticipate recognition and suspicion.

Third, the broadcast solicited listening from the target population. Its schedules, transitions, mixtures of information and entertainment, vocal personae, and musical forms offered reasons to tune in and remain while inviting particular interpretations of military service, home, loyalty, and loss. Lacey's account of German radio use situates such attention within working and domestic routines in which music could accompany other activities while news

prompted more focused listening.[45] Strategic design met listeners under these changing conditions. Recognition could coexist with disbelief; pleasure could exceed the purpose of the new text; and a familiar tune could recall a memory unavailable to the people who had rewritten it.

Finally, the institutions listened *back*. Monitoring reports, enemy commentary, interrogations, rumors, and comebacks carried accounts of reception into the office. Informants, translators, interrogators, and analysts selected and reformulated what they heard before it reached decision makers. By retaining these returns in the MUSAC files, the office made encounters with broadcasts and related campaigns part of its working evidence. I follow both the listening described in a report and the subsequent institutional use of that report.

Steven Feld's concept of acoustemology—sound and listening as ways of knowing—clarifies what joins these practices.[46] I use an *acoustemology of strategic warfare* to name the broader ways military and intelligence institutions produce, organize, and operationalize knowledge through sounding and listening. Within that field, MUSAC reveals an *acoustemology of strategic listening*: a recursive process in which knowledge of listeners, repertory, cultural familiarity, gendered address, credibility, and attention entered musical decisions intended to persuade, while evidence of listening returned as material for institutional judgment and further work. The process can be reconstructed at the institutional level even when the surviving record does not link a particular listener report to a subsequent musical decision. *Strategic listening*

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[45] Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*, 107–8. The survey evidence and the social settings of listening are discussed further in Chapter 5.

[46] Steven Feld, "Acoustemology," in *Keywords in Sound*, ed. David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 12–21.

follows who could define a target, whose hearing counted as expertise, and how an encounter with sound became usable knowledge. Unequal relations among planners, performers, and listeners are therefore part of the analysis of musical meaning.

VIII. Production Trace and Reception

Jean-Jacques Nattiez's tripartition provides a vocabulary for relating institutional intention, musical construction, and listener meaning. Nattiez distinguishes the poietic processes of production, the material trace produced by those processes, and the esthesic processes through which listeners construct meaning.[47] The model is especially productive for MUSAC because it treats reception as an act of meaning-making rather than the recovery of a message delivered intact.

MUSAC's poietic field was distributed. An OSS directive could specify a target vulnerability; Metzl could write a new lyric; an arranger could reshape phrase, harmony, instrumentation, or tempo; a singer could inflect the text through accent and persona; an engineer could determine the recorded balance; British programmers could excerpt or sequence the disc; and an announcer could place it within a new verbal frame. No one participant necessarily possessed the whole operation. Institutional secrecy made this distributed production an intentional condition rather than an incidental feature of collaboration.

The trace was correspondingly plural. A lyric sheet, arrangement, lacquer or shellac disc, catalogue entry, broadcast log, recorded performance, and remembered fragment preserve different states of the musical object. In many cases, the original sound recording is missing

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[47] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 10–17, 28–29.

while the text and administrative record survive. In others, a disc may preserve a performance whose exact position within a live broadcast cannot be reconstructed. I therefore do not use a surviving lyric as a transparent substitute for what a listener heard. Close analysis moves among the available traces while marking the difference between them.

The esthesic field is the most fragmentary. Listener meaning does not follow automatically from the properties of the song or the intentions of its makers. Nattiez's distinction allows a melody to be demonstrably familiar, a text to contain a demoralizing insinuation, and an OSS planner to expect a particular response without treating those facts as evidence that a listener experienced that response. When reception appears through an interview or monitoring report, it enters the archive as a new production with its own author, occasion, language, and institutional use.

This tripartition structures the dissertation's musical analyses. I compare source songs and MUSAC versions at the level of lyric, melody, harmony, form, arrangement, instrumentation, tempo, vocal timbre, accent, persona, recording, and program sequence when the materials survive. I then read those features alongside production directives and documented interpretations. Identifying the original composers and lyricists locates the adaptation within a longer musical history; examining the German text and recorded performance shows what MUSAC's workers retained or changed. The analysis follows those decisions through the sources that preserve them and identifies whose interpretation is at issue at each stage.

IX. Evidence and Efficacy

I read the surviving records in relation to one another. Directives establish what planners sought to do; lyric sheets, arrangements, and recordings show how cultural workers pursued

those aims; shipment and programming records locate the resulting materials in circulation. Listener statements, monitoring items, warnings, and captured references document encounters with songs, stations, and coordinated campaigns. These records support an account of how musical intervention was made, encountered, and evaluated. A claim about a particular change in belief or conduct must be connected to evidence of that response, rather than inferred from a production total or a listener's recognition alone.

Comebacks have a dual place in this inquiry. They report encounters with an operation, and their selection and retention show what the office regarded as important evidence about its work. Their mediation is part of that history. A German warning, a prisoner interview, and an Allied evaluation can converge on music's importance while giving different accounts of why listeners attended to it. I examine those convergences and follow how officers used them to justify, revise, and remember an operation. This preserves the force of the evidence while distinguishing the response a document describes from the larger judgment an evaluator made from it.

MUSAC's consequences also include the labor and money it mobilized, the recordings it produced, and the cultural knowledge it made available to psychological warfare. It enlisted Jewish émigré expertise and drew on Jewish contributions to popular repertory within a larger network of Allied personnel and commercial institutions. Its treatment of gender, national familiarity, and musical memory became part of an organized practice of audience planning. The reports that recorded this work carried its lessons beyond the individual recording session and into institutional memory.

Listener agency remains central to this account. German military and civilian listeners heard radio under censorship, surveillance, danger, and the conditions of total war. Within those constraints, they could compare news, select entertainment, discuss what they heard, and detach a tune or phrase from its broadcast setting. Choosing to listen did not necessarily mean knowing who had produced the program; the station's false identity was itself one of the conditions under which listeners made sense of what they heard. I use agency to identify this participation in meaning-making, including the choices and reinterpretations visible in the surviving returns.

X. Dissertation Architecture

The chapter sequence follows the processes this method reconstructs. Chapter 2 establishes whose cultural knowledge became available to MUSAC; Chapter 3 explains how that knowledge was organized into production; Chapter 4 analyzes the musical transformations; and Chapter 5 follows listening and its return to the office as evidence. Chapter 6 then examines the postwar survival and transformation of the practices and records assembled during the war. The sequence allows musical interpretation and institutional history to develop together, with the Conclusion drawing out what their integration contributes to the study of music and covert power.

Chapter 2 reconstructs MUSAC's creators and the forms of expertise the OSS made operational. It follows Donovan's institutional role; the coordinating work of Katherine "Kay" Halle and Rhoda Klinger Hirsch; the compositional, arranging, theatrical, and broadcasting experience of Weill, Goehr, Metzl, and Irving Miller; and the performers whose careers connected opera, cabaret, film, popular song, and radio. The chapter treats biography as institutional history, showing how Jewish exclusion and exile, professional mobility, and

American commercial experience shaped the knowledge available to the project. It also makes administrative labor visible alongside the named artists whose recordings survive.

Chapter 3 examines the production system that converted expertise into recorded material. It traces Morale Operations' relationship with the PWE, the Washington and London offices, the Mohawk Trading Corporation, the J. Walter Thompson Company, Muzak, studios, review procedures, budgets, labels, shipments, and cable traffic. The chapter shows that MUSAC was made through coordination among government, military, and commercial institutions. Its concealment was built into contracts, paperwork, and circulation as well as into the sound of the broadcasts.

Chapter 4 turns to the designed musical weapon. Through close comparison of source materials and MUSAC versions, it examines how lyric substitution, arrangement, voice, accent, tempo, instrumentation, genre, sentiment, parody, and fragmentation created familiarity and disturbance at the same time. Crediting the source repertory brings Jewish musical authorship into the analysis of adaptation, while the history of German radio helps explain the conventions through which an intimate voice could claim public attention. Gender remains central because the project repeatedly imagined women's voices, romantic relationships, domestic absence, and sexual suspicion as routes to male military morale. The chapter asks how the recordings' musical construction enabled, complicated, or redirected their strategic design.

Chapter 5 follows MUSAC's musical persuasion through broadcast programming, coordinated campaigns, and the archive of listening and comebacks. German warnings and Allied reports show how music sustained attention and how its placement alongside news and commentary made it part of the broadcast's persuasive construction, including when listeners

recognized the station's enemy provenance. The Westwall case follows a campaign theme across song, leaflet, and surrender instruction, while *Das Neue Deutschland* shows how newspaper, anthem, and related materials worked within the larger Morale Operations system that also circulated MUSAC. These cases connect musical construction with circulation and reported memory. The chapter treats listeners as co-producers of meaning and examines how the OSS selected and interpreted these encounters as evidence of efficacy. Lacey's history of everyday radio use helps situate the practices of attention through which the broadcasts entered listeners' lives.

Chapter 6 traces the project's termination and afterlife. It follows the records, personnel, practices, and institutional claims that survived the dissolution of the OSS, including Metzl's continuing intelligence career, and examines how later American clandestine-radio operations developed related practices of musical persuasion, source concealment, and audience intelligence. The chapter places those survivals beside the postwar histories reconstructed by Beal, Fosler-Lussier, Ansari, and other scholars of occupation and cultural diplomacy. That comparison makes visible both continuity and transformation: covert impersonation, overt cultural representation, reeducation, exchange, and radio patronage organized musical attention, authority, and persuasion through different relations among sponsor, performer, institution, and audience.

The Conclusion returns to the relation between musical and operational history. MUSAC's distributed authorship, altered repertory, concealed sponsorship, and mediated reception make it necessary to follow musical meaning across the boundaries of a work, a broadcast, and an intelligence operation. The histories of Jewish cultural labor and gendered radio address explain some of the knowledge and conventions on which that operation depended.

Reconstructing these relations together establishes the dissertation's transferable methodological contribution: strategic listening offers a way to study music when covert institutions have made authorship, provenance, transmission, and the record of reception unstable. It also establishes a substantive musical argument: psychological warfare entered the construction of lyrics, arrangements, voices, and programs, where émigré knowledge and gendered conventions helped make persuasion sound culturally familiar.

MUSAC's larger significance lies in what it reveals about the state's encounter with music. The OSS did not discover an inherent power residing inside songs. It built an apparatus for selecting cultural knowledge, altering musical traces, circulating them under false identities, imagining listeners, and interpreting returns. That apparatus coordinated music's deliberate use as a weapon through choices audible in its songs and programs. It could solicit a judgment or feeling without making musical meaning obedient. Its history shows how cultural expertise entered the expressive construction of songs and how accounts of listening became knowledge through which an institution assessed music's impact and developed its use as a psychological weapon.

Danielle Stein

Dissertation

Chapter 2

Dramatis Personae: The People of MUSAC

MUSAC brought intelligence officials and administrators into collaboration with musicians and performers whose careers connected Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Britain, and the United States. Their work joined professional entertainment to an operation that deliberately remade music for psychological warfare. Many of its musicians and performers were émigrés whose careers had been disrupted by National Socialism and who carried with them professional knowledge of the musical, theatrical, and broadcasting cultures toward which the project would later direct its recordings. MUSAC therefore depended upon forms of linguistic, musical, theatrical, political, and technological expertise that the Office of Strategic Services could not produce through conventional military personnel alone. Recruiting this expertise also brought established professional networks into the operation, connecting intelligence work to the people and institutions able to make recordings.

The biographies of these participants reveal how intimate cultural knowledge became a form of wartime expertise. William J. Donovan's OSS created an institutional environment in which unconventional professional knowledge could be recruited for intelligence work;

Katherine "Kay" Halle and Rhoda K. Hirsch helped coordinate the personnel and information on which MUSAC depended; Edward Cushing brought experience in music criticism and the recording industry to its New York administration; Kurt Weill, Rudolf Goehr, Lothar Metzl, and Irving Miller contributed distinct forms of compositional, linguistic, theatrical, and broadcasting expertise; and the project's performers brought experience shaped by opera, operetta, cabaret, film, popular song, commercial recording, and radio. Their professional histories were not incidental background to MUSAC. They constituted part of the project's operational resources. Their judgments also helped determine the operation's means of persuasion: how a German rhyme could carry insinuation, how an arrangement could support intimacy or ridicule, and which performer could make that address convincing.

The surviving archive makes those relationships unusually visible. Correspondence, personnel records, contracts, recording documentation, and internal memoranda identify participants whose knowledge of the operation varied: some worked inside its intelligence structure, while others supplied professional labor under cover arrangements. Halle's name recurs across the MUSAC files examined for this dissertation, while Hirsch's correspondence brings Washington's coordination of the project into particularly close view.[1] This chapter establishes who these participants were, how their political and professional histories positioned them within MUSAC, and what forms of expertise became available through their participation.

[1] "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, MD; Rhoda K. Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," December 20, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Jewish lives and creative work run through this network. Weill, Goehr, and Metzl brought knowledge formed within German-speaking culture and carried into exile after Nazi persecution. Jewish performers likewise contributed professional experience that racial exclusion had driven from German institutions. As Kate Lacey shows, the Nazi takeover of German radio in 1933 brought the removal of Jewish employees from both administrative and creative work, making racial exclusion part of the reorganization of broadcasting itself.[2] Halle's German-Jewish paternal background places Jewish family history within the project's administrative world as well. These histories were not identical, but together they reveal a consequential reversal: an Allied operation relied on cultural knowledge that National Socialism had sought to expel from German life. The connection also extended to the songs MUSAC adapted, including works by Jewish and Jewish-descended composers and lyricists in American popular entertainment.[3]

I. Administration and Intelligence

William J. Donovan and the Expansion of Wartime Intelligence

As founder and director of the Office of Strategic Services, William J. Donovan helped establish the institutional setting in which MUSAC could recruit cultural expertise for wartime intelligence. Before the creation of the OSS, Donovan had established a prominent career as an

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[2] Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 100–101.

[3] Neil W. Levin, "Kurt Weill," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, accessed September 12, 2026, https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/kurt-weill; "Rudolf Goehr," *Die Kardosch-Sänger*, accessed September 12, 2026, https://kardosch-saenger.de/die-abels-die-deutschen-revellers-aus-ungarn/rudolf-goehr; Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War, "Lothar Metzl," *Austrian Soldiers in Foreign Armies*, accessed September 12, 2026, https://austriansoldiers.lbg.ac.at/bio/lothar-metzl/?lang=en; Shapell Manuscript Foundation, "Kennedy and the Arts: His Unprecedented Invitation of Scholars, Artists, Writers, and Thinkers to His Inauguration," accessed October 1, 2026, https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/kennedy-invites-humanities-leaders-to-inauguration/; Case Western Reserve University, "Halle, Manuel," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, accessed October 1, 2026, https://case.edu/ech/articles/h/halle-manuel. Individual biographies and repertory examples below document the forms of participation distinguished here.

attorney, decorated First World War veteran, political figure, and international observer. In 1940 President Franklin D. Roosevelt began employing him as an unofficial emissary and fact-finder abroad, asking Donovan to assess political and military conditions at a moment when the United States had not yet entered the war.[4] These assignments placed Donovan in direct contact with the rapidly changing European war and helped shape his developing ideas about what an American intelligence organization would need to understand and accomplish.

Donovan's mission from late 1940 into March 1941 took him through the Mediterranean, the Balkans, the Middle East, and North Africa. His investigations joined military assessment to questions of political allegiance, information, and morale. Earlier visits had already exposed him to German propaganda and subversion and to British proposals for unconventional warfare. In his June 10, 1941 "Memorandum of Establishment of Service of Strategic Information," Donovan explicitly identified radio as a weapon for attacking an enemy's morale and beliefs: "In this attack the most powerful weapon is radio." He connected that power to intelligence, insisting that effective psychological warfare required planning grounded in accurate information. He also proposed bringing dispersed government information together for analysis by linguistic, technical, and psychological specialists, then circulating their findings rapidly to the departments that needed them. Radio thus occupied a central place in his proposal for an intelligence organization capable of shaping the political and psychological conditions of war.[5]

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[4] John Whiteclay Chambers II, "'Wild Bill' Donovan and the Origins of the OSS," National Park Service, last updated July 21, 2017, https://www.nps.gov/articles/wild-bill-donovan-and-the-origins-of-the-oss.htm.

[5] William J. Donovan, "Memorandum of Establishment of Service of Strategic Information," June 10, 1941, 2–4, CIA-RDP84-00022R000200100014-7, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp84-00022r000200100014-7. For the surrounding institutional history, see Greg Bradsher, "William J. Donovan and the Establishment of the Office of the Coordinator of Information, July 1940–July 1941," *The Text Message*, National Archives, July 8, 2021, https://text-

That conception also required knowledge of listeners. In December 1941, Walter C. Langer described to Donovan the organization of psychologists and psychoanalysts he had assembled to advise the staff, particularly its radio section. His January 21, 1942 memorandum warned scriptwriters and broadcasters not to lose sight of "the true nature of the weapon they are using or the people to whom they are talking." He described German shortwave listeners as isolated individuals listening under difficult conditions and urged forms of address appropriate to that encounter.[6] The OSS's General Order No. 9, issued January 3, 1943, subsequently placed radio within MO's explicit mandate to disseminate secret propaganda and conduct subversion.[7] MUSAC's later enlistment of composers, writers, broadcasters, and performers gave this conjunction of psychological knowledge and directed communication a specifically musical form.

Donovan's relationship to MUSAC was also direct. Published histories of the operation identify him as personally requesting Marlene Dietrich for the project.[8] Dietrich combined

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message.blogs.archives.gov/2021/07/08/william-j-donovan-and-the-establishment-of-the-office-of-the-coordinator-of-information-july-1940-july-1941/. See also John Whiteclay Chambers II, "'Wild Bill' Donovan and the Origins of the OSS," National Park Service, last updated July 21, 2017, https://www.nps.gov/articles/wild-bill-donovan-and-the-origins-of-the-oss.htm. Chambers identifies a copy of Donovan's memorandum in RG 226, Entry 139, box 221, folder 3096, National Archives at College Park.

[6] Walter C. Langer to Colonel Donovan, "Resignation," December 10, 1941, in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 2, "The Office of the Coordinator of Information," box 99A, tab R, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Walter C. Langer to Colonel William J. Donovan, "Recommendations and Suggestions on Short-wave Broadcasts to Germany," January 21, 1942, in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 3, "The Foreign Information Service," box 99B, tab Z, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

[7] Office of Strategic Services, General Order No. 9, "Deputy Director—Psychological Warfare Operations," issued January 3, 1943, effective January 4, 1943, in *History of the Office of Strategic Services in London, 1942–1945*, vol. 7, "Morale Operations Branch: Basic Documents," 2, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1623, roll 3, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

[8] Lawrence C. Soley, *Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA Subversive Propaganda* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 125; Christof Mauch, *The Shadow War against Hitler: The Covert Operations of America's Wartime Secret Intelligence*

professional ability, German cultural recognition, public opposition to National Socialism, and extensive experience in recorded media. Donovan's intervention brought those qualities within the reach of an intelligence operation. In his May 10, 1945 letter to Lester O'Keefe, Donovan also credited their recording collaboration with producing "a psychological weapon." His acknowledgment connected professional studio work to the operation's declared purpose.[9] That collaboration depended on administrators who could coordinate personnel, information, and secrecy. Katherine "Kay" Halle and Rhoda K. Hirsch occupied different but complementary positions within that system. Donovan's letter is reproduced in Appendix D, Figure D.2.

Katherine "Kay" Halle

Katherine Murphy Halle (1903–1997), known as Kay Halle, entered the OSS with a background well suited to the cultural and political work of Morale Operations. Born in

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Service, trans. Jeremiah M. Riemer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 154–55. On the attribution of Dietrich's recruitment to Donovan, see Matt Fratus, "Marlene Dietrich: The Blond Bombshell Who Broke the Nazis With Her Voice," *Coffee or Die*, March 1, 2021, https://www.coffeeordie.com/article/marlene-dietrich. For Donovan's personal letter thanking her for the recordings, see Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 59; Central Intelligence Agency, "The 'Glorious Amateurs' of OSS: An Eclectic Group of Characters Who Helped Win a World War," December 3, 2021, section "Singing for a Cause: Marlene Dietrich," https://www.cia.gov/stories/story/the-glorious-amateurs-of-oss/. For Dietrich's own correspondence with Donovan about releasing the OSS recordings, see Marlene Dietrich to William J. Donovan, July 24, 1951, handwritten letter with attached typescript, OSS Collection, CIA-RDP13X00001R000100090007-8, Central Intelligence Agency, Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp13x00001r000100090007-8. See also unsigned draft letter to Marlene Dietrich, n.d., with handwritten revisions, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland (same draft also photographed in a different folder), expressing the agency's gratitude and requiring confidentiality. For McIntosh's retrospective recollection of Donovan identifying Dietrich as someone to approach and trust with the secret work, see Elizabeth McIntosh, interview in *A Woman at War: Marlene Dietrich Remembered*, ed. J. David Riva (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 89–94. This recollection is distinct from a contemporaneous recruitment letter.

[9] William J. Donovan to Lester O'Keefe, May 10, 1945, OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, Entry A1-210, box 429, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

Cleveland to Samuel Halle, a co-founder of the Halle Brothers department store, and Blanche Murphy Halle, she grew up in a household with German-Jewish paternal and Irish-Catholic maternal roots.[10] She attended Smith College, studied piano at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and developed a career in journalism, broadcasting, and the arts. Her personal networks connected American and British political and cultural life, including the Roosevelt and Churchill circles.[11]

Halle brought substantial broadcasting experience to intelligence work. She hosted Cleveland's *Know Your City* beginning in 1938, traveled through South America in 1940 while preparing material for WGAR, and became an intermission commentator for Cleveland Orchestra broadcasts in 1941. Recruited into the OSS, she acquired the office nickname "Mata Halle." McIntosh describes Halle's work developing MO themes and coordinating subversion programs. Halle and Jane Smith-Hutton also attended weekly interagency meetings that coordinated propaganda themes and generated directives for field stations.[12] Her significance to MUSAC appears in the correspondence, personnel documentation, reports, and communications that she received and coordinated. By September 1945 she was identified as the "MO Reports Officer," and by October as "Chief, MO Reports Office."[13] As the OSS approached dissolution,

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[10] Frank E. Wrenick, "Halle, Katherine Murphy," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, Case Western Reserve University, last updated October 6, 2023, https://case.edu/ech/articles/h/halle-katherine-murphy; Shapell Manuscript Foundation, "Kennedy and the Arts: His Unprecedented Invitation of Scholars, Artists, Writers, and Thinkers to His Inauguration," https://www.shapell.org/manuscript/kennedy-invites-humanities-leaders-to-inauguration/. See also Case Western Reserve University, "Halle, Manuel."

[11] Wrenick, "Halle, Katherine Murphy."

[12] Wrenick, "Halle, Katherine Murphy." See also Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 56–57.

[13] Phillips Trenbath to Kay Halle, "Functions of MO in a Continuing Intelligence Organization," September 20, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 156, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," Wash–MO–OP–68, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at

memoranda routed to Halle concerned the preservation of black-radio recordings and the functions Morale Operations might perform within a continuing intelligence organization. At war's end, Halle interviewed returning MO personnel and evaluated their work; McIntosh reports that her assessments were later incorporated into CIA planning.[14] Her work helped turn wartime activity into records and accounts that could survive the office that had produced them.

Halle's and Hirsch's administrative work also shaped the archive through which this dissertation became possible. Their files at the National Archives at College Park provided some of the most productive routes into MUSAC's dispersed documentation. Following their correspondence and reports made it possible to reconstruct relationships across offices and to recover contributions that remain largely invisible in accounts centered on senior officials or celebrated performers. Halle's records connect cultural personnel, operational reporting, and the preservation of Morale Operations' work. She operated across the branch at a broad reporting and coordinating level. Hirsch appears more immediately inside MUSAC, linking Washington intelligence and London requirements to the New York personnel creating the recordings.

Rhoda K. Hirsch

Rhoda Klinger Hirsch, a Jewish administrator, was identified in MUSAC's official project description as "in charge of Musac, Washington." McIntosh likewise identifies Hirsch as

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College Park, College Park, Maryland; Eugene Warner to Kay Halle, "Operational History of Das Neue Deutschland," October 1, 1945, Field Station Files (OSS Field Office Records), Entry A1 154, container 50, folder "Project–ETO–Das Neue Deutschland (Operational History)", Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

[14] Herbert S. Little to Kay Halle, "ETO Black Radio Recordings," September 4, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. On continuing intelligence planning, see Trenbath to Halle, "Functions of MO in a Continuing Intelligence Organization," September 20, 1945. For Halle's debriefings and their later use, see McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 59.

MUSAC's Washington liaison officer.[15] The personnel entry strikes through "Ass't to Mr. Cushing," explicitly identifying her responsibility for the project in Washington. Her work coordinated the intelligence, repertoire decisions, and production materials circulating among Washington, London, and the New York staff making the recordings. Her recruitment connected MUSAC's administration to a wider network of propaganda expertise. Her husband, Sol S. Hirsch, served with the OSS in France and Luxembourg.[16] Within MO, Sol worked on the French desk. Rhoda's selection brought her own administrative and propaganda expertise to MUSAC within a professional network that already included Sol's work in MO. Their June 10, 1944 V-mail shows that their correspondence included Rhoda's working life: writing from an OSS detachment, Sol responded to developments in her office and to a conversation that had helped clarify her circumstances.[17] This shared history provides context for her professional network; her operational authority is visible in her own MUSAC records.

She maintained direct communication with Lothar Metzl and supplied the New York staff with intelligence relevant to its German-language material. In a January 16, 1945 memorandum titled "Intelligence for Muzak," Metzl returned material she had sent, described it as "extremely valuable and interesting," and asked to receive it again when available.[18] The exchange connects Hirsch's Washington work to the lyric writer's creative practice: she helped determine the

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[15] "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park. See also McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 57.

[16] Ranachqua Foundation, "College Assistance Grant Program," accessed September 27, 2026, https://ranachquafoundation.org/college-assistance-grant-program/.

[17] Sol S. Hirsch to Rhoda K. Hirsch, V-mail, June 10, 1944, microfilm roll 46, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

[18] Lothar Metzl to Rhoda K. Hirsch, "Intelligence for Muzak," January 16, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

information available to the people turning wartime intelligence into songs. Her correspondence also shows her maintaining continuity between approval and production. On August 4, 1944, she asked Metzl to clarify whether a new list of twenty titles supplemented or replaced an earlier list, explaining that London should check only songs the New York staff was certain would be used. On January 3, 1945, she forwarded Cushing lyrics for four songs received from London.[19] These exchanges show her keeping repertoire proposals, field decisions, and working materials connected across the operation's offices.

Other correspondence reveals the breadth of the material she coordinated. In a December 20, 1944 memorandum to Edward Cushing, Hirsch forwarded German-language broadcast recordings, reports concerning *Soldatensender* and *Soldatensender West*, scripts intended for German audiences, information on another Morale Operations radio station, and English translations of German songs.[20] In another memorandum dated January 16, 1945, Hirsch described herself as once again "deep in MUSAC records," reconciled a proposed thirty-song list against decisions received from London, tracked which songs had been approved or rejected, identified lyrics written in London or sent to New York, checked a fifty-seven-song list for duplication, and requested additional music.[21] These records place her at an important

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[19] Rhoda K. Hirsch to Lothar Metzl, "MUSAC Project," August 4, 1944, container 171, folder 2278; Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," January 3, 1945, container 172, folder 2295; both in Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

[20] Rhoda K. Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," December 20, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[21] Rhoda K. Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," January 16, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

intersection among intelligence material, London's requirements, Washington oversight, and the New York personnel producing the recordings.

Hirsch and Halle occupied complementary positions within Morale Operations. Halle's reporting and documentary work extended across the branch; Hirsch maintained MUSAC's records, transmitted intelligence and source material to New York, tracked London's decisions, and communicated with its creative personnel.[22] Reading their correspondence as administrative authorship makes their contribution visible. Selecting, translating, reconciling, and routing information shaped what the musical staff could know and use. Their administrative decisions helped determine which intelligence, repertory, and instructions reached the studio and could enter the construction of musical persuasion. Hirsch provided an administrative spine for MUSAC, linking these offices through detailed knowledge of the repertoire and its progress toward production.

Edward Cushing

Edward Cushing (1903–1956) brought professional experience in music criticism and commercial recording to MUSAC's administration. Formerly a music critic for the *Brooklyn Eagle*, he joined the Columbia Gramophone Company in 1939 as an artistic adviser and public relations assistant.[23] MUSAC's official project description identifies him as chief of New York

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[22] "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172; Hirsch to Cushing, "MUSAC," December 20, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284; Hirsch to Cushing, "MUSAC," January 16, 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295; Metzl to Hirsch, "Intelligence for Muzak," January 16, 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295.

[23] Robert L. M. Underhill, "Edward Cushing, 1903–1956," *American Alpine Journal* 10, no. 2 (1957): 139–40, https://publications.americanalpineclub.org/articles/12195713900/Edward-Cushing-1903-1956.

operations for MO's European and Mediterranean Section.[24] His position placed him within the institutional structure supporting the New York staff's selection of songs, preparation of German lyrics, and supervision of recordings. Hirsch's correspondence with Cushing documents the exchanges of intelligence, repertoire decisions, and working materials that connected Washington's coordination to New York's production.[25] His participation demonstrates that professional musical knowledge entered MUSAC through its administrative leadership as well as through its composers and performers.

These professional connections were part of MUSAC's operational capacity. Cushing's recording-industry experience, Miller's work in network radio, and the participation of the J. Walter Thompson Company placed commercial musical and media knowledge within the project's organization.[26] Through its personnel and collaborators, the OSS drew on established professional networks capable of turning musical plans into recordings. Hirsch's coordination connected those production resources to intelligence, repertoire decisions, and London's requirements. Musical warfare depended on both the recruitment of these resources and the administrative labor that kept them working together.

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[24] "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172.

[25] Rhoda K. Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," January 3, 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295; Hirsch to Cushing, "MUSAC," January 16, 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295.

[26] "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172; Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277.

II. The Musical Creators

MUSAC's creative personnel brought together distinct forms of musical, linguistic, theatrical, and broadcasting expertise. Weill and Goehr contributed compositional and arranging experience; Metzl brought the linguistic precision and political satire of Viennese cabaret; and Miller supplied the conducting and studio practices of American network radio.[27] For the three Jewish émigrés, this collaboration also redirected knowledge developed in European institutions that Nazism had made inaccessible. Their work joined histories of persecution and displacement to an American production infrastructure. The OSS required both: familiarity with the target's musical and linguistic world and the ability to turn that knowledge into recordings.

Kurt Weill

Kurt Weill entered MUSAC with a professional history spanning German composition, political theater, popular music, and exile. Born in Dessau in 1900, the son of a Jewish cantor, he trained in the German classical tradition before becoming a defining composer of Weimar musical theater. His work with Bertolt Brecht, including *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1928), joined popular idioms to theatrical experimentation and social criticism. He fled Germany in 1933 and arrived in the United States in 1935, where he developed an American theatrical career. His wartime work included Ben Hecht's *We Will Never Die* (1943), a pageant calling attention to the murder of European Jews.[28] Jewish persecution was therefore not simply the circumstance of

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[27] "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[28] Neil W. Levin, "Kurt Weill," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, accessed September 12, 2026, https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/kurt-weill. For a broader musicological account of Weill's theatrical career across European and American contexts, see Stephen Hinton, *Weill's Musical Theater: Stages of Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), especially chaps. 1 and 8.

Weill's departure from Germany; it also became an explicit subject of his American public work. MUSAC enlisted a composer already experienced in making music carry political meaning across languages and media.

Weill's American identification also informed his public account of his artistic work. In a March 1941 radio interview, he described his arrival in the United States as "coming home" and connected his enthusiasm for American life to his compositions. His December 12, 1941 letter to Robert E. Sherwood, discussed in Chapter 1, proposed enlisting émigré artistic experience in a radio campaign against Nazi Germany. His 1947 letter to *Life* subsequently rejected its description of him as a German composer and asserted his American citizenship. These statements join German musical formation, Jewish histories of exclusion, and participation in American cultural and political life.[29]

Weill's declarations of American belonging also carried political stakes. His June 1940 proposal for an "Alliance of Loyal Alien Americans" sought to establish émigrés' anti-Nazi commitments and loyalty before American authorities and the public. Read alongside this initiative, his March 1941 account of feeling at home in the United States can be understood as both an expression of attachment and a public assertion of political trustworthiness. These

[29] Kurt Weill, interview on *I'm an American!*, NBC Blue Network, March 9, 1941, transcript reproduced by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, https://www.kwf.org/kurt-weill/recommended/im-an-american/; Weill to Robert E. Sherwood, December 12, 1941, quoted in David Farneth, Elmar Juchem, and Dave Stein, eds., *Kurt Weill: A Life in Pictures and Documents* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2000), 208; Weill, letter to the editor, *Life* 22, no. 11 (March 17, 1947): 17, original letter dated February 21, 1947, reproduced as "Gentle Beef," Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, https://www.kwf.org/kurt-weill/recommended/gentle-beef/. Weill became a US citizen on August 27, 1943; see Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, "I'm an American!," timeline, https://www.kwf.org/timelines/im-an-american/.

purposes could coexist: emotional investment in American life could accompany efforts to secure recognition and protection in a climate of suspicion toward refugees.[30]

The chronology limits what can be inferred from this public self-presentation. Weill's 1940 proposal and March 1941 interview preceded the mass removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans beginning in 1942. They establish efforts to make loyal belonging publicly legible, but do not by themselves establish fear of imprisonment as the cause of a particular statement. Neither those motives nor the protections an individual hoped to secure can be assigned collectively to other émigré artists.[31]

Weill's contribution to MUSAC is documented in correspondence and in "Wie lange noch?" A November 28, 1944 memorandum identifies the number as a Weill composition recorded by the project and sent to London.[32] Its earlier form, "Je ne t'aime pas," was a French

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[30] Weill to Erika Mann, June 17, 1940, Weill–Lenya Archive, box 47, folder 11, cited through Naomi Graber, "Found in Translation: Kurt Weill on Broadway and in Hollywood, 1935–1939" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013), 267, as quoted in Rebecca Ariane Schmid, "Toward a New Kurt Weill Reception: A Study of Influence in the Music Theater of Marc Blitzstein and Leonard Bernstein" (PhD diss., Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2020), 38 and n. 177, https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/server/api/core/bitstreams/596d4e0d-8bd2-411e-b767-28fc2134346f/content. The proposed alliance did not develop beyond the planning stage; the original letter is cited here through Schmid's discussion. On German Jewish refugees' public assertions of loyalty amid suspicion, see Anne Schenderlein, "German Jewish 'Enemy Aliens' in the United States during the Second World War," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 60 (Spring 2017): 101–16, esp. 109–13, https://www.ghi-dc.org/fileadmin/publications/Bulletin/bu60.pdf.

[31] National Archives and Records Administration, "World War II Enemy Alien Control Program Overview," https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/enemy-aliens/ww2; National Park Service, "WWII Home Front: Incarceration and Martial Law," https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/wwii-home-front-incarceration-and-martial-law.htm; Schenderlein, "German Jewish 'Enemy Aliens,'" 109–13. Selective restrictions and internment affecting German nationals, including some Jewish refugees, must be distinguished from the mass removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans, including US citizens. These different policies do not establish that declarations of loyalty protected any particular artist from detention.

[32] Edward Cushing to David Williamson, "Musac Project," November 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

song with words by Maurice Magre; the German version used a text by Walter Mehring.[33] Weill's movement among German theater, French song, and American production gave MUSAC access to a composer whose work had already crossed the national and linguistic boundaries that clandestine broadcasting sought to negotiate.

Rudolf Goehr

Rudolf Goehr entered MUSAC with experience in composition, radio, film, popular music, and commercial recording. Born in Berlin in 1906, Goehr grew up in a Jewish musical household connected through his mother, Thekla Mendelsohn, to the Mendelssohn family. Thekla had studied piano at Berlin's Neue Akademie der Tonkunst and gave him his earliest instruction. He joined Arnold Schoenberg's composition master class at the Prussian Academy of the Arts in 1930. His brother Walter brought him into Berlin radio as a musical assistant, while work with the Abel vocal ensemble and the Melody Gents developed his practical skills as pianist and arranger. According to the music critic and Schoenberg biographer Hans-Heinz Stuckenschmidt, Goehr rehearsed the vocal numbers and conducted the radio orchestra during preparations for the 1930 radio presentation of Schoenberg's *Von heute auf morgen*.[34] Formal composition and commercial entertainment were interconnected parts of his training. The ability to prepare music for different voices, ensembles, and recording conditions became a professional resource that Goehr carried into exile.

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[33] Kurt Weill and Maurice Magre, "Je ne t'aime pas," and Kurt Weill and Walter Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," in *The Unknown Kurt Weill: A Collection of 14 Songs* (New York: European American Music Corporation, 1982); Kurt Weill Foundation, "1933–1941: Exile and Frustration," https://www.kwf.org/kurt-weill/recommended/1933-1941-exile-and-frustration-text-only/.

[34] Hans-Heinz Stuckenschmidt, statement in Entschädigungsakte Rudolph Goehr, Reg. Nr. 58.710, Entschädigungsamt Berlin; Ryan Hugh Ross, "Walter Goehr (1903–1960)," *Music and the Holocaust*, World ORT, https://holocaustmusic.ort.org/resistance-and-exile/walter-goehr/; "Rudolf Goehr," *Die Kardosch-Sänger*, https://kardosch-saenger.de/die-abels-die-deutschen-revellers-aus-ungarn/rudolf-goehr.

After leaving Germany in 1933, Goehr continued working with popular vocal ensembles in Paris. Internment in France and his eventual escape to the United States in 1941 interrupted that career, but did not erase the skills it had produced. By late 1942 he was working on the Eastman Kodak radio program *Musical Pictures*; he also contributed arrangements to Weill's American theatrical work.[35] MUSAC's organization sheet identifies Goehr as responsible for musical arrangements.[36] A Jewish musician displaced from German broadcasting thus helped prepare music for an Allied operation directed toward German listeners. Goehr's importance lay in the combination of compositional training and practical experience making music work across media. He could translate a musical idea into an arrangement suited to a particular performer and ensemble. In MUSAC, that craft joined the lyric writer's German text to the conductor's studio resources. The project made operational use of a professional flexibility developed across Berlin, Paris, and American broadcasting. Arrangement helped determine how a text would be heard: its balance against the ensemble, the timing of an attack, and the movement between sentiment and comedy belonged to the persuasive design as well as to the practical work of recording.

Lothar Metzl

Lothar Metzl (1906–1989) entered MUSAC with a professional history unusually well suited to the manipulation of language for political effect. Born in Vienna into a Jewish family, he earned a doctorate in law from the University of Vienna and worked as a trainee lawyer while simultaneously developing a career as a playwright, satirist, lyricist, and cabaret writer. He became closely associated with the interwar Viennese cabaret *Literatur am Naschmarkt*, whose

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[35] "Rudolf Goehr," *Die Kardosch-Sänger*.

[36] "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277.

programs combined songs, theatrical sketches, topical humor, and political commentary and developed an explicitly anti-National Socialist and pro-Austrian orientation before the Anschluss brought its work to an end.[37] In that environment, Metzl worked with writers including Rudolf Weys, Hans Weigel, and Jura Soyfer and developed skills in compression, wordplay, parody, political allusion, and the placement of ideological criticism inside popular entertainment. The Anschluss in March 1938 destroyed the cultural world in which Metzl had built that career. As a Jewish writer, he fled Austria, traveling through Italy and Great Britain before sailing from Liverpool to New York in September 1938.[38] In the United States he joined the broader community of Central European émigré artists, participated in the Refugee Artists Group, continued writing theatrical material, and became involved in anti-fascist radio work associated with New York station WMCA.[39] His movement into wartime psychological warfare therefore represented less a departure from his earlier career than a new institutional setting for skills he had already developed through political cabaret, radio, and exile.

Metzl entered the United States Army in 1943 and joined OSS Morale Operations in 1944 as a writer. Personnel history places him in New York working as a librettist, while MUSAC's organization sheet identifies his responsibility for lyrics.[40] The January 1945 exchange with Hirsch shows intelligence material reaching him through Washington.[41] The

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[37] Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War, "Lothar Metzl," *Austrian Soldiers in Foreign Armies*, https://austriansoldiers.lbg.ac.at/bio/lothar-metzl/?lang=en; Österreichisches Kabarettarchiv, "Biografie Rudolf Weys," https://www.kabarettarchiv.at/Biografie-Rudolf-Weys.

[38] Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, "Lothar Metzl."

[39] Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, "Lothar Metzl."

[40] Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, "Lothar Metzl"; "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277.

[41] Metzl to Hirsch, "Intelligence for Muzak," January 16, 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295.

office consequently supplied both an institutional setting and current information for a practice Metzl had developed before exile: placing topical political meaning within recognizable entertainment. Metzl and Kurer's collaboration preceded MUSAC within New York's refugee theater community. Metzl participated in the Refugee Artists Group and undertook antifascist radio work. In 1940, both appeared in *Reunion in New York*, produced by the American Viennese Group, with Metzl also credited as a co-conceiver. Traussnig connects their prior collaboration to his ability to tailor MUSAC lyrics to her vocal and performative qualities.[42] I read these activities as ways of establishing cultural belonging through artistic participation: their Viennese theatrical experience became part of American professional life and an émigré community's collective work. That history helps explain the relationships and knowledge MUSAC could recruit. Their established collaboration gave Metzl experience writing for Kurer's performative qualities and gave the operation access to artists already working within shared professional networks. Metzl brought more than fluent German. His knowledge of rhythm, jokes, parody, theatrical timing, and popular idiom made language performable. The OSS placed a Jewish Viennese cabaret writer at the center of the project's German-language writing, reversing the exclusions through which the Nazi regime had sought to define German culture. His work also joined two histories of political satire: the anti-Nazi cabaret of pre-Anschluss Vienna and an American intelligence operation using familiar songs to challenge the regime. Metzl's later service as a CIA analyst

[42] Florian Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen: Österreicher in US-Propagandainstitutionen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017), 244; The Broadway League, "From Vienna," *Internet Broadway Database*, https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/from-vienna-12883; The Broadway League, "Reunion in New York," *Internet Broadway Database*, https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/reunion-in-new-york-13232.

carried this accumulation of linguistic, theatrical, and wartime intelligence experience into his postwar career.[43]

The effort to retain Metzl also reveals the continuing institutional value placed on wartime propaganda expertise. An October 30, 1945 memorandum concerning personnel for SI's Propaganda Intelligence Section records efforts to retain him and recommends him as an ETO area assistant.[44] As MO's wartime organization was being dismantled, planners sought to preserve the knowledge accumulated by its personnel. Read alongside Metzl's work on MUSAC and his later CIA service, these efforts place his contribution to musical warfare within a longer history of Jewish émigré expertise in American intelligence. His career connects wartime musical propaganda to the subsequent analytical work of American intelligence.

The memorandum's recipient also connects this personnel planning to the subsequent history of American international broadcasting. Whitney Shepardson, addressed as Chief of Secret Intelligence in October 1945, later served as president of the Free Europe Committee, which operated Radio Free Europe, from 1953 to 1956. Together with Metzl's subsequent CIA service, Shepardson's trajectory places the personnel relationships surrounding MUSAC within the broader transition from wartime morale operations to Cold War intelligence and political broadcasting.[45]

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[43] Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, "Lothar Metzl."

[44] Memorandum to Whitney Shepardson, "Personnel for Propaganda Intelligence Section, SI," October 30, 1945, 1–2, folder 1560, box 113, Entry 139, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. The memorandum also proposes Sol Hirsch as an alternative if the preferred candidates were unavailable, describing him as "one of the best propaganda experts MO ever had in France" and considering whether he might leave the State Department to return.

[45] Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, The Papers of Whitney Hart Shepardson, 1910–1966: A Descriptive List, "Registration Statement,"

Irving Miller

Irving Miller connected MUSAC to the working practices of American network radio. The project's reports identify him as a conductor associated with NBC and describe his role in assembling musicians for its recordings.[46] In 1940, Miller conducted the Friday-evening version of The Dinah Shore Show on NBC's Blue Network, broadcast from June 14 to September 27. His experience with Shore is especially relevant to MUSAC's vocal design – the project's June 28, 1944 recruitment instructions named her among its stylistic models.[47] Studio conducting required repertorial flexibility, rapid preparation, ensemble coordination, and attention to the microphone. These were practical forms of expertise as an arrangement had to become a balanced, usable recorded performance within a scheduled session. MUSAC's organization sheet assigns Miller musical direction alongside Metzl's lyric writing and Goehr's arranging.[48] His contribution placed the émigré writers and musicians within an existing American professional network. Knowledge of German-speaking culture could guide a text or interpretation, but the project also needed musicians accustomed to producing recorded sound efficiently. Miller helped supply that institutional and technical capacity.

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https://www.fdrlibrary.org/documents/356632/390886/findingaid_shepardson.pdf/f127a67f-603b-45c9-bfc1-1650f43d157b; Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War, "Lothar Metzl," Austrian Soldiers in Foreign Armies, https://austriansoldiers.lbg.ac.at/bio/lothar-metzl/?lang=en.

[46] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See also Lothar Metzl, MUSAC terminal report ("Muzak"), unpaginated personnel section, in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 6, MO Branch, box 99B, tab N, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

[47] John Dunning, *On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 200; Ira Ashley to Gordon Auchincloss, June 28, 1944, 1, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

[48] "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277.

Jewish authorship also appears in the source repertory MUSAC adapted, including works whose creators are not documented here as participants in the operation. The source repertory included "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top," written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II for *Oklahoma!* (1943), and recorded for MUSAC by Dietrich. Keller's September 28, 1944 session included "Jenny," from Weill and Ira Gershwin's *Lady in the Dark*, and Irving Berlin's "Easter Parade."[49] Naming these composers and lyricists reveals another layer of Jewish creative work beneath the German adaptations. Rodgers, Weill, Gershwin, and Berlin were Jewish; Hammerstein's paternal Jewish heritage formed part of a more mixed family and cultural identity.[50] The original writers need not have participated directly in MUSAC for their work to become part of its musical resources. Even when new German lyrics replaced the original words, the adaptation carried forward music shaped by these creative histories.

III. The Performers

The principal named performers discussed here represent a broad cross-section of German-language and Central European musical life. Marlene Dietrich, Vilma Kurer, Maria

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[49] "Session #18 (Double Session)," September 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2286, "All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, MD; "Schlittenfahrt" ("Surrey with the Fringe on Top"), MUSAC lyric sheet naming Marlene Dietrich, August 23, 1944, record 7, same folder; Danielle Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, unpublished research dataset, file Musac_Project_Consolidated_with_Origin_Research(3).xlsx, "Sheet1," Dietrich's "Surrey," Keller's "Jenny," and Keller's "Easter Parade"; Mark N. Grant, "Lady in the Dark: An Appreciation," Kurt Weill Foundation, https://www.kwf.org/appreciations/lady-in-the-dark-an-appreciation/; Irving Berlin, "Behind the Songs," https://www.irvingberlin.com/behind-the-songs.

[50] For Jewish creators' contributions to American musical theater, see Andrea Most, *Making Americans: Jews and the Broadway Musical* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). On the Gershwin family's background, see Howard Pollack, *George Gershwin: His Life and Work* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), chap. 1, "Gershwin and His Family." On Weill, see Hinton, *Weill's Musical Theater*, chap. 1, "Biographical Notes." For Hammerstein's family background and religious upbringing, see Laurie Winer, *Oscar Hammerstein II and the Invention of the Musical* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023), 25. Hammerstein's Jewish ancestry is distinguished here from a claim about his religious observance.

Manton, Daisy "Dési" Halban, Grete Stueckgold, Greta Keller, Herta Glaz, Jarmila Novotná, John Hendrik, and Sig Arno worked across opera, operetta, cabaret, popular song, theater, film, radio, and recording.[51] Several were Jewish artists whose careers had been disrupted by racial persecution; others experienced occupation, political opposition, or professional relocation in different ways. Their participation brought living knowledge of repertories, accents, performance conventions, and theatrical styles into MUSAC. These shared professional resources did not depend on a single nationality or a uniform experience of exile.

The recruitment correspondence states what the planners wanted. In June 1944, cables between London and Washington called for contemporary popular songs with German lyrics, predominantly female singers, and voices whose German would not sound American. Austrian or northern German accents were acceptable. Ira Ashley's June 28 instructions connected idiomatic German delivery to current American popular styles, using singers such as Dinah Shore, Frances Langford, and Connie Boswell as points of reference.[52] Language was therefore a musical and operational requirement, not simply a matter of translation. The words had to sound natural in performance, and the voice had to make the station's address credible. Chapter 3 examines the recruiting, clearance, and contracting arrangements through which those requirements were put into practice.

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[51] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," performer column; "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172. The index includes additional unnamed or jointly credited performers beyond the principal biographies presented here. For name variants and the treatment of shared credits, see appendix A, "Performer Names and Recording Credits."

[52] Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, June 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Mann to Smith, cable, June 14, 1944, and Smith to Mann, cable, June 15, 1944 (tab H), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park. Ashley to Auchincloss, June 28, 1944, 1, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

Auditions made those preferences consequential. The July 8 project report records the selection of one man and seven women with varied styles and vocal techniques. Metzl's later account emphasizes the search for singers with precise German diction.[53] Recruiters wanted stylistic range within a linguistically convincing sound: different voices could supply ballads, rhythm numbers, intimate popular songs, or comic treatments. Availability and recording efficiency also mattered, as correspondence about Kurer's travel, Keller's holiday, and Dietrich's commitments makes clear.[54] The resulting ensemble joined a strong preference for female voices to the practical opportunities of New York's émigré and broadcasting networks.

The intimacy such performers could create at the microphone also had a history in broadcasting. In her study of German radio, Lacey traces the development of a deliberately informal, conversational style in women's programming, where scripted speech cultivated the impression of a personal encounter.[55] Her account helps explain the professional work behind an apparently effortless vocal address. For MUSAC, ease of delivery, precise diction, and sensitivity to the microphone were skills that experienced performers could bring to familiar songs and newly written German lyrics. These skills shaped how rewritten words could carry emotional and political force. The analysis therefore distinguishes the gender assigned in the research index, the role voiced by a lyric, professional type, microphone technique, celebrity

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[53] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Lothar Metzl, "Report on Musac," terminal report enclosed with David Williamson to Kenneth D. Mann, May 7, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[54] Edward Cushing to David Williamson, "Recording in N.Y.," August 24, 1944, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944", and container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc"; both in Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

[55] Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*, 193–98.

persona, and imagined audience. An opera singer, a cabaret comedian, and a diseuse brought different ways of making intimacy, authority, or accusation audible; performers could also revise the roles assigned to them.

Many of these performers had participated directly in the German-speaking entertainment culture that MUSAC sought to address. Their voices and professional habits had developed in theaters, opera houses, cabarets, film studios, radio stations, and recording studios. Jewish exclusion and wartime displacement had dispersed much of that knowledge without making it disappear. MUSAC assembled it in a new setting and asked its possessors to use familiar language and musical forms for an Allied purpose.

Marlene Dietrich

Among the performers recruited for MUSAC, Marlene Dietrich occupied an exceptional position. By the time she entered the project, she was one of the most internationally recognizable German-born performers of the twentieth century, and her public identity remained strongly associated with the cultural world of Weimar-era Berlin. Her career had developed through theater, cabaret, film, and popular entertainment before her international breakthrough in Josef von Sternberg's *Der blaue Engel* (*The Blue Angel*) in 1930. The low voice, restrained phrasing, theatrical ambiguity, and close relationship between singing and characterization that subsequently defined her screen and recording persona had been formed within that interwar performance culture.[56] Dietrich therefore brought to MUSAC not simply a recognizable voice,

[56] National Women's History Museum, "Marlene Dietrich," https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/marlene-dietrich; Allan Bell, "Falling in Love Again and Again: Marlene Dietrich and the Iconization of Non-native English," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15, no. 5 (2011): 627–56, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2011.00516.x.

but a voice already connected in public memory to a German cultural world that preceded National Socialism and the war.

Her political history transformed the meaning of that familiarity. After the Nazi seizure of power, Dietrich rejected efforts to draw her back into the German film industry and increasingly aligned herself publicly with opposition to the regime. She became an American citizen in 1939 and devoted substantial portions of her wartime career to the Allied effort, including extensive performances for American troops and German-language broadcasting directed toward Europe.[57] Dietrich consequently occupied an unusual cultural position: she remained recognizably German while having conspicuously rejected the political regime that now claimed authority over German national culture. Her familiarity to German listeners and her public opposition to National Socialism were therefore inseparable components of her wartime persona.

Dietrich joined MUSAC as a consultant, a role explicitly recorded on the project's organization sheet, and subsequently participated as a recording artist. Cushing's August 1, 1944 memorandum documents preparations for her recording work and her opportunity to choose among the proposed songs. A separate recording memorandum states that she had been told for whom she was working, while specifying that the operation's nature remained undisclosed.[58] Her

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[57] National Women's History Museum, "Marlene Dietrich"; Mary R. Desjardins and Gerd Gemünden, "Introduction: Marlene Dietrich's Appropriations," in *Dietrich Icon*, ed. Gerd Gemünden and Mary R. Desjardins (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 5–6; Amy Lawrence, "Marlene Dietrich: The Voice as Mask," in *Dietrich Icon*, 85–88.

[58] MUSAC recording memorandum fragment, undated, 3, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Reichner to Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 171. "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, undated, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Edward Cushing to Morgan S. A. Reichner, "Recordings," August 1, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172,

advisory and performing roles brought professional judgment into the project's musical decisions. On August 7, Metzl reported that Dietrich opposed a subversive rewriting of "Lili Marleen" because she believed it would be ineffective, favoring the original German lyrics.[59] Her intervention concerned the song's persuasive effectiveness. MUSAC enlisted her expertise in evaluating musical material as well as her ability to perform it, making her participation part of the gendered labor through which the operation's musical weapons were developed.

Dietrich concentrated qualities that MUSAC sought: German cultural familiarity, experience with recorded media, public opposition to National Socialism, and a recognizable performance identity. Alongside Jewish colleagues driven from European institutions, she represents a different form of anti-Nazi participation. Her German identity and refusal of the regime challenged the Nazi claim to speak for German culture. MUSAC drew on that history as well as on the voice through which it had become publicly recognizable.

Vilma Kurer

Vilma Kurer was a Jewish Austrian actress and cabaret performer whose professional experience connected MUSAC to the German-speaking theatrical world displaced by Nazism. Born in Melk in 1914, she worked in Vienna and Prague before fleeing through Poland to the United States in 1938.[60] Her acting and cabaret experience centered on characterization and the delivery of text. She brought the ability to make German text function as performed speech and

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folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[59] Lothar Metzl, memorandum concerning Dietrich's proposed "Lili Marleen," August 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[60] Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen*, 214–15.

song, an especially useful skill in a project that repeatedly altered familiar lyrics. Kurer's preparation included study as a guest student at Max Reinhardt's school and work in Viennese cabaret. In New York, she performed at Die Arche, a Jewish exile cabaret that combined entertainment with opposition to National Socialism. Her professional network also included Metzl; their shared credits in the American Viennese Group's *Reunion in New York* (1940), discussed above, place their collaboration within New York's refugee theater community. Traussnig connects this prior collaboration to Metzl's ability to tailor lyrics to her vocal and performative qualities.[61] MUSAC thus drew on established relationships through which émigré artists already knew how to write for one another's abilities.

Her broad theatrical experience also gives significance to the description of her in Metzl's terminal report as "a personality singer of night club type."[62] This classification selected a particular persona from her wider range of performance, directing her capacity for characterization toward songs organized around desire, absence, and doubt. Her contribution joined trained theatrical judgment to the gendered design of musical persuasion. Kurer's participation is documented in recording correspondence and in the consolidated song index, which lists fourteen entries under her name, including "How Much Longer?"—the English working title associated with "Wie lange noch?"[63] Her work connects Weill's adaptation to a performer capable of carrying its German-language address. Correspondence about her

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[61] Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen*, 214, 216–17, 244; The Broadway League, "Reunion in New York," *Internet Broadway Database*, https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/reunion-in-new-york-13232.

[62] Traussnig, Geistiger Widerstand von außen, 243, quoting Lothar Metzl, "Terminal Report on Musac," May 7, 1945. See also Metzl, MUSAC terminal report ("Muzak"), unpaginated personnel section, Donovan Papers, box 99B, tab N.

[63] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," entries credited to Vilma Kurer; Cushing to Williamson, "Musac Project," November 28, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284.

availability also places her within the practical scheduling of MUSAC's sessions.[64] The project relied on her as a working performer whose theatrical and linguistic skills could be brought repeatedly into the studio.

Maria Manton

Maria Manton, later known as Maria Riva, occupied a different position within the ensemble. Born Maria Elisabeth Sieber in Berlin in 1924, she was the daughter of Dietrich and Rudolf Sieber and grew up in a transatlantic film and theatrical environment. She trained at the Max Reinhardt Academy and used the professional name Maria Manton in the early 1940s.[65] The consolidated MUSAC index records four entries under the variant "Mary Manton."[66] Her participation adds a younger generation to a roster otherwise dominated by established careers in European and American entertainment. Manton's musical and linguistic familiarity came through upbringing and early theatrical training rather than the long independent recording careers of Keller or Hendrik. Her presence shows that the ensemble brought together different kinds and lengths of professional experience. The project's roster was a working network, not a collection assembled solely according to celebrity or a single model of vocal accomplishment.

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[64] Cushing to Williamson, "Recording in N.Y.," August 24, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, and container 172, folder 2280, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[65] Maria Riva, interview by Gary Rutkowski, March 17, 2009, Television Academy Interviews, interview overview and chapter 2 description, https://interviews.televisionacademy.com/interviews/maria-riva; for contemporary use of the professional name Maria Manton, see the radio listing for *Ceiling Unlimited*, *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison), February 15, 1943.

[66] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," four entries credited to "Mary Manton."

Daisy "Dési" Halban

Daisy "Dési" Halban brought an operatic and concert background rooted in a Jewish Viennese musical family to MUSAC. The daughter of the celebrated Jewish soprano Selma Kurz and physician Josef von Halban, she performed at the Vienna State Opera during the 1930s. A singing engagement brought her to the Netherlands in 1937, where she met the Dutch Jewish art dealer Jacques Goudstikker. They married that December, and she subsequently moved to the Netherlands.[67] In May 1940, following the German invasion, the couple fled with their infant son aboard the SS Bodegraven. During the escape, Goudstikker fell through an uncovered hatch and died. Halban and their son continued through Canada to the United States.[68] Her wartime American career followed a rupture that joined Nazi persecution to profound personal loss. Her subsequent work for MUSAC placed this displaced Jewish musical expertise within an operation directed against Nazi Germany.

The MUSAC index lists twenty-eight solo entries for Halban and four duets with Hendrik.[69] Her substantial participation places formal vocal training alongside the project's popular-song and duet repertory. Her work demonstrates how an operatic and concert singer could bring trained diction, phrasing, and ensemble experience into popular material prepared for radio. The project drew on skills that crossed genres, even when the performers' biographies were associated with particular institutions.

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[67] Monika Kornberger, "Halban, Familie," *Oesterreichisches Musiklexikon online*, last modified December 18, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1553/0x00321870; Jewish Museum, "Reclaimed: Paintings from the Collection of Jacques Goudstikker," exhibition, March 15–August 2, 2009, https://thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/reclaimed-paintings-from-the-collection-of-jacques-goudstikker/.

[68] Jewish Museum, "Reclaimed."

[69] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," entries credited to Daisy Halban and to Halban with John Hendrik.

Grete Stueckgold

Grete Stueckgold brought experience in German opera and American broadcasting to MUSAC. Born Grete Schneidt in London to a German father and an English mother, she developed her operatic career in Germany and made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Eva in Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg on November 2, 1927.[70] Her Jewish history also belongs within this professional biography: a December 1938 report in Emanu-El and the Jewish Journal recounted her former husband Jacques Stueckgold's account of her conversion to Judaism.[71] Her career connected German-language musical training, Jewish professional relationships, and American performing institutions before her participation in MUSAC.

Her experience extended beyond the opera house. In April 1934, contemporary coverage announced her Saturday-evening broadcasts of American songs over WABC and the Columbia network, accompanied by an orchestra and chorus directed by André Kostelanetz.[72] Stueckgold appears in twenty-eight entries in the MUSAC index.[73] The project thus recruited a singer whose professional experience already crossed opera, concert performance, and radio. Her trained diction, phrasing, and interpretive discipline became resources for a clandestine popular-song operation, bringing established musical and broadcasting expertise into the design of wartime persuasion.

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[70] Metropolitan Opera Archives, "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg," performance of November 2, 1927, CID:97030, https://archives.metopera.org/MetOperaSearch/record.jsp?dockey=0365151.

[71] "Tells Hitler Anecdote," *Emanu-El and the Jewish Journal* (San Francisco), December 30, 1938, 10, California Digital Newspaper Collection, University of California, Riverside, item JW19381230.2.58, https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=JW19381230.2.58.

[72] "Kilocycles," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, April 2, 1934, https://www.jta.org/archive/kilocycles-6.

[73] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," entries credited to Grete Stueckgold.

Greta Keller

Greta Keller came to MUSAC from the cosmopolitan cabaret and chanson cultures of interwar Vienna and Berlin. Born in Vienna in 1903, she developed a career across stage revues, nightclubs, radio, and commercial recording. Her late-1920s "whispering" style, her BBC appearances, and her commercial recordings located her voice within the expanding culture of intimate mediated performance.[74] She became known less for operatic projection than for phrasing, diction, restraint, and a conversational relationship to text. Those qualities mattered at the microphone, where small changes of inflection could carry personality and interpretation. By the Second World War, Keller had years of experience making a song work through recorded sound.

Keller's career was international before wartime displacement. She performed and recorded beyond Austria and Germany, settled in New York during the 1930s, and continued to move among European and American entertainment settings.[75] MUSAC's September 28, 1944 double-session sheet places her alongside Hendrik in a studio program that included adapted popular repertory.[76] Her significance lies in that conjunction of professional history and recorded practice. An intimate vocal manner developed in commercial entertainment became available for a clandestine station addressing listeners in German. The Weill–Gershwin and Berlin songs in

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[74] Monika Kornberger, "Keller, Greta (Grete, eig. Margaretha Anna)," *Österreichisches Musiklexikon online*, accessed September 12, 2026, https://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_K/Keller_Greta.xml, https://doi.org/10.1553/0x0001d406.

[75] Kornberger, "Keller, Greta."

[76] "Session #18 (Double Session)," September 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2286, "All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, MD.

that session also connected her performance to Jewish contributions within the American repertory being adapted.

Herta Glaz

Herta Glaz brought to MUSAC the formal operatic traditions of interwar Central Europe. An Austrian-born Jewish mezzo-soprano, she received her vocal training in Vienna under Rosa Papier-Paumgartner before establishing a professional career during the early 1930s in Breslau, Prague, and other Central European musical centers.[77] Her career developed within a German-language operatic network whose movement across borders cultivated shared repertorial knowledge, diction, and performance conventions. National Socialist racial policy progressively excluded her from the professional world in which she had trained and established herself. Following a North American tour during the mid-1930s, she remained in the United States as conditions in Europe deteriorated.[78] She continued her operatic career in the United States and joined the Metropolitan Opera during the war years.[79] MUSAC drew on this career across European and American institutions and on the Central European vocal practices Glaz had carried into exile.

The MUSAC index records Glaz under the variant "Herta Glatz," with eight entries.[80] Her significance lies in the musical world embodied by her training. Nazi exclusion had helped

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[77] "Herta Glaz (Contralto)," *Bach Cantatas Website*, https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Glaz-Herta.htm; Bruce Duffie, "Mezzo-Soprano Herta Glaz: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie," interview recorded February 7, 1988, transcript published 2013, https://www.bruceduffie.com/glaz.html.

[78] "Herta Glaz (Contralto)," *Bach Cantatas Website*; Duffie, "Mezzo-Soprano Herta Glaz," introductory biography.

[79] "Herta Glaz (Contralto)," *Bach Cantatas Website*; Duffie, "Mezzo-Soprano Herta Glaz," introductory biography.

[80] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," eight entries credited to "Herta Glatz."

disperse Jewish performers beyond the institutions in which their expertise had developed. The same knowledge could then be put to work by Allied organizations. In Glaz's case, MUSAC gained access to a singer whose career connected Central European opera, forced displacement, and the Metropolitan Opera. Her participation makes the reversal of racial exclusion into Allied cultural resources particularly visible.

Jarmila Novotná

Jarmila Novotná brought a transnational Central European musical history to MUSAC. Born in Prague in 1907, the Czech soprano and actress worked in Prague, Berlin, Vienna, and Salzburg before establishing her American career. In a later interview, she recalled the multilingual demands of European opera and emphasized the work required to make sung words intelligible.[81] Her account helps explain why nationality alone was an inadequate measure of suitability for MUSAC. German-language diction and repertorial knowledge were professional accomplishments cultivated across borders, not possessions restricted to German-born singers.

Novotná and her family came to the United States in 1939, and she made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1940.[82] Her circumstances differed from those of Jewish colleagues expelled under racial policy: German occupation and war had transformed the position of a prominent Czech artist whose career had long included German-speaking institutions. From exile, she made song a means of answering that occupation. In 1942, following the destruction of Lidice, she recorded *Songs of Lidice* with piano accompaniment by Jan Masaryk, the

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[81] Bruce Duffie, "Presenting Jarmila Novotná," interview conducted March 26, 1988, first published in *The Massenet Newsletter*, June 1992, https://www.bruceduffie.com/novotna.html.

[82] Duffie, "Presenting Jarmila Novotná."

Czechoslovak foreign minister in exile.[83] The collection made folk song a vehicle of remembrance and cultural resistance, and its broadcast on Voice of America extended that work through radio.[84] Her subsequent participation in MUSAC, documented by four entries under her name in the project's index, extended this musical resistance into clandestine operations.[85] Having publicly asserted Czech cultural survival through song, Novotná now contributed to an operation that concealed the origins of its German-language recordings. She brought both the linguistic and repertorial knowledge cultivated across Central Europe and experience using musical performance against the regime that had occupied her homeland.

John Hendrik

John Hendrik, born Hans Hirschberg in Berlin in 1904, built his early career in commercial recording and operetta. As a Jewish performer, he left Germany in 1933, worked in Britain, and subsequently continued his career in the United States.[86] His professional history joined German-language popular entertainment to international broadcasting. By the war years he had also worked in the Office of War Information's German-language service, as MUSAC

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[83] Masarykovo muzeum v Hodoníně, "Jarmila Novotná (23. září 1907 – 9. února 1994)," exhibition, April 20–May 17, 2020, https://www.masaryk.info/akce/1125/; Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association, "Jarmila Novotna: Transatlantic Opera, Screen, and Czech Cultural Presence," exhibition, June 15–25, 2022, https://www.bohemianbenevolent.org/upcoming-events/jarmila-novotna-transatlantic-opera-screen-and-czech-cultural-presence; Derek Sayer, *Prague, Capital of the Twentieth Century: A Surrealist History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 337–39. Sayer acknowledges Michael Beckerman's reading of and suggestions for the relevant sections at 512n210.

[84] Veronika Vejvodová, "Czech Prima Donnas at the Met Opera: An Exhibition at the Czech Center in New York (2024)," *Musicalia* 17, nos. 1–2 (2025): 210, https://doi.org/10.37520/muscz.2025.008.

[85] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," four entries credited to Jarmila Novotna.

[86] Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek, authority record for John Hendrik (Hans Hirschberg), https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/person/gnd/121480615; for his exile chronology, see Lars von Törne, "Ein merkwürdiges Leben," *Der Tagesspiegel*, November 17, 2004, https://www.tagesspiegel.de/gesellschaft/medien/ein-merkwurdiges-leben-1171783.html.

security correspondence records.[87] A voice formed within German commercial entertainment had become available to American broadcasting directed toward Europe. In Hendrik's case, exile carried both the language of the intended listeners and experience in the media through which they could be reached.

Hendrik is the most frequently represented solo singer in the consolidated song index. It contains 119 entries under his name alone, plus five shared entries: four with Halban and one with Mrs. Granichstaedten. Together, these solo and shared credits account for 124 entries associated with him.[88] His repertory spans ballads, popular standards, rhythm numbers, marches, traditional material, and songs with different degrees of lyrical alteration. The range establishes him as one of MUSAC's principal working voices, able to move among musical styles and levels of political explicitness. Hendrik's importance lies in the convergence of linguistic familiarity, recording experience, and sustained studio use. MUSAC repeatedly employed a Jewish performer whose professional knowledge had developed inside German entertainment before persecution redirected his career abroad. His later work at RIAS Berlin, following his permanent return to Germany in 1957, continued this relationship between German-language music and American-supported broadcasting into the Cold War.[89]

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[87] Samuel Scrivener Jr. to Frank M. Chapin, "Spot Checks for MO/NY Project," February 13, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[88] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," performer-column count: 119 solo Hendrik entries, four duets with Halban, and one with Mrs. Granichstaedten. These counts describe entries in the surviving research dataset, not distinct titles or a complete wartime output.

[89] gd/dpa, "So klang Amerika," *Die Welt*, June 12, 2004, https://www.welt.de/print-welt/article320055/So-klang-Amerika.html.

Sig Arno

Sig Arno entered MUSAC with a professional identity formed within the comic theater, cabaret, and film culture of interwar Germany. Born Siegfried Aron in Hamburg in 1895, the Jewish performer built his career as an actor and comedian, becoming particularly associated with character roles that depended upon timing, exaggeration, physical characterization, and the manipulation of speech and gesture for humorous effect.[90] His background consequently connected MUSAC to a different register of prewar German entertainment from the operatic, chanson, and popular-song traditions represented elsewhere in the ensemble. Arno's professional expertise lay not primarily in vocal beauty or formal musical training, but in making language, character, irony, and ridicule function as performance. National Socialism disrupted that career and forced Arno from Germany. He worked elsewhere in Europe before rebuilding his professional life in the United States, where he became particularly active in Hollywood film.[91] Exile changed the language, location, and institutional setting of his work without erasing the theatrical practices in which he had been trained. The comic timing, characterization, verbal inflection, and satirical conventions of German-speaking theater and cabaret therefore remained part of the professional knowledge he carried into American wartime culture.

Arno appears in sixteen entries in the consolidated song index. Eight are coded as containing propagandistic lyrics; six of those eight are classified as satirical.[92] The concentration

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[90] DFF—Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum, "Siegfried Arno," *filmportal.de*, https://www.filmportal.de/person/siegfried-arno_8d6b9cc0564d41e9bf38f3d98a33e61e; Stephanie D'heil, "Siegfried Arno," https://www.steffi-line.de/archiv_text/nost_buehne/01a_arno.htm.

[91] D'heil, "Siegfried Arno"; DFF—Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum, "Siegfried Arno," biography.

[92] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," sixteen entries credited to Sig Arno. Eight carry an OSS lyric-propaganda designation, six of them satirical. The index retains the institutional classifications; their relationship to Arno's professional persona is analyzed here.

gives concrete form to the connection between his comic profession and MUSAC's repertory: a performer experienced in character, timing, and ridicule repeatedly recorded material organized around satirical treatment. The project did not need to invent those techniques of address. Arno had developed them within German theater and film before Nazi persecution forced him to work elsewhere. His participation joined Jewish theatrical expertise to an operation that made German-language humor part of psychological warfare.

Conclusion

MUSAC made cultural expertise operational through collaboration. That collaboration gave the OSS access to existing musical and commercial networks and joined them to an intelligence organization. Its administrative networks brought intelligence and repertory into a studio where émigré knowledge of German-speaking entertainment met the production practices of American radio. The participants' musical and linguistic judgments helped determine how an Allied purpose could take the form of a convincing German-language performance.[93] The recruitment correspondence makes the desired combination explicit: convincing German, varied popular styles, a strong preference for female voices, and performers who could make those qualities usable in recording. The OSS found operational value in skills it could not manufacture through military training alone.

Jewish history is integral to that account. Nazi persecution displaced composers, writers, and performers whose knowledge of German-speaking culture remained with them in exile. In

[93] "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277; "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172; Smith–Mann cables, June 7–15, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278 (June 15 at tab H); Ashley to Auchincloss, June 28, 1944, 1, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278.

MUSAC, that knowledge could be directed against the regime that had excluded them. Jewish contributions also reached the project through American cultural and administrative networks and through the source songs selected for adaptation. The result was not a culturally uniform ensemble, but a collaboration in which Jewish creative work helped sustain the very musical familiarity on which the operation depended. That familiarity supplied materials for persuasion: remembered styles and idioms could give new accusations, refusals, and appeals the force of a voice from within German-speaking culture.

This chapter establishes a diverse but purposeful concentration of expertise. Hendrik's 119 solo entries and five duets differ from Arno's smaller, heavily satirical group; Dietrich's public persona differs from Glaz's operatic training or Keller's intimate chanson style.[94] These differences mattered because the recordings demanded different kinds of address. Their biographies show how professional and political histories shaped the musical knowledge available in the studio. The persuasive weapon emerged through that collaboration. Writers, arrangers, performers, and the women coordinating information helped determine what institutional instructions could become in sound. Musical knowledge became operational through their decisions about what to sing and how to make a text convincing in performance. Chapter 3 follows the arrangements that sustained this collaboration across Washington, London, and New York. Recruitment, contracts, the supply of material, and the coordination of studio work turned the participants' cultural expertise into a continuing system of musical production.

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[94] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, "Sheet1," entries for Hendrik and Arno.

Danielle Stein

Dissertation

Chapter 3

Creating Musical Warfare: The Organization and Production of MUSAC

The artists, writers, administrators, and intelligence personnel traced in Chapter 2 brought the cultural knowledge on which MUSAC depended. This chapter shows how Morale Operations (MO) organized that knowledge into a recording project. Its central argument is that MUSAC's organization enabled music to be constructed as a psychological weapon. Musical choices were negotiated in relation to the identity and purpose of the clandestine broadcast – music had to sustain an attractive, apparently German program while intervening in enemy morale. Persuasion could reside in a rewritten lyric, a performance's emotional address, or its placement beside other material; officials and artists negotiated how explicit that intervention could become without compromising the station's cover. Decisions about lyrics, voices, and arrangements therefore developed alongside decisions about security, approval, and distribution. The correspondence between London, Washington, and New York reveals how those demands shaped one another, from the first requests for material to the recording sessions and shipments that supplied the station.

I. Morale Operations and the Logic of Clandestine Radio

MUSAC's institutional basis had been established before the first recording request. OSS General Order No. 9, issued on January 3, 1943, and effective the following day, created the

Morale Operations Branch and assigned it the "conduct of subversion other than physical." The Joint Chiefs of Staff directive of October 27, 1943, clarified its responsibility for morale subversion through rumors, clandestine radio, false leaflets, and forged documents.[1] Concealed attribution was part of the branch's assigned work. Music entered this organization as a means of reaching people through the entertainment they sought and the broadcasting conventions they recognized.

An internal MO report identified three principal means of distribution: agents, radio, and aircraft. Agents carried or circulated material on the ground; aircraft delivered printed propaganda, including material dropped for local dissemination; radio transmitted sound directly across borders. The report described radio as particularly suited to "demoralizing rumors, false orders and entertainment and music into which MO twists have been laced."[2] MUSAC developed within this effort to make the means of delivery serve the operation: recordings would attract and retain an audience while giving covert radio forms of insinuation, ridicule, and emotional pressure that could operate within entertainment.

Making that station sound plausible depended upon precise cultural knowledge. The memorandum "Radio as a Medium for Subversive Morale Operations," dated May 22, 1944, identified speed, timeliness, reach, and independence from literacy among radio's advantages. It

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[1] Office of Strategic Services, General Order No. 9, January 3, 1943, effective January 4, 1943, certified copy in *History of the Office of Strategic Services in London, 1942–1945*, vol. 7, "Morale Operations Branch: Basic Documents," 2, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1623, roll 3, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Jodi Foor, introduction to *OSS Morale Operations Branch Propaganda Sample Books, 1943–1945*, National Archives Microfilm Publication M2108 (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 2006), 1, https://www.archives.gov/files/research/microfilm/m2108.pdf.

[2] "Distribution" and "Radio Distribution," in *Open and Clandestine Methods for Demoralizing the Enemy*, Morale Operations Reports Office, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, RG 226, Wash-MO-OP-68-69, container 160, ARC 6267087, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (hereafter NARA). For aircraft delivery and the distinction between overt leaflet drops and material delivered for covert dissemination, see History Project, Strategic Services Unit, *War Report of the OSS*, vol. 1 (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), 216.

placed equal emphasis on the properties of sound: a familiar voice could authenticate a transmission, vocal communication could create personal contact, and news could be combined with music, drama, and other entertainment.[3] Clandestine, or "black," radio intensified those possibilities by concealing the relationship between speaker and sponsor. OSS instructional material defined it as a station secretly controlled by a belligerent nation while appearing to represent another organization or interest identified with its target audience. Concealed sponsorship, rather than the necessary falsity of every statement, was fundamental to the designation. As the May memorandum stated, "Truth is no handicap with 'Black' radio."[4] The distinction between black and overt, or "white," broadcasting was also a difference in represented position. Official radio remained accountable to its declared sponsor; black radio could claim to articulate the grievances and culture of the target population. The memorandum condensed that difference into the formulation, "White is the voice of the outsider: black is the voice of the insider."[5] Music contributed to that claim. OSS guidance advised stations to supply local color through news and songs, use memorable music and jokes, and play recorded material capable of catching listeners moving across the dial.[6] Entertainment could attract an audience that had not deliberately sought propaganda and sustain attention long enough for other material

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[3] "Radio as a Medium for Subversive Morale Operations," May 22, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, RG 226, Wash-MO-OP-71-72, container 164, ARC 6267087, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[4] "Black Radio," especially "Intelligence," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, RG 226, Wash-MO-OP-70-71, container 163, ARC 6267087, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; "Radio as a Medium for Subversive Morale Operations," May 22, 1944.

[5] "Black Radio," especially "Cover"; "Radio as a Medium for Subversive Morale Operations," May 22, 1944.

[6] "Black Radio," "Audience Techniques," Wash-MO-OP-70-71, container 163.

to circulate. The same familiar forms could carry the insinuation themselves, making musical pleasure and political intervention part of a single encounter.

Planners translated this requirement for cultural credibility into practical instructions. Black-radio stations required speakers without foreign accents, current slang, and detailed intelligence about the target area. A station could expose its sponsorship by using information its represented source could not plausibly possess or by allowing its language and repertory to become dated. Particularly important for MUSAC, one report warned that obsolete "slang and music" could betray a station's cover.[7] Accent, repertory, arrangement, and verbal idiom therefore helped protect a station's concealed sponsorship. A convincing musical style served an operational purpose. Yet MO planners also understood that radio carried its own risks and limitations. Broadcasting required specialized personnel and equipment, could be jammed or located, and depended upon atmospheric conditions, available receivers, and the willingness of listeners to risk punishment.[8] Black radio added the danger that its fiction might exceed the audience's willingness to believe it. The May memorandum warned operators not to overstep the "bounds of credulity" and concluded that the work required "much finesse."[9] These instructions made cultural judgment part of production: the station's musical and spoken material had to sustain the identity it claimed.

There were established broadcasting precedents for this combination of entertainment and political address. Kate Lacey shows that German radio expanded light entertainment during the

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[7] "Black Radio," "Establishing a Black Radio Station," "Intelligence," and "Security," Wash-MO-OP-70-71, container 163.

[8] "Radio as a Medium for Subversive Morale Operations," "Reasons against radio" and "Special reasons against 'black' radio," May 22, 1944; "Black Radio," "Establishing a Black Radio Station" and "Security."

[9] "Radio as a Medium for Subversive Morale Operations," May 22, 1944.

war, drawing on cabaret, humorous presenters, and conversational sketches to recover listeners' attention. The 1941 program "Eine halbe Stunde Kabarett," for example, carried propaganda through comic exchanges about everyday wartime life. The BBC's German Service likewise used character monologues and imagined conversations alongside news and commentary.[10] MUSAC entered this existing competition for listeners and for the interpretation of German wartime experience. Its task was to supply familiar forms of entertainment through which a clandestine station could make its account of German life persuasive.

The spring 1944 recording requests turned these principles into a practical production problem. London wanted American popular songs with German lyrics: music current enough to attract listeners, performed in voices that could sustain the station's German identity. Washington had to find the writers, performers, and recording facilities capable of meeting that demand. Their correspondence shows how the office's assumptions about listening became specifications for musical work.

II. From Doctrine to Demand: The Origins of MUSAC

The request that created MUSAC developed through a sequence of cables and memoranda in the spring and summer of 1944 as the London office of Morale Operations attempted to meet a practical need within its joint work with the British Political Warfare Executive (PWE). London possessed news, commentary, and political material, but it also required entertainment capable of attracting listeners and sustaining a clandestine station's represented identity. The surviving correspondence records an evolving demand: a request for

[10] Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 129–30, 137–38.

German-language lyrics became a request for American popular songs recorded by culturally credible performers; questions about overlap with the Office of War Information (OWI) forced London to distinguish white from black musical broadcasting; and disagreements about explicit propaganda clarified the relationship between entertainment and subversion. MUSAC emerged from this exchange as a system for manufacturing the sound clandestine radio required. The earliest request concerned writing rather than recording. On April 2, 1944, Rae Smith, chief of OSS Morale Operations in London and a former J. Walter Thompson advertising executive, informed Kenneth D. Mann that London needed a "constant stream" of special lyrics for popular songs, together with jokes and gags, for a major black-radio operation. No suitable writer was available in London, and slow transportation made it necessary to recruit in the United States. Smith asked Mann to locate at minimum a lyricist and a gag writer, preferably people capable of composing directly in German or working with German-language collaborators.[11] The cable did not yet describe the recording enterprise that followed, but it identified the shortage from which that enterprise grew: London needed renewable entertainment written with sufficient fluency to inhabit a station claiming proximity to German listeners.

The request also entered a division of responsibility that OSS and OWI were still negotiating. Their June 1944 exchange of letters distinguished operations by their actual or apparent source. OWI was responsible for official propaganda from American sources outside enemy-controlled territory; OSS handled material originating, or purporting to originate, within

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[11] Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, April 2, 1944 (paraphrase), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Lawrence C. Soley, Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA Subversive Propaganda (New York: Praeger, 1989), 99; Rae Smith was an American advertising executive and former European head of J. Walter Thompson who became chief of the OSS Morale Operations Branch in London in 1943 and coordinated its collaboration with Britain's Political Warfare Executive; Colonel Kenneth D. Mann succeeded Frederick Cable Oechsner as chief of the OSS Morale Operations Branch in May 1944, overseeing the branch's Washington administration and its clandestine propaganda activities across multiple theaters.

enemy lines. In his June 6 letter to Donovan, OWI director Elmer Davis specified that OSS should obtain OWI's concurrence before operating a black radio station outside enemy or enemy-occupied territory.[12] The distinction concerned both operational authority and the source a broadcast appeared to represent. It made the separation of overt and clandestine musical production a practical issue for MUSAC.

London's request had meanwhile changed in form and scale. On June 7, Smith cabled an "urgent need" for current American popular songs fitted with German lyrics and recorded in the United States. The finished discs were to be performed by a good orchestra and vocalist and sent to London by air. Lyrics had to use current German; performers were to be principally women; and Viennese or North German voices were acceptable, but American and English accents were not. Smith initially instructed that "no attempt should be made at propaganda."[13] Contemporary style, linguistic currency, and vocal credibility were part of the requested recordings before MUSAC had fully developed institutional form.

The specification of women's voices was itself a programming decision. Kate Lacey's history of German radio shows how choices of presenter and style of address expressed broadcasters' assumptions about their audiences and the purpose of a program. Her account places such decisions within the development of radio as a medium heard in domestic life, where a familiar voice could help establish a station's character. In MUSAC's production brief, gender likewise stood alongside accent, repertory, and orchestration as something planners could specify

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[12] Elmer Davis to William J. Donovan, June 6, 1944, digitized transcript, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, https://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/psf/box4/t55m15.html; History Project, *War Report of the OSS*, 1:216–17. The institutional history describes the division agreed in the June exchange of letters.

[13] Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, June 7, 1944 (paraphrase), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA. For the subsequent exclusion of American accents, see Smith to Mann, June 15, 1944, same folder, tab H. The June 7 cable itself requests Viennese and North German voices.

and assess. The preference organized the voices through which the station would address its audience. Gender was therefore part of the construction of persuasive address; the sex of a performer and the gender of an intended listener were distinct questions.[14]

Washington's response exposed a jurisdictional and security problem. OWI was already producing American hit songs with German lyrics for overt broadcasting. Mann asked whether OWI's material could satisfy London and whether performers truly required a foreign character. Smith's June 15 answer was unequivocal: OWI's material was white, while London's was black. The two required different voices, lyrics, and arrangements. London wanted American musical modernity without an audible American sponsor: "Harry James with a good German lyric and pure Austrian or north German voice." Reusing voices identified with OWI risked revealing Allied control of the clandestine station.[15] The desired product was deliberately hybrid, joining American popular tunes and arrangements to German-language voices while suppressing the seams of that construction. The first lyrics prepared in Washington revealed disagreement about how directly the recordings should communicate a morale message. On June 21, Mann reported that ten hit-parade songs had been fitted with lyrics calculated to make listeners "war-wary and peace-minded." London requested samples before Washington incurred substantial expense so that lyrics and accents could be evaluated.[16] Ira Ashley, a New York radio specialist serving with

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[14] Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*, 193–94, 198. For MUSAC's vocal requirements, see Smith's cable of June 7, 1944, cited above.

[15] Kenneth D. Mann to Rae Smith, cable, June 14, 1944, and Smith to Mann, cable, June 15, 1944 (paraphrases), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA. Tab H identifies the June 15 cable.

[16] Mann to Smith, cable, June 21, 1944, and Smith to Mann, cable, June 27, 1944 (paraphrases), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The cable's phrase "war-wary" is retained as typed in the archival paraphrase.

OSS Morale Operations in London, helped shape the entertainment requirements that the American production staff were asked to meet. His work brought professional broadcasting knowledge into decisions about how clandestine radio would attract and address German listeners. His June 28 letter made the concern explicit: London was "in the business of supplying entertainment," and, as in commercial radio, "entertainment is the come-on, and the other stuff is the commercial." Washington's material, he complained, carried too visible a propagandistic presence.[17] The disagreement concerned the degree and location of persuasive pressure as well as London's authority over the program. Ashley's commercial analogy records one operational position at this formative moment; it does not describe the full subsequent range of MUSAC's work. Entertainment, overtly altered lyrics, and indirect emotional address remained subjects of negotiation, as the later classifications and production correspondence show.[18]

Ashley also clarified the labor and infrastructure London lacked. He needed performers who combined idiomatic German with a feeling for American popular songs; Northern German, Berlin, or Viennese accents were acceptable, but American accents were excluded. New York or Hollywood was to locate singers and select current hits, after which London could supply lyrics for chosen tunes.[19] Strong arrangements, appropriate recording media, transatlantic shipping, and

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[17] Ira Ashley to Gordon Auchincloss, June 28, 1944, 1, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA; Florian Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen: Österreicher in US-Propagandainstitutionen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017), 225; Ira Ashley was an American radio producer who joined the OSS Morale Operations staff in London, where he helped plan clandestine German-language broadcasts and coordinate the musical and technical requirements supplied to MUSAC in New York. For the later musical and propaganda descriptors, see appendix A, figure A.1 and table A.1.

[18] Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen*, 244–45. Traussnig reports the archival designation NOP ("No Propaganda Content") for Kurer's "No Love, No Nothin'," while interpreting its German adaptation as indirect persuasion. The distinction between the office's classification and the recording's potential persuasive operation informs the musical analysis developed in Chapter 4.

[19] Ashley to Auchincloss, June 28, 1944.

an outward explanation for the work also had to be arranged. Ashley proposed that the recordings could be represented as entertainment prepared for liberated populations and that performers sent overseas might travel under USO cover.[20] Before MUSAC had a formal designation, its planners were already addressing talent, repertory, accent, orchestration, technology, transportation, and concealment. On July 3, urgency overrode London's earlier request to await samples. Smith praised Metzl's lyrics, authorized production at a proposed rate of five records per week, and instructed Washington to minimize subversive content until "pure entertainment is in the groove."[21] Meanwhile, Morgan S. A. Reichner, an OSS Morale Operations officer who shared responsibility for MUSAC's Washington direction and liaison with Edward Cushing, converted London's sonic specifications into an administrative design in his June 28 *Report on Electrical Transcriptions*. Because OWI's production emphasized American accents, OSS would conduct the activity independently. Reichner identified J. Walter Thompson as the civilian organization capable of providing commercial-radio personnel and facilities; Lothar Metzl, Edward Cushing, and Reichner formed the proposed OSS staff responsible for lyrics, repertory, talent, planning, and coordination.[22] Cushing and Metzl were already arranging auditions. Lester O'Keefe, a radio producer at J. Walter Thompson, was investigating orchestral arrangements, while other agency personnel were exploring whether

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[20] Ashley to Auchincloss, June 28, 1944.

[21] Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, July 3, 1944 (paraphrase), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[22] Morgan S. A. Reichner, *Report on Electrical Transcriptions*, June 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

bands associated with Thompson could contribute. The agency would provide organizational services while OSS paid production expenses.[23]

By July 8, one day after the first session, Reichner designated the project as the "Musac Project." Washington retained direction and liaison; Metzl handled lyrics and the selection of numbers; Rudolph Goehr was expected to provide special arrangements; O'Keefe supervised production and recording; Irving Miller conducted; and Marlene Dietrich was available as a cleared consultant without a fee. Performers, musicians, and most recording-company personnel did not need to know the purpose of the transcriptions or the purchaser's identity. Auditions had produced a prospective roster of one man and seven women, and the first session had taken place on July 7 at the Muzak Corporation's New York studio.[24] In slightly more than three months, London's request for a lyricist and gag writer had become a compartmentalized recording operation.

On July 13, 1944, William J. Donovan authorized MUSAC's continuation beyond its original test project. Writing to J. Walter Thompson, he stated that the test would be completed that week and gave the company authority to continue production until further notice.[25] A March 1945 review later described MUSAC as MO's contribution to *Pancake*, the broader joint British-American operation associated with *Soldatensender West*. It attributed the project's initiation to Rae Smith, recorded formal Board of Review approval on July 22, 1944, and noted a second

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, 1–3, OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, "Withdrawn Records," Entry A1-210, Box 461, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park.

[25] William J. Donovan to J. Walter Thompson & Company, attention Walter O'Meara, July 13, 1944, 1–2, OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, "Withdrawn Records," Entry A1-210, Box 429, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park.

appropriation in December.[26] The first session at Muzak's New York studio on July 7, Donovan's authorization on July 13, and the Board's approval on July 22 mark successive stages in the establishment of a continuing production operation. MUSAC took shape gradually through transatlantic negotiation, as London defined its needs and Washington assembled the personnel and industrial resources required to meet them.

The negotiation between field demand and Washington approval belonged to a planning system that had developed through MO's expansion. In May 1943, an MO Plans and Operations Committee (MOPO) began meeting three times a week to consider how current events could be used for subversion, while the OSS Planning Staff handled longer-term planning. By May 1944, MO's new chief sought to make Washington responsible for overall strategy and coordination with OWI and the State Department, leaving tactical decisions and execution to the field.[27] This division helps explain why MUSAC's production requirements emerged through continuing negotiation between offices.

Washington also developed a structure for joining intelligence to production. An MO Workshop was established in April 1944; in October it combined with the MO Intelligence Unit under the Plans and Production Section. The OSS's institutional history names MUSAC, spelled "MUZAC" in the report, among the European projects to which that section made substantial contributions. It also records why centrally prepared directives could lose their usefulness: field

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[26] K. D. Mann, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, pp. 1-2, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The report calls one J. Walter Thompson contact "Walter O'Keefe"; contemporaneous project documents identify him as Lester O'Keefe. It also describes MUSAC's records as part of the larger *Pancake* operation, a distinction that should be preserved despite retrospective summaries that sometimes conflate the two names.

[27] History Project, *War Report of the OSS*, 1:214–16. The report identifies MOPO as the "MO Plans and Operations Committee."

operations had to respond to military relationships, changing local conditions, and the cover of particular stations or publications.[28] MUSAC's requests, approvals, shipments, and revisions gave this relationship a musical form. The New York unit supplied recordings whose lyrics, voices, and arrangements continued to be shaped by London's broadcasting needs.

III. Building the Civilian Production Network: J. Walter Thompson, Mohawk, and the Mechanics of Cover

Knowing what London wanted did not give the OSS the means to produce it. MO possessed neither a standing dance orchestra nor the ordinary machinery used to hire performers, negotiate with union musicians, reserve studios, manufacture discs, and pay civilian vendors. It also could not approach those resources openly. The resulting arrangement joined a small OSS supervisory staff to J. Walter Thompson, the Muzak recording company, and a dummy corporation identified in later records as the Mohawk Trading Corporation. Cover did more than hide this network; it made the network operable. J. Walter Thompson entered the project because it already possessed the relationships MO lacked. Reichner's June 28 report described the agency as a secure route into commercial radio production. Walter O'Meara and William Griffin had previously served with OSS, while Lester O'Keefe brought experience as a radio producer and access to professional facilities and personnel. Reichner proposed that Thompson contribute its organizational services and facilities as a wartime service while the government reimbursed production expenses.[29] The OSS was therefore not purchasing finished records from an ordinary

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[28] History Project, *War Report of the OSS*, 1:217–18. The report calls the unit the "Plans and Production Section" and identifies "MUZAC" among its European projects.

[29] Morgan S. A. Reichner, *Report on Electrical Transcriptions*, June 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Walter O'Meara was an advertising executive and writer who

supplier. It was borrowing a commercial production organization and paying the costs generated when that organization acted on its behalf.

Intelligence officers nevertheless retained direction. An internal description of MO/New York placed a small OSS staff over activities performed by Thompson and Muzak on approved projects.[30] Reichner's July 8, 1944 project report made the division more specific: Washington maintained direction and liaison; Metzl was responsible for lyrics; Goehr was designated for arrangements; O'Meara and Griffin served as Thompson's executive contacts; O'Keefe was producer; and Miller conducted an adjustable ensemble.[31] A March 1945 evaluation stated that the Thompson principals knew OSS was the real party in interest and that a dummy corporation concealed its role, while discussion with other persons outside OSS was prohibited.[32] Thompson's leading contacts were therefore informed intermediaries between the intelligence organization and the larger workforce that did not require equivalent knowledge.

The assignments to Metzl and Goehr made Jewish émigré expertise part of this institutional design. Metzl brought experience in Viennese cabaret, satire, and radio to the preparation of German lyrics; Goehr brought experience in arranging, broadcasting, and popular

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served as chief of planning in the OSS before returning to J. Walter Thompson, where he became one of the agency's principal contacts for MUSAC. William Griffin was a former OSS employee working at J. Walter Thompson who served as an executive contact between the advertising agency and the MUSAC project. On the union, orchestra, and studio arrangements, see Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 58.

[30] "MO/OSS/New York," organizational description, undated, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[31] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, sec. 2, "Organization," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. For Miller's role, see the continuation of the report.

[32] "Full Description of Project," MUSAC project evaluation, ca. March 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See also K. D. Mann, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, NARA.

entertainment to the proposed musical work. Both had left German-speaking Europe after the Nazi rise to power. The report's assignment of responsibilities gave these histories an operational place – the cultural knowledge carried into exile could now shape songs prepared for German listeners under Allied direction.[33]

The Mohawk Trading Corporation supplied an outward legal and commercial identity. A termination memorandum called Mohawk "the dummy corporation set up to handle this project" and recorded its post-office-box address. When MUSAC ended, the OSS considered dissolving the corporation along with clearing Metzl's office and settling civilian obligations.[34] Mohawk letterhead shows how the cover appeared outside classified correspondence. On May 10, 1945, K. D. Mann wrote to conductor Allen Roth on Mohawk letterhead, thanking him for recordings made under his guidance and crediting his musical workmanship with the operation's successful conclusion. The letter described MUSAC as "our" project while leaving OSS unnamed. Its pairing of musical recognition and corporate cover shows how the organization could acknowledge a contributor's work while maintaining the outward identity under which that work had been arranged.[35] Other correspondence places Mohawk within a wider OSS purchasing

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[33] Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War, "Lothar Metzl," *Austrian Soldiers in Foreign Armies*, https://austriansoldiers.lbg.ac.at/bio/lothar-metzl/?lang=en; "Rudolf Goehr," *Die Kardosch-Sänger*, https://kardosch-saenger.de/die-abels-die-deutschen-revellers-aus-ungarn/rudolf-goehr. For their assigned MUSAC responsibilities, see Reichner to Mann, "Musac Project Report," July 8, 1944, sec. 2, "Organization," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, NARA, cited above.

[34] David Williamson to John Hughes, "Musac Recordings for MO," April 26, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[35] K. D. Mann to Allen Roth, May 10, 1945, Mohawk Trading Corporation letterhead, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The letter uses the spelling "Musak project."

system serving additional branches.[36] Its usefulness lay in its administrative ordinariness: it could purchase, receive bills, maintain an address, and correspond with civilian workers.

An October memorandum identifies the entity transmitting J. Walter Thompson invoices internally as "ANNA." Its precise relationship to Mohawk remains to be established, but the memorandum records a clear payment chain: Thompson billed for recording sessions; the dummy corporation transmitted the invoices; General Counsel obtained MO's approval; and Special Funds paid the accounts through the corporation.[37] The agreements moved MUSAC from an initial three-session test into continuing production.[38] Donovan's July 13 authorization allowed up to $900 for each three-hour session of four numbers.[39] Actual charges varied with the personnel and recording work required. An October packet for August sessions totaled $3,559.71 after a credit. The sessions preserved elsewhere as repertory lists and finished discs were also commercial transactions conducted under cover.[40]

Thompson's contribution extended beyond billing and access. Project records consistently place O'Keefe inside production decisions as producer and reviewer.[41] His role

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[36] John C. Hughes to David Williamson, April 27, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[37] Office of General Counsel to David Williamson, "'Musac' Project," October 10, 1944, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[38] MUSAC cost and production memorandum, p. 3, ca. July 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

39 Donovan to J. Walter Thompson & Company, July 13, 1944, 1–2.

[40] Office of General Counsel to David Williamson, "'Musac' Project," October 10, 1944, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, NARA. The listed charges total $3,572.33 before application of the $12.62 credit, producing the memorandum's final total of $3,559.71.

[41] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

becomes especially visible in *Die Blitzbühne*, a recorded variety program involving John Hendrik, Sig Arno, Herbert Berghof, and Lizzi Balla. Cushing sought rapid clearance so rehearsals could begin, and the production sheet credited Metzl with the script, Allen Roth with musical supervision, and O'Keefe with direction.[42] O'Keefe acted as more than a liaison; he was a professional radio producer capable of coordinating dialogue, music, rehearsal, performance, and studio technique. Donovan's May 10, 1945 letter to O'Keefe explicitly recognized this contribution, crediting their recording collaboration with producing "a psychological weapon." This acknowledgment placed O'Keefe's production expertise within the OSS's conception of music as an instrument of warfare.[43] These records expand the meaning of institutional cover. Mohawk and the corporation identified as ANNA concealed the purchaser, but corporate names also received invoices, maintained addresses, and enabled payment. Thompson supplied informed executives, a producer, and access to the commercial-radio labor market. Muzak supplied studios and technical personnel. OSS officers selected objectives, controlled information, approved costs, and supervised the civilian organizations. Cover was productive infrastructure: it allowed the state to enter a commercial cultural industry as purchaser and producer without appearing there under its own name.

Termination briefly exposed the machinery that routine production kept dispersed. In April 1945, Williamson forwarded approved Thompson invoices, anticipated one final packet, notified O'Meara that operations were ending, and considered the future of Mohawk and its post-

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[42] Edward Cushing to Rhoda K. Hirsch, "Musac Project," January 5, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. For the script, direction, and music-supervision credits, see *Die Blitzbühne*, title and production sheet, January 26, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, NARA.

[43] William J. Donovan to Lester O'Keefe, May 10, 1945, OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, Entry A1-210, box 429, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

office box.[44] Hughes's response raised the corporation's possible uses beyond MUSAC, while the May letter to Roth closed one outward relationship. Winding down required OSS to separate what cover had joined: agency agreement, invoices, corporation, office, personnel, and unfinished recordings.[45] The network had worked because intelligence direction, commercial expertise, and concealed transactions were not alternatives but mutually dependent components of clandestine production.

IV. Secrecy by Design: Clearance, Cover Stories, and Compartmentalization

The civilian production network depended upon an unequal distribution of knowledge. The recordings had to appear sufficiently ordinary to be contracted, rehearsed, and produced within New York's entertainment industry while their clandestine destination remained concealed. Secrecy therefore entered the organization of the work itself, determining who was investigated, who was cleared, what explanation could be offered, and how much of the operation informed participants were permitted to understand. MUSAC did not divide neatly between insiders who knew the truth and outsiders who believed one common cover story. A small group of OSS officers possessed the operational requirement and maintained contact with London. Cleared executives at J. Walter Thompson knew OSS was the real party in interest and that a dummy corporation concealed its role. Muzak personnel could be investigated for technical access without receiving policy information. Performers, instrumentalists, and

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[44] David Williamson to John R. Schoemer Jr., "Musac Project," April 23, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[45] Williamson to Hughes, "Musac Recordings for MO," April 26, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, NARA.

recording-company employees ordinarily did not need to know either the purchaser or the destination. Some received an overt explanation; some were told only that the work served the government or war effort; and others were deliberately told neither the sponsor nor the recordings' purpose.[46] Compartmentalization operated through graduated disclosure rather than a single fiction.

Published accounts identify OWI or Voice of America as one outward explanation used within the production network. Lawrence Soley reports that the musicians' union was told the recordings belonged to the American overt propaganda effort, while Christof Mauch situates that explanation within the broader concealment of OSS sponsorship.[47] German-language recordings for an official government station offered a plausible reason to hire émigré performers, union musicians, and commercial-radio personnel without disclosing a black-radio destination. Other explanations were also contemplated. Ashley proposed that outsiders could be told the recordings were entertainment for liberated populations, that performers sent abroad could travel under USO cover, and that questions could be answered by stating, truthfully but incompletely, that the work was important to the government.[48] These stories substituted a legitimate overt purpose for the clandestine use that had to remain hidden.

Reichner's July 8 report formalized this division. O'Meara, Griffin, and O'Keefe were identified as cleared Thompson contacts; Dietrich's consulting role was also marked as cleared.

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[46] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. See also "Full Description of Project," MUSAC project evaluation, ca. March 1945.

[47] Soley, *Radio Warfare*, 125; Christof Mauch, *The Shadow War against Hitler: The Covert Operations of America's Wartime Secret Intelligence Service*, trans. Jeremiah M. Riemer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 154–55.

[48] Ira Ashley to Gordon Auchincloss, June 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA.

Talent, musicians, and recording-company personnel did not need to know the purpose of the transcriptions or for whom they were being made. Reichner believed that Muzak's engineers had already undergone security checks because of their previous work for OSS/MO/Far East. That prior work gave MUSAC access to technical personnel with experience of OSS production, while knowledge of the new project remained limited by role.[49] The project could therefore assemble people in one studio who possessed radically different understandings of the same session. Clearance itself had to be obtained without revealing why it was required. In November 1944, Metzl sent Rhoda Hirsch the names of Herbert Berghof, Sig Arno, Oscar Karlweis, and Oskar Homolka for investigation, describing them only as actors who might be used in a "recorded variety program."[50] A December request for spot checks on Arno, John Hendrik, and Lizzi Balla explained that the performers would not be informed of the organization's identity or the recordings' purpose. Ordinary security forms would have revealed that an inquiry was underway, so the checks were conducted without their knowledge and had to be completed before rehearsal.[51] A February memorandum repeated the procedure for a rush production requested by London and suggested that approval might need renewal for successive performances.[52] Investigation, notification, rehearsal, and production were thus coordinated within the same concealed schedule.

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[49] Reichner to Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, 1–2.

[50] Lothar Metzl to Rhoda A. Hirsch, "Security check," November 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[51] Samuel Scrivener Jr. to Frank M. Chapin, "Spot Checks for MO/NY Project," December 29, 1944, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[52] Samuel Scrivener Jr. to Frank M. Chapin, "Spot Checks for MO/NY Project," February 13, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, NARA.

Formal secrecy could not control private inference. The February request noted that Keller had previously been interviewed for OSS/MO work and that Hendrik worked for OWI as a German-language broadcaster. Both might reasonably conclude that OSS sponsored the recordings.[53] Official disclosure and participants' own inferences could therefore differ. The studio contained overlapping understandings of the work. Washington officers understood MUSAC as a contribution to a joint clandestine-radio operation. Thompson's principal contacts knew OSS stood behind the production. Metzl and Cushing knew much of the London correspondence and black-radio requirement. Engineers could be cleared for technical work without entering policy decisions. Performers could know repertory, colleagues, and immediate studio demands while receiving only an overt explanation or none at all.

Elizabeth McIntosh's retrospective account gives this uneven distribution of knowledge a physical setting. She recalled a guarded New York recording studio where access depended on passes and special orders, and described differences in what performers knew about the work. In her account, Dietrich and her daughter Maria Riva understood the altered German lyrics, and Dietrich helped change words. McIntosh remembered Dietrich as exceptionally well briefed; the wartime memorandum discussed below nevertheless recorded limits even on Dietrich's knowledge of operational use. The two accounts preserve different perspectives on the relationship between creative participation and privileged access to information.[54]

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[53] Ibid. For the relationship between cooperation and compartmentalization in the British doctrine preserved in Donovan's personal papers, see Political Warfare Executive, "The Meaning, Techniques and Methods of Political Warfare," n.d., 10, sec. VIII, "Secrecy," in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 3, *The Foreign Information Service*, tab H, copy no. 98, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

[54] Elizabeth McIntosh, interview in *A Woman at War: Marlene Dietrich Remembered*, ed. J. David Riva (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 89–94. Compare the undated MUSAC recording memorandum, 3, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–

Marlene Dietrich occupied an exceptional position. Organization records identify her as a cleared consultant, while a surviving memorandum stated that she was the only artist, so far as its author knew, who had been told for whom she was working. Even she had not been told "the nature of the operation in which she is engaged."[55] Knowledge of the sponsoring organization did not entail knowledge of operational use. Dietrich's fame, Allied commitments, and consulting role allowed OSS to disclose more to her than to ordinary performers, but not everything. The limits of disclosure affected even Edward Cushing, one of the officers organizing MUSAC in New York. In July 1944, Cushing scheduled sessions, proposed repertory, circulated lyrics and duplicate recordings, and coordinated material sent to London, yet admitted that he wanted "a clearer idea of the nature of the operation in London."[56] From the instructions available to him, he understood that the records were intended for black radio, authentic accents were required, OWI could not use the same numbers, and overt propaganda was prohibited. London's simultaneous demand for American swing and a recognizable émigré performer such as Keller made the station's represented identity difficult for him to reconstruct.[57] He therefore sought further guidance about how lyrics could be angled and which completed texts London considered acceptable.[58]

PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, cited in note 55 below.

[55] MUSAC recording memorandum, p. 3, undated, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA. See also Reichner to Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944. See also unsigned draft letter to Marlene Dietrich, n.d., with handwritten revisions, same folder.

[56] Edward Cushing to Morgan S. A. Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA; matched copy, pp. 1–2.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

Cushing's uncertainty shows that compartmentalization protected MUSAC while generating friction inside it. Without a complete picture of the station's identity, New York producers sometimes had to infer objectives from partial instructions and return questions across the Atlantic. London retained the operational context and final approval; New York possessed the personnel and production capacity. Secrecy reduced the number of people capable of exposing the project but could also slow decisions and make the surviving archive preserve the production chain more clearly than the complete knowledge of any participant. MUSAC's secrecy was therefore not one cover story but a managed distribution of information. Overt institutions supplied plausible outward explanations; dummy corporations and commercial agencies concealed the purchaser; security officers investigated performers without disclosing the inquiry; and cleared intermediaries knew enough to contract and produce the recordings while remaining separated from their deployment. That structure also shaped recruitment. Performers had to be selected, investigated, approved, scheduled within the period of approval, and assigned an explanation appropriate to what they needed to know.

V. Selecting the Voices: Recruitment, Audition, and Operational Suitability

The compartmentalized system determined more than what performers could be told. MUSAC required voices capable of inhabiting German lyrics without sounding American, working within contemporary American popular idioms, surviving imperfect transmission, completing several recordings within tightly scheduled sessions, and entering the project without compromising security. Artistic and operational judgment converged. A singer could be accomplished yet unusable, culturally credible yet too recognizable, or ideally suited to one type of material but not another. This combination had a direct parallel in Allied broadcasting: as the June correspondence established, OWI was already producing American hit songs with German

lyrics. MUSAC's particular requirement was to adapt that combination to a concealed station identity, with different voices, lyrics, and arrangements. London defined the initial requirements. Smith requested mainly female vocalists, accepted Keller's Viennese accent, and asked for a North German voice while excluding American accents and overlap with OWI.[59] Ashley translated those specifications into commercial-performance categories. He lacked a "sweet ballad singer" and imagined an ideal German combination of Dinah Shore, Frances Langford, and Connie Boswell. Keller appeared useful because her voice had not proved identifiable when tested on commercial recordings.[60] These comparisons identified crooning, popular phrasing, romantic delivery, and adaptability to dance-band repertory as capacities to be transferred into idiomatic German.

Gender established the broad shape of the desired roster, but genre, timbre, accent, technique, and repertorial flexibility determined an individual's usefulness. The July 8 project report recorded auditions with numerous German singers and the selection of one man and seven women judged capable of supplying variety in "style, technique, and voice."[61] Metzl's terminal report later described almost daily auditions intended to "weed out mediocrities," with perfect diction among the requirements few candidates met. He identified the recording, broadcasting, operatic, theatrical, nightclub, and comic experience of those selected as distinct resources for

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[59] Smith to Mann, cable, June 7, 1944 (paraphrase), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA; Mann to Smith, June 14, 1944, and Smith to Mann, June 15, 1944 (paraphrases), same folder. Tab H applies to the June 15 cable.

[60] Ira Ashley to Gordon Auchincloss, June 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA.

[61] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

the project.[62] Metzl's retrospective categories correspond with the earlier planning record: MUSAC assembled a roster whose varied skills could serve different forms of musical and dramatic address. Established professional relationships also informed the writing of material for particular voices. As Chapter 2 established, Metzl had worked alongside Kurer in the émigré revue *Reunion in New York*. Traussnig connects that earlier collaboration to Metzl's ability to tailor MUSAC lyrics to her vocal and performative qualities. Their shared theatrical experience made knowledge of a performer's capabilities a resource for musical design, connecting Jewish émigré networks to the interaction of lyric, voice, and characterization.[63]

Recruitment joined institutional requirements to identities shaped by artistic participation and political commitment. German-language performance, knowledge of familiar repertories, and established working relationships were resources the operation needed. Refugee theater, antifascist broadcasting, and American professional life had already brought several contributors into overlapping networks. Their histories of Jewish exclusion and exile mattered within this process through the careers, affiliations, and commitments they had formed. These histories help explain why particular artists became attractive recruits and collaborators, and how experience already used to construct cultural and civic belonging entered wartime intelligence work. Public claims of loyal belonging formed part of this political setting, while the recruitment documents specify artistic and linguistic requirements rather than a common private motive among the artists.

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[62] Lothar Metzl, "Report on Musac," terminal report enclosed with David Williamson to Kenneth D. Mann, May 7, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[63] Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen*, 244.

Recruitment continued after the first sessions. A memorandum justifying Cushing's expenses described repeated interviews and auditions, often conducted at meals because performers were unavailable at other times.[64] In August, when London asked New York to increase production, Cushing reported that the project was "short on talent." Dietrich was leaving on tour, Kurer was in Reno, and Keller was on holiday. Metzl, Thompson, and Cushing searched for replacements but believed they had nearly exhausted the New York pool. A Hollywood unit was possible but lacked the union arrangements, supervision, and institutional relationships already established in New York.[65] Availability and location were operational qualifications because they determined whether a voice could enter regular production.

London continued the selection process after recordings arrived. A July cable judged the first numbers musically effective but considered the male voices excellent and the women only passable, requested attention to diction, and instructed New York to keep searching for a stronger ballad singer.[66] An August cable welcomed two new women but criticized excessive vibrato, an excessively low key, microphone distance, recording balance, and insufficient brilliance for penetrating interference.[67] These responses made recruitment a continuing process: passing an audition began a performer's evaluation under broadcast conditions. London could retain,

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[64] David Williamson to Mr. Dimond, attention R. B. Simpson, "Expense Accounts - Edward Cushing," September 20, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[65] Edward Cushing to David Williamson, "Recording in N.Y.," August 24, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, RG 226, NARA. The copy is in container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6; the copy is in container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6.

[66] Cable from London, July 24, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[67] Cable from London, August 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Microfilm reference: History of the London Office of the OSS, 1942–1945, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1623, roll 2, RG 226, Entry A1 91, National Archives at College Park.

reassign, criticize, or replace performers as their recorded voices encountered the conditions of broadcasting.

This continuing evaluation also guided expansion of the roster. In November, Williamson asked London to assess Jarmila Novotná, describing her as a Metropolitan Opera soprano with a popular style suited to ballads by Kern, Romberg, and Friml.[68] Operatic stature did not guarantee acceptance; her value depended upon whether formal training could be translated into the popular idiom and broadcast environment London required. Recognizability posed a paradox. Ashley initially recommended Keller because he believed her voice could not be identified. Cushing later questioned London's request for a singer well known in Europe and publicly resident in the United States.[69] London nevertheless continued to ask for Keller and Hendrik.[70] Professional reputation demonstrated technical reliability and command of German popular style while increasing the possibility that a listener might identify a displaced performer. MUSAC did not eliminate that contradiction; it balanced recognition against utility.

Dietrich represented its most conspicuous form. Unlike ordinary auditioned singers, she appeared as a cleared consultant and was the only artist known to have been told she worked for OSS, though not the nature of the operation. Cushing negotiated her participation around her availability and offered her a choice among prepared songs.[71] When she later performed publicly

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[68] David Williamson to George C. Dibert, "Musac Project," November 13, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[69] Cushing to Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944, cited in note 56.

[70] Morgan S. A. Reichner to David Williamson, August 22, 1944, and David Williamson to Edward Cushing, August 23, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[71] Edward Cushing to Morgan S. A. Reichner, "Recordings," August 1, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA. See also Reichner to Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944.

for USO camp shows in Europe, London requested new versions of titles she had recorded because frequent use of her voice increased the danger of identification.[72] Her fame therefore made her both unusually valuable and unusually difficult to use without compromising the operation. For other prospective participants, selection proceeded through security checks conducted under limited descriptions of the project.[73] Political history entered this review, although the records do not preserve a single, consistently applied set of criteria.

Professional reliability can be reconstructed from production schedules. The initial plan expected no more than four numbers from a three-hour session. Metzl's terminal report later counted single sessions producing four recordings and double sessions producing eight within corresponding three- or six-hour blocks.[74] Performers had to arrive prepared, adjust to stock arrangements or transpositions, work with German lyrics produced under time pressure, and complete enough material to maintain London's supply. Repeated requests for Hendrik and Keller reflected not only approval of their voices but their dependability within the schedule. The roster functioned through its members' different forms of expertise. Hendrik supplied a male popular voice with extensive recording and broadcasting experience; Keller joined Central European cabaret and recording authority to a flexible style; Kurer offered a nightclub-oriented personality; Novotná and Stueckgold expanded the ballad and soprano repertory; Arno entered as

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[72] Ira Ashley to David Williamson, "Musac - Lyrics," January 18, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[73] Lothar Metzl to Rhoda A. Hirsch, "Security check," November 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA; Samuel Scrivener Jr. to Frank M. Chapin, "Spot Checks for MO/NY Project," December 29, 1944, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, NARA; Scrivener to Chapin, "Spot Checks for MO/NY Project," February 13, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, NARA.

[74] Reichner to Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944; Metzl, "Report on Musac."

a comic and dramatic specialist; and Dietrich required individualized handling because her value, fame, clearance, and availability were exceptional. MUSAC selected performers through overlapping tests of accent, gender, style, diction, availability, security, productivity, and continuing approval from London. Selection was not a single decision made before recording began but an ongoing process for determining which human voices could safely and efficiently be converted into clandestine recorded sound. Once those voices had been selected, cleared, and scheduled, they still required material. Songs had to be located, German lyrics written or received from London, intelligence incorporated without exposing its source, arrangements prepared or adapted, and revisions approved before performers entered the studio. The following section turns from the construction of the talent pool to that creative workflow.

VI. From Intelligence to Score: The MUSAC Creative Workflow

Once MUSAC had assembled a roster of performers, the operation still required a repeatable means of turning popular songs into material suitable for clandestine transmission. Tunes had to be identified and purchased; London had to determine whether they duplicated material already in use; German lyrics had to be written, received, revised, and approved; arrangements had to be located or prepared; singers had to receive texts they could perform; and every component had to reach a studio on a schedule set by the demand for new recordings. The resulting workflow did not move in a simple line from a single author to a finished record. It joined London, Washington, New York, commercial producers, lyricists, arrangers, and performers in a chain of selection, circulation, revision, and authorization. MUSAC's creative process was therefore also an administrative process: the movement of paper, information, and authority shaped the musical material that performers and studio personnel would bring into sound.

The earliest surviving descriptions assigned recognizable responsibilities within that system. A July 8, 1944 project report placed Morgan Reichner and Edward Cushing in Washington as directors and liaisons. In New York, Lothar Metzl was responsible for selecting numbers and preparing lyrics, while Rudolph Goehr, whose transfer to the project had been requested, was expected to work with Metzl on special musical arrangements. J. Walter Thompson personnel, particularly Lester O'Keefe, would handle production and recording.[75] The same report identified Irving Miller as conductor and a source of standard arrangements. Its "Organization" section mapped the responsibilities that connected these participants.[76] Reichner's July report distinguished the information given to participants according to their work and clearance, so the organization recorded here should not be mistaken for knowledge shared by everyone in the studio. Performers could know their immediate collaborators while remaining unaware of the full chain from OSS direction to clandestine broadcast.

The surviving correspondence shows how these assigned responsibilities overlapped in practice. Metzl selected titles and wrote or adapted German texts, but lyrics also arrived from London. Goehr prepared special arrangements, while Miller could supply standard ones and other arrangements could be obtained from commercial stock. Cushing coordinated the movement of lyrics, scores, and recordings while also proposing titles, questioning textual choices, and requesting changes. London alternately acted as client, lyric supplier, reviewer, and

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[75] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Col. Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. For the studio, recording media, and arrangement workflow, see also Lothar Metzl, "Muzak," terminal report, in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 6, MO Branch, box 99B, tab N, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA, unpaginated.

[76] Reichner to Mann, "Musac Project Report," July 8, 1944, sec. 2, "Organization," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; continuation. On disclosure to participants, see sec. 2(e) of the report and Section IV above.

final authority. Following the transmission, revision, and authorization of a text makes these overlapping contributions visible. Authorship developed through the interaction of assigned responsibilities with editorial, musical, and performing judgments. The process began with repertory selection. On July 28, Cushing sent Reichner a detailed account of upcoming sessions. The memorandum paired named performers with songs already chosen for the next week, then listed current and standard tunes from which later sessions might be built. The standards required a check with London, Cushing explained, because a cable response was necessary "so that we can move ahead."[77] Selection was thus provisional even when sheet music and performers were available in New York. A commercially promising title did not become MUSAC material until the project determined that London wanted it, had not already recorded it, and could use it within the developing program.

Paper copies accompanied that decision-making. Three days later, Williamson, writing through Reichner, reported that the sheet music and German lyrics for all songs recorded to date were being sent to Rae Smith by air pouch. London also received a list of titles planned for the following two weeks and was asked to identify immediately any numbers already cut in Britain. A proposed lyric for "Swinging on a Star" traveled in the same packet for approval.[78] The recordings were therefore preceded and followed by documentary counterparts: lists announced prospective work; lyrics and scores enabled review; cables accelerated decisions; and air pouches carried material that could not be transmitted as conveniently or securely. Before MUSAC

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[77] Cushing to Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944, cited in note 56.

[78] David Williamson to Rae Smith, "MUSAC Project," July 31, 1944, by Morgan S. A. Reichner, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

existed as a library of discs, it existed as a circulating dossier of titles, texts, music, clearances, and responses.

London was not merely the recipient of finished American production. As the pace increased, it assumed a larger share of the writing and screening. In August, Reichner informed Williamson that London would use forthcoming title lists both to reject unsuitable or duplicate numbers and to mark songs for which its own personnel would prepare lyrics. Those texts would then be forwarded to New York for recording.[79] Ira Ashley formalized the arrangement on September 1 by returning eliminated titles, identifying songs London would handle immediately, and promising further lyrics by air pouch.[80] On October 25, Williamson sent Major George Dibert an additional list of eighty titles, noting Metzl's preference to write certain lyrics and asking London to approve the proposed division between the two offices.[81] The division of labor was therefore negotiated title by title. New York possessed the commercial music network and recording unit; London possessed immediate knowledge of the broadcast operation and authority to decide what the station required. Production speed made that transatlantic collaboration necessary. By August 24, Cushing reported that twelve sessions since July 7 had produced forty-six current songs with German lyrics. London now wanted production doubled, but Metzl could not sustain eight new lyrics each week while continuing his other duties. Cushing proposed

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[79] Morgan S. A. Reichner to David Williamson, August 22, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[80] Ira Ashley to David Williamson, "Lyrics," September 1, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[81] David Williamson to Maj. George Dibert, "MUSAC," October 25, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

assistance from MO personnel and London writers, arguing that two or three outside texts per week would allow Metzl to remain both principal librettist and production supervisor. He was reluctant to hire an ordinary commercial lyricist because clearance and copyright created additional complications.[82] Creative labor was thus treated as a production capacity that could be measured, overextended, and redistributed. The weekly quota influenced not only how often MUSAC recorded but also how authorship was dispersed across offices.

The pressure for speed repeatedly collided with the need for approval. A September memorandum complained that New York had sent London a long list of tunes on August 25 and asked it both to reject unsuitable titles and select several for London writers, but no answer had arrived. Without that response, New York risked recording material London did not want or duplicating songs already produced there. The same memorandum asked for clearer instructions about propagandistic content. New York had generally followed London's direction to avoid propaganda, yet several more pointed lyrics appeared to have been accepted. Cushing therefore wanted to know whether such songs should remain a small but regular part of production and, if so, what subjects and degree of explicitness London considered usable.[83] Approval was not a ceremonial step after creation. It determined which creative work should begin and what kind of work the project was attempting to produce.

The production history of "Wie lange noch?" ("How much longer?"), with music by Kurt Weill and a German text by Walter Mehring, makes these negotiations concrete. In June 1944, Lotte Lenya recorded the song with Weill at the piano. Chapter 4 examines that performance and

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[82] Cushing to Williamson, "Recording in N.Y.," August 24, 1944, copies cited in note 65.

[83] Memorandum to Rae Smith and Morgan S. A. Reichner, "MUSAC Project," September 9, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

the song's wider multimedia campaign. The July correspondence reveals how MUSAC's production staff subsequently revised the material and assigned it to another performer. New York had recorded Kurt Weill's song with Vilma Kurer, using Walter Mehring's German text and Weill's music with one change: at Cushing's direction, Metzl removed the phrase "Wie lange noch" and substituted new words because the phrase might have been used elsewhere by Warner, one of the London writers. Cushing proposed that Warner write a different lyric on the same theme while leaving the Weill version to London.[84] A later instruction called for the song to be recorded again with Lotte Lenya.[85] The correspondence makes the successive contributions visible: Weill's composition and Mehring's text, Metzl's textual alteration, Cushing's editorial direction, a proposed parallel London lyric, Kurer's performance, and a planned Lenya remake. MUSAC joined their work to editorial and performing decisions made within its production network. [86]

Revision also depended upon MUSAC's uncertain relation to the station for which it was producing material. In the same July 28 memorandum, Cushing tried to reconcile the instructions he had received. The records were said to be intended for black radio; authentic accents were

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[84] Cushing to Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944. For the earlier Lenya–Weill performance, see Kurt Weill and Walter Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," Lotte Lenya, voice, Kurt Weill, piano, Bost Recording Company, New York, June 1944, sound recording, approximately 3:16, author's research audio file "Wie lange noch_.mp3"; Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, "Lotte Lenya Discography," https://www.kwf.org/research-center/lenya-discography/. The Foundation catalogs the recording under OWI and dates it to spring 1944. For the June 1944 Bost session and its OSS/MUSAC provenance, see Robert DeVecchi to W. C. Morck, memoranda, June 7, 13, 26, and 27, 1944, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[85] David Williamson to Edward Cushing, August 23, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[86] Kurt Weill and Walter Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," in *The Unknown Kurt Weill: A Collection of 14 Songs* (New York: European American Music Corporation, 1982); Neil W. Levin, "Kurt Weill," *Milken Archive of Jewish Music*, https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/kurt-weill; Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, "Lothar Metzl." The published score credits Weill's music and Mehring's German text; the July 28 correspondence records the subsequent MUSAC intervention.

required; the numbers could not be used by OWI or another MO station; and lyrics were to remain free of overt propaganda. Yet London also requested ordinary American swing recordings and named Keller, a performer known to be in the United States. Cushing inferred that the operation might be black principally because it was subversive, while the program itself could appear to come from official German radio. If that interpretation was correct, he argued, lyrics could carry ideas through double meanings while avoiding "crude overt propaganda." He then asked London to judge five completed texts and to accept or reject another lyric by return air pouch.[87] The exchange demonstrates that lyric revision was inseparable from operational clarification. Writers could not determine the proper angle until they understood the identity the station claimed and the degree of political meaning that identity could plausibly sustain.

Feedback continued after texts had been written and recordings produced. In January 1945, Ashley followed up on Cushing's criticism of two London-written lyrics with the unnamed lyricist responsible for most of the texts sent from London to New York. The writer accepted Cushing's objections, agreeing that difficulty in singing was itself evidence of a poor lyric. Cushing's comments thus returned problems discovered in performance to the writing process for possible revision. The same memorandum rejected two other songs on operational grounds: a Soviet march conflicted with the station's purported identity, while another number was too closely associated with refugees.[88] Together, these decisions show that songs were reviewed both for their viability in performance and for their compatibility with the station's cover. A text could be returned to its writer, revised, or abandoned before it reached the studio.

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[87] Cushing to Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944.

[88] Ira Ashley to David Williamson, "Musac - Lyrics," January 18, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

Rhoda K. Hirsch's correspondence gives Washington's coordinating role a human and practical form. The project description identified her as "in charge of Musac, Washington." In a January 16, 1945 memorandum, Metzl returned intelligence she had supplied, called it "extremely valuable and interesting," and asked to receive such material again. Hirsch's work connected the intelligence office to the person preparing German lyrics in New York. Her correspondence with Cushing also carried recording and song decisions through Washington. On December 20, 1944, she sent Cushing recordings, reports on *Soldatensender*, radio scripts, and English translations of five song texts that he had prepared. Intelligence circulation therefore depended on an administrator who could keep information, people, and production in contact.[89]

Her repertoire correspondence shows how that coordination worked. On August 4, 1944, Hirsch asked Metzl whether a new list of twenty titles supplemented or replaced songs already submitted to London, explaining that the field should check only numbers New York intended to use. On January 3, 1945, she forwarded Cushing four lyrics received from London. On January 16, she reconciled a thirty-song proposal against earlier approvals, rejections, and transmitted lyrics, then checked a separate fifty-seven-song list against Washington's records and requested confirmation that London would not duplicate work already underway in New York. This detailed knowledge of the repertoire and its production history made her coordination a form of

[89] "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, NARA; Lothar Metzl to Rhoda K. Hirsch, "Intelligence for Muzak," January 16, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Wash–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA; Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," December 20, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," Wash–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA; Hirsch to Cushing, "MUSAC," January 16, 1945, container 172, folder 2295, same entry and repository. See also McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 57, on Hirsch's Washington liaison role and coordination between PWE, MO London, and MO New York.

administrative authorship: it connected field decisions to the material available for writing, rehearsal, and recording.[90]

That workflow also created the points through which intelligence and operational knowledge could enter musical production. MO's black-radio doctrine demanded current information while warning that a station could expose itself by using knowledge unavailable to its purported source.[91] MUSAC's structure placed London, closest to the broadcast operation, in a position to approve themes, reject titles, and assess cover; Washington supplied direction and liaison; and New York converted those requirements into lyrics, arrangements, and recorded performances. Lists, memoranda, and revisions document intelligence moving through this system. They establish the institutional connections through which knowledge could enter a song, while the lyric sheets and recordings preserve the particular musical interventions examined in Chapter 4. MUSAC's creative organization was consequently neither a conventional songwriting partnership nor a simple assembly line. Its efficiency depended upon distributed expertise: London understood the developing program and its cover; Washington coordinated authority and communication; New York knew the repertory, writers, performers, and production market; and commercial specialists could turn the selected material into a record. That distribution generated ambiguity. Later summaries could state that Metzl wrote lyrics or Goehr prepared arrangements, but the working correspondence reveals London writers, editorial interventions, stock music, conductor-arrangers, remakes, and performer-specific revisions.

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[90] Rhoda K. Hirsch to Lothar Metzl, "MUSAC Project," August 4, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA; Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," January 3, 1945, and January 16, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Wash–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA.

[91] "Black Radio," especially "Intelligence" and "Security," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, RG 226, Wash-MO-OP-70-71, container 163, ARC 6267087, National Archives at College Park.

Individual artistry shaped, and was constrained by, this collaborative chain. A performer's judgment or an arranger's revision could alter the proposed intervention even though the documentary record often privileges routing and approval over the attribution of creative decisions.

By the time a singer entered the studio, the apparent simplicity of an American tune with German words concealed a substantial administrative history. Repertory selection, textual revision, and judgments about the station's identity had made operational demands performable. The studio brought those decisions into contact with musicians' interpretations and the conditions of recording.

VII. Into the Studio: Irving Miller, the NBC Musicians, and the Recording Sessions

In the studio, MUSAC's approved tunes, German lyrics, arrangements, and selected voices became a recorded performance. The session did more than capture a finished artistic product. It was the point at which the project's administrative, financial, and technical constraints became audible. Musicians had to be contracted at rates the OSS could afford; arrangements had to be made usable by whatever ensemble was available; singers had to complete several numbers within a limited session; and the resulting performances had to survive manufacture, shipment, and reception through the interference of wartime broadcasting. The recording session gave the project's cultural expertise an audible form that could be duplicated and circulated. Further revisions remained possible as London evaluated what it received. The organization of this work depended on another civilian institution. MUSAC used the facilities of the Muzak Recording Studio at 151 West Forty-Sixth Street in New York, while J. Walter Thompson coordinated access to performers, musicians, and production personnel. A July 1944 report assigned Lester O'Keefe responsibility for production and recording, identified Muzak as the recording site, and

emphasized that neither the performers nor most of the technical personnel needed to know the project's actual purpose.[92] Muzak offered an established studio and the capacity to manufacture masters and copies, but access was not unlimited. Lothar Metzl later recalled that wartime shortages and a crowded schedule—much of it connected to Signal Corps work—made studio time difficult to obtain. Arrangements with the company therefore included not only the use of its facilities but also the speedy delivery of finished recordings. The first session at Muzak's New York studio took place on July 7, 1944, only after New York had accumulated enough completed lyrics to sustain production.[93]

Irving Miller stood at the center of the sessions themselves. A conductor employed by NBC, Miller brought MUSAC access to both professional radio musicians and a library of standard arrangements. The project retained him to conduct the orchestra and to assemble players from a flexible pool rather than maintain a permanent ensemble. One early plan listed three violins, an accordion, a trumpet, four saxophones, percussion, guitar, bass, and piano, although the number and combination used in a particular session could change according to the singer, the arrangement, and the kind of number being recorded.[94] The surviving descriptions vary slightly in their accounting of this pool, but they agree on its essential character: MUSAC did not employ one fixed "house band." Metzl's terminal report described Miller as leading ensembles

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[92] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Col. Kenneth D. Mann, "Musac Project Report," July 8, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park.

[93] Lothar Metzl, "Report on Musac," enclosed with David Williamson to Col. Kenneth D. Mann, May 7, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, NARA.

[94] Reichner to Mann, "Musac Project Report," July 8, 1944; see also the report's "Organization" section.

of approximately eight to fourteen musicians, while contemporary cost estimates anticipated that one session might require fifteen players and another only six.[95]

This flexibility was an operational solution. It enabled MUSAC to produce contrasting numbers without paying for the largest possible ensemble at every session, and it allowed Miller to match available personnel to arrangements prepared for commercial performance rather than for the project's exact instrumentation. These choices shaped the balance of rhythm, strings, brass, reeds, and accordion and the relationship between accompaniment and voice. The changing ensemble connected musical construction to the professional labor network through which the OSS produced its recordings. The musicians were not trained as intelligence personnel and did not need to be. They could enter the studio, read familiar commercial arrangements, complete the assigned performances, and leave without learning where the recordings would be broadcast.

The musicians' union shaped the pace and expense of that labor. Through J. Walter Thompson, the project negotiated a special wartime rate that permitted sessions of no more than three hours and generally no more than four numbers. Four completed numbers filled one side of a sixteen-inch disc; two sessions could therefore produce the eight selections required for a two-sided disc.[96] The arrangement gave MUSAC access to first-rate union musicians while imposing a severe economy of time. A singer, conductor, and ensemble had to rehearse, adjust, and record as many as four German-language performances within a single three-hour block. When a session involved two artists, production could extend across two consecutive blocks, but the underlying unit remained the same: four usable recordings in three hours.

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[95] Metzl, "Report on Musac"; Reichner to Mann, "Musac Project Report."

[96] Reichner to Mann, "Musac Project Report."

MUSAC's organizers tried to protect the project from these constraints by creating a backlog. The earliest schedule called for sessions on July 7 and 10, followed by additional dates during the next week. The immediate objective was to send London a first disc of eight tunes and then build approximately six weeks of material. Such a reserve would permit *Soldatensender* to maintain its broadcasts if a performer became unavailable, a studio date was lost, or another production difficulty interrupted New York's schedule.[97] The backlog was therefore not merely an administrative convenience. A clandestine station that depended on a continuing supply of current entertainment could not allow the contingencies of commercial recording in New York to become gaps in its programming.

The surviving production reports show how quickly this schedule expanded. By August 24, Cushing reported that twelve sessions had produced forty-six popular songs with German lyrics. Double sessions during the first two weeks had supplied London as rapidly as possible; production then settled temporarily into one weekly session of four numbers. Cushing nevertheless urged a return to two sessions per week, noting both the demand for material and the difficulty of coordinating performers, lyrics, and studio time.[98] By the end of the project, Metzl counted forty-eight sessions: twenty single sessions involving one performer and four recordings, and twenty-eight double sessions involving two performers and eight recordings. The figures indicate a project organized around recurring, standardized production blocks, even though the people and repertory within those blocks continually changed.[99]

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[97] Ibid.

[98] Cushing to Williamson, "Recording in N.Y.," August 24, 1944, copies cited in note 65.

[99] Metzl, "Report on Musac."

Standardization did not eliminate improvisation. Budget limitations left little money for special orchestrations, so Miller relied heavily on stock arrangements drawn from the commercial and broadcast repertory already available to him. When an arrangement did not suit the singer's range, the ensemble at hand, or the desired effect, changes often had to be made in the studio. Metzl credited Miller—and later his successor, Allen Roth—with transposing material, refreshing older arrangements, and solving practical problems "on the spot."[100] This labor is easy to lose in a catalogue of song titles. A recorded tune might preserve a lyric written and revised over several days, but its final key, balance, tempo, introduction, or instrumental distribution could also reflect decisions made under the pressure of a three-hour session. MUSAC's sound emerged not only from advance planning but from the concentrated judgment of professional musicians working within the project's temporal and financial limits.

London's responses made clear that a performance judged satisfactory in the studio might not function adequately when pressed onto a disc and transmitted over the air. An August 7 cable acknowledged receipt of twelve selections and an aluminum dub, but reported several problems. The voices of two new women represented an improvement, although New York was warned to monitor vibrato, avoid keys that placed the voice too low, and prevent singers from working too close to the microphone. The broadcast required sufficient "brilliance to penetrate interference," and London found the recording level and balance of this batch inferior to those of the first set. It also asked for more current American-style orchestrations, corrected labels, advice on preventing pressings from warping in slight heat, and continued delivery of both pressings and dubs.[101] This

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Cable from London, August 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA. Microfilm reference: History of the London Office of the OSS, M1623, roll 2, RG 226, Entry A1 91, NARA.

cable reveals a feedback loop extending from the European transmitter back into the New York studio. The recording was evaluated not only as a musical performance but as an object that had to carry a voice through static, preserve intelligibility, and remain playable after transport. Microphone distance, key, vocal production, ensemble balance, recording level, labeling, and the physical stability of the disc all became operational concerns. London's comments could therefore alter subsequent sessions without giving every participant access to the larger operation. Instructions arrived in the language of recording practice and could be implemented by singers, conductors, and engineers who knew only the work immediately before them. London's listening thus reentered production as instruction: what personnel heard became knowledge about audibility, intelligibility, and stylistic credibility that New York could use in subsequent sessions.

Some material returned to the studio even after a usable version had been completed. A memorandum concerning a double session on December 28 identified eight numbers recorded by John Hendrik and Dési Halban and noted that the titles might not have been placed on the discs. More important, Cushing explained that all eight tunes had been rerecorded under an agreement with London in order to provide "variety of performance for broadcasting."[102] Rerecording did not necessarily indicate failure. Multiple performances of the same number could enlarge the station's programming options, while changes in singer, arrangement, or delivery could prevent repetition from becoming conspicuous. In other cases, a new session corrected technical or production problems. A planned January recording required accelerated security clearance so that performers could rehearse with Metzl, O'Keefe, Cushing, and Muzak's technical staff before

[102] Edward Cushing to Rhoda K. Hirsch, "Musac Project," January 5, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, NARA.

entering the studio. Retakes, alternate versions, and special rehearsals thus belonged to the production system rather than standing outside it as exceptions.

The accounts registered these sessions as units of both musical labor and clandestine expenditure. Estimates grouped performers, musicians, conducting, contracting, studio time, masters, and copies within a single session cost; actual invoices varied with the work required.[103] The payment arrangements discussed in Section III allowed those expenses to move through the cover corporation while concealing the government purchaser. Financial administration sustained the recurring studio work on which the musical operation depended.[104]

The physical form of the finished product changed as the project learned what worked. The original plan called for sixteen-inch, two-sided Vinalite discs recorded at 33⅓ revolutions per minute, with four numbers on each side. Metzl later reported that the quality of the early pressings ranged from excellent to merely fair. Subsequent lateral and vertical Vinalite-acetate pressings proved more reliable, while London's complaints about heat damage prompted attention to warping and handling.[105] These details mattered because MUSAC was not producing performances for immediate broadcast from a New York studio. It was producing portable carriers: masters, dubs, pressings, and copies that had to preserve the recording long enough to reach another organization in another country.

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[103] Reichner to Mann, "Musac Project Report," July 8, 1944. The maximum estimate was $715: $75 for talent, $390 for the band, $90 for the conductor, $60 for the contractor, and $100 for studio rental, a master, and six copies. Actual costs varied with personnel and arranging requirements.

[104] Office of General Counsel to David Williamson, "'Musac' Project," October 10, 1944, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, NARA.

[105] Reichner to Mann, "Musac Project Report"; Metzl, "Report on Musac"; cable from London, August 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA.

By March 1945, an internal evaluation described production as "in full swing," with a minimum of eight songs recorded each week. It credited the project with 258 German lyrics and a corresponding number of arrangements, recorded across thirty-four sixteen-inch discs and sent to the field.[106] Metzl's later session count indicates that the complete operation produced more than three hundred recording entries before its termination. These totals document the sustained production through which musical decisions became a continuing operational capability. Over a period of months, MUSAC repeatedly assembled a temporary workforce, occupied a commercial studio, converted paper arrangements into recorded performances, inspected the results, corrected problems, and generated additional copies.

The studio consequently reveals MUSAC in its most concrete form. The project depended on the expertise of Miller, Roth, O'Keefe, Metzl, the singers, union musicians, and Muzak engineers, but it also depended on schedules, rates, clearances, labels, masters, invoices, and the physical behavior of recording materials. Their interaction explains how Morale Operations made musical psychological warfare reproducible: institutional requirements could be realized in performances and preserved for repeated transmission. At the end of each successful session, the OSS no longer possessed only a plan, a lyric, or an arrangement. It possessed a recorded object. The final section follows those objects out of the studio and toward clandestine broadcast.

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[106] K. D. Mann, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, NARA. For the session-based index's unit of count and its distinction from historical output statements, see appendix A, "Corpus and Classification Method."

VIII. From New York to Clandestine Broadcast

The completion of a recording session did not complete MUSAC's work. The resulting discs still had to move through the administrative and geographic structure that separated a New York studio from a clandestine transmitter in Britain. Surviving project descriptions identify the route in broad terms: the MUSAC staff in New York selected songs, prepared German lyrics, and supervised their recording; the discs then passed through Washington to Morale Operations in the European Theater of Operations.[107] From there they entered Pancake, the joint British-American radio operation that broadcast to German troops first as Soldatensender Calais and later as *Soldatensender West*. Production reports and receipt cables connect these offices through the movement of recordings, documenting what New York supplied, what London received, and how the station put the material to use.

MUSAC's recordings were made to circulate beyond the place of their creation. A completed set could include a master, several pressings, and an aluminum dub. The duplication of formats protected the operation against technical incompatibility and material failure while giving London more than one usable carrier. As the project developed, New York continued to send both pressings and dubs, and experimented with lateral and vertical recordings on Vinalite and acetate. These choices responded to the practical demands of overseas use: the records had to endure handling and transport, fit the equipment available in Britain, and remain intelligible when rebroadcast under wartime conditions.[108]

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[107] "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park.

[108] Morgan S. A. Reichner to Col. Kenneth D. Mann, "Musac Project Report," July 8, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, NARA; Lothar Metzl, "Report on Musac," enclosed with David Williamson to Col. Kenneth D. Mann, May 7, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, NARA.

The August 7, 1944 cable discussed above makes the connection between shipment and use explicit. London acknowledged twelve additional selections and an aluminum dub and reported that they were "all in use." Its requests for corrected labels, playable pressings, and continued delivery of both pressings and dubs joined confirmation of broadcast use to instructions for the next shipment. Receipt brought New York's work into the station's programming and gave London a further occasion to shape what the studio would supply.[109]

The recording's capacity to act at a distance depended on its material circulation. A pressing had to be playable on the receiving equipment, correctly identified, delivered, and made available to the programmer. London's requests for corrected labels, usable copies, and multiple formats show that these conditions required continuing work. The physical carriers and their handling therefore shaped which performances could enter a broadcast and when. Their movement connects musical production to the wartime infrastructure that made transmission possible.

This exchange joined two different production environments. In New York, the project worked through lyricists, singers, union musicians, commercial arrangements, an advertising agency, and a recording studio. In Britain, the same material became part of a twelve-hour program combining music, entertainment, and news. The transformation required no further disclosure to most of the people who had created the records. Musicians who had understood a session as anonymous wartime work could not follow the disc into its clandestine use; singers who knew only a cover explanation did not need to know the name of the transmitter. Compartmentalization thus remained intact even as the product crossed organizational

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[109] Cable from London, August 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA. Microfilm reference: History of the London Office of the OSS, M1623, roll 2, RG 226, Entry A1 91, NARA.

boundaries. Knowledge traveled selectively, while the recording itself carried the labor of people who possessed different understandings of what they had made.

Project reports indicate that demand from London remained substantial. One description stated that *Soldatensender West* broadcast nightly from eight in the evening until eight in the morning on approximately twelve medium- and shortwave frequencies, and attributed more than half of that period to musical entertainment supplied through MUSAC. The report placed the project within the station's recurring program structure. It also stated that the character of the music had developed with the program as a whole, connecting the supply of recordings to continuing decisions about how the station would address its listeners.[110]

The scale of the shipments corroborates that description. By March 28, 1945, the project had produced 258 German lyrics and a corresponding number of arrangements. An evaluation prepared the following day reported that these had been recorded on thirty-four sixteen-inch discs and "sent to the field." It also described production as continuing at a minimum of eight songs per week.[111] Those totals measure more than repertory. Each disc represented the completion of a chain running from London's demand through song clearance, intelligence and propaganda guidance, lyric writing, performer selection, security review, arranging, rehearsal, studio production, duplication, and transatlantic circulation. The regularity of the shipments made MUSAC useful to a station whose plausibility depended in part on the continuous availability of varied and current entertainment.

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[110] "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945.

[111] K. D. Mann, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, NARA.

Morale Operations also incorporated reported German listening into its assessment of that supply. The March evaluation described a large enemy audience and cited prisoner-of-war testimony attributing the station's popularity in considerable part to the excellence of its musical entertainment. Within the OSS, these reports provided grounds for valuing and sustaining the project. They entered an ongoing exchange in which London requested more recordings, confirmed that selections were in use, and returned technical criticism intended to improve later batches. Hirsch's February 5, 1945 memorandum relayed London's high valuation of the project, reported that thirty-six "musacs" had been used during January 18–February 1, and conveyed its promise to send Cushing a list of unused titles. Reported audience response and staff evaluation thus made listening consequential for institutional decisions about musical production.[112]

The end of MUSAC followed the contraction of the operation it had been created to supply. On April 23, 1945, David Williamson forwarded six J. Walter Thompson invoices and reported that the MUSAC Project had been discontinued. Some work remained in completion, and he anticipated one final group of invoices from the agency.[113] The memorandum captures the project in the process of closing: regular sessions had ended, but unfinished recordings, accounts, and contractual obligations still had to be resolved. Four days later, John C. Hughes informed Williamson that Metzl's work and "the project in which he has been interested" were to be

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[112] Ibid. For London's February assessment and reported use, see Rhoda K. Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "Musac Project," February 5, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Wash–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, NARA. The memorandum notes January 31 as an exception.

[113] David Williamson to John R. Schoemer, Jr., "Musac Project," April 23, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, NARA.

discontinued and that his New York office space would become available after May 10.[114] By May 7, Metzl's terminal report could describe the project retrospectively, accounting for its personnel, procedures, recording formats, and forty-eight sessions.

MUSAC therefore ended as it had operated: through paperwork that coordinated clandestine objectives with ordinary professional labor. The final invoices did not disclose the broadcast identity performed by *Soldatensender West*, just as the records themselves did not announce the American institution that had commissioned them. Yet the accumulated memoranda, cables, evaluations, invoices, and terminal reports allow the production chain to be recovered. From a New York studio, the project manufactured recordings capable of leaving behind the people who made them, crossing the Atlantic, and entering the soundscape of a station that claimed to speak from within the German military world.

Conclusion: From Production System to Psychological Weapon

MUSAC was not simply a collection of propaganda songs. It was a clandestine production system designed to convert intelligence requirements and cultural knowledge into reproducible sound. Morale Operations began with a theory of radio that emphasized timeliness, intimacy, voice, entertainment, and concealed sponsorship. The joint British-American operation in London transformed that theory into a specific demand for musical material that could attract and retain German military listeners and work upon their feelings and judgments through its musical construction. Meeting that demand required more than composers and performers. It required a civilian cover, an advertising agency, union negotiations, professional radio

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[114] John C. Hughes to David Williamson, Chief, European-Mediterranean Section, Morale Operations, April 27, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park.

musicians, recording facilities, security clearances, financial controls, and a means of moving the finished objects into the European theater. These exchanges give concrete institutional form to the *acoustemology of strategic listening* developed in Chapter 1. Cultural research and intelligence informed musical decisions; hearing the resulting performances generated further knowledge about audibility, stylistic credibility, and persuasive address. Studio judgments, London's technical and editorial responses, and comebacks attributed to German listeners entered the system from different positions. The production correspondence shows how officials organized those forms of knowledge and made them available for further work.

The production system depended on both expertise and concealment. The OSS needed people who understood German language and culture, American popular music, commercial broadcasting, theatrical performance, and studio practice. At the same time, it restricted knowledge of the operation according to role. Metzl could receive intelligence and propaganda initiatives without necessarily knowing every detail of their origin. J. Walter Thompson personnel could organize contracts and sessions while protecting the identity of the purchaser. Performers could be evaluated, cleared, rehearsed, and recorded under a cover explanation. Union musicians and studio engineers could contribute indispensable professional labor without knowing that their work would be used by a black radio station. Compartmentalization did not merely surround the recordings after their creation. It shaped the circumstances under which they were selected, written, performed, paid for, and circulated.

This arrangement also complicates conventional ideas of artistic authorship. Reading across the production record makes audible work visible as a collaboration among people with different responsibilities and different access to information. A MUSAC recording could combine a commercially familiar melody, a German lyric derived from intelligence or

propaganda guidance, an arrangement taken from NBC's library, alterations made by a conductor during a timed session, a singer selected for both vocal and political suitability, and technical revisions prompted by London's reception conditions. No single participant controlled the whole object. Its authorship was distributed across offices, professions, and levels of clearance, while OSS administration supplied the structure that made those contributions converge.

By following that collaboration from clandestine-radio doctrine to the completed disc, this chapter has located psychological design within MUSAC's working procedures. Demands for particular accents and gendered voices, judgments about familiar repertory, and revisions to arrangements or recording balance shaped the means through which music was intended to persuade. These decisions make the production history integral to the interpretation of the songs.

Chapter 4 brings that history into close musical analysis. It examines how familiarity and alteration, intimacy and impersonation, nostalgia and humor entered melodies, German texts, arrangements, and performed voices. The office's classifications, including "No Propaganda Content," become part of that inquiry into the relationship between overt political language and persuasion within musical construction. MUSAC's institutional purpose took form in decisions about what listeners would hear and how a song might address them. The next chapter follows those decisions into the music.

Danielle Stein

Dissertation

Chapter 4

Designing the Weapon—Music, Voice, and the Acoustic Masquerade

Before the MUSAC Project could transform popular music into a weapon, the Office of Strategic Services first had to determine what, precisely, it hoped to damage. “Morale” appeared throughout wartime intelligence and planning documents as both an observable condition and an operational objective, yet the term rarely denoted something as simple as optimism, loyalty, or the will to continue fighting. A German civilian could be exhausted by war, resentful of the Nazi Party, frightened by bombing, doubtful of victory, and still continue to work, obey, and sustain the war effort. The distinction was fundamental. Dissatisfaction became operationally meaningful only when it altered behavior or passed from one person to another in a form capable of altering the behavior of others. MUSAC’s sentimental songs, comic parodies, gendered voices, and appeals to soldiers’ memories of home emerged from this larger effort to convert private feeling into consequential action.

MUSAC constructed this musical weapon at three interlocking levels: through the recomposition of individual songs by means of German lyrics, arrangement, and vocal performance; through the fragmentation of familiar recordings into cues, fanfares, and underscoring; and through the organization of those materials within broadcast sequences that masqueraded as German military entertainment while returning repeatedly to the theme of

defeat. Surviving song recordings preserve the construction of individual performances; scripts and recording inventories document the organization of musical cues and complete programs in *Die Blitzbühne*, a set of three fifteen-minute MUSAC programs produced in New York for black transmission. Together, these sources make it possible to consider weaponization as a musical process extending from the studio to the architecture of the broadcast. Jean-Jacques Nattiez's account of musical meaning helps connect these scales of work to the act of listening. His distinction among the processes of creation, the resulting musical object, and the listener's interpretation directs attention to how a recording could acquire political force through performance and context.[1]

Two further distinctions clarify the relations examined here. Paradigmatic analysis compares recurrent or analogous musical units and the transformations that make them recognizable as related. Syntagmatic analysis examines how units acquire significance through their succession and combination. Drawing on the analytical tradition developed by Ruwet and Nattiez, I extend these questions from musical phrases to versions, cues, and broadcast items. I ask what a new treatment retains or changes and how its position within a program alters its address. This extension treats the broadcast as an object assembled through institutional decisions, while keeping formal relations distinct from the intentions and interpretations reconstructed through the poietic and esthesic dimensions of the analysis.[2]

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[1] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), ix–x, 10–18, esp. 12–13, 16–17. Nattiez also calls the material trace the "neutral level"; here, "neutral" does not imply ideological neutrality but designates the work's immanent or material configuration. On the semiological tripartition's development, see also Jean Molino, "Musical Fact and the Semiology of Music," trans. J. A. Underwood, introduction by Craig Ayrey, *Music Analysis* 9, no. 2 (1990): 105–56, https://doi.org/10.2307/854225.

[2] Nicolas Ruwet, "Methods of Analysis in Musicology," trans. Mark Everist, *Music Analysis* 6, nos. 1–2 (1987): 3–36, https://doi.org/10.2307/854214; Jean-Jacques Nattiez, "Paradigmatic Analyses," in *Musical Analyses and*

These relations reveal what I call an *acoustemology of strategic listening* within a broader *acoustemology of strategic warfare*. MUSAC did not simply use prior intelligence to manufacture sound. It attempted to learn what German listeners recognized, trusted, enjoyed, and rejected; to translate that knowledge into repertorial, linguistic, performative, and programming decisions; and to treat evidence of listening as further intelligence. The process was recursive: listening informed production, production solicited listening, and reported reception returned to the institution as a basis for evaluation. This formulation names the strategic organization of acoustic knowledge around listeners who could turn the dial. Securing their attention and shaping what they heard within the music were connected problems of persuasion.

I. Designing for the German Listener: Morale, Credibility, and Psychological Vulnerability

The distinction between feeling and action was central to a March 1942 report produced by the Psychology Division of the Coordinator of Information, the institutional predecessor to the OSS. "Current German Attitudes and the German War Effort" began with a deceptively simple formulation: "what people say, think and feel about the war is of importance only insofar as it measurably affects what they, or others influenced by them, do about the war." Its authors defined morale analysis as the study of the relationship "between feeling and doing, between attitude and effort." Nazi Germany remained, in the report's description, a "going concern," sustained by routine, discipline, social conformity, material incentives, and severe penalties.

Musical Exegesis: The Shepherd's Melody in Richard Wagner's Tristan and Isolde, ed. and trans. Joan Campbell Huguet (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2021), 117–44, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781800103634.006. For the earlier distinction between syntagmatic and associative relations, see Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, with Albert Riedlinger, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), part 2, chap. 5, 123–26. The extension from recurrent musical units to institutional choices among versions and broadcast items is the analytical use developed here.

These structures could preserve military and economic production even when the individuals operating within them no longer believed in victory.[3]

The report described potentially disaffected groups as "morale catalysts" whose attitudes might spread once deteriorating military and economic conditions weakened routine obedience. The operational target could therefore be the person best placed to carry an interpretation into a factory, household, barracks, or letter between home and front. These categories were not transparent measurements of public opinion: they were assembled from intercepted correspondence, monitored broadcasts, interrogations, émigré testimony, neutral press, and distant analytical judgment. Their importance lies in the audience model they supplied. Whether accurate or distorted, it shaped the emotions MUSAC attempted to activate and the voices it employed. These assessments document the institutional models of German morale within which musical intervention became thinkable. The production correspondence examined in Chapter 3 connects these institutional models to the movement of intelligence into the project, while the musical analyses below show how anticipated feelings and responses entered particular performances.

Kate Lacey's history of German radio places this imagined audience within the practices of everyday listening. By 1939 Germany had 12.5 million radio sets, while factory receivers and public loudspeakers extended broadcasting beyond the household. Schedules helped organize domestic routines, but employment and location also determined when people could listen. Women working outside the home, for example, complained that programs of interest aired

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[3] Coordinator of Information, Research and Analysis Branch, Psychology Division, "Current German Attitudes and the German War Effort," Report No. 21, March 19, 1942, summary and pp. 1–3, file 5970, "War Morale of the Civil Population," Germany, Regional File, Entry NM-84 77, Military Intelligence Division, Record Group 165, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

while they were at work. Music could accompany another activity, whereas a news bulletin invited a more concentrated hearing. Clandestine stations entered these established habits, competing for attention within days already structured by work, domestic responsibilities, and radio itself.[4]

Within this listening culture, radio complicated the OSS's behavioral model: broadcasts entered domestic routines, but listeners' responses remained difficult for analysts to observe. "The Radio Propaganda Atmosphere of the German Public," issued two days after the report on German attitudes, described broadcasting as part of the total wartime environment. German listeners heard official domestic radio alongside, when they were willing and able to risk it, transmissions from the BBC, Moscow, and other foreign stations. The report did not conclude that Allied broadcasting had displaced German radio. Domestic broadcasting possessed the advantages of repetition, availability, and state control; foreign radio could, at best, "raise doubts" about official claims. The authors nevertheless treated doubt as a possible "catalyst" when military reversals made those claims increasingly difficult to reconcile with lived experience.[5] A broadcast did not have to convert its listener. It could preserve an alternate explanation until later events appeared to confirm it.

Music already occupied this radio environment as an instrument for managing wartime attention. A March 1942 State Department press review reported that German long-wave broadcasting would concentrate on serious music, while medium-wave stations would emphasize

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[4] Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 102–4, 107–8.

[5] Coordinator of Information, Research and Analysis Branch, Psychology Division, "The Radio Propaganda Atmosphere of the German Public," Psychology Division Report No. 28 (R&A No. 616), March 21, 1942, summary and pp. 1–3, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

light music because, according to Goebbels, those at home and at the front were too absorbed by war and long working hours to sustain concentration through extended serious programs. A "cheerful disposition," he maintained, was especially important during severe strain.[6] German authorities had thus articulated light music as a technology for managing fatigue: it demanded little concentration, regulated disposition, and offered relief without interrupting work or military service. The OSS and PWE appropriated this existing broadcast logic. By reproducing the sounds and programming expectations through which German radio managed strain, clandestine broadcasting could exploit the same lowered threshold of attention for different political ends.

By 1945 MUSAC described its primary task more specifically as the production of American popular songs with German lyrics for *Soldatensender West*, directed toward Germany and occupied Western Europe and "more particularly" toward areas where German troops were concentrated.[7] The institutional target therefore joined the abstract "German listener" to a concrete broadcast situation: a soldier encountering music amid military routine, uncertain news, separation from home, and the progressive contraction of the fronts. Credibility consequently depended upon more than factual accuracy. It depended upon whether a transmission sounded as though it belonged in the listener's world. Arrangement, accent, repertory, the announcer's manner, and the proportion of familiar to disruptive material all contributed to the listener's judgment. A plausible report placed within an acoustically foreign program could expose its source; a tendentious suggestion placed among recognizable music and apparently routine

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[6] "Germany: Radio Communications; War Morale of the Civil Population," extract from State Department Press Review No. 1033, Bern, March 13, 1942, file 5970, Germany, Regional File, Entry NM-84 77, Military Intelligence Division, RG 165, National Archives at College Park.

[7] "MUSAC Project," briefing prepared for *Die Blitzbühne*, ca. January 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

announcements might survive because the program had already established a credible environment. The propagandists designed not only messages but conditions of reception.

Strategic listening, in this sense, began before transmission. Through monitoring, audience studies, émigré cultural knowledge, and repertory research, producers constructed an anticipated field of reception: which voices would sound local, which songs familiar, and which expressions of disaffection plausibly German rather than recognizably Allied. These conclusions were inconsistent and shaped by operational priorities, but they functioned as intelligence, guiding decisions about repertory, arrangement, diction, and vocal delivery. Audience research also supplied a model for how a song's emotional argument might travel beyond its immediate listener. The April 1944 study "German Women as Special Target for Morale Operations" treated women principally as a "medium of distribution" through which soldiers and workers might be reached.[8] The study mapped household routines, factory contacts, neighborhood conversations, and letters to the front as routes through which defeatist interpretations could circulate. Women were therefore treated not simply as an audience but as intermediaries between the campaign and the soldier. Within this model, the familiar subjects of romantic song—separation, fidelity, and return—could carry an operational implication: the soldier was needed at home, and surrender would not make him a coward. The report even proposed that wives and sweethearts indicate that they would not condemn a man who surrendered or "arranged to be captured." An Allied demand for surrender could thus reach the soldier as familial permission.

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[8] Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, "German Women as Special Target for Morale Operations," R&A No. 1661, April 4, 1944, summary and pp. 2–4, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

MUSAC's concentration on women's voices, sentimental repertory, romantic separation, possible infidelity, and memories of domestic life belongs within this logic. These songs occupied the affective relationships that OSS planners identified as channels between the home and military fronts. At the same time, the performers complicate the report's rigid gender division. Marlene Dietrich, Greta Keller, Vilma Kurer, Lotte Lenya, Herta Glatz, Jarmila Novotná, and Grete Stueckgold were not politically naïve conduits. Their histories of stage, cabaret, opera, film, exile, and anti-Nazi activity made their voices politically charged before any lyric was altered. MUSAC mobilized the feminine intimacy imagined by planners while placing culturally authoritative women in the active position of shaping the message. The fuller implications of that transformation—from woman as target to woman as weapon—will be addressed in Section V. Across these reports, the German listener emerges not as a national type but as a person situated within overlapping relationships: between soldier and sweetheart, household and factory, official announcement and private experience, domestic radio and forbidden transmission. These relationships formed the social terrain on which MUSAC was designed to operate. Its recordings addressed the interval between dissatisfaction and action where familiar styles solicited attention, romantic address recast instruction as intimate permission, and nostalgia set present deprivation against an audible past. Before those pressures could operate, however, the broadcast had to sound as though it belonged to the world it intended to enter.

II. Entertainment as Camouflage

The model of the listener developed by OSS analysts placed an unusual burden upon the MUSAC recordings. Music had to attract attention without revealing the purpose for which that

attention had been sought. It had to sound familiar enough to inhabit the German listener's world, yet different enough to redirect emotions already circulating within it. Camouflage was not applied after composition. It was built into the relationship among repertory, arrangement, language, voice, and political content. This requirement explains why the correspondence treats entertainment and propaganda as distinguishable but inseparable. On June 21, 1944, Kenneth D. Mann reported from Washington that ten hit-parade songs had been supplied with German lyrics calculated to make listeners "war-wary and peace-minded." Rae Smith did not reject the objective, but asked to hear completed samples before Washington incurred substantial expense. Lyrics, accents, and performances had to be tested within the represented world of a German soldiers' station.[9] A conspicuously defeatist text could confirm Allied intent at the same moment it asked the listener to accept an apparently German voice. Cover was an acoustic effect produced by the total recording.

Ira Ashley stated the underlying principle in a June 28 letter to Gordon Auchincloss. London was "in the business of supplying entertainment," he explained, and followed commercial broadcasting: "entertainment is the come-on, and the other stuff is the commercial." Current hit-parade selections had to be chosen with intelligence about audience preferences, since the station first had to offer something listeners wanted. Ashley considered Washington's material too visibly propagandistic: "I am afraid the OSS schools teach propaganda too well," he

[9] Kenneth D. Mann to Rae Smith, cable, June 21, 1944, and Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, June 27, 1944 (paraphrases), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. The cable's phrase "war-wary" is retained as typed in the archival paraphrase.

complained, “and that old boogie man is much too present for our purposes.”[10] The analogy identified attraction as the precondition of influence. Entertainment gave listeners a reason to remain tuned in, allowing politically altered material to reach an audience initially drawn by the music. On July 3, Smith translated this concern into a production directive. He praised Lothar Metzl’s lyrics but instructed Washington to “minimize or eliminate the subversive content of the lyrics until pure entertainment is in the groove.”[11] Camouflage was therefore temporal and proportional. London did not ask political content to disappear. It asked that entertainment precede it, accumulate around it, and establish a listening routine into which more subversive material might later pass. Here the listener’s agency was not a residue left over after propaganda had done its work; it was the condition around which the operation had to organize itself. MUSAC therefore depended on music to attract listeners and sustain their attention long enough for its political material to be heard. That instruction regulated overt content and cover; it did not exhaust the musical means of psychological warfare. A performance could make longing, ridicule, or disaffection available within the entertainment itself, including where a more explicit lyric had been rejected.

Christina Baade’s account of popular music at the wartime BBC clarifies the broader broadcast environment in which this premise became possible. Popular music acquired new institutional value because it could organize morale, labor, military belonging, and Anglo-American cooperation, while audience research divided listeners by occupation, gender, age, and

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[10] Ira Ashley to Gordon Auchincloss, June 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, “Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944,” Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[11] Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, July 3, 1944 (paraphrase), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, “Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944,” Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

service.[12] MUSAC shared this functional understanding of entertainment but redirected it across enemy lines. Where BBC morale programming could acknowledge its institutional source, PWE clandestine broadcasting depended upon concealing the actual relationship between broadcaster and listener. The BBC used musical familiarity to consolidate morale within an acknowledged community; PWE used it to erode enemy morale by appearing to speak from within that community. The comparison therefore reveals a shared musical mechanism while clarifying the different political work it was made to perform.

Lacey supplies the German side of this history. After schedules crowded with speeches, Party events, and military music drove listeners away, Nazi broadcasters expanded light entertainment. Wartime changes brought more humor, comic presenters, and flexible programming; the characters Herr Schnick and Frau Schnack used everyday banter to convey guidance about wartime conduct. The BBC's German service also worked through character monologues, fictional letters, and staged conversations alongside news and commentary. Read with Ashley's commercial-radio analogy and the Blitzbühne briefing, these practices help explain Soldatensender's hybrid design. Its combination of news, intimate address, popular music, and satire drew on an existing broadcast vocabulary. MUSAC and PWE rearranged those conventions to make disaffection sound like part of German everyday life.[13]

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[12] Christina L. Baade, *Victory through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3–5, 60–81. Baade's subject is the BBC rather than PWE black radio; the comparison concerns the wartime functionalization of popular music and the institutional construction of differentiated audiences.

[13] Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*, 102, 129–30, 137–38, 198; Ashley to Auchincloss, June 28, 1944; "MUSAC Project," briefing prepared for Die Blitzbühne, 1–2, Entry A1 92, box 487, RG 226, NARA College Park.

This sequence complicates any division of MUSAC's repertory into propagandistic and non-propagandistic songs. A number with an unaltered romantic lyric could attract listeners, authenticate the station's musical competence, and make a later parody seem less suspicious. "Pure entertainment" performed operational labor. Conversely, an explicit morale song could weaken the project if it appeared before the station had secured trust. Political intensity and strategic value were not identical. The project needed a flow of recordings so that altered lyrics of unequal intensity could be distributed among dance numbers, sentimental songs, comic pieces, familiar melodies, and material functioning chiefly as attraction. The same logic shaped London's distinction between overt, or "white," broadcasting and a clandestine station. When Washington asked whether German-language recordings by the Office of War Information could meet London's needs, Smith insisted that the operations required different voices and arrangements. OWI could speak as the United States; its American accents agreed with an acknowledged source. A black station could not accept the same acoustic evidence of sponsorship. Smith nevertheless did not seek a hermetically German sound. "We do not want American accents," he explained, but "typical American arrangements are in order." His model was "Harry James with a good German lyric and pure Austrian or north German voice."[14] The designation NOP ("No Propaganda Content") therefore requires analysis at two levels: the institution's classification of lyrical explicitness and the recording's musical and operational function. Reading the classification alongside a performance, its production record, and its

[14] Kenneth D. Mann to Rae Smith, cable, June 14, 1944, and Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, June 15, 1944 (paraphrases), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

broadcast setting reveals how lyrical explicitness related to the broader construction of musical persuasion. The office's classification key is reproduced in appendix A, figure A.1 and table A.1.

The range of available musical alternatives was institutionally produced. Song lists, clearances, casting decisions, lyric approvals, and studio resources determined which versions could be made and sent to London. British programming then placed selected recordings in relation to announcements, news, and other music. A paradigmatic comparison can therefore ask why one lyric, voice, or arrangement was chosen over another where the correspondence documents that choice; syntagmatic analysis asks what happened when the resulting item occupied a particular position in a script or broadcast. The two operations did not belong neatly to separate offices. London also intervened in lyrics and selection, while the New York staff composed complete sequences for Die Blitzbühne. Institutional authority shaped both the available alternatives and their arrangement in time.

The formula was deliberately hybrid. American musical modernity remained audible as novelty, rhythmic energy, sensuality, and the prestige of scarce or forbidden music. German words made the number intelligible, while a German or Austrian voice placed it within a recognizable cultural field. MUSAC concealed not every trace of American influence but the governmental and operational relationship organizing it. An arrangement might be imported or imitated without proving who was speaking; an American accent attached the foreign source to a vocal body and restored the distance the operation sought to collapse.

The MUSAC briefing for *Die Blitzbühne* shows that cover operated at the scale of the entire broadcast, not only within individual songs. Alongside the popular-song recordings prepared for *Soldatensender West*, the staff proposed a series of longer programs for black transmission that would combine the format of American commercial radio with the topical

satire and performance style of prewar German and Austrian political cabaret. The resulting program could be represented either as an actual German counterpart to an American USO troop show or as a studio production staged to resemble one. Rather than attaching a false origin story to a sequence of finished songs, the producers built that fiction into the program's sound and structure. A master of ceremonies, performers, orchestra, interruptions, applause, topical jokes, and familiar repertory worked together to evoke a complete social event: entertainment that appeared to originate within the German military world and to address Wehrmacht personnel as its natural audience.[15]

The briefing described the result as deliberately "hit-or-miss" vaudeville whose apparently miscellaneous contents formed "a carefully planned series of variations on a single theme: Defeat." It also repeated the project's governing distinction: *Die Blitzbühne* offered "entertainment, not instruction."[16] The phrase does not mean that the program lacked an argument. It means that the argument was distributed through sequence and musical transformation. A failed offensive could be sung to *Ach du lieber Augustin*; a victory march could reveal itself as a sped-up funeral march; a boastful communiqué could be interrupted by the music that contradicted it. Defeat was not delivered once as a thesis. It was rehearsed in changing genres until it appeared to organize the entire show.

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[15] "MUSAC Project," briefing prepared for Die Blitzbühne, ca. January 1945, 1–2, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, NARA. The briefing's references to an American commercial program, prewar German and Austrian political cabaret, and a German counterpart to a USO performance describe the proposed program's formal cover.

[16] Ibid., 2. The phrases "carefully planned series of variations on a single theme: Defeat" and "entertainment, not instruction" appear in the project's description of the demonstration program. See also Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 58, on the project's variety programs.

"Purity" was nevertheless an aspiration the project could not fully stabilize. Many New York performers were émigrés whose accents, repertories, and public identities carried histories of movement across Germany, Austria, Europe, Britain, and the United States. That experience qualified them to perform cultural proximity but also increased the risk of recognition. Entertainment therefore camouflaged MUSAC at several levels: it attracted the "dial twister," diluted altered lyrics, made American style available without an openly American address, and—in the longer programs—organized propaganda as the flow of a plausible show. Pleasure, familiarity, rhythm, timbre, and timing were not neutral cover for a later message. They were the means by which the message entered the listener's world.

III. Authenticity and the Problem of Credibility

Entertainment could camouflage a clandestine recording only while it remained plausible within the world it claimed to inhabit. MUSAC's hybrid formula did not eliminate the problem of authorship; it relocated that problem into sound. Accent, repertory, idiom, vocal style, topical reference, and recording quality became evidence by which a listener might judge whether a song belonged to the station presenting it. The same details that authenticated the broadcast could expose it. OSS guidance therefore treated authenticity as an accumulation of small, current, culturally situated details. Broadcasters were expected to speak without a trace of foreign accent, understand contemporary slang, and seem representative of the people they addressed. Black radio also required intelligence from travelers, prisoners, agents, censorship material, and monitored communications.[17] Yet information had to remain plausible within the

[17] "Black Radio," n.d., sections "Establishing a Black Radio Station" and "Intelligence," OSS Morale Operations files, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Washington–MO–OP–70–71, container 163, ARC 6267087, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

identity claimed. A broadcaster could expose the operation through facts that the represented source could not reasonably know, or through cultural material that had ceased to be current. Obsolete "slang and music," one report warned, could betray the station as readily as an incorrect military detail.[18]

For black radio, authenticity was not an inherent property of a voice or song but an attribution the broadcast sought to elicit from particular listeners. A prewar song might evoke welcome nostalgia in one context and betray outdated cultural knowledge in another; an Austrian voice might sound familiar without sounding local to a northern German soldier. Because the station claimed proximity to its audience, even a small discrepancy could compromise its cover. The May 22, 1944 memorandum "Radio as a Medium for Subversive Morale Operations" accordingly warned against "over-stepping bounds of credulity of audience" and stated that black radio demanded "much finesse."[19] For MUSAC, such credibility emerged from the relationships among lyric, melody, genre, voice, arrangement, and broadcast setting. A politically altered number could remain plausible when these elements made the intervention sound native to the performance rather than inserted from outside. Textual explicitness alone did not determine what listeners were invited to notice: an explicit phrase might pass as conventional humor or flirtation, while tempo, phrasing, or vocal stress could make a familiar or apparently innocuous line newly conspicuous. Political meaning therefore depended not only on what a text said, but on how the recording directed attention toward it.

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[18] Ibid., section "Security."

[19] "Radio as a Medium for Subversive Morale Operations," May 22, 1944, OSS Morale Operations files, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Washington–MO–OP–71–72, container 164, ARC 6267087, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

Radio separates the heard voice from the visible circumstances of its production. Black broadcasting adds a more specific intervention: it invites the listener to attribute that voice to a source different from the institution organizing it. The singer, transmitter, apparent speaker, and sponsor need not be the same kind of source. A listener could recognize a performer while remaining uncertain about the station, or identify Allied sponsorship while continuing to value its music. The masquerade therefore operated through an attempted attribution whose success must be established rather than presumed.[20]

That reliance on recognition connects the problem of credibility to Nattiez's account of musical meaning. He distinguishes the *poietic* process of making a work from the material trace it produces and the *esthesic* process through which a listener interprets it.[21] For MUSAC, the relation took a practical form. Writers, arrangers, singers, and producers worked with an imagined German audience; their choices became audible in the recording's words, rhythm, timbre, and phrasing. A listener brought memories and expectations through which those features could signify familiarity, intimacy, or dissent. An accent selected to suggest a German insider might sound different to someone who recognized the singer as an exile. MUSAC's design depended on anticipating such associations and giving them a musical form.

Die Blitzbühne makes this relation visible in the construction of a complete program. MUSAC prepared and produced three fifteen-minute variety programs, bringing script, music,

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[20] Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 32. Chion's account of acousmatic listening concerns hearing without seeing the originating source. The distinctions among performer, transmitter, apparent speaker, and sponsor developed here specify the problem of attribution in black radio.

[21] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, 12–17.

casting, and performance into a coordinated sequence.[22] Familiar melodies, military announcements, and comic interruptions gave the program the recognizable form of a troop show while repeatedly returning it to the theme of defeat.[23] The conventions of military entertainment offered a familiar point of entry; the sequence of jokes and musical interruptions made those conventions carry an account of failure. Here the relation between making and listening becomes concrete. The producers organized the contrasts within the program, while listeners could recognize the familiar forms and hear the contradictions the program exposed. Nattiez's distinction directs attention to the musical choices through which that interpretation became possible.

Broadcasting introduced further choices and conditions. A song's position beside news or another number helped shape its address, while signal strength, interference, access to a receiver, and the risks of listening affected when and where it could be heard.[24] The following analyses therefore move between planning records and the musical forms they helped produce, asking how a lyric, voice, or familiar tune invited political interpretation. Chapter 5 takes up the German warnings, listener reports, and institutional evaluations that returned from the operation.

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[22] Edward Cushing to Williamson, "Musac," March 29, 1945, memorandum beginning "To correct misstatements in branch history," COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Cushing reported three completed fifteen-minute variety programs and assigned MUSAC 207 of the 280 German-lyric titles then completed, resisting an institutional narrative that diminished New York's authorship.

[23] MUSAC Project budget worksheet, ca. 1945; Lothar Metzl to Williamson, May 1, 1945, shipping memorandum and recording inventory, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. For the program's musical construction, see *Die Blitzbühne*, Program I, English outline, German script, and related production materials; "MUSAC Project," briefing prepared for *Die Blitzbühne*, ca. January 1945, 1–2, both in Entry A1 92, box 487. The worksheet attributes part of the project's overrun to the three programs; Metzl's inventory lists physical copies of Shows 1, 2, and 3.

[24] "Black Radio," section "Effectiveness of Black Radio," OSS Morale Operations files, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Washington–MO–OP–70–71, container 163, ARC 6267087, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

IV. Double Meanings and Indirect Address

If entertainment provided camouflage, double meaning supplied one of its most adaptable mechanisms. A lyric could remain legible as romance, nostalgia, comedy, or religious exhortation while making another proposition available: resistance has become futile; surrender is not shameful; home matters more than sacrifice; political authority has become ridiculous. The political proposition did not need to displace the surface meaning. Concealment depended upon both remaining audible at once. Edward Cushing articulated the problem in a July 28, 1944 memorandum to Morgan S. A. Reichner. As Chapter 3 established, compartmentalization prevented Cushing from possessing a complete account of the station for which he was producing. He knew the records were intended for black radio, that authentic accents were required, and that overt propaganda was to be avoided. He also knew London requested American swing arrangements and performers such as Greta Keller, whose voice and residence outside Germany might be recognized.[25] Cushing wondered whether the operation was "black" because its material was subversive or because it attempted the stricter fiction of official German provenance. If London did not need every selection to pass as the product of official radio, New York could avoid "crude propaganda" while introducing ideas through "double meanings."[26]

Double meaning made the listener's interpretive work part of the design. MUSAC shaped recordings in which a romantic refusal could also suggest military fatigue or capitulation. Nattiez's distinction helps explain why this ambiguity was useful: listeners could connect the

[25] Edward Cushing to Morgan S. A. Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944, 1–2, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[26] Ibid.

song's words and sounds to their own circumstances without the lyric naming every political referent.[27] The acceptable meaning of a lyric depended upon the position from which the listener imagined it speaking. A statement impossible for an official German station might remain plausible within a dissident soldiers' station; a joke that endangered one cover could authenticate another. This uncertainty accompanied MUSAC from its first directives. On June 7, Rae Smith requested current American songs with German lyrics while instructing that "no attempt should be made at propaganda."[28] On July 3, he asked Washington to minimize subversion until entertainment was "in the groove."[29] The apparent contradiction becomes legible when propaganda is understood as a problem of degree, placement, and represented identity rather than the simple presence or absence of political content.

By August 1944, this graduated approach had become audible in MUSAC's New York recording sessions. The project assembled German-language recordings of unequal political intensity, placing songs that could function as ordinary entertainment alongside adaptations whose subversive implications were more pronounced. The sessions therefore provide a material record of how MUSAC distributed political pressure across a repertory rather than requiring every selection to deliver an explicit message. Dietrich's contributions are especially revealing

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[27] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, 11–12, 17.

[28] Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, June 7, 1944 (paraphrase), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. A separate microfilm citation is *History of the London Office*, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1623, roll 2, RG 226, Entry A1 91, National Archives at College Park.

[29] Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, July 3, 1944 (paraphrase), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

because they show how indirect address could emerge through the interaction of language, performance, and broadcast context without depending upon extensive lyric alteration.

The apparent familiarity of Dietrich's repertory also carried histories of Jewish authorship. "You've Got That Look" paired music by Friedrich Hollaender with English lyrics by Frank Loesser. Hollaender was a Jewish composer whose Berlin cabaret and film career had continued in Hollywood after flight from Nazi Germany; Loesser came from a German-Jewish family in New York. Their collaboration had already helped fashion Dietrich's screen persona before MUSAC returned the song to German. Its covert use drew on both the star's recognizable manner and the songwriting that had made that manner commercially familiar.[30]

Dietrich's MUSAC recording of "You've Got That Look," rendered as "Du hast 'nen Blick," retains its erotic premise: the narrator is unsettled by another person's gaze, declares that she should resist, and admits that she cannot. Within the lyric's immediate scenario, the failed resistance is playful and directed toward a desired partner. Yet the line "Ich weiß, wehren sollt' ich mich, doch ich kann's nicht"—"I know I should defend myself, but I cannot"—also sustains a literal hearing.[31] In the original film, Dietrich performed the song as Frenchy, a saloon singer addressing a predominantly male audience; erotic resistance was already its theatrical

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[30] Frank Loesser, "You've Got That Look (That Leaves Me Weak)," song catalog, https://frankloesser.com/library/youve-got-that-look-that-leaves-me-weak/; World ORT, "Berlin Cabaret in Exile," *Music and the Holocaust*, https://holocaustmusic.ort.org/resistance-and-exile/berlin-cabaret-in-exile/; Melodie Hollander, "Biography," Frederick Hollander Music, https://www.frederickhollandermusic.com/en/biography; Claire D. Maiers, "Frank Loesser," *EBSCO Research Starters* (2024), https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/biography/frank-loesser. All accessed September 12, 2026.

[31] Marlene Dietrich, "Du hast 'nen Blick" ("You've Got That Look"), MUSAC recording session, August 23–24, 1944, Sound Recording 226.7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

premise.[32] Removed from *Destry Rides Again* and placed among wartime news and soldierly address, the German version retained that erotic premise while making *wehren* available in the more literal sense of military defense. This shift did not require the listener to recognize the film, since the flirtatious scenario remained audible within the lyric itself. Dietrich's MUSAC performance gives the doubleness additional weight. Around the line, she descends toward a lower, speech-like delivery while the accompaniment recedes. The admission briefly separates itself from the surrounding flirtation without abandoning it. A listener can hear a woman yielding to a gaze, a body unable to defend itself, or resistance that has become impossible. No reading cancels the others. The recording does not hide a discrete political command beneath an innocent text; broadcast context and vocal gesture reorganize an existing semantic possibility. Romantic capitulation offered a language in which military capitulation might be privately rehearsed without first being named as cowardice. Recording and version information for the sound sources analyzed in this chapter is consolidated in appendix C.

Dietrich's German sleigh adaptation of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top," from the then-recent Broadway musical *Oklahoma!*, operates more obliquely. *Oklahoma!* had opened on March 31, 1943, less than eighteen months before Dietrich's MUSAC session; its recency made the song precisely the kind of current American

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[32] "You've Got That Look (That Leaves Me Weak)," with music by Friedrich Hollaender and lyrics by Frank Loesser, was performed by Marlene Dietrich in George Marshall, dir., *Destry Rides Again* (Universal Pictures, 1939); see also Marlene Dietrich with Victor Young and His Orchestra, "You've Got That Look," Decca 23140, recorded December 11, 1939. The film did not receive its first German theatrical release, under the title *Der große Bluff*, until November 1947. The present analysis therefore does not presume that wartime German listeners recognized its cinematic source; it identifies the song's relocation from an erotic theatrical setting into a wartime broadcast environment. Public listening copy: Dietrich, "You've Got That Look," film soundtrack (YouTube; supplied by Zebralution).

repertory London had requested.[33] In its original dramatic setting, Curly courts Laurey by describing the ornate carriage in which he proposes to take her to a community social. The song is oriented toward an anticipated future – a shared excursion, increasing intimacy, and a slow journey home. MUSAC preserves the courtship address, horse-drawn vehicle, and imagined motion but redirects their temporal and affective course. The German version relocates the journey into a winter landscape – a sleigh travels through a snow-covered valley as bells sound and a warm room promises enclosure from the world outside.[34] The repeated motion and bell imagery suggest escape, while the domestic destination evokes the kind of self-contained world that war had made unavailable. In the final verse, fog replaces clarity, ravens cry in darkness, and the narrator asks the horse to slow so that she may preserve the illusion of seeing an absent figure in the sleigh. A journey that begins as romantic release becomes a structure for measuring disappearance. Because the text does not specify death, departure, or lost love, a wartime listener could supply casualty or impossible return. Nostalgia constructs a scene the listener cannot securely inhabit, allowing the beloved "you" to expand into home, prewar life, or a Germany imagined apart from the regime's demands. This source also extends the Jewish thread beyond the émigré contributors: Rodgers was Jewish, and Hammerstein came from a theatrical family with Jewish paternal roots. Their American courtship song supplied the music and dramatic premise that MUSAC reshaped into a German scene of absence. Most's account of *Oklahoma!*

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[33] Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, *Oklahoma!*, directed by Rouben Mamoulian, St. James Theatre, New York, opened March 31, 1943. "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top," with music by Rodgers and lyrics by Hammerstein, is sung by Curly as he describes to Laurey the carriage in which he proposes to take her to the community's box social. The 1943 Decca recording of *Oklahoma!* also circulated the score beyond the theater and is generally recognized as the first Broadway original-cast album.

[34] Marlene Dietrich, "Schlittenfahrt" (German adaptation of "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top"), MUSAC recording, August 23, 1944, Sound Recording 226.7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. "Schlittenfahrt," lyric sheet, Dietrich, August 23, 1944, record no. 7, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2286, "All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Translation by the author.

situates the source musical within historically specific negotiations of American belonging; MUSAC's adaptation gave this material a new institutional purpose.[35]

Program I of *Die Blitzbühne* shows double meaning operating through casting and musical stereotype as well as lyric. The script calls for the Ilonka sequence to begin with a cue identified as Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody*, although it does not specify a number or excerpt.[36] The generic designation was itself functional. Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* had circulated internationally as prominent examples of the *style hongrois*, a repertory of musical gestures through which European art and popular culture learned to signify Hungary while frequently conflating Hungarian national identity with Roma performance. The cue therefore functions less as an ethnographic representation of Hungary than as theatrical shorthand – it places Ilonka as Hungarian before her voice enters. The script reinforces that placement by specifying a pronounced Hungarian accent. Ilonka then sings a music-hall number about a red-haired woman who has no interest in German soldiers because her sweetheart is a Don Cossack. "Red" first describes hair and sexual danger; through accent, topical reference, and the Cossack lover, it simultaneously names the Soviet advance. The archival outline states the mechanism

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[35] William G. Hyland, *Richard Rodgers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Laurie Winer, *Oscar Hammerstein II and the Invention of the Musical* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023), 25; Benjamin Ivry, "The Jewish Musicals That Oscar Hammerstein Never Got to Do," interview with Mark Eden Horowitz, *Forward*, June 29, 2022, https://forward.com/culture/506562/mark-eden-horowitz-oscar-hammerstein-letters-jewish-musicals-oklahoma-dybbuk/. These accounts distinguish Hammerstein's Jewish ancestry and cultural connections from religious observance. See also Andrea Most, *Making Americans: Jews and the Broadway Musical* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), chap. 4, "We Know We Belong to the Land": The Theatricality of Assimilation in *Oklahoma!*.

[36] The surviving script identifies the cue only as *Hungarian Rhapsody* and does not specify which of Liszt's nineteen rhapsodies, or which excerpt, was intended. In the absence of a surviving recording, its precise musical realization cannot be reconstructed. On the *style hongrois* as a historically constructed repertory of musical signs rather than a transparent representation of Hungarian national music, see Jonathan D. Bellman, "Toward a Lexicon for the *Style hongrois*," *The Journal of Musicology* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 214–37; and Shay Loya, *Liszt's Transcultural Modernism and the Hungarian-Gypsy Tradition* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011), especially 17–85.

plainly: "Reds (redheads) are dangerous and should be let alone."[37] The joke does not reside in the words independently of sound. The Liszt cue supplies a conventional, historically constructed national frame that the scripted accent is meant to confirm; together they position Ilonka before the Cossack reference redirects her address toward the Eastern Front. The music-hall persona converts military warning into erotic counsel. A soldier can laugh at the dangerous woman while hearing an instruction to withdraw from the advancing Red Army. As in Dietrich's *wehren*, political meaning passes through a gendered scene of attraction and refusal; *Die Blitzbühne* distributes that doubleness across voice, repertory, character, and sequence.

The series' title sheet is dated January 26, 1945, during the Soviet siege of Budapest. The pairing of a Hungarian musical cue with the Don Cossack lover was therefore available as a topical allusion as well as a theatrical stereotype. The production date does not establish when a particular audience heard the sequence; the relation between the cue and the campaign's changing military context must remain tied to the evidence for each event. See also the War and MUSAC Project Timeline.[38]

MUSAC also approached the threshold of direct command. John Hendrik's German-language adaptation of "Hallelujah" drew upon a song whose earlier life already joined military movement, nautical entertainment, spiritual imitation, and collective address. Vincent Youmans first composed its melodic material as a march while serving at the Great Lakes Naval Training

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[37] *Die Blitzbühne*, Program I, English outline, German script, and related production materials, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[38] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "The Holocaust in Hungary," *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-holocaust-in-hungary. For the January 26, 1945 title sheet, see the *Die Blitzbühne* production materials cited in this chapter and appendix B. The cue's topical availability is an interpretation of the conjunction of script and wartime chronology, not proof of a particular broadcast date.

Station during the First World War; Leo Robin and Clifford Grey later supplied lyrics for the 1927 musical *Hit the Deck!*, where Stella Mayhew introduced the number as Lavinia in blackface, joined by the chorus. James Ross Moore describes the song as a "rousing contemporary spiritual": not an inherited spiritual, but a Broadway song written and staged to invoke the sound and communal force of Black sacred performance.[39] That history does not establish what a wartime German listener recognized, but it clarifies the poietic materials Metzl and Hendrik inherited—a march-derived, chorus-oriented Broadway spiritual whose exhortative force was already built into its refrain. Metzl preserved rather than invented the song's movement from memory to command. The 1927 lyric begins by recalling childhood and communal prayer, then directs its listeners to "Sing Hallelujah" while Satan "lies a-waitin'" and creates "skies of gray."[40] Hendrik's German version elaborates the remembered scene through Sunday morning, old people, organ, and hymn, retains both the imperative and the personification of Satan, and changes the semantic hinge: "Satan führt den Staat an, / Nimm den Rat an, / Wirf ihn raus!"—"Satan leads the state; take the advice; throw him out!"[41] Satan no longer produces metaphorical clouds; he leads the state. Collective consolation becomes political expulsion. Religious vocabulary, rhyme, melodic familiarity, and the possibility of joining the

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[39] Gerald Bordman, *Days to Be Happy, Years to Be Sad: The Life and Music of Vincent Youmans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 23–24, 99–103, 230; Arnold Shaw, *The Jazz Age: Popular Music in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 262–64; James Ross Moore, "Grey, Clifford (05 January 1887–25 September 1941), Librettist, Lyricist, and Bobsledder," *American National Biography* (Oxford University Press), accessed September 8, 2026, https://doi.org/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.article.1803554. Moore describes "Hallelujah!" as a "rousing contemporary spiritual"; Bordman identifies Mayhew's original performance as blackface.

[40] Vincent Youmans, "Hallelujah!," lyrics by Leo Robin and Clifford Grey, from *Hit the Deck!* (New York: Harms, 1927), sheet music, York University Libraries Sheet Music Collections, http://hdl.handle.net/10315/27890.

[41] John Hendrik, German adaptation of "Hallelujah," MUSAC recording session, August 23–24, 1944, Sound Recording 226.7, OSS records, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Translation by the author.

refrain remain intact, but the state and the imperative sharply narrow the distance between entertainment and political attack.

The contrast shows that MUSAC's strategies formed a spectrum rather than a code. "Du hast 'nen Blick" leaves military surrender inside erotic surrender. The sleigh song converts romance into a meditation upon loss without naming the war. Ilonka turns Soviet danger into a sexual joke. "Hallelujah" uses a familiar spiritual-style refrain to deliver a direct instruction. Whether explicitness endangered or strengthened cover depended upon the station's represented identity. A dissident soldiers' station could plausibly ridicule a government more openly than one pretending to be official German radio. The choice carried a further irony. "Hallelujah" belonged to a racialized Broadway tradition built from Black sacred expression, part of the Black-influenced popular culture that Nazi cultural authorities condemned as foreign and *entartet*. The OSS Hendrik version turned that judgment back upon the regime: the music remained the vehicle of communal deliverance, while the Nazi state took Satan's place as the corrupting force. MUSAC made a musical language the regime disparaged carry the judgment that the regime itself was corrupt.[42] The closer operational parallel lay in the Reich's contradictory willingness to exploit jazz and swing in foreign propaganda while condemning them within German cultural life—a contradiction taken up below through Charlie and His Orchestra.[43]

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[42] Albrecht Dümling, "The Target of Racial Purity: The 'Degenerate Music' Exhibition in Düsseldorf, 1938," in *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich*, ed. Richard A. Etlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 43–72; Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 82–123.

[43] Horst J. P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); see also the discussion of Charlie and His Orchestra below.

Programming further altered the force of each number. A direct attack placed after romantic or comic songs occupied a different position from one that opened a broadcast. London's demand for recordings of unequal intensity allowed sentiment to make absence audible as loss, comedy to detach authority from dignity, and an overt refrain to name the conclusion more directly. Double meaning consequently emerged across the repertory as well as within a song. Indirect address also required listeners to connect romantic and military resistance, journey and defeat, or Satan's government and the Nazi state. Some associations were strongly cued; others remained optional. MUSAC designed conditions in which memory, fear, desire, and historical knowledge might yield a politically useful conclusion without requiring the propagandist to supply every referent. The vocal body governed many of these associations. Dietrich's lowering of register, Hendrik's declarative delivery, the gender of the apparent speaker, and the possibility of recognizing an exiled performer altered the position from which every double meaning sounded. The next section follows those associations into the voice itself.

V. Voice, Gender, Celebrity, and Recognition

Voice gave MUSAC's political address a socially recognizable speaker. A melody could travel without disclosing who had selected it, and an instrumental style could be imported, copied, or imitated. The voice was less easily detached from a body. Accent located the singer geographically; timbre suggested age, gender, class, and performance history; phrasing could make a line sound confidential or public; recognition could attach the recording to a performer whose whereabouts and politics were already known. For a clandestine station, voice was therefore both an unusually efficient instrument of proximity and its most dangerous evidence of origin.

This tension helps explain why the MUSAC Project recruited German- and Austrian-born performers rather than treating the German lyric as sufficient camouflage. The singers did more than pronounce Metzl's words correctly. They brought familiar German and Austrian accents and performance styles to the American arrangements, helping the station present the music as part of the listener's own cultural world. Yet the same performers had been displaced by, or publicly separated from, the Reich. Their accents promised proximity while their biographies disclosed distance. MUSAC depended upon émigré experience to manufacture an acoustic insider, even though exile made that position fundamentally unstable. MUSAC's own briefing makes performance, rather than translated content, the decisive category. An "English digest"—a condensed summary of the program's contents—or even a complete translation could not convey the German program's "tone, quality or effect"; its "spirit and flavor" were "of prime importance."[44] A surviving *Die Blitzbühne* title sheet gives that claim a production history. Dated January 26, 1945, it names Lothar Metzl as scriptwriter, Lester O'Keefe as director, Allen Roth as music supervisor, and Sig Arno, John Hendrik, Herbert Berghof, and Lizzi Balla as performers under Edward Cushing's MUSAC Project.[45] By assigning separate responsibility for writing, direction, music, and performance, MUSAC treated the German text as only one component of the program rather than as a self-sufficient message. Its intended tone had to emerge through the coordination of words, music, casting, and delivery—qualities that an English summary or written translation could not reproduce. Metzl's scriptwriting places Jewish émigré experience within those performance decisions. His work in Viennese cabaret, satire, and

[44] "MUSAC Project," briefing prepared for *Die Blitzbühne*, 2–3, Entry A1 92, box 487, RG 226, NARA College Park.

[45] *Die Blitzbühne*, title and production sheet, "Produced at Muzak Studios," January 26, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

radio preceded his flight after the Anschluss. In Die Blitzbühne, that expertise took a specific dramatic form: imagined military speakers, topical jokes, and musical interruptions made the regime's language available for ridicule. The prewar cabaret invoked by the briefing was a professional practice that a Jewish exile helped recreate for Allied broadcasting.[46]

The microphone made this intimacy technically possible. Huub Wijfjes describes radio as a form of "despatialized simultaneity" that moved public voices into domestic and individual listening, while amplification allowed singers to replace projection with softer, more tender vocal production. Crooning emerged from this changed relation: a voice could appear to whisper directly to a distant listener, and small shifts of breath, tone, and color acquired expressive force unavailable in a hall.[47] MUSAC's clandestine address intensified the paradox. A signal designed for mass transmission sought credibility by sounding not massed but close.

Lacey identifies a German history of this familiar address in the *Plauderei*, or conversational chat. Women's programming helped develop a scripted informality that made public speech sound welcome within the home, and this manner later became important to Nazi domestic broadcasting. For MUSAC, that history gives vocal intimacy a cultural as well as a technical meaning. Dietrich's and Lenya's movements between speech and song could make a political statement sound like a private disclosure within a medium already accustomed to such

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[46] Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on Consequences of War, "Lothar Metzl," *Austrians in U.S. Military Service*, https://austriansoldiers.lbg.ac.at/bio/lothar-metzl/?lang=en (accessed September 12, 2026); Die Blitzbühne, title and production sheet, January 26, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; Program I, Entry A1 92, box 487. The connection between Metzl's professional history and the program's design is developed from these sources.

[47] Huub Wijfjes, "Spellbinding and Crooning: Sound Amplification, Radio, and Political Rhetoric in International Comparative Perspective, 1900–1945," *Technology and Culture* 55, no. 1 (January 2014): 148–85, esp. 149–51, 158–62, https://doi.org/10.1353/tech.2014.0013.

familiarity. The female voice offered a way of addressing listeners personally across the boundary between home and front.[48]

Allison McCracken defines crooning as a technologically produced "intimate singing aesthetic," a formulation that describes much of MUSAC's recorded vocal practice.[49] Although her study centers on American male crooners and the gendered anxieties surrounding their soft vocality, MUSAC carried the techniques of crooning across male and female émigré voices and across repertories not ordinarily classified as crooner songs. Dietrich makes this movement across gender especially audible. McCracken shows how the amplified softness of the male crooner unsettled normative masculinity; Dietrich reversed and compounded that instability, bringing crooning's microphone intimacy into a low, speech-inflected register conventionally coded as masculine. Yet the voice remained inseparable from the erotic femininity of her star persona. Its force lay not in sounding simply male, but in holding masculine-coded authority and feminine address together – intimacy could sound at once seductive, self-possessed, and commanding.[50] Dietrich's speech-like attacks and flexible rhythmic placement, Hendrik's movement from intimate recollection toward exhortation, and other close-miked performances used breath, diction, dynamics, and microphone placement to bring the voice near the listener. Not every MUSAC recording relied upon this aesthetic: operetta, comic declamation, and projected ensemble singing drew upon other vocal modes. Crooning was nevertheless one of the project's principal technologies of proximity. It allowed a mass broadcast to address the listener

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[48] Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*, 193–98.

[49] Allison McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing: Crooning in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), esp. 74–125.

[50] Allan Bell, "Falling in Love Again and Again: Marlene Dietrich and the Iconization of Non-native English," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15, no. 5 (2011): 627–56, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2011.00516.x.

at the scale of private speech, making the covert message sound personal. A role already established in *Destry Rides Again*—Frenchy addressing a room of men through flirtation and resistance—carried into the MUSAC version of "You've Got That Look." The change of language and broadcast setting made that established erotic address available for a military reading. In this sense, MUSAC recruited a performance history along with a voice.[51]

Vilma Kurer's contributions reveal how such performance histories entered the project through gendered casting. Metzl described her as "a personality singer of night club type," a designation that selected one aspect of a much broader theatrical practice. As Florian Traussnig shows, their earlier collaboration in the émigré revues *From Vienna* and *Reunion in New York* gave Metzl knowledge of her vocal and performative capabilities when preparing MUSAC lyrics. The assigned nightclub persona drew its credibility from an experienced performer's command of characterization and delivery. Their collaboration made Jewish émigré theatrical knowledge part of the design of an apparently German musical address.[52]

Traussnig's analysis of Kurer's "Kein Kuss, kein Mann, kein Frühling," the German adaptation of "No Love, No Nothin'," also clarifies the limits of MUSAC's lyrical classifications. The project designated the recording NOP, yet Traussnig reads its transformation of romantic waiting as indirect persuasion. Where the American original affirms fidelity until the

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[51] George Marshall, dir., *Destry Rides Again* (Universal Pictures, 1939), Dietrich's performance of "You've Got That Look"; Dietrich, "Du hast 'nen Blick," MUSAC recording, August 23–24, 1944, OSS records, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. For the earlier discussion and listening links, see Section IV.

[52] Florian Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen: Österreicher in US-Propagandainstitutionen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017), 243–44; Lothar Metzl, MUSAC terminal report ("Muzak"), personnel section, unpaginated, in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 6, MO Branch, box 99B, tab N, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA. The report was forwarded with David Williamson's memorandum of May 7, 1945. The original report describes Kurer as "a personality singer of night club type"; Traussnig also discusses her earlier theatrical collaboration with Metzl.

beloved returns, the German adaptation questions whether continued waiting still makes sense. He locates its persuasive possibilities in the interaction of the text, musical setting, and Kurer's vocal delivery.[53] Read alongside the office's classification, this interpretation shows how a recording could organize disaffection without stating a political instruction. Kurer's interpretive labor gave the waiting woman an audible presence through which intimacy, frustration, and doubt could become pressures upon the soldier's continued sacrifice.

The project's reliance upon women's voices grew from the gendered theory of circulation examined in Section I. The Research and Analysis Branch imagined wives, sweethearts, sisters, and mothers as a "medium of distribution" whose letters and conversations might assure soldiers, "however subtly," that surrender or arranged capture would not make them cowards.[54] MUSAC gave that proposed route an audible form. A romantic song could simulate the absent woman while radio placed her address in the soldier's surroundings; second-person pronouns, lowered register, remembered rooms, and the promise or withdrawal of intimacy positioned him inside a relationship rather than before an Allied argument.[55] Gender organized not only who sang, but the imagined route by which a political permission reached its target. The surviving project summary describes eleven German- or Central-European-born artists and divides 312 recordings among "pure entertainment," "black" twists, and "sentimental nostalgia." Dietrich, Hendrik, Grete Stueckgold, Greta Keller, and Jarmila Novotná appear among the named singers; other

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[53] Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen*, 244–50. The archival NOP designation and Traussnig's interpretation of indirect persuasion are retained as distinct descriptions of the recording.

[54] Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, "German Women as Special Target for Morale Operations," R&A No. 1661, April 4, 1944, summary and pp. 2–4, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[55] Ibid., 7.

files add Vilma Kurer, Herta Glatz, Lotte Lenya, and Maria Manton.[56] The concentration of female voices within sentimental repertory was not a natural quality of gender but a production decision about how intimacy would be heard.

The session-based research index makes that differentiated address visible across 304 recording entries. Among entries coded for a male singer and carrying a known lyric-propaganda designation, forty-one of 134 have some designated propaganda content (30.6 percent), compared with thirty-two of 163 female-coded entries (19.6 percent). Satire accounts for seventeen of those forty-one male-coded entries and five of the thirty-two female-coded entries; slightly slanted lyrics account for fourteen and twenty respectively. Five mixed-gender entries and one entry of each gender without a designation are excluded from these comparisons. These are patterns of classification and casting, not measures of persuasive strength or listener response.[57]

Musical form and style make the pattern more specific. Male-coded entries more often carry the form label "Rhythm" and the period style label "Gay," while female-coded entries more often carry "Ballad" and "Sentimental." The relation is not an explanation in itself: Hendrik's large share of the indexed recordings and Arno's concentration in satire make

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[56] "MUSAC over Soldatensender—Plan/Execution," undated retrospective project summary, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2287, Book II, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See also McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 58.

[57] Danielle Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, unpublished working dataset, Sheet1, rows 2–305, columns D–E and P. The 304 recording entries include rerecordings: 135 male-coded entries, 164 female-coded entries, and five mixed-gender entries. Excluding mixed-gender entries and one male-coded and one female-coded entry lacking a lyric-propaganda designation yields denominators of 134 and 163, respectively. The OSS classifications are retained from the "Table of Songs," 1–10, accompanying Lothar Metzl, "Report on Musac," forwarded with David Williamson's memorandum of May 7, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; see the classification key. See Appendix A for the corpus's unit of count and the reproduced historical classification key.

performer and professional type consequential. Arno's sixteen entries include eight with a propaganda designation, six of them satirical. Read beside the close analyses, these distributions show how an operation could align lyric, mood, and a recognizable performance persona. They also direct attention to exceptions such as Keller's comic military refusal and to women's power to shape the address they performed.[58]

Vocal labor was unevenly mapped. Women frequently voiced separation, fidelity, sexual refusal, domestic enclosure, and the peaceful past; male performers more often approached collective exhortation or direct attack. Keller's "I Am Like the Westwall," examined in Chapter 5, places military mockery inside a woman's refusal and makes the division less absolute. Yet the more consequential gender distinction lay elsewhere. Whereas OSS audience analysis largely imagined German women as wives, mothers, or sweethearts whose emotions might indirectly influence male soldiers, MUSAC's female performers stood on the production side of persuasion. Through breath, register, diction, timing, and persona, these culturally authoritative women actively judged sacrifice, mocked military strength, and defined home. Their agency remained bounded by compartmentalization. An advertising agency engaged performers under a wartime recording cover, and the artists were not necessarily told that their records would enter a British-controlled black station.[59] They could make consequential artistic choices while knowing only part of the system in which those choices would be used. Dietrich's preparation of "Lili

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[58] Stein, *Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research*, Sheet1, rows 2–305, columns D–E, K, M, and P. Across all male- and female-coded entries, respectively, Rhythm appears 69 and 36 times, Ballad 43 and 101, Gay 61 and 26, and Sentimental 47 and 100. "Gay" is the historical style designation, not a coding of sexual identity. Arno has sixteen indexed entries, eight with a propaganda designation, six of them satirical.

[59] "A MUSAC Project Report," OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, Entry A1 210, box 461, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; Lawrence C. Soley, *Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA Subversive Propaganda* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 125.

Marleen" documents such an artistic choice. On August 7, 1944, Metzl reported that she considered an overtly subversive rewrite ineffective and preferred the original German lyric; he agreed that the familiar text would better serve the recording.[60] Her objection shows that she understood the recording's propagandistic purpose and helped decide how it should work. The familiar words left voice, arrangement, and broadcast placement to carry the intervention. Dietrich's judgment about what could sound persuasive became part of the weapon's design even though she did not control its eventual operational use.

Women's operational expertise also shaped the information and repertoire available for these performances. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, Rhoda K. Hirsch reconciled proposed songs with London's decisions, forwarded lyrics to New York, and supplied intelligence that Metzl considered valuable to his work.[61] Her coordination connected knowledge of the field to the materials available for adaptation, rehearsal, and recording. This was administrative authorship within the design of musical persuasion: decisions about circulation, approval, and duplication helped determine which words and musical possibilities reached the studio. Hirsch's work places a Jewish woman's organizational and intellectual labor within the same operational history as the singers' interpretive choices.

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[60] Lothar Metzl, memorandum concerning Marlene Dietrich's proposed "Lili Marleen" recording, August 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[61] Rhoda K. Hirsch to Lothar Metzl, "MUSAC Project," August 4, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," January 3 and January 16, 1945, and Lothar Metzl to Hirsch, "Intelligence for Muzak," January 16, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

London's familiar formula—American arrangement, German lyric, and "pure Austrian or north German voice"—treated accent as a security technology.[62] An American dance-band sound could provide novelty and attraction, but an American singer would attach that sound too securely to an outside government. A German or Austrian voice instead suggested that someone culturally proximate had selected and interpreted the music for the listener. Vocal nationality was expected to localize an otherwise transnational recording. Yet the available singers made "purity" impossible in the strict sense implied by the cable. Their voices had moved among European cabaret, opera, film, nightclub, Broadway, radio, and American studios. That circulation enabled them to negotiate German language against American rhythm, but it also made displacement audible. London did not receive an untouched national sound. It received voices capable of performing cultural proximity because they had already crossed musical and political worlds.

The émigré performers were therefore not simply hired labor within an American institution. Their embodied knowledge of language, genre, microphone technique, and prewar listening cultures became part of the project's acoustemology. MUSAC's capacity to sound proximate depended on people who knew, through performance and memory, how German and Austrian popular culture had sounded before and beyond the Reich. Ashley's June 28 instructions proposed a German counterpart to Dinah Shore, Frances Langford, and Connie Boswell, bringing familiar commercial vocal types into the casting brief. He also reported testing Keller's commercial recordings and finding her voice unidentifiable. Recognition intensified the

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[62] Kenneth D. Mann to Rae Smith, cable, June 14, 1944, and Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, June 15, 1944 (paraphrases), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

contradiction. Cushing specifically raised Greta Keller as a problem: London requested her although her voice and residence outside Germany might be known.[63] For a station claiming official provenance, recognition could rupture the fiction; for a dissident soldiers' station, the same recognition could make opposition plausible. Familiarity rapidly attached a new lyric to memories of films, stages, and prewar life, while the singer's absence testified to what National Socialism had destroyed. Celebrity was therefore both a security risk and a cultural argument. The masquerade did not always require a listener to mistake the singer's location. It could depend upon hearing an exiled voice as culturally internal to Germany but politically external to the regime. The August 23–24, 1944, MUSAC sessions construct contrasting relations between sounding body and listener.[64] Dietrich draws the listener into an unstable private scene; Hendrik's "Hallelujah" expands from personal memory into collective address through register, pacing, diction, and pronoun. Lacey's account of the removal of Jews from German radio's administrative and creative work in 1933 gives this displaced expertise a sharper historical significance. The cultural knowledge excluded from the Reich's broadcasting institutions remained available to a clandestine operation seeking to sound German.[65]

Here the semiotic force of voice emerged relationally. Nattiez defines meaning as what occurs when an object is situated against a horizon of lived experience; accent, timbre, and

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[63] Ira Ashley to Gordon Auchincloss, June 28, 1944, 1, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Edward Cushing to Morgan S. A. Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944, 2, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Ashley reports testing Keller's commercial recordings; Cushing raises her recognizability and location as questions of cover.

[64] "Marlene Dietrich and John Hendrik," Sound Recording 226.7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; copy from NARA II. The supplied recording contains MUSAC session material dated August 23–24, 1944.

[65] Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*, 100–101.

celebrity likewise became meaningful when listeners connected them to remembered performers, regions, genres, and prewar musical life.[66] In "Du hast 'nen Blick," Dietrich's narrow range, delayed attacks, and flexible placement make the text sound disclosed rather than projected. The repeated *du* gives the listener the position of the gaze that has produced her confession. Twice, as the accompaniment thins, she descends into a lower, speech-like register for "Ich weiß, wehren sollt' ich mich, doch ich kann's nicht"—I know I ought to fight back, but I can't.[67] The gesture isolates *wehren* and *kann's nicht* without breaking the erotic scene. Intimacy is therefore something the performance stages, not simply an effect of vocal softness. Dietrich casts one imagined listener as both the cause and recipient of a disclosure in which yielding remains controlled and knowing.

That control is important to the recording's gender politics. Dietrich's public persona had long combined erotic display with detachment, masculine-coded tailoring with feminine glamour, and invitation with refusal. Dietrich's cabaret performance in Josef von Sternberg's *Morocco* (1930), in male evening dress and including a kiss with a woman in the audience, provides an earlier instance of her manipulation of gendered appearance and erotic address .[68] In "Du hast 'nen Blick," the singer appears compromised by another's gaze, yet she continues to regulate the terms of access: "Na schön, also küsse mich, doch mach die Augen zu"—very well, kiss me, but close your eyes. The voice can therefore signify vulnerability without becoming

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[66] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, 10–11.

[67] Marlene Dietrich, "Du hast 'nen Blick" ("You've Got That Look"), MUSAC session recording, August 23–24, 1944, Sound Recording 226.7, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Translation by the author.

[68] Erica Carter, "Marlene Dietrich: The Prodigal Daughter," in *Dietrich Icon*, ed. Gerd Gemünden and Mary R. Desjardins (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 196; Mary R. Desjardins and Gerd Gemünden, "Introduction: Marlene Dietrich's Appropriations," in *Dietrich Icon*, 10–11. See also *Morocco*, directed by Josef von Sternberg (Paramount, 1930); Imogen Sara Smith, "Mistress of Ceremonies," Criterion Collection, June 17, 2018, https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/5584-mistress-of-ceremonies.

powerless. For a soldier whom the OSS imagined as needing permission to cease resistance, the admission offered not an image of abjection but a performance in which capitulation remained compatible with self-possession. Dietrich's sleigh song develops intimacy through sustained phrases and restrained delivery. Snow, bells, fir trees, a warm room, and an old clock accumulate until the final scene turns toward fog, distance, and the narrator who "weine ganz leise"—weeps very quietly—while asking the horse to slow.[69] Romantic privacy becomes mourning heard at close range. Both performances engage the OSS fantasy that an intimate woman might release a soldier from heroic obligation, yet Dietrich also sounds as displaced artist and star. Her voice evokes home while testifying that home has been ruptured.

Hendrik's "Hallelujah" begins instead with Sunday morning, organ, old hymns, and childlike freedom from care. The refrain broadens the address: "Sing Halleluja" is an imperative designed for repetition, positioning the listener as a potential chorus member.[70] Firm consonants and projected contour then carry "Satan führt den Staat an, / Nimm den Rat an, / Wirf ihn raus!"— Satan leads the state, / Heed the advice, / Throw him out!—without Dietrich's confidential retreat. Assertion becomes advice and command before resolving in the promise that peace will enter the home. Public action retains a domestic endpoint. The contrast does not make feminine singing inherently intimate or masculine singing inherently political. MUSAC produced these modes through casting, genre, text, arrangement, and direction, while Keller's

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[69] Marlene Dietrich, "Schlittenfahrt" (German adaptation of "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top"), MUSAC recording, August 23, 1944, Sound Recording 226.7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. "Schlittenfahrt," lyric sheet, Dietrich, August 23, 1944, record no. 7, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2286, "All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Translation by the author.

[70] John Hendrik, German adaptation of "Hallelujah," MUSAC session recording, August 23–24, 1944, Sound Recording 226.7, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Translation by the author.

satire, Dietrich's authority, and Hendrik's nostalgia disturbed the division. Gender organized address, surrender could resemble intimate permission, and disaffection could become a collectively repeatable refrain.

Voice ultimately allowed MUSAC to place political pressure inside the memory of persons as well as songs. A familiar melody recalled an earlier listening world; a familiar singer embodied it. When that singer returned through a clandestine station, recognition could expose the operation, but it could also remind the listener of the cultural losses through which the Nazi present had been made. The émigré voice did not simply impersonate an insider. It made displacement itself available as evidence. Dietrich's timbre, Keller's cabaret authority, the operatic training of Novotná and Stueckgold, and Hendrik's recording career consequently supplied distinct forms of credibility and distinct risks of regional or political recognition. MUSAC's masquerade was strongest and most fragile at the moment a listener believed that he knew who was singing. That tension reaches its clearest form in "Lili Marleen," where Dietrich's recognized voice entered a melody already saturated with soldiers' memories, rival recordings, military broadcasting, and separation.

VI. "Lili Marleen": From Military Ritual to Reusable Cue

No title associated with MUSAC exposes the project's musical method more clearly than "Lili Marleen." The song did not require the OSS to invent a German idiom or teach soldiers a new refrain. By 1944, its melody already moved across fronts, nations, and political allegiances. Its history on *Soldatensender Belgrad* had also joined it to the temporal habits of military radio as the familiar number marked the hour, recalled absent women, and gathered geographically dispersed soldiers into an imagined listening community. MUSAC could therefore intervene not

only by recording the song again, but by separating recognizable components from the whole and placing them in new dramatic positions. The surviving evidence establishes two related acts of recomposition. First, Dietrich and the MUSAC staff chose to preserve the original German lyric, shifting political work toward arrangement, voice, and broadcast context. Second, *Die Blitzbühne* Program III divided "Lili Marleen" into instrumental signs: a fanfare and, later, an accordion cue. The song became both a completed vocal performance and a store of detachable musical materials. In this second form, its opening sound could recur beneath a fictional soldier's failed homecoming without requiring the lyric to state the program's conclusion.

Hans Leip wrote the poem that became "Lili Marleen" while serving as a soldier during the First World War, published it in expanded form in 1937, and saw it set by Norbert Schultze the following year. Lale Andersen's 1939 recording, issued as "Lied eines jungen Wachtpostens (Lili Marlen)," gained its extraordinary wartime circulation after *Soldatensender Belgrad* began playing it regularly in 1941.[71] The song's wartime power lay precisely in the tension between its military framing and the portability of its emotional address. Its scene of distance, memory, loneliness, and uncertain return was available to German and Allied soldiers alike. That transnational legibility made it useful to clandestine radio as a tune already claimed by incompatible armies could cross an enemy transmitter without sounding wholly foreign.[72]

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[71] Christian Peters, *Lili Marleen: Ein Schlager macht Geschichte* (Bonn: Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2001); Katja Protte, "Mythos 'Lili Marleen': Ein Lied im Zeitalter der Weltkriege," *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 63, no. 2 (2004): 355–400.

[72] Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, "Lili Marleen—Ein Schlager macht Geschichte," exhibition page, https://www.hdg.de/stiftung/leih-ausstellung/lili-marleen-ein-schlager-macht-geschichte (accessed September 3, 2026); Liel Leibovitz and Matthew Miller, *Lili Marlene: The Soldiers' Song of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), 16–18, 23–24, 59–61, 101–7; Protte, "Mythos 'Lili Marleen,'" 365.

Andersen's recording makes the military position audible before the singer begins. A rolled snare prepares a bugle call whose dotted and triadic figures resemble signals of attention, assembly, and retreat.[73] The record does not merely accompany a private love song with martial color. It locates the remembered meeting beneath the lantern inside an institution that regulates bodies and time. Bass drum and snare convert remembered footsteps into measured ones; the sentry cannot remain with Lili because military time interrupts romantic time. Philip Tagg's concept of the museme—the smallest musical unit capable of carrying recognizable expression—helps describe the work of this opening. A bugle figure has no single universal meaning, but beside military calls, percussion, and a soldier's text it activates an associative field of routine, command, marching, and collective discipline.[74] The record teaches the listener how to position the intimacy that follows. Andersen's controlled vocal delivery and the melody's descending gestures preserve sadness within that frame, allowing duty and vulnerability to occupy the same sounding object. Accordion and male chorus add two further kinds of belonging. The accordion's ascending and descending turns can evoke Central European folk and popular repertories, regional dance, and the sociability of the *Harmonika*.[75] The chorus surrounds Andersen's singular voice with an audible body of men. It does not eliminate longing; it collectivizes it, making the absent woman and the remembered lantern available through a

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[73] Lale Andersen, "Lied eines jungen Wachtpostens (Lili Marlen)," with ensemble conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler, Electrola E.G. 6993, 78 rpm, 1939. Public listening copy: Andersen's 1939 performance, embedded in BR-Klassik's "Lale Andersen: Verbot und Verhaftung wegen 'Lili Marleen'" (April 29, 2025).

[74] Philip Tagg, "Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice," *Popular Music* 2 (1982): 37–67, esp. 48, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143000001227. Tagg describes interobjective comparison, musemes, and extramusical fields of association as tools for relating musical structures to culturally learned meanings.

[75] Franz Josef Breuer, *Das neue Soldatenliederbuch: Die bekanntesten und meistgesungenen Lieder unserer Wehrmacht*, vol. 1 (Mainz: Schott, 1939); Philip V. Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

group that can sing the refrain back. Bugle summons, percussion measures, accordion localizes, and chorus converts private memory into military ritual.

That military ritual had already been strategically redirected before MUSAC entered the song's recording history. On January 12, 1942, Karl Schwedler—"Charlie"—recorded an English-language version with Lutz Templin's orchestra for the Reich's foreign-broadcasting apparatus. The recording subsequently appeared in programs addressed to British and American servicemen, including *Jerry Calling*. Its intervention was not primarily an overtly political rewrite. By translating a German soldiers' song into English and directing it across enemy lines, Nazi broadcasting attempted to convert the intimacy and recognition already accumulated by Andersen's recording into an instrument of attraction. British and American monitors knew this specific recording, placing its strategic readdressing within the Allied listening system from which MUSAC drew. MUSAC's 1944 recording was therefore a deliberate counter-recording – it returned "Lili Marleen" to German, redirected it toward Wehrmacht listeners, and transferred its voice from a German propagandist addressing Allied troops to Germany's most recognizable anti-Nazi émigré. The musical sign remained familiar, but its direction of address, institutional authorship, and implied allegiance were strategically inverted.[76]

Thomas Mann's *Deutsche Hörer!* broadcasts offer a contemporary comparison in the use of an identifiable German exile's authority against National Socialism. Mann's BBC addresses

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[76] Imperial War Museums, "Lili Marlene," performed by Charlie and His Orchestra, Karl Emil Heinrich Schwedler, sound recording, catalogue no. 10568, object no. 80010346, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80010346; Horst J. P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 316; Peter Wicke, "Lili Marleen (Lale Andersen)," *Songlexikon: Encyclopedia of Songs*, December 2011, rev. October 2013, https://songlexikon.de/songs/lilimarleen/.

and Dietrich's contributions differed in genre, sponsorship, and presentation, but both make it possible to distinguish German cultural affiliation from allegiance to the Nazi regime.[77]

MUSAC's production records trace the decisions through which Dietrich's performance gave the familiar song a new political position. On August 7, 1944, Metzl reported plans to record her in the original German "Lili Marleen." Dietrich had rejected an explicitly subversive rewrite because she believed it would be ineffective; Metzl agreed that the familiar text was already "excellent" for their purposes and requested an arrangement from Private Goehr.[78] A MUSAC session log records "Lili Marlene" in Dietrich's ninth session on August 16, and a corresponding lyric sheet identifies it as record number six for that date.[79] This sequence is crucial. The absence of rewritten words was not the absence of propaganda, nor was it evidence that the title entered the project as undifferentiated entertainment. Dietrich and Metzl made a strategic decision about musical credibility. A conspicuous political replacement would have competed with the listener's memory of a song whose power depended upon repetition and recognition. Retaining the familiar lyric left arrangement, vocal performance, juxtaposition, and later reuse to redirect that memory. The request to Rudolf Goehr makes another part of that labor visible. A Jewish émigré with experience in German radio and French and American musical

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[77] Thomas Mann, "German Listeners!," July 1942, in *Listen, Germany!* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), 102–7, reproduced by *German History in Documents and Images*, https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/nazi-germany-1933-1945/thomas-mann-german-listeners-july-1942. This comparison concerns publicly identifiable exile and antifascist address; it does not establish a shared institutional role or a private motive for either performer.

[78] Lothar Metzl, memorandum concerning Marlene Dietrich's proposed "Lili Marleen" recording, August 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[79] MUSAC session log, Marlene Dietrich session no. 9, August 16, 1944, including "Lili Marlene," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171; "Lili Marlene," MUSAC lyric sheet, Dietrich, August 16, 1944, record no. 6, Entry A1 139, container 172, "All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

production, Goehr was asked to prepare the arrangement through which Dietrich would revisit the familiar song.[80] The session sheet and lyric sheet are reproduced in Appendix B, Figures B.5a–B.5b; the recording/version distinctions are consolidated in Appendix C.

The decision also clarifies Dietrich's position within the project. She did not function as a transparent carrier of a text supplied by the OSS. Her judgment about how a German listener might respond altered the object that MUSAC produced. The August memorandum demonstrates that performance strategy was negotiated in the studio rather than simply imposed upon the singer. The August 16 wartime master remains unrecovered in this study. Dietrich's commercial reconstruction with accordionist Charles Magnante, made on September 7, 1945, brings her wartime performance conception into the surviving recorded history only thirteen months after the MUSAC session.[81] Its accordion cueing, flexible pacing, and solitary, speech-like vocal line carry forward the performance conception Dietrich had developed during the war. The accordion is especially consequential because *Die Blitzbühne* independently specified both a "Fanfare (Lili

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[80] "Rudolf Goehr," *Die Kardosch-Sänger*, https://kardosch-saenger.de/die-abels-die-deutschen-revellers-aus-ungarn/rudolf-goehr (accessed September 12, 2026), drawing on the Goehr family archive, correspondence with Arnold Schoenberg, and German archival records; Metzl memorandum, August 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The memorandum documents the request to Goehr; the particular arrangement of the unissued master remains a separate question.

[81] "Marlene Dietrich and John Hendrik," Sound Recording 226.7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; copy from NARA II. The supplied composite contains MUSAC material from August 23–24, 1944, but no identifiable performance of "Lili Marleen." The nearest surviving reconstruction used here is Marlene Dietrich, "Lili Marlene," Decca 23456, matrix 73031, recorded September 7, 1945, with orchestra directed by Charles Magnante. See Christina L. Baade, "Between the Lines: 'Lili Marlene,' Sexuality, and the Desert War," in *Music, Politics, and Violence*, ed. Susan Fast and Kip Pegley (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2012), 93–94, 101 n. 71. This chapter treats the Decca recording as a near-contemporary reconstruction of Dietrich's wartime performance conception, not as the missing German master itself. Dietrich's subsequent *Marlene Dietrich Overseas* provides corroborating evidence of deliberate reconstruction: its notes explain that she retained copies of her OSS recordings, played them for Mitch Miller, and remade the repertory for Columbia. See Damien Keane, "Amplification: At Home with Marlene Dietrich Overseas," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Modernism and Technology*, ed. Alex Goody and Ian Whittington (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 257–70, esp. 257–58.

Marlene)" and "Accordian - Lili Marlene," showing that MUSAC itself treated those timbres as recognizable components of the song. Heard alongside those production materials, the 1945 reconstruction makes the musical consequences of Dietrich's interpretation audible: it withdraws the bugle, rolled snare, emphatic march pulse, and male chorus that organize Andersen's record.

What disappears is musically consequential. In place of a summons, the later recording opens with accordion. Its slower tempo and flexible phrase beginnings weaken the sense of measured forward motion. Dietrich's entries do not always confirm the beat immediately; the voice and accompaniment seem to find one another across small spaces of hesitation. Military regularity becomes remembered time, expanding around individual words. With no male group to answer, the lyric is no longer absorbed into the audible body of comrades. The cleared texture places one voice against one instrument. The arrangement gains its force from subtraction. Without the bugle, snare, and male chorus, the song no longer sounds like a shared military ritual. The accordion remains, but beside Dietrich's solitary voice it now evokes private memory rather than comradeship. It also brings the song nearer to the sound world of cabaret and *chanson réaliste*, where accordion, rubato, and a female voice often frame disappointed attachment or loss.[82] The category is comparative rather than genealogical; it does not make "Lili Marleen" a French chanson. It identifies conventions through which the same melody could move from public military ritual toward the interior speech of the person left behind.

Dietrich's timbre completes that change. Her delivery remains close to speech: attacks can be delayed, vowels lengthen, and vibrato becomes most audible at the ends of sustained notes. These gestures belong to an established performance practice audible in her prewar

[82] Fréhel, "Où sont tous mes amants?," 1935, and Lucienne Delyle, "Mon amant de Saint-Jean," 1942. These recordings function as interobjective comparisons, not as claims of direct borrowing.

recordings, where breath and delayed enunciation communicate detachment or sadness without surrendering control.[83] In "Lili Marleen," they make separation bodily. The singer does not simply report distance, she sounds as though distance has altered the production of the sentence. If a German listener recognized Dietrich, that recognition could expose the presence of an émigré and American participant. It could also place exile inside the song. A German-born performer who had rejected the Nazi regime returned through a melody associated with soldiers' memory and home.[84] The voice was culturally proximate even when its political and geographical distance was known. Recognition therefore threatened the masquerade of provenance while strengthening another proposition – German musical memory did not belong exclusively to the Nazi state.

Program III from the *Die Blitzbühne* series converts this performance history into broadcast technique. Its recurring sketch, "My Dear Waldemar," consists of letters that follow a soldier's successive retreats: from Tunis in 1942, to the Dutch coast and Eastern Front in 1943, to Paris and Russia in 1944, and finally to Germany in 1945. The repeated salutation promises continuity while each new location documents contraction. Geographic retreat becomes a formal principle – the letter returns, but the territory from which it is written does not. The last episode makes "Lili Marleen" part of that structure. As the master of ceremonies introduces the final letter, the script calls for a "Fanfare (Lili Marlene)." After the soldier returns to Germany and receives his wife's letter announcing that she is leaving with a Polish forced laborer, a second

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[83] Marlene Dietrich, "Je m'ennuie," 1933; *Destry Rides Again*, directed by George Marshall (Universal Pictures, 1939).

[84] Elizabeth McIntosh, interview in *A Woman at War: Marlene Dietrich Remembered*, ed. J. David Riva (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 89–94; Coco Schumann, interview in Riva, *A Woman at War*, 158–59, 161; "A MUSAC Project Report," OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, Entry A1 210, box 461, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

direction specifies "Accordian - Lili Marlene" beneath the speech.[85] The title is not presented as a complete song. It is broken into two timbral functions: fanfare announces the soldierly correspondence, while accordion accompanies the collapse of the homecoming it had seemed to promise.

The script confirms that instrumentation itself carried referential force. No lyric is needed for the accordion to summon the absent title. By 1945, the timbre and opening gesture could operate as a musical synecdoche—a part standing for the song's entire network of lantern, soldier, waiting woman, separation, and hoped-for return. The cue invited the listener to complete that network from memory, then placed it beneath a scene in which return has failed. Familiarity performed the connective work that an explanatory line would have made too explicit. This reuse also changes the function of repetition. *Soldatensender Belgrad* had made "Lili Marleen" a recurring ritual whose regular return could stabilize wartime time. *Die Blitzbühne* preserves recurrence but reverses its assurance. The letters to Waldemar repeatedly return only to chart retreat; the song returns only as fragments; the accordion sounds when the domestic future has vanished. MUSAC weaponized not simply sadness, but the breakdown of a formal promise. The music returns, while the soldier cannot recover the place, relationship, or political world to which return once pointed.

These sources support two related comparisons. Across versions, the familiar melody and title permit a comparison of martial framing, instrumentation, language, and vocal address.

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[85] *Die Blitzbühne*, Program III, "My Dear Waldemar," German script and English production materials, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The script directions specify "Fanfare (Lili Marlene)" and "Accordian - Lili Marlene." For the closing English script pages and both "Lili Marlene" cues, see appendix B, figures B.3a–B.3b (pp. 6–7).

Within Program III, the fanfare and accordion cue acquire distinct functions through their placement around the soldier's final letter and failed homecoming. The first comparison concerns related musical treatments; the second concerns their ordered dramatic relations. Neither establishes that a listener knew every earlier recording. The 1945 Dietrich recording also remains a comparative witness rather than evidence of the precise arrangement heard in August 1944. The scripts support claims about the designed sequence, while the transmission of a particular program requires separate evidence.

Program III survives not as an unrealized script but as part of a documented series of three completed, recorded, and shipped *Blitzbühne* shows. The title sheet, budget, Cushing memorandum, and May 1 inventory trace the programs from design through material production. Within the third show, the directions "Fanfare (Lili Marlene)" and "Accordian - Lili Marlene" treat the song as divisible recorded matter: recognizable pieces of its sound could be detached from the complete performance and assigned new dramatic work. Whether the cues were taken from Dietrich's August 16 master or recreated in the studio does not change that production logic. The fanfare announces the soldier's final letter to Waldemar; the accordion accompanies the collapse of his homecoming. MUSAC thus used remembered fragments of a familiar song to organize a new narrative of retreat and domestic loss. The closing script pages are reproduced in appendix B, figures B.3a–B.3b.

"Lili Marleen" therefore reveals weaponization at more than one scale. Andersen's recording joined private longing to military routine; Charlie and His Orchestra redirected that ritual toward Allied listeners in English; MUSAC's August 1944 session reversed the vector, returning the song in German through Dietrich's recognized anti-Nazi voice. The precise arrangement of that wartime master remains to be recovered. The 1945 commercial

reconstruction makes audible how the withdrawal of martial signals could expose solitude and suspended time. Program III then goes further – it takes the title apart, allowing fanfare and accordion to function as cues within a sequence about retreat and failed homecoming. The weapon was neither melody nor lyric alone, but the distance between remembered versions and new placements – a summons recalled, an accordion detached from its song, a chorus made absent, and a musical return aligned with narrative nonreturn. MUSAC's use of familiar fragments invited listeners to supply an earlier ritual and hear it against a newly organized scene. In Nattiez's terms, the fragment did not intrinsically contain barracks, separation, or return; it acquired those associations when placed against a listener's horizon of prior hearings.[86] The following section turns from this dismantling of a familiar sonic object to "Wie lange noch?," a new political question multiplied across recording, radio, print, leaflet, sheet music, sticker, and airdrop. The two cases reveal opposite but complementary designs – one weaponized memory by fragmentation, the other pursued ubiquity through multimedia circulation.

VII. "Wie lange noch?": From Intimate Accusation to Multimedia Campaign

If "Lili Marleen" became useful to MUSAC because it could be taken apart, "Wie lange noch?" acquired force because it could be multiplied. Its title already exerted political pressure. By leaving unnamed what must end, "How much longer?" became more urgent each time it returned. In Lotte Lenya's recording, the question emerged from a specific conjunction of Walter Mehring's lyric, Kurt Weill's recomposed chanson, and an intimate female voice. In the larger campaign, it migrated away from that performance into newspaper prose, leaflets, stickers, a

[86] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, 10, 12–13.

graphic *W*, sheet music issued under a false German publisher's imprint, a second song, and a proposed black radio recording. The media did not merely reproduce a stable message. Each one altered who could seem to ask the question, what grievance it named, and how privately or publicly it could be encountered.

The campaign therefore broadens the meaning of musical weaponization. A song could do more than carry propaganda within its lyric or arrangement. It could generate a verbal and visual refrain that continued to act when the melody was absent. Conversely, the printed question could prepare a listener to hear an apparently ordinary song as a complaint against the Nazi regime. "Wie lange noch?" moved between sounding and silent media, allowing voice, typography, repetition, and covert attribution to authenticate one another. Its design did not depend upon a single decisive exposure. It attempted to create the impression that the same impatient question was arising from many places inside German-controlled Europe. Before the question moved across media, however, the music had already moved across language, performers, a decade, and a radically changed political context.

"Wie lange noch?" did not begin as a newly invented propaganda song. Its musical history reaches back to Weill's first years of exile, after he fled Germany in 1933 and worked in France. During the summer of 1934, he set Maurice Magre's poem "Je ne t'aime pas" for the French cabaret singer Lys Gauty. The song was commissioned for Gauty, recorded by her, and performed frequently. A decade before Mehring's political text and Lenya and Weill's wartime recording, this music already possessed a performed and recorded life within European popular

culture.[87] That history changes how the later song must be understood. Weill did not simply retrieve a melody from his private portfolio. He returned to a recorded female performance in which refusal is an effort to break an attachment that has not released its hold. Magre's speaker tells the beloved to remove his hand and tries to shut out the voice and scent that keep him sensually present. Yet her repeated "Je ne t'aime pas" is contradicted by the scene: she kneels crying behind a closed door and finally addresses him as *mon bien-aimé*. She is not describing a separation already achieved; she is trying to make separation real by saying it. In 1944, Weill returned to this dramatic structure with Mehring's German text and Lenya's voice. Mehring changed the object of the speaker's difficult withdrawal – the effort to leave a beloved who still exerted emotional power became the effort to withdraw allegiance from a political ruler.

Gauty's recording gives that contradiction a specifically sonic history. Weill sets the chanson as a slow, cabaret-inflected love song whose minor and major regions do not divide sorrow neatly from consolation. The change of mode intensifies the speaker's attempt at composure while the text continues to disclose desire. Gauty's heightened diction follows Magre's imagery closely, expanding into a recognizably Weillian dramatic climax before the performance contracts into a parlando coda. The closing words arrive in broken phrases—"Retire ta main" and "Je ne t'aime pas"—followed by a final spoken refusal and a piano chord that

[87] Kurt Weill and Maurice Magre, "Je ne t'aime pas," Lys Gauty, voice, 1934; Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, "1933–1941: Exile and Frustration," accessed May 3, 2026, https://www.kwf.org/kurt-weill/recommended/1933-1941-exile-and-frustration-text-only/. For the later recording's catalog history, see Kurt Weill and Walter Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," Lotte Lenya, voice, with piano, spring 1944, 3:15; Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, "Lenya Discography," accessed September 3, 2026, https://www.kwf.org/research-center/lenya-discography/, which identifies it as "recorded for the Office of War Information." Its OSS/MUSAC provenance is documented below.

retreats to pianissimo. The song does not end by overcoming attachment. It dissipates around an assertion the performance has already made impossible to believe.[88]

The 1934 record shows that the wartime song began by remaking an existing mediated object. French chanson, cabaret intimacy, and a woman's unstable refusal supplied its musical and dramatic resources. Weill and Mehring, both Jewish exiles, brought those resources into an address directed against the regime that had driven them from Germany. Mehring's background in political cabaret and satire met Weill's movement among German theater, French chanson, and American musical production. Their contribution made the relation between private betrayal and political disaffection something the song could perform. Lenya's delivery gave that collaboration its particular recorded voice.[89]

In June 1944, Lenya and Weill recorded the German song at Bost Recording Company in New York for OSS/MUSAC. The surviving performance runs approximately three minutes and sixteen seconds, with Lenya accompanied by Weill at the piano.[90] Mehring preserves the second-

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[88] Kurt Weill and Maurice Magre, "Je ne t'aime pas," and Kurt Weill and Walter Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," in *The Unknown Kurt Weill: A Collection of 14 Songs* (New York: European American Music Corporation, 1982); Gauty, "Je ne t'aime pas," 1934 recording; Weill and Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," 1944 recording; Suna Avci, "Style and Context in Kurt Weill's American Songs" (DM diss., Indiana University, 2013), 42–45. The analysis compares the published scores and the two recordings.

[89] Neil W. Levin, "Kurt Weill," *Milken Archive of Jewish Music*, https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/kurt-weill; Rudolf Kayser and Andreas Kilcher, "Mehring, Walter," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed.; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Varian Fry," *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/varian-fry. For the composition and text, see Weill and Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," in *The Unknown Kurt Weill*, and the recordings cited above. The interpretation of the collaboration is the author's.

[90] Kurt Weill and Walter Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," Lotte Lenya, voice, Kurt Weill, piano, Bost Recording Company, New York, June 1944, 3:15–3:16; "Wie lange noch_.mp3." The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, "Lenya Discography," accessed September 3, 2026, https://www.kwf.org/research-center/lenya-discography/, catalogs the item as "recorded for the Office of War Information." For the June 1944 Bost session and its OSS/MUSAC provenance, see Robert DeVecchi to W. C. Morck, memoranda, June 7, 13, 26, and 27, 1944, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; and Edward Cushing to David Williamson, "Musac Project," November

person intimacy of Magre's poem but reverses the direction of its drama. The French speaker says that separation has already occurred even as her performance betrays continuing attachment. The German speaker asks when she will finally be able to say that it is over. Broken promises, submission, torment, silence, and waiting turn the faithless lover into a political ruler without requiring Hitler to be named. The intimate *du* remains deniable while the promise of blue skies, the paternal relation, and the repeated question make the addressee inseparable from the regime.

The recomposition carries that political transformation. The German song unfolds in two broad strophes whose internal sections continually redefine the relation between minor and major. It opens in F minor, where the tonic alternates with an augmented-sixth sonority that presses toward motion without granting stable release. Syncopation softens the metrical pulse, making the accompaniment less a march than an unsettled oscillation beneath the voice. The first strophe turns toward F major, but this parallel-major space does not secure reassurance. The title question opens a further tonal departure into D minor, so that the promised change of mode becomes another form of displacement.[91]

Weill's revisions also make the new title structurally audible. The German setting thins the accompanimental texture and withdraws the piano's lower support at the first and final statements of "Wie lange noch?" The question is exposed by a temporary loss of musical ground. Between the strophes, a dotted figure in the piano becomes more prominent, and the final coda

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28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[91] Kurt Weill and Maurice Magre, "Je ne t'aime pas," and Kurt Weill and Walter Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," in *The Unknown Kurt Weill: A Collection of 14 Songs* (New York: European American Music Corporation, 1982); Gauty, "Je ne t'aime pas," 1934 recording; Weill and Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," 1944 recording; Suna Avci, "Style and Context in Kurt Weill's American Songs" (DM diss., Indiana University, 2013), 42–45. The analysis compares the published scores and the two recordings.

enlarges the exchange between singer and instrument. Lenya's last question rises an octave above its earlier register before the piano answers with accented, densely voiced chords.[92] Where Gauty's ending recedes through broken speech and a pianissimo close, Lenya and the piano move upward and outward through forte and fortissimo reiterations of the question. The 1934 recording performs a refusal that collapses under the weight of attachment; the 1944 recording converts the difficulty of separation into escalating political impatience.

The French and German settings therefore support a paradigmatic comparison of related phrases: changes in register, texture, dynamics, and harmonic direction transform material retained across versions. The question's placement within each setting also matters syntagmatically, because the preceding strophe and following instrumental response shape its force. The campaign's later cross-media circulation does not establish a common sequence in which audiences encountered these versions.

The contrast should not be reduced to an essential opposition between "French" playfulness and "German" aggression. It nevertheless draws upon cabaret's capacity to move between the sentimental and the satirical, the private and the political, and the pleasurable and the critical. Lisa Appignanesi describes German cabaret as developing a more serious and satirically aggressive impetus from its French precedents, while Philip Bohlman emphasizes the political force produced when hybrid song genres move across repertories and allow lament, love

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[92] Kurt Weill and Maurice Magre, "Je ne t'aime pas," and Kurt Weill and Walter Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," in *The Unknown Kurt Weill: A Collection of 14 Songs* (New York: European American Music Corporation, 1982); Gauty, "Je ne t'aime pas," 1934 recording; Weill and Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," 1944 recording; Suna Avci, "Style and Context in Kurt Weill's American Songs" (DM diss., Indiana University, 2013), 42–45. The analysis compares the published scores and the two recordings.

song, and social criticism to occupy the same object.[93] Weill's act of self-borrowing realizes that mobility at the level of a single composition. The earlier record remains audible beneath the later one, but its affective materials have been rebalanced for wartime address.

Lenya's performance makes that address personal. Her delivery moves along the boundary between singing and speech: consonants sharpen the accusation, phrase endings can recede from full projection, and the repeated questions sound directed toward a particular absent body rather than declared to an anonymous crowd.[94] The microphone intimacy discussed in Section V is important here, although Lenya's practice should not be reduced to the American crooner model. Lenya's *diseuse* style—poised between speech and song—makes pitch, spoken inflection, and verbal attack parts of the same dramatic utterance. As a result, the public indictment takes on the emotional immediacy of a private betrayal.[95] Gender is therefore not ornamental to the recording's politics. The regime is addressed from the position of one who has been deceived, used, and kept waiting. Yet the singer does not remain a passive emblem of suffering. She controls the pace of disclosure and finally judges the addressee's exhausted authority. The song transforms a conventionally feminized complaint into a political interrogation while preserving enough erotic residue for the accusation to sound overheard. Unlike an announcement telling soldiers what to think, Lenya's voice models the moment at which attachment becomes recognition of betrayal.

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[93] Lisa Appignanesi, *The Cabaret* (New York: Universe Books, 1976), 32; Philip V. Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 200; Weill and Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," 1944 recording.

[94] Lisa Appignanesi, *The Cabaret* (New York: Universe Books, 1976), 32; Philip V. Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 200; Weill and Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," 1944 recording.

[95] David Hamilton, "Listening to Lenya," *Kurt Weill Newsletter* 16, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 9, https://www.kwf.org/images/newsletter/kwn162p1-24.pdf.

The surviving sources distinguish the recording's catalog attribution from its operational history. The Kurt Weill Foundation describes the session as "recorded for the Office of War Information." The July 3, 1944 acknowledgment to Weill bears the typed name W. C. Morck and refers to its sponsor only as "this organization." It thanks "you and Mrs. Weill" for their work on "Wie Lange Noch," acknowledging Lenya alongside the composer, and reports that the recordings had been received and reshipped toward their destination. The letter assigns the recordings a "very definite place in the prosecution of the war," promises a fuller explanation of their contribution at some future date, and requests continued confidentiality. Acknowledgment and secrecy worked together: the artists' contribution was credited while its destination and use remained undisclosed in the letter. Weill also corresponded directly with Robert DeVecchi of the OSS about the song and its wartime use. OSS cables distinguished OWI's overt recordings from material intended for black radio. Cushing's July 28 memorandum records a further version: Kurer had sung the Weill setting the previous day, with Metzl replacing its title phrase at Cushing's direction because he feared that Warner might already have used it. Read with that correspondence and Cushing's later account, the acknowledgment helps reconstruct the song's movement through a concealed production and distribution system.[96]

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[96] Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, "Lenya Discography," accessed May 3, 2026, https://www.kwf.org/research-center/lenya-discography/; DeVecchi to Morck, June 7 and 13, 1944 (see note 86); David Williamson to Douglas M. Dimond, "Bills for recordings," June 28, 1944, Entry A1 92, box 487, RG 226, NARA College Park. Kenneth D. Mann to Rae Smith, cable, June 14, 1944, and Rae Smith to Kenneth D. Mann, cable, June 15, 1944 (paraphrases), Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. W. C. Morck to Kurt Weill, July 3, 1944, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The sender's name follows the typed signature on the archival copy, which does not name the sponsoring organization. Edward Cushing to Morgan S. A. Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944, 2, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The memorandum distinguishes Kurer's July 27 recording from the earlier Lenya–Weill recording.

MUSAC's own files make that provenance explicit. In November 1944, Edward Cushing returned correspondence, music, lyrics, and orchestrations for a different version produced through Eugene Warner. He explained that the "original Weill WIE LANGE NOCH" had already been "recorded by us and sent to London." He judged the Warner version inferior in text, music, and performance and suspected that it belonged to a separate black or gray operation.[97] Cushing was not describing an OWI recording that OSS later happened to borrow; he claimed the Weill master as a MUSAC product and treated it as the project's authoritative version. The shared title did not erase musical difference. OSS personnel compared versions and regarded compositional and performative quality as operational concerns. That distinction matters because the campaign did not simply distribute one master recording across several channels. It detached the question from Weill and Mehring's song. In print it became anonymous typography or a caption for changing grievances; another OSS unit returned it to music as a more conventional dance song. What coordinated the campaign was recurrence, not exact duplication of one object.

The leaflet and sticker series demonstrates how a musical refrain could continue after its tune had fallen silent. Surviving examples place a large *W* beside variations of "Wie lange noch?" and adapt the question to food shortages, bombing, bereavement, adolescent conscription, the security of Party officials, forced labor, sexual anxiety, and military abandonment. The campaign reportedly included sixteen designs, of which the surviving archival

[97] Edward Cushing to David Williamson, "Musac Project," November 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Cushing states that the "original Weill WIE LANGE NOCH" had been "recorded by us and sent to London."

photographs and leaflets preserve a substantial group.[98] Their accumulation is as important as any single text. Each item supplies a new verse-like grievance; the repeated title provides the refrain. Printed repetition also changes the implied speaker. Lenya's recording locates the question in a recognizable female voice. A sticker on a wall, vehicle, door, window, or book removes the body and multiplies possible authors. It can appear to be the work of a worker, soldier, widow, neighbor, or clandestine group. The large *W* functions as a compact campaign mark, while the interrogative phrase leaves the viewer to complete both object and answer. The symbol functioned as a reproducible mark whose anonymous recurrence carried the campaign across different media.

Das Neue Deutschland ("The New Germany"), an OSS Morale Operations newspaper presented as the publication of an underground German opposition movement, extended the phrase into reported experience. Its use of the question placed the newspaper and musical work within the same larger campaign, allowing printed and sounded expressions of disaffection to reinforce one another. An article headed by "Wie lange noch" placed the question near an account of factory conditions, drawing the campaign from the compressed space of a slogan into a narrative of labor and exhaustion.[99] Here the refrain did not ask the reader to remember Lenya's exact melody. It taught the reader to encounter daily deprivation as evidence that the question was already being asked by others. Print could thus create a notional community of

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[98] "Wie lange noch?" leaflet and sticker series, including designs using the W and hand motifs, OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, container 88, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[99] "Wie lange noch," *Das Neue Deutschland*, July 15, 1944; "Wie lange noch?" leaflet, Soldatengruppe Das Neue Deutschland, Südfront, April 18, 1945; both in Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Washington–MO–OP–31, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

dissatisfaction around the same words that the recording had voiced as an intimate confrontation. A leaflet dated April 18, 1945 shows the formula's adaptation to the final weeks of the war. It asks how much longer soldiers will live in filth and make useless sacrifices, invokes a dead Berlin and burning cities, and presents captivity as the remaining route home.[100] The historical referent has become explicit, but the campaign retains the interrogative structure. Rather than announcing defeat as an Allied fact, it stages continued combat as a duration the German soldier is invited to end. The title's temporal adverb does the coercive work: *noch* makes each additional day appear not only painful but excessive.

The movement from sound to print did not abandon music. It reorganized musical expectation. Readers who had heard the song could supply a voice or cadential shape to the printed words; those who first saw the stickers could later recognize the title when it appeared in a broadcast or on sheet music. The campaign cultivated cross-media recognition even when no surviving document can reconstruct the order of each listener's encounters. Its refrain was simultaneously linguistic, graphic, and potentially remembered as sound. Nattiez's concept of the material trace clarifies why this recurrence did not stabilize a single message. The recording, newspaper heading, leaflet, sticker, and counterfeit score each offered a different material starting point for esthesic construction. What the campaign coordinated was not one invariant meaning but a field of possible relations among question, grievance, voice, musical memory, and political referent.[101] The following materials belong to the broader OSS Morale Operations

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[100] "Wie lange noch," *Das Neue Deutschland*, July 15, 1944; "Wie lange noch?" leaflet, Soldatengruppe Das Neue Deutschland, Südfront, April 18, 1945; both in Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Washington–MO–OP–31, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

[101] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, 12–17.

campaign. The Mediterranean office produced a separate setting of "Wie lange noch?" and circulated it to Washington for consideration; it was distinct from MUSAC's Weill–Mehring recording. Their relationship lies in the shared campaign phrase and documented interoffice exchange. Internal documentation identifies the piece as not identical with Weill's "Wie lange noch?" The printed sheet music credits "Friedrich Lindner," describes the number as a *Lied und langsamer Foxtrott*, and bears a counterfeit Berlin publication line for Ufaton Verlag. The working manuscript, however, is headed "Words and Music by Eddie Zinder," and Williamson's November 28, 1944 memorandum identifies the song as Zinder's while distinguishing it from Weill's composition. Read together, these documents establish the relationship between working authorship and the printed cover identity. The name "Friedrich Lindner" formed part of the commercial disguise through which an OSS-produced song could appear to originate within German musical life (see appendix B, figures B.1a–B.1d).[102] The DND newspaper page and selected "Wie lange noch?" leaflet are reproduced in appendix B, figures B.2a–B.2b.

Its musical language makes that cover portable. The surviving opening page is set in four-four time and begins in a five-flat minor field, centered on B-flat minor. A spare alternating bass and chordal accompaniment establishes the slow-foxtrot pulse before the voice enters. The melody favors compact, syllabic gestures and mild syncopations that can sit inside the dance rhythm without losing textual clarity. Chromatic inner voices and changes of harmonic color

[102] Eddie Zinder, "Wie lange noch…?!," working manuscript headed "Words and Music by Eddie Zinder," COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7; "Friedrich Lindner" [Eddie Zinder], "Wie lange noch…?! Lied und langsamer Foxtrott," counterfeit sheet music bearing a 1944 Berlin Ufaton Verlag imprint, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Washington–MO–OP–31, "Subversive Music" section; David Williamson to Edward Cushing, "Songs Received from MEDTO," November 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park. See appendix B, figures B.1b–B.1d; the printed score appears in figure B.1c. For the identification of Eddie Zinder with Edmund F. Lindner and the supporting OSS personnel record, see Chapter 5, note 31.

disturb the regular pulse, while shifts between piano and forte turn the accompaniment from confidential support into punctuation. This is not an imitation of Weill's more exposed, tonally displaced question. It offers a singable popular form whose regular beat and commercial sheet-music format could support domestic performance, rehearsal, duplication, or recording. The text is also more declarative. Its opening recalls promises made years earlier; the second verse tells the addressee that the world is large and he is small, that he cannot be omnipotent, that his game is over, and that the speaker will soon be free.[103] The lover-regime doubleness remains, but the political interpretation requires less excavation than it does in Mehring's poem. The shift is significant. Lenya's version weaponizes the moment at which intimacy turns into accusation. Zinder's version converts that accusation into an apparently circulating German dance song that another body might perform.

The sheet music was only one component of the Mediterranean version. On September 22, 1944, Warner transmitted a recording and orchestration to Washington, proposed the number for broadcast through black stations to Germany, and suggested that, even if the discs were not technically adequate, they could serve as a model for interpretation. The accompanying spoken introduction directs the listener to hear the song as an exposure of Hitler's fraud, failed promises, war, destruction, and oppression before instructing the operator that the record should follow.[104]

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[103] "Friedrich Lindner" [Eddie Zinder], "Wie lange noch…?! Lied und langsamer Foxtrott," Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; see appendix B, figure B.1c.

[104] Eugene Warner, Chief, MO Branch, to Chief, MO Branch, OSS Washington, September 22, 1944, memorandum transmitting a recording, orchestration, and introduction for "Wie Lange Noch"; "Speech of Introduction to M-O Tune 'Wie Lange Noch?'"; both in Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

The packet therefore links score, orchestration, voice, and radio framing. It preserves not only a composition but a proposed way of hearing it.

The Mediterranean version reveals how the campaign generated further musical production across Morale Operations. Cushing's rejection of the Warner packet shows that "Wie lange noch?" could move between OSS operations without remaining the same musical object. The Mediterranean office built a new song around the familiar question, giving the campaign continuity through its verbal hook rather than through Weill's music or Lenya's performance. The title became transferable, acquiring new music and a counterfeit German identity as it moved between OSS operations toward possible broadcast. An OSS Morale Operations retrospective from the Mediterranean theater explicitly traced the campaign to MO Washington. It reported that the "Wie lange noch?" series had been conducted "with much success," that prisoner-of-war interrogations showed German troops knew of the subversive campaign, and that its leaflets were circulating among troops in Germany.[105] These reports connect the campaign's coordinated design to encounters beyond the production offices. The recurring question had become recognizable to German troops, and accounts of that recognition returned to MO as evidence for evaluating its work.

The campaign built repeated opportunities for recognition into its distribution. Records, scores, newspapers, leaflets, and stickers made the question available through different encounters, each capable of recalling or extending another. If a broadcast was jammed, the

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[105] OSS Morale Operations, Mediterranean Theater, retrospective report, appendix A, 3, which states that the "Wie lange noch?" campaign was "Originated by MO Washington" and discusses prisoner-of-war recognition, circulating leaflets, the Lindner sheet music, and gramophone records, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 116, folder 1598, Washington–MO–OP–34, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

question might appear in print. If a leaflet was dismissed as enemy material, counterfeit sheet music might look commercially familiar. If the melody was forgotten, the title and *W* could remain. If the anonymous symbol seemed unmoored, a song or newspaper article could supply a voice and grievance. “Wie lange noch?” thus operated as a relay among media. Weill’s tonal instability and Lenya’s intimate accusation gave the question an affective body. The campaign detached the words from that body and multiplied their possible speakers. Zinder’s foxtrot then returned the phrase to music in a form designed to pass as a German popular song. The weapon was not any one version but the coordinated oscillation between specificity and anonymity, between a voice close to the microphone and a mark whose author could be anywhere.

This multimedia design clarifies what MUSAC and related OSS units meant by concealment. They did not always hide propaganda by making it apolitical. They hid its source by making political dissatisfaction appear distributed: sung by a betrayed woman, reported by a factory worker, printed by a German publisher, repeated by an unnamed group, or asked by a soldier who had endured one day too many. The final problem is implementation. These objects became black propaganda only when placed inside a broadcast sequence or covert distribution system whose apparent German origin could make their recurrence seem to arise within German society. The next section returns to *Soldatensender West* to examine that act of placement and the surviving evidence of how MUSAC’s recordings sounded within the station’s flow.

VIII. Satire, Operetta, and Broadcast Implementation

The MUSAC record left the studio with persuasive choices already built into its musical form, but its operational use still depended on placement. Its arrangement, German text, vocal manner, and recorded surface prepared it for covert use, but none of those features alone could

conceal its American production or determine how a German listener would hear it. For radio, that deployment occurred when it entered a broadcast sequence – when an announcer named it or withheld its source, when it followed a military communiqué, when another song displaced it, or when its final cadence gave way to news. *Soldatensender West* did not simply transmit MUSAC's discs. It supplied the frame in which their mixture of familiarity and estrangement could masquerade as German radio.

This shift in scale changes the object of musicological analysis. The preceding sections have examined the song and recording as composed objects: their instrumentation, tempo, vocal grain, rewritten words, generic memory, and cross-media repetition. At the level of radio, however, the relevant unit is no longer the individual number but the succession of heterogeneous sounds. News, speech, dance music, operetta, comic song, interruption, and silence formed a larger temporal design. Broadcast placement could intensify a lyric, neutralize it, or permit it to pass as entertainment. The station was therefore the final arranger of MUSAC's materials. A retrospective MUSAC summary makes this material infrastructure unusually visible. It describes sixteen-inch lateral-cut vinylite pressings rotating at 33⅓ rpm, with four songs on each side. Manufactured in the United States, the discs were intended for powerful British transmitters operating on medium- and shortwave frequencies. The same document reports that MUSAC material was played eight times each week for ten months and gives an output of 312 songs, describing their purposes broadly as unaltered entertainment, lyrics with "black" turns, and sentimental nostalgia.[106] This retrospective shorthand should not be confused

[106] "MUSAC over Soldatensender—Plan/Execution," undated retrospective project summary, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2287, Book II, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The card identifies the project's objective, claimed broadcast frequency and duration, 312-song output, three functional categories, personnel, and disc specifications.

with the more granular classifications preserved in MUSAC's working song tables: NOP ("No Propaganda Content"), SS ("Slightly Slanted"), PSat ("Propaganda Content, Satirical"), and PS ("Propaganda Content, Serious").[107] These labels registered degrees and modes of lyrical intervention rather than self-contained musical styles or the complete strategic function of a recording. A number marked NOP could still attract listeners and sustain the station's cover, while comparable musical idioms could carry satire or direct political argument.

The physical record also imposed a practical order. Four numbers pressed onto a side arrived not as an abstract repertory but as a sequence that had to be indexed, cued, and selected. A producer could play the side as grouped, isolate one band, return to a useful recording, or place it among British and continental commercial discs. In each case, programming recomposed the record's meaning. A sentimental song heard after casualty news did different work from the same song heard between two dance numbers. A parody surrounded by undisguised propaganda might sound like instruction; surrounded by credible entertainment, it could sound like an indiscretion from within German popular culture. At the level of the individual disc, the trace remained materially fixed; at the level of the broadcast, that disc became one component of a new trace composed through sequence. Programming could therefore alter the recording's semiotic function without altering the source recording itself.[108]

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[107] "Table of Songs," 1–10, accompanying Lothar Metzl, "Report on Musac," forwarded with David Williamson's memorandum of May 7, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The classification key defines NOP as "No Propaganda Content," SS as "Slightly Slanted," PSat as "Propaganda Content, Satirical," and PS as "Propaganda Content, Serious." The author consolidated the surviving tables into a single working dataset while retaining these OSS classifications.

[108] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, ix–x, 16–17.

A record's band order documents one arrangement of available material; it does not establish the order of transmission. I therefore distinguish the catalogue or pressing sequence from the sequence specified in a script and from the succession preserved in a broadcast recording. These sources permit different claims about selection, implementation, and the listening situations a program could create.

The MUSAC summary states the objective with revealing bluntness – nostalgic music would introduce defeatism and war weariness by contrasting life before and after Hitler and would "bait" Wehrmacht listeners into remaining for the news.[109] Music thus had two related assignments. It carried argument through words, performance, and memory, but it also managed attention. The first assignment is most legible in a strategically re-recorded and recontextualized number such as "Lili Marleen" or "Wie lange noch?" The second could be performed by an apparently innocuous foxtrot, a comic vocal, or an operetta excerpt. Entertainment did not suspend the operation. It created the continuity on which the operation depended. At the broadcast level, strategic listening became a temporal technique. Because the listener could leave at every transition, succession itself did political work: music recruited attention, announcements redirected it, variety renewed it, and repetition invited return. The station's power therefore lay not in acoustic enclosure but in the repeated conversion of optional listening into an operational resource. These assignments could also coincide within a single number. A sentimental song could sustain contact while inviting a soldier to hear continued sacrifice against memories of home; a comic performance could renew attention while undermining the dignity of an authority.

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[109] "MUSAC over Soldatensender—Plan/Execution," undated retrospective project summary, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2287, Book II, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The card identifies the project's objective, claimed broadcast frequency and duration, 312-song output, three functional categories, personnel, and disc specifications. See also McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 58.

The distinction between attention and persuasion describes related functions, not two separate classes of music.

The retrospective summarizes the scale of production and the institution's account of its broadcast use. Cables, shipment records, and inventories supply a closer view of how that sustained output moved between the studio and the station. On May 1, 1945, Lothar Metzl sent David Williamson a wooden box containing MUSAC recordings 1 through 5 and 7 through 40, noting that number 6 was not among them, together with extra copies and discs for three *Blitzbühne* shows.[110] Metzl's transfer inventory captures MUSAC at closure, after its recordings had already dispersed through the operation. The materials still on hand were one surviving remainder of a larger circulation between New York production and London broadcasting.

The Imperial War Museum's recordings of the last broadcasting day of *Soldatensender West*, transmitted on April 29, 1945, preserve the station after months of accumulated practice.[111] Recorded during the collapse of the Reich, they make audible the musical and verbal succession within which MUSAC had been designed to operate. The recordings examined here comprise nearly the full eleven-part sequence preserved by the Imperial War Museums.[112] Heard as a program rather than as a collection of songs, the material moves among announcements, spoken

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[110] Lothar Metzl to David Williamson, "Muzak," May 1, 1945, memorandum and inventory of recordings and *Blitzbuehne* copies shipped in a wooden box, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[111] Imperial War Museums, "Last Broadcasting Day of British Political Warfare Executive Radio Station Soldatensender West. Broadcast in Germany, 29/4/1945," sound recording, object no. 80005162, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80005162.

[112] Imperial War Museums, "Last Broadcasting Day of British Political Warfare Executive Radio Station *Soldatensender West*," broadcast in Germany, April 29, 1945, Sound 5205, object no. 80005162, eleven-part streaming-audio sequence. The working corpus comprises nearly the complete sequence, although a small number of segments remain unavailable. See the IWM catalogue record: https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80005162.

information, dance and theatrical idioms, and vocal performance. Music is not presented in a separate aesthetic enclosure. It continually resets the register of the broadcast.

This alternation was basic to the station's disguise. A German Army warning from August 1944 accused the station of beginning with the Wehrmacht communiqué and Knight's Cross announcements, mixing genuine and invented news, and interspersing the result with popular music.[113] The warning identified the very technique the station required listeners to experience temporally. Official-sounding speech established currency; music relaxed the discursive pressure and lengthened attention; another bulletin then entered an auditory space made plausible by repetition. The alternation also complicated the act of tuning away. A listener who rejected one statement might remain for a song, just as one who came for music might overhear a report.

At this scale, tempo includes more than beats per minute. It also describes the rate at which the station changed rhetorical posture. An intimate vocal could slow the program's perceived time after compressed news. A comic number could release tension while preserving ridicule. Operetta could expand the sonic space through sustained line and orchestral fullness; a clipped announcement could contract it again. Cadences and introductions became hinges between forms of address. This is a musicology of placement – not only what a number contained, but what preceded it, what interrupted or followed it, and how those relations organized the listener's attention.

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[113] German Army Command, "Dangerous Enemy Propaganda—Warning Against the So-Called Soldatensender Calais," August 26, 1944, English translation reproduced in "MO Black Radio Report," OSS Morale Operations files, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, container 156.

The later portions of the IWM sequence broaden the sonic field in which MUSAC recordings appeared. The singer of "Manuela" and the woman heard in the operatic selection spanning the fifth and sixth IWM files have not yet been identified. The comic number divided across files four and five, however, is Sig Arno's MUSAC recording of "Fuzzy Wuzzy," while the operetta excerpt in file six is John Hendrik's MUSAC recording of a selection from *Naughty Marietta*.[114] These identifications make the stylistic breadth of the sequence more concrete. Arno's "Fuzzy Wuzzy" uses the half-sung delivery and tightly managed comic timing of vaudeville. Hendrik's *Naughty Marietta* selection brings operetta's sustained line and theatrical projection into the same broadcast, while the unidentified women carry it into different popular and operatic registers. The station did not resolve these voices into a single style. Their contrast contributed to its credibility: by moving easily among recognizable forms of entertainment, *Soldatensender West* sounded programmed for listeners, allowing its propaganda to recede into the flow of the broadcast.

Operetta was especially valuable as camouflage because its familiarity did not depend on current political allegiance. A listener could recognize a melodic world, a vocal posture, or an orchestral convention without accepting the station's news. That partial recognition was sufficient to sustain the next transition. The same is true of crooning and intimate microphone address. As the earlier analysis of Dietrich showed, proximity could make a mass transmission feel privately directed. The broadcast did not have to choose between theatrical projection and

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[114] Imperial War Museums, "Last Broadcasting Day of British Political Warfare Executive Radio Station *Soldatensender West*," broadcast in Germany, April 29, 1945, Sound 5205, object no. 80005162, recordings 4–6, author's working copies; Sig Arno and John Hendrik MUSAC session recordings and associated recording documentation, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The performers of "Manuela" and the operatic selection spanning recordings 5 and 6 remain unidentified.

mediated intimacy. It could alternate them, assembling a sonic public whose imagined performers ranged from cabaret comedian to operetta singer to confidential female voice.

MUSAC's *Die Blitzbühne* makes this expanded conception of composition explicit. The project began primarily as the production of American popular songs with German lyrics for *Soldatensender West*, but its staff proposed longer programs for black transmission and prepared *Die Blitzbühne* as a demonstration. The accompanying memorandum described a hybrid of American commercial radio and the political cabarets of prewar Germany and Austria. More importantly, it warned that a digest or translation could convey the show's content but not its "spirit or flavor," qualities it called of prime importance to the performance.[115] For MUSAC's planners, meaning resided in how the material sounded and unfolded, not only in what the words denoted. The show's outline reads like a score for that unfolding. Fanfare and three voices announce the title; a master of ceremonies establishes an imagined Wehrmacht audience; a burst from the *William Tell* overture passes into *Coppélia*; dialogue, topical jokes, songs, and mock-serious recitation alternate until a burlesqued, accelerated Chopin funeral march and a unison finale return to the opening music.[116] These borrowed materials were not incidental quotation. They regulated recognition and surprise. The familiar overtures promised spectacle; abrupt transitions destabilized that promise; altered tempo turned the funeral march into a grotesque

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[115] "MUSAC Project," memorandum introducing *Die Blitzbuehne*, and *Die Blitzbuehne* outline, produced at Muzak Studios, January 26, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[116] *Die Blitzbühne*, Program I, English outline, German script, and related production materials, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

"victory" number. The program's own description called the apparently improvised vaudeville a carefully planned series of variations on one theme – defeat.[117]

The return of "Lili Marleen" as both fanfare and accordion cue in *Die Blitzbühne* Program III extends the same technique from whole song to sonic fragment.[118] The familiar song reappears in different instrumental forms, announcing the final letter and accompanying the collapse of the soldier's expected homecoming. These cues concentrate musical memory into brief dramatic interventions, bringing the song's associations with military life, separation, and return into the spoken scene. The accordion is thereby weaponized through placement. Its force lies not in an intrinsically mournful timbre but in the archive of hearings the timbre activates and in the new speech or scene to which the cue is attached. *Die Blitzbühne* confirms a practice visible across MUSAC – songs could be composed, rewritten, recorded, excerpted, and finally recomposed at the level of the broadcast. The scripts preserve the design of MUSAC's completed programs, while the last-day recordings preserve the station's transmitted sequence. Read together, they reveal how producers at both stages organized musical succession. The scripts show producers arranging material so that each item altered the force of what followed; the broadcast allows that principle to be heard in practice. Covert radio worked not only through individual songs or statements, but through their placement within the program.

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[117] "MUSAC Project," memorandum introducing *Die Blitzbuehne*, and *Die Blitzbuehne* outline, produced at Muzak Studios, January 26, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[118] *Die Blitzbühne*, Program III, "My Dear Waldemar," German script and English production materials, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The script directions specify "Fanfare (Lili Marlene)" and "Accordian - Lili Marlene." The closing English script pages (pp. 6–7) are reproduced in appendix B, figures B.3a–B.3b.

The operation did not end at one administrative instant. On April 23, 1945, W. H. A. Bishop of PWE's Black Propaganda Division praised the MUSAC discs, their attractive dance music and subversive lyrics, and the unexpected quality of their dubbing, while citing prisoner-of-war and listener evidence of their reception.[119] Six days later came the final *Soldatensender West* broadcast preserved by the Imperial War Museum. Metzl consolidated MUSAC discs and *Blitzbühne* copies on May 1. A letter from Kenneth D. Mann to Allen Roth dated May 10, 1945, marked the project's termination and credited Roth's conducting and musical labor with the operation's successful conclusion. Production, transmission, evaluation, and the acknowledgment of musical labor thus reached their conclusions in a sequence of related events. These closing records place administrative assessments alongside the project's surviving sounds and objects.[120] Mann's letter confirms the value the organization assigned to musical workmanship; Bishop's report shows how wartime officials assembled evidence of reception; the IWM recording preserves a broadcast event; Metzl's list records surviving objects. Together, these sources connect the musical labor of production, the sounds of transmission, and the assessments through which officials understood MUSAC's contribution to psychological warfare.

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[119] W. H. A. Bishop to Colonel Forgan, April 23, 1945, reproduced in "MO Black Radio Report," OSS Morale Operations files, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, container 156.

[120] Kenneth D. Mann to Allen Roth, May 10, 1945, Mohawk Trading Corporation letter concerning the termination of the Musak project, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

Conclusion: From Designed Weapon to Historical Evidence

MUSAC designed music as a weapon by treating musical form as a problem of concealed address. Instrumentation could recall military ritual or the sounds of home; tempo could turn triumph into exhaustion; a new lyric could inhabit a familiar melody; an accordion introduction could be detached and repeated; a close-miked voice could make mass radio sound intimate. Gendered voices organized desire, authority, injury, and accusation, while the movement among crooning, cabaret, popular dance song, and operetta gave the station a socially and historically varied German surface. The multimedia "Wie lange noch?" campaign extended that design beyond sound, allowing a musical question to recur as newspaper text, leaflet, sticker, sign, record, and counterfeit score. These techniques reworked broadcast habits whose history Lacey locates in everyday listening and gendered address. Jewish composers, original lyricists, and émigré contributors supplied both familiar repertory and the expertise to transform it. Their work helped make German-language musical opposition possible through cultural practices that Nazi policy had sought to exclude. Hirsch's coordination and Kurer's interpretive labor locate women's expertise within the decisions through which these cultural resources became instruments of musical warfare.

These musical techniques acquired their strategic direction within a system of relations: between an émigré performer and an imagined German soldier, between a New York studio and a British transmitter, between remembered repertory and altered words, and between entertainment and the news that entertainment helped a station deliver. Together, these relations formed an acoustemology of strategic listening. Read through Nattiez, the concept names the institutional feedback loop among these semiotic moments – imagined reception informed poietic decisions, material traces solicited interpretation, and institutional accounts of listeners'

responses returned as inputs to later production. The weapon was a system; listening was one of the ways that system knew.[121] *Soldatensender West* completed the design by arranging these relations in time. Its masquerade depended not on perfect imitation at every instant but on accumulated plausibility—enough recognized music, current information, stylistic variety, and tonal inconsistency to make continued listening possible. Its distributed organization does not remove the weapon from the music: the relations became audible through particular lyrics, arrangements, voices, and sequences intended to reshape feeling and judgment.

The musical designs reconstructed here lead directly to the question of encounter: how did listeners recognize, interpret, and respond to the sounds the operation placed before them? Chapter 5 turns to the materials that returned from the target: German warnings, intercepted commentary, monitoring reports, prisoner-of-war interrogations, listener accounts, and the institutional category of the "comeback." Such sources record encounter unevenly. Some document recognition; some report pleasure, suspicion, or partial belief; others convert fragmentary responses into claims of operational success. Reading them brings listeners' own actions into the history: comparing stations, enjoying a song while rejecting its politics, detecting deception, or repurposing what was heard.

Chapter 5 follows these encounters back into the institution, examining how officials interpreted recognition, pleasure, suspicion, and remembered music as knowledge about the operation. Listening became consequential both for the people who encountered the broadcasts and for the personnel who used accounts of those encounters to evaluate musical psychological warfare. The transnational labor behind an apparently German sound also unsettles the idea of

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[121] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, 12–17.

national voice, while personnel, media, and assumptions about persuasion carry the problem beyond 1945 into reeducation and cultural strategy.

Danielle Stein

Dissertation

Chapter 5

Hearing the Weapon: "Comebacks," Listener Agency, and the Evidence of Musical Efficacy

I. "Pleasant Pieces of Music": From Designed Weapon to Returned Evidence

On August 26, 1944, the German Army Command circulated a warning against a radio station that sounded dangerously familiar. *Soldatensender Calais*, the document explained, mixed authentic and invented reports, opened with recognizable military information, and allowed concise falsehoods to pass without the commentary that might expose them as argument. Music was integral to this deception. "Another trick," the warning continued, "is the broadcasting of pleasant pieces of music between the news items in order to enable slow minds to 'digest' what they have heard before the next dish of news is served."[1] The condescension belonged to the warning's authors, but so did its unusually precise description of musical function. The danger they identified was not simply that soldiers preferred Allied dance bands or that entertainment attracted a larger audience. It was that musical pleasure organized the broadcast in time. A song separated one item from the next, prolonged the interval in which a report might settle into memory, and made continued listening feel less like the reception of enemy propaganda than participation in the ordinary rhythms of a soldiers' program.

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[1] German Army Command, "Dangerous Enemy Propaganda—Warning Against the So-Called Soldatensender Calais," August 26, 1944, English translation reproduced in "MO Black Radio Report," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 156, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," Wash–MO–OP–68, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

The German warning offers evidence of how the broadcast's persuasive construction was recognized by those seeking to counter it. Its attention to pacing, sequence, and the relationship between music and news identifies techniques of psychological warfare audible in transmission, extending the evidence beyond the intentions documented in production records. MUSAC's work did not end with the rewriting and recording of an individual song. Music was designed to persuade through its lyrics, style, and performance, but its strategic function also depended on how it entered the larger broadcast. Its records entered programs in which dance numbers, familiar voices, military announcements, comic sketches, operetta, and news were placed in succession beneath the camouflage of German broadcasting. Within that sequence, music could establish credibility, cultivate emotional associations, redirect attention, or allow a verbal or musical insinuation to resonate after the announcer had stopped speaking. The German Army's metaphor of "digesting" the news therefore names a temporal effect produced by programming—the musical number became entertainment, interval, cover, and a means of retention. The warning is more specific about how music and news were combined within a broadcast than about how an individual song was crafted to persuade. Evidence of the latter lies in the song's lyrics, vocal delivery, and musical arrangement, read alongside the production records documenting those choices. Together, these sources reveal psychological warfare operating both within individual recordings and through their placement in a larger program—a song could carry a persuasive message of its own while also shaping how listeners encountered the news and commentary surrounding it.

An OSS evaluation issued seven months later similarly identified music as a source of audience attraction. On March 29, 1945, Kenneth D. Mann reported to the Board of Review that *Soldatensender West* had attracted a large enemy audience and that prisoners credited its

popularity among German troops to "the excellence of the musical entertainment."[2] Read beside the German warning, the evaluation shows officials on opposing sides treating musical pleasure as a means of attracting and retaining listeners. Chapter 4 followed the weapon from intelligence analysis and lyric writing through arrangement, vocal performance, recording, and broadcast construction. Chapter 5 follows what returned after those musical objects entered—or were intended to enter—the field. The Office of Strategic Services gathered these returns under the category of "comebacks": enemy warnings, intercepted broadcasts and press references, captured propaganda, prisoner interrogations, reports from agents and field units, and later institutional summaries.[3] A comeback was evidence selected and preserved because the office considered it relevant to an operation. Such material reached the file through observation, interrogation, translation, transmission, and bureaucratic interpretation, and that passage formed part of its historical function. Some comebacks document a specific encounter; others show that a German institution noticed a campaign; still others preserve the judgment that the OSS or Political Warfare Executive drew from several reports. Read together, they reveal how campaigns circulated, attracted attention, and became legible to the institutions directing them.

Concealment shaped both the intervention and its archive. "White," "gray," and "black" accordingly name modes of attribution—whether sponsorship was acknowledged, left

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[2] K. D. Mann, Chief, Morale Operations, through Deputy Director, SSO, to the Board of Review, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, 1–2, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Mann also reported 258 German lyrics, thirty-four sixteen-inch discs sent to the field, a minimum production rate of eight songs weekly, increasing use of MUSAC records, and prisoner testimony about musical entertainment.

[3] "MO Black Radio Report," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 156, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," Wash–MO–OP–68, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The surviving compilations use "comeback" for heterogeneous forms of reported enemy or audience response.

ambiguous, or deliberately misrepresented—not the factual accuracy of a message. *Soldatensender Calais/West* was "black" because it concealed Allied sponsorship and occupied the represented position of a German soldiers' station. Wartime offices applied these categories inconsistently, and coordinated campaigns could cross their boundaries. What matters here is the position from which a message claimed to speak – accurate news could appear within a black broadcast just as officially attributed information could remain selective or tendentious.[4]

To preserve the distinctions that the institutional record often compresses, this chapter proceeds through four evidentiary stages. A score, lyric sheet, script, or completed disc establishes a designed intervention: what a composer, performer, or propaganda office made and intended. A shipment, pressing record, broadcast log, distribution report, or surviving program establishes documented deployment: that the object entered a material or transmission channel. An enemy warning, captured copy, listener report, or prisoner statement establishes documented encounter: that a particular person or institution heard, saw, possessed, recognized, or discussed it. Finally, an OSS or PWE assessment that relates those encounters to demoralization, desertion, surrender, or "success" records an attributed effect. Together, these stages allow the archive to answer four related questions: what MUSAC made, where it traveled, who noticed it, and how wartime institutions judged its effects. Nattiez's semiological tripartition provides a musical framework for these archival questions. It distinguishes the processes of production, or poietic dimension; the material trace; and the processes of perception and interpretation, or esthesic

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[4] Office of Strategic Services, General Order No. 9, January 3, 1943, effective January 4, 1943, reproduced in *History of OSS in London, 1942–1945*, vol. 7, "Morale Operations Branch: Basic Documents," 2, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1623, roll 3, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226; "MO Black Radio Report," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 156, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," Wash–MO–OP–68, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

dimension. Applied here, these distinctions connect the institutional and creative work of designing musical persuasion to the recordings, scores, and scripts through which it took form, and to the meanings listeners constructed in encountering them.[5]

Wartime analysts also distinguished evidence of propaganda's circulation and reception from evidence of its military consequences. A 1942 Joint U.S. Intelligence Committee appreciation—a formal assessment based on available intelligence—distinguished apathy, rumor, foreign listening, and war weariness from any demonstrated impairment of German military capacity. A contemporaneous study of Germany's radio public likewise described illicit listening and word-of-mouth circulation while acknowledging that analysts had no definite means of isolating their combined effect. Together, these studies show that wartime analysts separated evidence of attention, circulation, and disaffection from evidence of impaired military capacity. That distinction allows this chapter to treat exposure, dissatisfaction, and memory as consequential effects in their own right rather than measuring every propaganda encounter against the single outcome of military collapse.[6]

That field changes what can be asked of music. The question is not only whether a lyric persuaded, but how a musical object made an encounter possible and what remained available to memory afterward. A timbre might identify a familiar dance-band arrangement before the words became clear. A singer's accent, microphone proximity, or gendered vocal address might

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[5] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 11–17.

[6] Joint U.S. Intelligence Committee, "Morale in Germany," J.I.C. 51, October 1, 1942, enclosing a London J.I.C. appreciation dated September 18, 1942, copy no. 4, J.I.C. Reports, vol. 18.6, book no. 6, box 84D, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1–3; Coordinator of Information, Research and Analysis Branch, Psychology Division, *The Radio Propaganda Atmosphere of the German Public*, R&A Report No. 616, Psychology Division Report No. 28, March 21, 1942, summary, 2, 11–13, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, digital download.

position the listener inside a scene of confidence, flirtation, homesickness, or complaint. A known melody carrying a substituted text could preserve its earlier associations while forcing them against a new political referent. A refrain such as "Wie lange noch?" could continue in stickers, leaflets, and *Das Neue Deutschland* after its sounding voice had disappeared, while the DND march supplied the counterfeit movement with a repeatable musical form. Music could also work more modestly as the pleasant interval that delayed a change of station, the recognizable surface that protected an unfamiliar claim, or the fragment later recalled without agreement with the attached message. Scholarship on wartime broadcasting, amplification, and crooning helps clarify these operations by treating popular music and mediated voice as techniques of address rather than neutral containers for words.[7]

Musical pleasure, then, did not require political credulity. A listener might suspect Allied sponsorship and still prefer the music, compare its news with official communiqués, or remember a refrain while refusing its demand. Chapter 5 therefore locates efficacy in the relationship among music, media, listeners, and institutions. Section II reconstructs how the OSS made "comebacks" from heterogeneous returns; Section III examines listening after exposure; Section IV follows the Westwall song's production and cross-media afterlife; Section V examines *Das Neue Deutschlandlied* and its circulation through music and print within the same larger Morale Operations system. Section VI develops the listener as co-producer, Section VII traces how institutions composed success from comebacks, and Section VIII establishes MUSAC's termination as the boundary from which Chapter 6 will examine postwar repurposing.

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[7] Christina L. Baade, *Victory through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3–5, 60–81; Huub Wijfjes, "Spellbinding and Crooning: Sound Amplification, Radio, and Political Rhetoric in International Comparative Perspective, 1900–1945," *Technology and Culture* 55, no. 1 (January 2014): 148–185, esp. 149–51 and 158–62; Allison McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing: Crooning in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 74–125.

II. Coordinating Campaigns, Producing "Comebacks"

Kenneth D. Mann's March 1945 evaluation joined production, shipment, broadcast, listening, and musical efficacy in a single account. Reconstructing the OSS category of "comeback" shows how offices, media, and acts of interpretation connected those stages. MUSAC chiefly supplied transportable musical components: arrangements, German-language vocal performances, instrumental sides, and occasional playlets that programmers elsewhere could insert into a schedule. It also produced the three complete fifteen-minute *Die Blitzbühne* programs examined earlier. MUSAC's principal broadcast environment was collaborative. British PWE facilities and personnel shaped *Soldatensender Calais/West*, while American Morale Operations supplied recordings, performers, intelligence, funding, and other program material. The station heard by a German soldier was therefore neither a discrete British product nor an OSS station in any simple proprietary sense. Its continuous German sound was assembled from differently governed contributions whose origins had to disappear in broadcast. That dispersal also shaped the evidence that returned.[8]

A European Theater of Operations progress report of November 29, 1944 preserves distinctions that Mann's evaluation condensed. Under "Pancake," MO/ETO reported that six new "Vicki" recordings, fourteen vocal sides, and two instrumentals had been completed and "put on the air," while MUSAC transcriptions from the United States continued to arrive at

[8] K. D. Mann, Chief, Morale Operations, through Deputy Director, SSO, to the Board of Review, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, 1–2, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

approximately eight per week.[9] The sentence places two production streams side by side: theater recordings explicitly connected to transmission and American discs whose arrival is documented without individual broadcast placement. Music was counted as an operational unit, produced and routed in quantities sufficient to sustain a twelve-hour soldiers' service. The verbs preserve that movement: "arrive" records a chain of custody, while "put on the air" records transmission. Together they show musical material flowing from American and theater studios into the soldiers' service. The earlier institutional chapters establish the OSS–OWI jurisdictional arrangements governing this collaboration.[10] Here their consequence is evidentiary – the administrative seams concealed in broadcast separated the records of American production, British transmission, theater programming, and audience response.

Rhoda K. Hirsch's Washington correspondence makes the labor sustaining this movement visible. In the exchanges examined in Chapters 2 and 3, she reconciled song proposals and approval lists, forwarded London lyrics, relayed field decisions, and helped prevent duplicate work across Washington, London, and New York. On February 5, 1945, Hirsch relayed London's high valuation of the project, reported that thirty-six "musacs" had been used between January 18 and February 1, and conveyed its promise to send Cushing a list of unused titles.[11]

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[9] European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army, Morale Operations Branch, "Progress Report, 15 to 30 November 1944," November 29, 1944, under "Pancake," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[10] Elmer Davis to William J. Donovan, June 6, 1944, recommended interpretation of OWI and OSS functions, in *Exhibits Illustrating the History of OSS*, vol. 6, MO Branch, box 99B, tab H, William J. Donovan Papers, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1–2.

[11] Rhoda K. Hirsch to Lothar Metzl, "MUSAC Project," August 4, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Wash–MO–PRO–6; Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," January 3 and January 16, 1945, and "Musac Project," February 5, 1945; Lothar Metzl to Hirsch, "Intelligence for Muzak," January 16, 1945, same series, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence Jan–Feb 1945," Wash–MO–PRO–6; all Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College

Her coordination helped determine which materials reached the studio and how field requirements entered repertoire and lyric decisions. This was administrative authorship with audible consequences: the supply of music depended on bringing intelligence, authorization, texts, and performers' work into a usable relation. Keeping Hirsch within the account of programming therefore extends the gender argument beyond voices heard on air. Women's operational expertise helped organize the conditions under which those voices could be produced, circulated, and heard.

The same arrangement produced the information that returned. A response might first appear in a monitored German broadcast, a captured document, an agent's observation, a prisoner interrogation, a neutral newspaper, or a report from an Allied military unit. Before it reached New York or Washington, it could be excerpted, translated, paraphrased, combined with other reports, and assigned to a campaign. Headquarters summaries then grouped these heterogeneous traces under the single heading "comebacks." The category was operationally capacious. A survey of "Major MO Achievements," for example, treated German jamming of the fictitious "General Beck" program and international newspaper reports that accepted the broadcast as authentic as comebacks to the same operation. Its account of a false "Radio Paris" transmission placed neutral monitoring, French press coverage, reported prisoner belief, and the confusion of American monitors—who considered the counterfeit news important enough that General Omar Bradley was awakened—under the same heading.[12] What returned in these cases

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Park. The February 5 memorandum notes the exception of January 31 within the January 18–February 1 interval; the count is not a nightly rate.

[12] "Major MO Achievements in—ETO—MEDTO—METO," n.d., sections on the "General Beck" program and "Radio Paris," OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, box 21, loose volume, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The document's own organization under the label "Comebacks" is evidence for the category's heterogeneity.

was not one kind of listener response. It was a bundle of countermeasures, circulation, mistaken attribution, press repetition, reported belief, and institutional reaction.

The category's expansiveness gave it operational value. Jamming showed that an opponent had detected a transmission and considered it worth suppressing. An enemy denial confirmed that a forged claim had entered official attention. A field agent who watched soldiers read a leaflet documented encounter more directly than a shipping record. The OSS used such signs to decide whether to repeat a theme, protect an exposed channel, redirect distribution, or continue funding a project. Comebacks were the office's working intelligence – reports selected and preserved because they helped planners judge circulation, recognition, and response. Their evidentiary force becomes clearer when we recover who observed what, under what conditions, and how the observation entered a summary.

Some operations even shortened or partly manufactured the return path. A DND plan intended a forged issue to reach Allied news agencies so that they would treat it as authentically German; the resulting coverage was then archived as proof that the objective had been achieved. Allied publicity enlarged the fictitious German movement and fulfilled a stated operational objective, although it cannot serve as independent evidence of enemy reception.[13] The comeback file records both reactions to an operation and the routes by which Morale Operations generated visibility. MUSAC's records likewise preserve several stages of a return. The November theater report distinguishes material arriving in Europe from material already broadcast. Mann's March review brought such production and field reports together with prisoner testimony about musical

[13] "New Plan," n.d., unnumbered DND page describing intended reception by Allied news agencies, OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, box 21, loose volume, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

attraction.[14] Section VII examines how he made these different kinds of evidence into an account of accomplishment for the Board of Review.

"Comeback," then, named field evidence made legible within the wartime apparatus. It carried the marks of monitoring, translation, custody, inter-Allied cooperation, institutional rivalry, and retrospective selection. Following that passage shows both how an operation circulated and how its effects were recognized and assessed. It also moves the listener from the end of a one-way model into the middle of a contested system: comparing stations, choosing when to remain tuned, repeating fragments, recognizing a deception, or enjoying music whose political address he did not wholly accept. The next section turns to the most revealing evidence of that agency—reports that German soldiers continued to listen after *Soldatensender Calais* had been publicly identified as an enemy station. Once exposure failed to end attention, musical pleasure and political belief can no longer be treated as the same event.

III. Listening After Exposure

On October 31, 1944, an Allied intelligence summary recorded a scene that the German Army Command's warnings should have made unlikely. A prisoner of war reported that *Soldatensender Calais* had been playing loudly at a German Red Cross center near Cologne. "Nobody objected," the summary noted, "and every one listened attentively."[15] The encounter

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[14] Mann, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, 1–2. The thirty-four objects are described as sixteen-inch discs rather than thirty-four individual songs; the report's "like number" refers to 258 arrangements corresponding to 258 lyrics. The same memorandum reports increasing use and summarizes prisoner testimony about musical entertainment's role in attracting the station's audience.

[15] Twelfth Army Group, Daily Intelligence Summary, October 31, 1944, excerpt reproduced in "MO Black Radio Report," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 156, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," Wash–MO–OP–68, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The excerpt preserves a prisoner-of-war account of Soldatensender Calais playing at a German Red Cross center near Cologne. For a separate station-level listening estimate, see Clayton D. Laurie, *The Propaganda*

occurred roughly two months after Army Command had identified the station as a disguised enemy operation and instructed officers to warn their units against it. Exposure, in other words, had not ended listening. The report records attention rather than assent, and that distinction is precisely what makes it valuable. It overturns the binary model on which many accounts of black radio depend – either the disguise remained perfect and the operation succeeded, or the disguise was penetrated and the operation failed. At the German Red Cross center, an exposed enemy station retained an attentive audience.

The setting matters as much as the sentence. This was not a solitary listener furtively turning a dial but a radio sounding in a semipublic institution, where objection—or the absence of it—was socially legible. Loud playback made the broadcast available to people who had not chosen the station themselves, and the absence of objection made continued attention visible to everyone in the room. The account reached Allied intelligence through a prisoner's recollection and was later preserved in a MUSAC file as a comeback. Its selection shows that the office regarded the episode as evidence of the station's continuing reach. The report documents *Soldatensender Calais* being heard attentively in a shared social space after German authorities had exposed it. The August warning makes that pattern clearer. Army Command described *Soldatensender Calais* as "frequently" heard within the army and, "recently," to an increasing extent. Its authors attempted to teach listeners how to recognize the station: the opening Wehrmacht communiqué and announcements of decorations, the mixture of genuine and invented information, the concise delivery of reports, and the "pleasant pieces of music"

Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 205, 287n43. Laurie reports the Twelfth Army Group's claim that 90 percent of prisoners of war taken in summer 1944 listened regularly to *Soldatensender*. The figure concerns reported listening to the station as a whole; it does not isolate MUSAC recordings or measure their persuasive effects. See also Chapter 1, note 23.

separating one news item from the next.[16] Such instruction presupposed more than technical availability. It acknowledged that the station had entered soldiers' listening routines deeply enough to require a counter-pedagogy. Official naming changed the terms of attention rather than ending it. A soldier could accept the warning's attribution and continue to value the music, suspect a broadcast without knowing which item was false, or listen precisely because an enemy source might carry military information suppressed by German media. Recognition could reshape attention without eliminating it.

A December 1944 OSS report relayed Nazi analysts' description of precisely this listening practice: "The soldiers still listen to the various Allied propaganda stations." The analysts attributed that listening partly to the shortage of news at the front and partly to musical preference: "many German soldiers prefer the kind of music the Allied stations broadcast."[17] Although the observation concerned Allied stations collectively, its inclusion in MUSAC's "MO Black Radio Report" shows that project personnel regarded it as relevant to their own operations. Read alongside the Army warning and Red Cross report, the passage documents a consistent wartime understanding – German soldiers continued to listen even when they knew or suspected a station's Allied provenance, and music helped keep them tuned in. That reported preference returns analysis to sound. Dance-band arrangements, familiar melodies, polished émigré diction, and close-miked address could mark a service as abundant and pleasurable before a substituted

[16] German Army Command, "Dangerous Enemy Propaganda—Warning Against the So-Called Soldatensender Calais," August 26, 1944, English translation reproduced in "MO Black Radio Report," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 156, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," Wash–MO–OP–68, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[17] Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, "Effect of Allied Propaganda on German Troops," citing "German Front Morale as Seen by Nazi Analysts," December 1944, reproduced in "MO Black Radio Report," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 156, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," Wash–MO–OP–68, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The surviving compilation repeats the observation in notes attributed to a German war reporter in February 1945.

lyric was fully parsed. A song also created several minutes in which the receiver remained tuned and gave the following announcement a point of entry. Writing to Gordon Auchincloss on June 28, 1944, Ira Ashley had framed this logic through the analogy of commercial radio, with entertainment attracting listeners and the other material occupying the place of advertising. This complicates the retrospective language of music as "bait."[18] Musical numbers were not neutral vestibules leading to propaganda: they shaped the duration, intimacy, and emotional setting in which news was encountered, while particular songs could themselves stage political accusation, ridicule, longing, or refusal. Staying tuned was an enabling condition for persuasion, not its synonym.

Vilma Kurer's recordings reveal how this relationship between entertainment and persuasion could be designed within a number. Chapter 4 examined the contrast between the archival NOP ("No Propaganda Content") designation of "No Love, No Nothin'" and Florian Traussnig's reading of its indirect persuasion. His analysis draws attention to meanings produced through performance and adaptation that a lyric-content label does not exhaust.[19] Set beside the reports of musical preference and continued listening, the example connects the studio's differentiated choices to the station's need to hold attention. A number could offer familiar entertainment while its gendered address carried another invitation to feel or judge. Kurer's case

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[18] Ira Ashley to Gordon Auchincloss, June 28, 1944, 1–2, especially 1, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; "Example of an MO Music Project—'Pancake' over Radio Soldatensender," n.d., OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, container 88, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. For a later account of musical attraction, persuasive design, and reported prisoner listening, see Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 57–58. McIntosh's retrospective account is not treated here as an independently established audience survey.

[19] Florian Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen: Österreicher in US-Propagandainstitutionen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017), 243–50, especially 244–45. The NOP designation records the office's lyric-content classification; Traussnig's discussion interprets the song's indirect persuasion. See also Chapter 4, section V.

establishes a designed possibility of layered persuasion; the station reports show why retaining listeners mattered operationally.

The evidence also helps recover practices hidden by the singular noun listener. Kate Lacey's history of German broadcasting places such evidence within a wider culture in which radio moved among homes, factories, public loudspeakers, and semipublic institutions, while listeners shifted between focused news listening and companionable background sound. In a 1940 survey examined by Lacey, 99% of women respondents reported always or usually performing another activity while listening, even though at least 90% of all surveyed groups tuned in to at least one news broadcast per day.[20] The category therefore conceals both varying degrees of attention and the social life of the set. Radios were domestic and institutional objects around which small groups gathered. News could be compared with official reports, repeated to friends, detached from the voice or station that first carried it, and altered in retelling. In this circulation, music possessed a special portability. A melody, refrain, or performance style could remain memorable even when a listener rejected the announcer's argument; conversely, familiarity with a tune could lend continuity to a station whose spoken claims were being tested. Word of mouth extended the reach of a report, while humming, quotation, and recognition could extend the life of its musical frame. None of these actions required the stable credulity imagined by the phrase "duped listener." They required only partial attention, memory, and a willingness to use foreign broadcasting selectively.

The sonic nationality of MUSAC further unsettled simple attribution. German-speaking émigré performers supplied idiomatic diction and repertorial familiarity, while American studios,

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[20] Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 102–9, esp. 107–8.

popular-song arrangements, British transmitters, and PWE scheduling produced the conditions of audibility. To a listener, those layers did not necessarily resolve into a single national source. Radio's amplified voice could feel close even when its production apparatus was geographically and institutionally dispersed; crooning in particular had made such technically produced intimacy a recognizable feature of popular listening.[21] MUSAC exploited this intimacy, but it did not erase the listener's capacity to hear accent, repertoire, orchestration, surface noise, or programming conventions as evidence. Sonic plausibility was therefore provisional. It offered a position from which the station could be heard as familiar, not a guarantee that the station would be believed to be German.

The familiar surface described here depended on the writers, arrangers, and performers whose professional histories Chapter 2 reconstructs.

Once that provisional quality is restored, the apparently contradictory evidence becomes coherent. German authorities could condemn a station as dangerous while soldiers continued to hear it. Listeners could prefer Allied music without endorsing Allied policy. They could credit one report because it corroborated experience, dismiss another as fabrication, and still return for the next dance number. In a group setting, one person's choice of station could expose others who neither selected nor protested it. For these station-level reports, sustained access is the effect

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[21] Edward Cushing to Morgan S. A. Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944, 2, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Cushing questioned the consistency of authentic German accents and restrictions on OWI and other MO use with requests for American swing and Keller's recognizable voice. Christina L. Baade, *Victory through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 60–81; Huub Wijfjes, "Spellbinding and Crooning: Sound Amplification, Radio, and Political Rhetoric in International Comparative Perspective, 1900–1945," *Technology and Culture* 55, no. 1 (January 2014): 148–85, esp. 149–51 and 158–62; Allison McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing: Crooning in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 74–125. McCracken's account concerns American male crooning; the relevance here is her analysis of microphone intimacy as a technological and cultural effect.

most clearly documented; perfect deception was not its necessary condition. Music maintained attention, stabilized a recurring broadcast environment, and kept information available for comparison after attribution had become uncertain or hostile. That finding establishes an opportunity for persuasion. The case studies ask more specifically what the music invited listeners to feel or judge, and what the returned evidence can show of those encounters.

"Listening after exposure" thus names a historical practice that black-radio histories often miss. The Red Cross report documents continued attention; the German warning documents institutional concern and a theory of musical pacing; and the December analysis records a preference for Allied music. Together they show that musical pleasure preserved a channel even after the cover story became unstable, giving news and rumor continued access to listeners. The Westwall case narrows this history from station-level listening to a particular musical object.

IV. "I Am Like the Westwall": A Campaign Theme Across Media

"Ich bin wie der Westwall / und ich falle auf keinen Fall"—"I am like the Westwall, and I will not fall under any circumstances." Greta Keller recorded this refrain for MUSAC on September 28, 1944, under the English source title "Come With Me, My Honey."[22] The complete German lyric sheet and archival English translation are reproduced in appendix B, figures B.4a–B.4b. The tune's commercial history adds another dimension to this act of adaptation. "Come With Me, My Honey (The Song of Calypso Joe)," by Mack David, Joan Whitney, and Alex Kramer, was published in 1944 and circulated through the film *Meet Miss*

[22] "MUSAC Lyrics: 'Ich bin wie der Westwall,'" English title "Come With Me, My Honey," singer Grete [Greta] Keller, September 28, 1944, record no. 12, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, Entry A1 139, Washington and Field Station Files, container 172, Wash-MO-Pro-6–7, National Archives at College Park. The file's spelling "Grete Keller" is retained in the document description; the performer is Greta Keller. See appendix B, figure B.4a.

Bobby Socks and contemporary dance-band recordings. Its wider recording history includes a British version by Joe Loss and His Orchestra, issued by His Master's Voice. Loss was one of the prominent Jewish bandleaders of interwar Britain. His recording places the song within a commercial dance-music culture whose Jewish participants extended well beyond the singers employed by MUSAC.[23] Recording/source status for the Keller item and other audio discussed here is consolidated in appendix C. See also the War and MUSAC Project Timeline for the recording and campaign chronology.

The lyric sheet identifies the singer, the recording date, and the piece as record number 12, anchoring the song as a specific MUSAC production. Session 18 lists four Keller numbers—"Come With Me, My Honey," "Jenny," "Easter Parade," and "Let's Sing a Song About Susie"—followed by four John Hendrik sides, including "For Me and My Gal" and "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition." Two of Keller's companion numbers make Jewish authorship visible within the same session. "Jenny," from *Lady in the Dark*, brought together Kurt Weill's music and Ira Gershwin's lyrics, while "Easter Parade" was Irving Berlin's.[24] Jewish composers and lyricists thus helped supply the popular repertory through which MUSAC constructed its

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[23] Mack David, Joan Whitney, and Alex Kramer, "Come With Me, My Honey (The Song of Calypso Joe)" (New York: Santly-Joy, 1944); *Meet Miss Bobby Socks* (Columbia Pictures, 1944); Joe Loss and His Orchestra, "Come With Me, My Honey" / "Rosanna," His Master's Voice B.D. 5880, 78 rpm; MUSAC lyric sheet, record no. 12. The MUSAC sheet establishes the source title, not a specific model recording. Loss's place in British Jewish dance-band culture is discussed in Jenni Frazer, "In the 1930s, Yiddishe Band Leaders Had Britain Dancing," *Jewish Chronicle*, December 31, 2020, https://www.thejc.com/news/in-the-1930s-yiddishe-band-leaders-had-britain-dancing-b1l9a1oy.

[24] "Session #18 (Double Session)," September 28, 1944, MUSAK [MUSAC], listing Greta Keller and John Hendrik repertory, RG 226, Entry A1 139, Washington and Field Station Files, container 172, folder 2286, "All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45," Wash–MO–PRO–6, National Archives at College Park. For the source-song credits, see Mark N. Grant, "Lady in the Dark: An Appreciation," Kurt Weill Foundation for Music; and Irving Berlin, "Behind the Songs," entry "Easter Parade." On these writers' Jewish backgrounds, see Neil W. Levin, "Kurt Weill," Milken Archive of Jewish Music; and Library of Congress, "About this Collection," George and Ira Gershwin Treasures, https://www.loc.gov/collections/george-and-ira-gershwin-treasures/about-this-collection/.

German-language entertainment. The topical contrafactum was therefore recorded beside current popular repertory, sharing studio labor and material format with entertainment numbers. Its political work was embedded within the musical stream that supplied the station rather than isolated in a studio event set apart as propaganda.

The refrain's political force drew on the associations that the Westwall carried for German listeners at this moment in the war. Built along Germany's western frontier between 1938 and 1940, the Westwall—a network of bunkers and antitank barriers known to the Allies as the Siegfried Line—was both a major defensive system and a heavily promoted symbol of the Reich's invulnerability. By September 1944, as Allied armies reached the German border, the line had become a test of the regime's promise that German territory could still be defended. The tension between the Westwall's symbolic authority and its uncertain military future supplied the political stakes of MUSAC's "Ich bin wie der Westwall," which brought the regime's promise of defensive strength into the intimate language of popular song. Against this historical background, its satirical maneuver becomes clear – the song turns a symbol of German military defense into a man's intimate humiliation. A woman orders an importunate man to remove his hand from her knee and makes clear that he has no chance with her. The refrain's compact verbal joke depends on the double work of Fall. The idiom auf keinen Fall means "under no circumstances," while fallen makes the Westwall's physical collapse audible inside the woman's declaration that she will not yield. MUSAC did not merely place political words over an attractive tune. It made the tune's repeated refusal carry a military proposition whose force depended upon timing.

The recording's timing sharpened the joke. On September 11, American patrols crossed the German border; by the end of the month, Allied forces were confronting the Westwall itself. The rapid advance across France had encouraged expectations of German collapse, even as

supply problems and renewed resistance slowed the approach.[25] Keller's recording entered the MUSAC catalogue just as the regime's claim of invulnerability was being tested in battle. The lyric planted the fortification's anticipated failure inside its boast: every repetition of "I will not fall" invited listeners to hear its vulnerability before battle had settled the question.

The lyric's political force becomes clearest in Keller's performance, where military language becomes a woman's control of an unwanted encounter. After the spoken interruption "What are you up to?," she refuses the man's advance and turns her body into a fortification:

> I'm like the Westwall,
> I won't fall under any circumstances.
> I'm like the Westwall
> At all times and places
> Listen and get this straight—
> take your hand off my knee.
> I'm like the Westwall
> And you haven't got a chance with me.[26]

The analogy is comic because its scales do not match, but the mismatch gives Keller authority. "Bei mir beisst man auf Granit"—literally, "with me, one bites on granite," an idiom of unyielding resistance—moves from flirtation to building material; the repeated Westwall refrain then makes her individual "no" stand for the failure of military access. The spoken-and-sung alternation matters as much as the wordplay. Spoken objections stage unwanted proximity, while the tune converts refusal into a public refrain. Keller does not narrate Allied superiority from outside German culture. Through conversational diction and the authority of her cabaret

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[25] Charles B. MacDonald, *The Siegfried Line Campaign*, United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1963), 3–9, 17–25. MacDonald records the first American patrol crossing on September 11 and the First Army's late-September expectation that Allied forces might soon bring the enemy "to their knees." "Westwall" is used here for the German term and "Siegfried Line" when following Allied usage.

[26] "English Title: Come With Me, My Honey," MUSAC record no. 12a, singer Grete [Greta] Keller, English translation, RG 226, Entry A1 139, Washington and Field Station Files, container 172, Wash-MO-Pro-6–7, National Archives at College Park. See appendix B, figure B.4b.

performance, Keller voices this judgment from within a recognizable German-language popular style.

The source song's invitation makes MUSAC's reversal especially pointed. Its title promises invitation and movement toward another person. MUSAC reverses that trajectory – the German woman will not "come with" the man, will not take the cinema seat beside him, and will not yield to his advance. A popular dance number organized around approach becomes a song about denied access. The final stanza enlarges the rejection from one man to the military's demand for bodies. "Und wenn das Militär auch Soldaten braucht / mein Enthusiasmus ist ausgeraucht/Even if the military needs soldiers, my enthusiasm has burned out," she denies both the man's access to her body and the regime's claim on her enthusiasm. The Westwall metaphor allows a woman's voice to judge continued sacrifice, while the refrain gives that judgment a compact musical form designed to recur.

The surviving record places "Ich bin wie der Westwall" firmly within MUSAC's production catalogue and the stream of recordings made for Soldatensender. Project summaries describe those records collectively as attractive programming and document large-scale transmission arrangements. No title-level broadcast log survives for record number 12, but the production file and aggregate reports establish its operational place: MUSAC selected, recorded, numbered, and preserved a topical song intended for the station's musical stream.[27] Its refrain

[27] "Example of an MO Music Project—'Pancake' over Radio Soldatensender," n.d., OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, container 88, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; Mann, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, 1–2, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279. Together, the summaries document aggregate production, shipment, transmission arrangements, and reported use of MUSAC recordings.

made the Westwall's promised strength vulnerable to a comic refusal carried by melody and repetition.

The Westwall's reappearance in later leaflet material preserved in the MUSAC file shows that the fortification remained an important operational theme after the September session. "Das alte Lied" ("The Old Song" or, idiomatically, "The Same Old Story") repeats the complaint "Menschenhände gegen Stahl"—"human hands against steel"—across Normandy, France, Belgium, Holland, and the failed winter offensive. It then addresses the German soldier directly: for the second time he has been thrown into Westwall bunkers, but now armor support, fuel, and supply routes have been squandered. Internal references to the winter offensive and to Soviet forces near Berlin place the leaflet in early 1945, months after Keller's September recording. Its inclusion in the file indicates that MUSAC personnel treated the later print attack as part of the project's documentary record.[28]

"Das alte Lied" continued the recording's rhetorical work without needing to quote Keller's exact refrain. Both media seized the fortification that was meant to signify permanence and made it bear evidence of exhaustion. Keller's number did so through musical repetition, flirtation, and the unstable promise "I will not fall." The leaflet did so through serial comparison – the same mismatch between "human hands" and Allied military equipment had returned, but with fewer resources and less strategic hope. By early 1945, Germany's failed Ardennes counteroffensive—the Battle of the Bulge—had consumed scarce men, armor, and fuel without reversing the Allied advance. What had been anticipatory comedy in September had become

[28] "Das alte Lied" and "The Old Song," German leaflet and English translation, CT-47, RG 226, Entry A1 139, Washington and Field Station Files, container 155, Wash-MO-Op-67–68, National Archives at College Park. The early-1945 dating is an inference from the document's references to the failed winter offensive and Soviet forces sixty kilometers from Berlin; the photographed item does not display a production date.

retrospective material accounting. The associated "Generalsbefehl!" brings the sequence from interpretation to procedure. Presented as an order from the commanding general of the opposing forces, it tells men in bunkers, machine-gun nests, and other fortified positions how to signal with something white, emerge under a temporary cease-fire, leave helmets behind, and approach Allied soldiers unarmed. Compliance, it promises, will bring immediate safety.[29] The document performs a task that the song does not. "Ich bin wie der Westwall" makes the line ridiculous and continued mobilization undesirable; "Das alte Lied" renders the tactical position hopeless; "Generalsbefehl!" specifies an action. Read together, the objects disclose a division of persuasive labor among music, argument, and instruction.

Together, these materials show how a single military symbol performed different persuasive tasks as conditions changed: anticipatory comedy in September became post-Ardennes material accounting and finally a practical script for leaving the fortifications. Their coordination lay in thematic succession rather than simultaneous release. Each medium recast the Westwall for a different moment, allowing musical ridicule, printed diagnosis, and surrender instruction to reinforce one another across the campaign. "Ich bin wie der Westwall" thus demonstrates how MUSAC developed a military theme across sound and print. Keller's recording converted the Nazi claim of defensive invulnerability into a gendered comic refusal; the later leaflet recast the fortification as evidence of material exhaustion; and "Generalsbefehl!" translated that exhaustion into instructions for surrender. Their preservation within the operational archive shows that the Westwall mattered not as an isolated joke but as a campaign

[29] "Generalsbefehl! Anweisung für die Übergabe von Bunkern, Maschinengewehrnestern und anderen befestigten Stellungen," CT-47, with English translation "General's Order: Instructions on the Surrender of Pillboxes, Machine-Gun Nests and Other Fortified Positions," RG 226, Entry A1 139, Washington and Field Station Files, container 155, Wash-MO-Op-67–68, National Archives at College Park. The shared CT-47 identifier links the instruction to the Westwall leaflet group.

resource whose meaning changed with the battlefield. The following section examines *Das Neue Deutschland* within the same larger Morale Operations system, where anthem, newspaper, membership card, enemy denunciation, and prisoner reporting leave a denser trail of audience recognition.

V. *Das Neue Deutschlandlied*: Anthem, Counterfeit Collectivity, and Recognition

Das Neue Deutschland belonged to the same larger Morale Operations system as MUSAC, in which musical and printed materials circulated, echoed one another, and reinforced campaigns directed at German morale and perception. DND purported to be an underground German peace movement but was produced by OSS Morale Operations. Its newspaper, agents, prisoner carriers, field-post insertions, and aerial drops gave the invented organization material presence and created repeated opportunities for encounter.[30] Music was woven into this circulation: anthem sheets traveled inside the newspaper, while its pages took up the refrain "Wie lange noch?" examined in Chapter 4. Music and print thus supplied material for one another in a campaign aimed at shaping German morale, perceptions of the war, and expectations of its outcome. DND's distribution reports, German denunciations, and prisoner testimony provide the chapter's most specific evidence of reported musical recall. This evidence illuminates the shared system through the DND anthem, while reception claims about individual MUSAC recordings remain tied to evidence for those recordings.

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[30] "Example of an MO Newspaper: '*Das Neue Deutschland*'—'The New Germany,'" August 1944, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, Entry A1 99, OSS History Office Collection, container 40, National Archives at College Park; "DND Distribution," Morale Operations report, n.d., 5–6, OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, container 40, loose papers, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The latter reports the million-copy miniature drop. Also Christof Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler: The Covert Operations of America's Wartime Secret Intelligence Service*, trans. Jeremiah M. Riemer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 160–62.

Music was not decorative to that attempt. An OSS retrospective explained the decision in revealingly social terms: "Our Movement '*Das Neue Deutschland*,' like any good German movement needed a hymne," and Morale Operations therefore originated a marching tune. Edmund Lindner, an Austrian émigré whom the branch valued for his knowledge of German language, psychology, documents, and the German Army, supplied the song. Roughly printed music sheets were folded into copies of the newspaper and distributed through the same channels.[31] The archive's phrase "needed a hymne" identifies the song's operational task. A platform could state what DND believed, and a membership form could enroll an adherent, but an anthem could make the nonexistent membership audible as a collective voice.

The paradox is fundamental. DND was a counterfeit institution seeking real identification. Its producers did not merely forge the outward signs of a political organization; they assembled practices through which such an organization might be imagined into existence. Reading the newspaper positioned an individual as an informed German dissident. Completing the membership card converted sympathy into a quasi-bureaucratic identity. Singing the march, at least in the scenario imagined by its designers, converted isolated readers into a sounding group. The paper, form, and song thus addressed different dimensions of affiliation—narrative, administrative, and acoustic—while reinforcing the same fiction. Lindner's sixteen-bar melody is correspondingly economical. The surviving sheet presents a single unharmonized line in G

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[31] "Appendix A," retrospective report on *Das Neue Deutschland*, n.d., Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 116, folder 1598, Wash–MO–OP–34, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, 3. The report states that the movement "needed a hymne," identifies the specially produced marching tune, and describes the rough offset sheets folded into newspapers. "Hymne" is the German word for "anthem/hymn." Personnel salary-increase justification for "Mr. Zinder" (Edmund F. Lindner), headings "Job Description" and "Special Qualifications or Reasons for Increase in Salary," approvals February–March 1945, OSS Personnel Files, 1941–1945, Entry 224, box 454, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The form credits his knowledge of German language, psychology, documents, and the German Army.

major, with no elaborate accompaniment or developed instrumental texture. The restricted format made the song portable: it could be printed inexpensively, learned from one page, and supplied with whatever vocal or instrumental support circumstances allowed. Regular phrase lengths and the recurrence of compact declarative units give the text the forward motion of a march without requiring a virtuosic singer. The notation constructs participation as the default performance mode. Rather than showcasing the individuality of a Greta Keller or Marlene Dietrich, *Das Neue Deutschlandlied* offers a melody whose imagined authority comes from voices joining it. The surviving melody sheet is shown as Musical Example 5.1 below.[32]

[32] Edmund Lindner, "Das Neue Deutschlandlied," sixteen-bar melody sheet, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Wash–MO–OP–31, National Archives at College Park. See Musical Example 5.1.

Musical Example 5.1. Edmund Lindner, "*Das Neue Deutschlandlied*," surviving sixteen-bar melody sheet.



Source: Edmund Lindner, "Das Neue Deutschlandlied," melody sheet, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Wash–MO–OP–31, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

The setting also makes political change audible inside a conventional tonal frame.

Lindner begins with images of new life arising from ruins and directs the first half of the song

toward the Third Reich's extinction. Chromatic inflections disturb that passage, while the slogans that follow—no class struggle, no racial hatred, no Führer, no monarch—are set in firmer, more sharply profiled gestures. The final lines descend before regaining the tonic on the image of a Germany served by free people and made enduring through their union. The musical argument does not abandon German national continuity; it moves through disruption toward tonal restoration. In this sense, the ending performs the political fiction on which DND depended – the Reich can perish without Germany perishing, because a different Germany is already available to sing itself into audibility.

> New life blossoms out of the ruins,
> New life will arise again.
> All of us now serve the New Germany;
> The Third Reich must therefore perish.
> No class struggle! No racial hatred!
> No Führer, no monarch!
> Free people serve the New Germany;
> The New Germany will stand forever.[33]

The text belongs to a democratic-national vocabulary that German listeners could recognize without accepting an American political idiom as such. Its language of collective service, freedom, unity, and national endurance recalls the third stanza of Hoffmann von Fallersleben's "Deutschlandlied," the song adopted as Germany's national anthem in 1922: "Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit / für das deutsche Vaterland" ("Unity and justice and freedom / for the German fatherland"). Both texts imagine a national community secured through the concord of free participants rather than obedience to a single ruler. Lindner's references to ruins, class antagonism, and the abolition of the Führer principle make his intervention specific to 1944, while the older anthem supplied a historically resonant lexicon of unity and freedom.

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[33] Lindner, "Das Neue Deutschlandlied," author's translation, lightly regularized. The archival retrospective calls the item both a "hymne" and a marching tune; this section uses anthem, march, and Marschlied to describe those overlapping assigned functions rather than to impose a single stable genre label.

Whether or not Lindner consciously quoted or modeled the older anthem, DND's democratic proposal was voiced through recognizable German national terms rather than through musical or verbal signs of foreign instruction.[34] Shana L. Redmond's account of the anthem helps name the work assigned to this form. Redmond describes the anthem as a "sound franchise": a musical practice through which solidarity, citizenship, and political belonging can be composed, circulated, and repeatedly enacted. Her study concerns Black diasporic movements with constituencies and struggles wholly different from this OSS fabrication. At the level of form, however, the concept clarifies why Morale Operations considered a hymn necessary: an anthem could make an organization seem to possess both a past worth invoking and a body capable of singing in the present.[35]

Within this shared Morale Operations system, the DND march and MUSAC's recordings assigned music different but complementary tasks. A MUSAC record placed a revised lyric inside the intimate address of a professional singer and depended on broadcast repetition. Lindner's march was offered as the movement's own song. Its printed melody collapsed the distance between audience and performer by treating the reader as a potential singer. The sheet did not need to identify an émigré celebrity or an American studio. Its anonymity supported the cover story, while its singability offered a low-cost means of reproducing the movement beyond

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[34] August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben, "Das Lied der Deutschen" (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1841), stanza 3. The comparison concerns the shared democratic-national vocabulary rather than a claim of direct quotation.

[35] Shana L. Redmond, *Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 4–5, 8. Redmond's "sound franchise" provides a theory of anthemic circulation and collective performance; it is applied here to the formal work of the anthem, with the historical difference between Black diasporic movements and DND's fabricated constituency maintained.

the newspaper's physical life. Every hypothetical performance could generate another copy without paper, press, or transmitter.

DND's pages also carried a refrain from the musical campaign examined in Chapter 4. The July 15, 1944 issue used "Wie lange noch . . ." as the headline for an account of civilian exhaustion, hunger, overwork, air raids, separation, and possible death under incendiary bombs.[36] Across song, leaflet, radio, and newspaper, "how much longer?" became a portable structure of anticipation. Its recurrence across media documents coordination at the level of a rhetorical and sonic refrain that could be read silently, remembered as language, or activated through melodies circulating under the same words. Membership cards extended this fiction in an administrative register. Some appeared in a corner of the newspaper to be cut out and retained; others circulated separately with DND materials.[37] Placed beside the march sheet, they reveal a coordinated poetics of affiliation. A completed card individualized the claim I belong, while the anthem supplied the imagined sound of we. Both were portable, memorable, and potentially incriminating once German warnings made DND possession or singing punishable. The related cross-media print comparison appears in appendix B, figures B.2a–B.2b.

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[36] "Wie lange noch . . .," *Das Neue Deutschland*, July 15, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Wash–MO–OP–31, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The article describes the Stuttgart factory worker's exhaustion, inadequate food, long hours, air-raid shelters, and death under incendiaries. See Chapter 4, Section VII, for the longer history of the Weill and Zinder settings (the latter circulated under the "Friedrich Lindner" cover identity) and the multimedia "Wie lange noch?" campaign.

[37] *Das Neue Deutschland*, membership application/card headed "Wie wird man Mitglied unserer Bewegung," valid through April 1, 1945, and later issue announcing "Mitgliedsaufnahme verlängert," valid through May 1, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Wash–MO–OP–31, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Some cards were integrated into the newspaper page; separate printed examples in the research files document distribution with airdropped DND materials.

Distribution reports trace the effort to place DND materials through agents, partisan networks, prisoner carriers, and mass drops. German denunciations carry the evidence from deployment to recognition. Reports in Das Schwarze Korps and Mitteilungen für die Truppe reportedly named the movement and threatened participation, including singing. By identifying the organization and its anthem as practices requiring suppression, German authorities confirmed that DND had entered official awareness; the act of denunciation also publicized the movement further. Press coverage created a parallel circuit of recognition. A copy introduced in Madrid helped generate stories about a German underground movement, and those stories returned to Europe as apparently independent confirmation that DND existed. Forged print, German denunciation, neutral-site rumor, and Allied coverage thus reinforced one another. Music entered this circuit when the march was printed, named in warnings, or remembered under interrogation as one practice through which the movement acquired social reality.[38]

The most important music-specific comeback survives in an OSS retrospective of the DND operation. The report states that prisoner interrogations showed the tune to be known among German troops and that some prisoners remembered both words and music.[39] This links recipients to the anthem at the level of musical memory, a more specific encounter than generic testimony that soldiers enjoyed *Soldatensender* or knew the DND newspaper. The retrospective

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[38] "Example of an MO Newspaper," August 1944, OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, container 40; "DND Distribution," n.d., 5–6, OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, container 40, loose papers; "German Comebacks from *Das Neue Deutschland*," in Washington Branch Progress Report, n.d., 6, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 116, folder 1595, "Progress Reports," Wash–MO–OP–33; "Appendix A," n.d., 2–3, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 116, folder 1598, Wash–MO–OP–34; all Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[39] "Appendix A," retrospective report on *Das Neue Deutschland*, n.d., Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 116, folder 1598, Wash–MO–OP–34, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, 3. The report summarizes prisoner interrogations as evidence that the tune was known among German troops and that some prisoners remembered both words and music.

gives these recollections institutional weight by using musical memory as evidence of DND's reach. An August 1944 summary adds evidence of physical possession and belief in the cover story. It reported that deserters crossed Allied lines carrying copies and quoting DND. It also recorded the statement of a noncommissioned prisoner from an artillery unit south of Bologna who said that he and his comrades believed the paper came from a German underground organization.[40] These are consequential encounters. Carrying a copy across the lines shows that recipients preserved and transported the object; identifying it as indigenous shows that the cover story could work. The report places that interpretation within a specific unit and capture context and documents DND materials being retained, quoted, and understood under the movement's counterfeit identity.

The surviving reports document DND's circulation and the forms of recognition it elicited. The campaign furnished a vocabulary for disaffection, an image of an alternative German community, and recognizable objects that soldiers carried across Allied lines. Several forms of evidence connect its design to these encounters: newspaper insertion and distribution, membership cards, German official responses naming the movement and its singing, and an OSS report of remembered words and tune. Together, these materials show how the newspaper and anthem gave the invented movement a material and musical presence beyond the production office. The achievement of *Das Neue Deutschlandlied* lay in giving a counterfeit movement a compact social form. The newspaper supplied a world in which German opposition already existed; the card invited the reader to enter that world; the anthem offered the sound of its

[40] "Example of an MO Newspaper," August 1944, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, Entry A1 99, OSS History Office Collection, container 40, National Archives at College Park. The report identifies the prisoner as a noncommissioned officer of the 8th Battery, 165th Artillery Regiment, 65th Division, captured south of Bologna. His statement documents an attributed interpretation collected under Allied custody.

members acting together. Its tonal return, regular phrases, and declarative slogans made "New Germany" available as a repeatable vocal position. Reported recall of words and music shows that this position traveled beyond the production office and remained memorable to German troops. Listeners could accept, resist, mock, or strategically perform it; each response required the interpretive labor through which propaganda acquired meaning. Section VI turns to that labor, treating the listener as a co-producer of the musical comeback.

VI. From Listening to Meaning: The Listener as Co-Producer

The preceding cases bring different levels of evidence into view: *Soldatensender* was heard after exposure; the Westwall materials connect a MUSAC song to a theme also developed in print; and reports from DND document remembered words and tune within the same wider MO system.[41] Together they locate musical efficacy in the encounter between designed sound and listener interpretation. This unevenness belongs to the structure of indirect propaganda. Morale Operations could select a melody, commission German lyrics, hire a recognizable singer, imitate a broadcasting genre, and place the result within a station designed to sound German. The listener completed the address by recognizing a style, inferring a source, connecting a topical joke to military experience, deciding whether a news item deserved comparison, or supplying the absent community invoked by an anthem. Nattiez describes this constructive activity as the esthesic process: listeners make meaning by relating what they hear to their own experience.[42] MUSAC's producers sought to anticipate that activity, drawing on cultural knowledge and

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[41] German Army warning, August 26, 1944; Twelfth Army Group intelligence summary, October 31, 1944; "Ich bin wie der Westwall," September 28, 1944; and DND retrospective reports cited above. These sources occupy different evidentiary stages.

[42] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 11–17.

musical practice to solicit particular associations and judgments. Co-producer names the listener's part in this process while preserving the unequal power and deceptive intent of the operation.

Partial belief was not defective credulity. Judgment could be distributed across a program: confidence in a report, pleasure in an arrangement, irritation at a lyric, and suspicion of the station's source. It could also change as military events confirmed or contradicted earlier claims. The listener did not have to choose between total deception and total rejection; they could use the broadcast selectively. Stuart Hall's later distinction among dominant, negotiated, and oppositional decoding offers useful vocabulary for this evidence. A preferred meaning may be built into a message without determining its reception. MUSAC complicates the model further because source attribution was itself part of the encoding. The listener had to decode not only what the record said but who could plausibly be saying it, for whom, and under what institutional cover. Tia DeNora's account of music as a resource for agency rather than a force with uniform effects is similarly useful here. A song may help organize memory, mood, identity, or action, but its capacity emerges through situated use. For a German soldier, the same broadcast could be entertainment, intelligence, forbidden contact, barracks background, or an occasion to perform dissent before trusted companions.[43]

The opportunity to receive a signal also did not ensure that a listener could attend to a performance as music. Danger, fatigue, other sounds, and the immediate demands of military or civilian work could interrupt recognition or make a familiar song irrelevant. These conditions

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[43] Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79*, ed. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 128–38; Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–20, 44–74. Hall and DeNora provide later analytical vocabulary for interpreting the wartime evidence.

qualify the imagined listening situation reconstructed from the production records. The sources support particular reported encounters, not a continuously receptive German audience.[44]

The three cases locate that interpretive work at different points. Keller's Fall pun required knowledge of the fortification and changed meaning as the Westwall's military status changed. The surrounding leaflets supplied a more explicit argument and instructions that listeners could encounter in different sequences. DND could print a card and melody; only a recipient could complete, retain, hum, sing, mock, or refuse them. Coordination existed in production, while coherence in reception had to be assembled.[45] This distinction protects refusal and misrecognition from being written out of the history. A listener could recognize Dietrich or Keller and reject the political position assigned to the voice. They could mistake an émigré accent for a regional, classed, theatrical, or foreign one. They could remember a refrain because it was irritating, repeat it as parody, or enjoy an arrangement while refusing its new words. Conversely, they might accept a report while recognizing the station as Allied. None of these responses is extraneous to the operation. They are among the uses through which the broadcast acquired a life beyond the studio and transmitter. What the propagandist called noise, resistance, or failed deception might still be evidence that the music had entered a listener's repertoire of comparison.

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[44] Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 3–5, 37–38, 80; Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*, 102–9. See also Chapter 5, Section III, on the circumstances of German listening. These works situate opportunities for attention without establishing one uniform experience of music under combat conditions.

[45] "Ich bin wie der Westwall," record no. 12, RG 226, Entry A1 139, container 172; "Das alte Lied"/"The Old Song" and "Generalsbefehl!," CT-47, RG 226, Entry A1 139, container 155. For the DND retrospective and "comeback" reports, see the sources cited in section V.

The same interpretive model refines "sonic nationality." German-ness did not reside naturally in a voice, melody, or arrangement; it emerged from a cluster of cues—pronunciation, vocal register, repertory, orchestration, announcer framing, technical sound, and placement within a soldiers' station—that listeners still had to interpret. Chapter 4 traced how émigré crooning and cabaret voices produced proximity; Baade, Wijfjes, and McCracken clarify the broader history of that mediated intimacy.[46] Such cues could make Allied production sound familiar without turning nationality into an acoustic essence. Station context could naturalize contradiction—a singer followed by military news, a dance record by rumor, entertainment by surrender appeal—while listeners could disaggregate the sequence. Music might authorize news or remain detachable from it. Designers counted on accumulation; listeners could select, reorder, discuss, or forget.

This framework clarifies the relationship between music's deliberate construction as a weapon and the limits of institutional control over its reception. Weapon was a term used by wartime practitioners and also names the deliberate intervention reconstructed in this dissertation: institutions selected targets, commissioned music, and coordinated its delivery to influence German perceptions and conduct. The lyrics, arrangements, voices, and scripts show how that purpose entered musical construction; reception evidence traces how listeners encountered and interpreted those designs. A recorded song could be rebroadcast, overheard, misidentified, remembered selectively, detached from its revised text, or turned against the

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[46] Christina L. Baade, *Victory through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 60–81; Huub Wijfjes, "Spellbinding and Crooning: Sound Amplification, Radio, and Political Rhetoric in International Comparative Perspective, 1900–1945," *Technology and Culture* 55, no. 1 (January 2014): 148–85, esp. 149–51 and 158–62; Allison McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing: Crooning in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 74–125. McCracken's American history is used comparatively.

purpose of its makers. Its repetition multiplied opportunities for persuasion while dispersing control over its uses and meanings.

The operation's intended effects depended upon an interpretive relation beyond administrative control. A melody could hold attention because it had earlier associations; a voice could sound intimate because broadcasting and popular culture had trained particular habits of listening; a topical lyric could work because the listener supplied knowledge of military conditions; an anthem could promise solidarity because singing was already a social practice. In every case, the intended effect relied upon capacities that belonged partly to the audience. Those capacities could be recruited, but not owned. What returned to the OSS and PWE were the forms of evidence the offices could collect: a prohibition, a receiver reportedly in use, a prisoner's recollection, a captured paper, an enemy denunciation, or a remembered tune. These comebacks gave evaluators material from which to assess attraction, demoralization, and success. Section VII examines how musical efficacy became institutionally legible and entered wartime memory.

VII. From Wartime Evaluation to Institutional Memory

If the listener co-produced the meaning of musical propaganda, the institution organized its evidence. By spring 1945, Morale Operations no longer needed only to make, ship, and place records. It also had to explain what that labor had accomplished, whether the expense should continue, and which features of the operation deserved preservation. The resulting evaluations performed a second act of composition: production totals, field reports, prisoner statements, British praise, and musical judgments were arranged into a coherent account of success. These documents made field returns administratively legible and established music's role in attracting an enemy audience. Applying Nattiez's distinction to the evaluators' work brings another act of

interpretation into view. Reported responses became material for institutional judgments about musical efficacy, which officials offered to guide decisions about the project's continuation and future use. These institutional readings connect musical reception to the production of knowledge through strategic listening.

Kenneth D. Mann's March 29, 1945 memorandum to the OSS Board of Review makes that conversion unusually visible. The document was written in response to a review of current Morale Operations projects, and its form joined narrative description to authorization, personnel, status, accomplishments, expenditure, and termination. Mann first situated MUSAC within the joint British-American Pancake operation and described *Soldatensender West* as a twelve-hour service of news, entertainment, and music. He then moved immediately from programming to reception: the station had attracted "a large enemy audience," he asserted, as proven by prisoners of war, most of whom attributed its popularity to "the excellence of the musical entertainment." By presenting the prisoner statements collectively, Mann made audience attraction an accomplishment that the Board could assess alongside the project's administrative record.[47]

The second page made unlike things commensurable. As of March 26, Mann reported 258 original German lyrics, a corresponding number of arrangements, thirty-four recorded discs sent to the field, and a minimum production rate of eight songs per week. He placed those countable outputs beside the assertion that "hundreds" of prisoners had testified that musical entertainment was largely instrumental in building the station's audience. The same evaluation also recorded expenditures of $45,243.62 through March 23 and an estimated future cost of $750 per week. The numbers gave the project duration, scale, and fiscal shape, while "hundreds" gave

[47] Mann, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, 1–2.

audience response a numerical scale. The interviews were summarized in the aggregate, but the report's structure makes their importance clear – Mann placed evidence of audience attraction beside production and cost because the Board was evaluating the project as a whole.[48]

That compression served the document's institutional purpose. The Board was deciding the status and continuation of a secret project rather than conducting independent audience research. Mann noted that production should remain in "full swing" until the jointly operated station ended its programs and that further work might be requested during the occupation. He also emphasized the use of a dummy corporation as cover and warned that the project should not be discussed with anyone outside the OSS. Written for a restricted internal audience, the memorandum shows what Morale Operations represented to its own reviewers as worthy of continued funding. It made MUSAC reviewable by turning musical labor into outputs and returned field reports into accomplishment.

Retrospective project sheets made the same conversion more schematic. "Musac over Soldatensender" aligned situation, objective, implementation, output, and prisoner testimony into a completed operation. A near-duplicate sheet folded MUSAC into the broader Pancake project, while "Black Radio: Musak Project" named American tunes, German lyrics, orchestration, established Continental artists, and placement on black stations before invoking "numerous cables and reports" as validation. Their repetition belongs to a shared citation circuit, but that circuit is itself evidence of the features the OSS chose to preserve: component, station, repertory,

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[48] K. D. Mann, Chief, Morale Operations, through Deputy Director, SSO, to the Board of Review, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, 1–2, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

and reported popularity were folded into one remembered project.[49] W. H. A. Bishop's April 23 letter supplied the strongest inter-Allied commendation. PWE personnel praised the OSS contribution to the musical entertainment of *Soldatensender West*, joining "attractive dance music" to "subversive lyrics" and singling out the ingenuity of replacing English vocals with German words.[50] This was a precise judgment about MUSAC's sonic labor from the institution that scheduled and transmitted the material. It adds PWE's evaluation to Morale Operations' account and confirms that British practitioners valued the conjunction of musical attraction and redirected address.

These documents formed a citation circuit. Prisoner statements and field cables were summarized for administrators; administrative conclusions became retrospective project sheets; inter-Allied praise confirmed the value of the partnership; and the surviving summaries supplied later institutions with a compact narrative ready for public retelling. At each stage, the story grew more coherent as individual encounters became less visible. The archive records success in the categories wartime institutions could preserve: production, circulation, audience attraction, technical ingenuity, collaboration, and enemy response. The CIA's later account of Marlene

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[49] "Musac over Soldatensender," n.d., Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2287, Book II, "MUSAC Project with Straight Lyrics and Photographs of MUSAC Artists"; "Example of an MO Music Project—'Pancake' over Radio Soldatensender," n.d., OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, container 88, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; "Black Radio: Musak Project," n.d., OSS History Office Collection, Entry A1 99, container 88, loose papers, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The near-duplicate sheets belong to the same retrospective citation circuit. For a later recollection of prisoners' attachment to Dietrich's voice and themes of homesickness and war weariness, see Elizabeth McIntosh, interview in *A Woman at War: Marlene Dietrich Remembered*, ed. J. David Riva (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 89–94. Her separate account of listening with OSS colleagues in China on page 93 is not evidence of German prisoner listening; neither account establishes a population-wide listening percentage.

[50] W. H. A. Bishop, Major General, Political Intelligence Department, to Colonel Forgan, April 23, 1945, extract reproduced in "MO Black Radio Report," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 156, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," Wash–MO–OP–68, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

Dietrich's wartime service shows how MUSAC has been presented to a public audience. Centering Dietrich's voice and her association with "Lili Marlene," it connects her OSS recordings to a broader account of music's contribution to psychological warfare.[51] The song's popularity, German official warnings against the broadcasts, and claims of demoralization become closely connected elements of this narrative. The account gives less attention to the distinctions among recordings and broadcasting stations, or to the collaborative work through which the music was produced and deployed. Dietrich's prominence provides a recognizable point of entry into this history, while the archival record brings additional participants, musical decisions, and institutional relationships into view. The Conclusion returns to this commemorative history to examine how particular performers and songs have shaped later understandings of musical psychological warfare.

The evaluations preserved an account of success centered on sustained production, musical attraction, and inter-Allied collaboration. Read alongside Hirsch's coordination and Kurer's performance work, those summaries reconnect the heard result to the Jewish cultural knowledge and women's expertise that helped produce it. This dissertation's contribution is to trace that relation across the studio, the broadcast sequence, and the returning intelligence, treating musical warfare as a coordinated practice of making sound and learning through listening. As field evidence passed into summaries and public commemoration, the institutions retained a usable account of what musical work had accomplished while individual listening encounters became harder to recover. That account also informed proposals for occupation. The

[51] Central Intelligence Agency, "Marlene Dietrich: Singing for a Cause," originally published October 23, 2008, republished March 30, 2020, https://www.cia.gov/stories/story/marlene-dietrich-singing-for-a-cause/.

chapter therefore closes by separating the recording project's documented end from the methods and claims its evaluators hoped to preserve.

VIII. Termination and the Postwar Planning

MUSAC's termination brought its recording work to a close while officials were still considering future uses for musical psychological warfare. On April 27, 1945, John C. Hughes informed David Williamson that Lothar Metzl's work and "the project in which he has been interested" were to be discontinued, and that the space Metzl occupied in the New York office would become available after May 10.[52] The memorandum gave this ending a practical form – the project was losing its authorization to continue and the office space from which its work had been organized. The arrangements that had sustained its regular production would have to be reconsidered if further musical work were undertaken. The decision followed Kenneth D. Mann's March evaluation, which had kept open the possibility that additional musical material might be requested during occupation.[53] Mann's account brought production, expenditure, and reports of audience response together as evidence of the project's value. His assessment made continued work conceivable, even as the subsequent termination order closed the existing operation. The relationship between these documents distinguishes the recording project's institutional life from the knowledge its participants had accumulated about musical persuasion.

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[52] John C. Hughes to David Williamson, Chief, European-Mediterranean Section, Morale Operations, April 27, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. The memorandum states that Metzl's work and project were to be discontinued and that his office space would become available after May 10.

[53] K. D. Mann, Chief, Morale Operations, through Deputy Director, SSO, to the Board of Review, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, 1–2, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

The cases examined in this chapter give that accumulated knowledge specific musical and operational form. Keller's Westwall song turned a military boast into the language of intimate refusal. Within the wider Morale Operations system, DND's anthem and printed materials offered words, music, and objects through which an invented German opposition movement could become recognizable. Broadcast sequences placed musical interventions alongside news, commentary, and entertainment, allowing their meanings to develop through repeated and varied encounters. These practices drew on cultural familiarity, gendered performance, and the expertise of composers, arrangers, performers, researchers, and administrators. They show how psychological warfare entered both the construction of musical material and the circumstances of its circulation.

The evidence returning from those encounters also became an institutional resource. German warnings, reports of continued listening, captured materials, and remembered words and tunes gave the office information about how its campaigns were being encountered and interpreted. These returns informed assessments of credibility, recognition, and musical appeal. In this sense, the project's history joins the production of persuasive sound to the production of knowledge through listening. Its evaluations preserved accounts of that experience that could support proposals for future work. Occupation planning raised new questions about the purposes to which this knowledge might be directed. Techniques developed to unsettle an enemy's confidence could be proposed for influencing political life after military defeat, changing the relationship between the institution producing the message and the people it addressed. Chapter 6 follows those proposals, the materials and personnel that carried wartime experience forward, and the changing uses of concealed musical address. MUSAC's closure provides the starting

point for asking how knowledge acquired through wartime musical production and listening entered plans for the postwar world.

Danielle Stein

Dissertation

Chapter 6

MUSAC Resonances

I. Project Sunset: Propaganda Content, Attention, and Secrecy

MUSAC ended as a recording operation while its administrators were still arguing for the future usefulness of its methods. Chapter 5 closed with the April 27, 1945 decision to discontinue Lothar Metzl's project and release its New York office space after May 10. That termination establishes the starting point for this chapter. What followed was an uneven process in which recordings, cultural expertise, personnel, and claims about musical persuasion acquired uses and proposed uses beyond the campaign that had brought them together. The knowledge at stake concerned how to construct psychological warfare through music: how words, arrangement, voice, gendered address, and program sequence could work upon an enemy audience's attachments and judgments. The project's closure and the survival of that expertise are an extension of that history.

This chapter follows those resources through postwar planning, the debate over clandestine German reeducation, and the reorganization of American intelligence. The Guatemalan case connects MUSAC to Metzl's later work in PBHISTORY and to music's place in radio and film propaganda. Radio Swan follows musical entertainment into an operation that gathered information from listeners, while the Iranian and Nicaraguan cases extend the history through the political work of sponsorship, transmission, and monitoring. These developments belong to the dissertation's acoustemology of strategic warfare: the ways military and intelligence institutions produce, organize, and operationalize knowledge through sounding and

listening. Within that framework, strategic listening connects knowledge of audiences to decisions about persuasive content and delivery, and follows the information that returns through reception and assessment. The postwar history asks how institutions preserved and reorganized that relationship as their personnel, targets, and political settings changed.

The March 29, 1945 evaluation examined in Chapter 5 had already anticipated that the Psychological Warfare Division might request further musical material during the occupation. Its account of production and reported audience attraction presented MUSAC as a resource for possible continued work even before the project ended.[1] Further commissions would have carried its accumulated expertise in musical persuasion into occupation broadcasting. The report thus introduces the question that organizes this chapter: how might the knowledge and methods developed to influence German listeners during the war be redirected after military defeat?

On May 7, 1945, David Williamson forwarded to Colonel Mann a terminal report prepared by Metzl at the completion of the operation. Metzl traced organizational work from June 1944, dated the first session of the Muzak studio series to July 7, and described production continuing through April 1945. The accompanying song table extended through April 19. He counted forty-eight recording sessions, including single and double sessions, and an output of more than three hundred songs. These figures describe the completed project and should be distinguished from the interim totals in Mann's March evaluation.[2] Metzl also explained what the

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[1] K. D. Mann, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, 1–2, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, container 172, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

[2] Lothar Metzl, "Muzak," MUSAC terminal report, n.d., forwarded with David Williamson to K. D. Mann, "Musac Project," May 7, 1945, unpaginated, container 172, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. July 7 marks the beginning of the Muzak studio session series; the earlier Weill–Lenya recording discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 remains a distinct production event.

production process had taught its participants. Staff consulted *Variety* popularity polls, researched successful songs from previous seasons, and differentiated selections by type, mood, and tempo. Familiarity and variety helped maintain enemy interest while furnishing materials for persuasion: remembered pleasures, sentimental attachments, comic expectations, and recognizable ways of singing. As Chapters 3 and 4 have shown, the recordings transformed these resources through German lyrics, arrangement, casting, and performance. Metzl's cabaret satire, performers' vocal personae, and the calibration of overt and indirect propaganda belonged to the construction of the music itself. The terminal report converted those working practices into a statement of operational knowledge.[3] Its concluding page is reproduced in Appendix D, Figure D.1. See also the War and MUSAC Project Timeline for the project's closing dates.

The skills discussed in Chapter 2 remained attached to particular practitioners. Goehr's experience in broadcasting and arranging and Metzl's work in political cabaret help explain what they brought to MUSAC.[4] Postwar proposals show which people and practices officials sought to retain, allowing the continuation of this expertise to be traced through specific institutional decisions.

Metzl's concluding claim explicitly rejected the reduction of entertainment to bait. Professional entertainment attracted and retained an enemy audience, but, properly employed, it could itself become propaganda and a "strong weapon of psychological warfare." The distinction matters for the history that follows. MUSAC's musical work sought to redirect feeling and judgment within the performance, through nostalgia, ridicule, erotic address, doubt, and

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[3] Metzl, "Muzak," terminal report forwarded May 7, 1945, unpaginated.

[4] See Chapter 2, the biographical discussions of Lothar Metzl, Rudolf Goehr, Kurt Weill, and the MUSAC performers; and Chapter 3, the division of creative and administrative work. The individual histories distinguish Jewish émigré participation from other anti-Nazi and American participation.

imagined alternatives to continued sacrifice. Attention made that intervention possible; it was not its final objective. Metzl offered the project's accumulated experience in making music persuasive as knowledge that intelligence work could use again.[5] The language of weaponry also appeared in the project's closing correspondence. On May 10, 1945, William J. Donovan thanked producer Lester O'Keefe for ten months of service and praised the professionalism of the recordings. He credited O'Keefe's cooperation with OSS staff with "producing a psychological weapon which played its part effectively."[6] The acknowledgment linked the operation's strategic purpose to the civilian expertise through which its recordings had been made. Read beside Metzl's assessment, it places professional musical production within the institution's own understanding of psychological warfare. Donovan's letter is reproduced in Appendix D, Figure D.2.

The gender analysis developed in Chapter 4 identifies one of the mechanisms of that persuasion. Lyric content, propaganda classification, musical style, singer gender, and performer type worked together to position an apparent speaker in relation to a listener. A sentimental voice could make withdrawal from military obligation sound like intimate permission; a cabaret performer could turn authority into an object of ridicule; a familiar male voice could move from recollection toward collective exhortation. Dietrich's authority, Keller's satire, and Hendrik's nostalgia complicated any fixed division between feminine intimacy and masculine command. These were constructed relationships among text, voice, persona, and political purpose. They are

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[5] Metzl, "Muzak," terminal report forwarded May 7, 1945, concluding assessment, unpaginated.

[6] William J. Donovan to Lester O'Keefe, May 10, 1945, OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, "Withdrawn Records," Entry A1-210, Box 429, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park.

part of the expertise whose postwar survival this chapter traces.[7] Preserving that expertise also involved controlling knowledge of the operation. On August 31, 1945, Herbert Little returned Dietrich's recordings while privately acknowledging the importance of her participation and reminding her that security restrictions still governed disclosure of their purpose. A performer could recover a musical object without receiving permission to make its operational history public. On July 24, 1951, Dietrich wrote to Donovan seeking release from her undertaking not to use the OSS recordings commercially, so that Columbia could issue them. MUSAC thus entered the postwar period through two linked processes: its methods were being described as valuable, and knowledge of those methods remained restricted.[8]

II. From Demoralization to Reeducation

The February 1945 OSS planning paper *The Role of MO in the Post-War Period* approached the future of psychological warfare by redefining the circumstances in which its methods might operate. It emphasized that black propaganda did not necessarily depend on false content. Even "unadorned truth" could be circulated by black means when its actual sponsor remained hidden. Information originating with American authorities might acquire a different political meaning if audiences encountered it as an intervention from within their own society.

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[7] See Chapter 4, Sections I, IV, and V, especially the analysis of audience research, double meaning, and "Voice, Gender, Celebrity, and Recognition"; and Chapter 5, Section IV, for Keller's Westwall song. The analysis distinguishes singer gender, professional persona, vocal technique, lyrical role, and imagined listener.

[8] Herbert Little to Marlene Dietrich, August 31, 1945, box 112, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Marlene Dietrich to William J. Donovan, July 24, 1951, OSS Collection, CIA-RDP13X00001R000100090007-8, Central Intelligence Agency, Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp13x00001r000100090007-8.

The paper treated that difference in attribution as a capability worth retaining.[9] Its "destructive" proposals extended wartime objectives into the anticipated aftermath of German defeat. Surviving Nazi organizations, militaristic youth and veterans' groups, parts of the former officer corps, and industrial interests associated with the regime remained potential targets. Surrender would end the military campaign without, in the planners' view, eliminating political formations capable of obstructing American objectives. Psychological warfare could consequently be redirected from an enemy army toward organizations and tendencies within a defeated society.

"Constructive MO" proposed a further extension. The branch could cultivate groups its planners identified with democratic reconstruction and American interests: selected labor organizations, youth and student networks, veterans' groups, and political associations. Film, theater, radio, and print would support the sustained dissemination of democratic ideas. The designation "constructive" expressed the planners' judgment about the political ends of their work. It did not remove the contradiction between encouraging democratic agency and concealing the foreign authority helping to organize it.[10] The report located persuasion in relationships as well as messages. Its phrase "the confidential voice of an accepted friend" described an alternative to overt pressure from a recognizable foreign authority. Agents might work through legitimate businesses, the press, scientific missions, or international organizations, while local collaborators could participate without knowing the full American purpose. In MUSAC, comparable attention to apparent source had shaped the choice of language, voice, and broadcast setting. The postwar paper proposed applying that knowledge beyond a musical

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[9] "The Role of MO in the Post-War Period," February 1945, 1–6, box 112, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[10] "The Role of MO in the Post-War Period," February 1945, 1–6.

operation, making social familiarity itself a channel through which external political objectives could appear locally generated.[11]

Mann's March 30, 1945 letter to Edward W. Barrett of the Office of War Information brought this reasoning into a proposed collaboration over German reeducation. OSS writers could place material in apparently German publications and extend similar methods to rumors and "perhaps radio." His April 2 "'Re-education' Plan for Germans" made the institutional stake explicit: cooperation with OWI might assure the future of MO as an operating branch. Read beside the March 29 MUSAC evaluation, these documents show officials assessing wartime work while seeking a place for their expertise after hostilities. The proposed partnership made the redirection of wartime psychological warfare inseparable from the struggle to secure MO's postwar institutional role.[12]

The proposed relationship with OWI was complementary. An acknowledged American agency could announce policy, while covert material could make similar ideas appear within an internal German discussion. A newspaper article, an editorial, a rumor, and a broadcast might therefore carry related arguments under different apparent authorities. These proposals carried forward a principle central to MUSAC's persuasive construction: the apparent identity of a speaker could help make a political intervention credible. The intended setting had changed from enemy broadcasting to occupation, where the same concern with who appeared to speak would shape attempts to influence reconstruction.

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[11] "The Role of MO in the Post-War Period," February 1945, 1–6.

[12] K. D. Mann to Edward W. Barrett, Executive Director, Overseas Branch, Office of War Information, March 30, 1945; and Mann, Chief, Morale Operations, through Deputy Director, Strategic Services Operations, to the Director, "'Re-education' Plan for Germans," April 2, 1945; both in folder 1554, "CHRONO—April 1945," box 112, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

Administrative design reflected the same concern with visibility. The November 1, 1944 proposal for MO activities in the U.S. Group Control Council contemplated the less revealing designation "Foreign Opinion Section." The camouflage would extend beyond the source of an individual article or broadcast to the office responsible for arranging it. Related papers, "MO in U.S. Group C.C." and "MO/SI Collaboration Plans for Post Hostilities," proposed clandestine radio, rumor networks, German-produced films, cultivation of influential people, covert opinion sampling, and the retention of personnel through collaboration with Secret Intelligence. The occupation plans joined influence to observation: the capacity to act depended on knowledge of the political environment and of responses within it.[13]

These plans illuminate a change in the relationship between institution and audience. A soldier addressed as an enemy during war would become a civilian living under Allied occupation. Speech presented as originating within German society could then help determine which German political voices were heard as credible participants in reconstruction. The method's advocates understood that an argument might become more acceptable when its foreign sponsor disappeared. The debate over *Das Neue Deutschland* exposed the political costs of making that disappearance a condition of democratic persuasion.

III. DND and the Limits of Covert Reconstruction

The May 1, 1945 "Discussion of MO Possibilities During Occupation" gave the proposed transition a long horizon. Drawing on the occupation objectives articulated at Yalta earlier that

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[13] K. D. Mann to the OSS Director, "OSS Berlin Mission for U.S. Group C.C.—MO Activities," November 1, 1944, 1–3, box 111, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; "MO in U.S. Group C.C.," n.d., and "MO/SI Collaboration Plans for Post Hostilities," n.d., both in a loose volume without a folder, box 21, Entry A1 99, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

year, it described a reorientation of German political, cultural, and economic life. Its authors reported estimates that the task might require at least fifteen years. They therefore questioned whether isolated leaflets, rumors, clandestine newspapers, and radio interventions were sufficient. A continuing organization embedded in German life might secure adherence, or at least non-opposition, to occupation objectives more effectively than repeated anonymous interventions.[14]

For MO planners, DND offered a possible foundation. As Chapter 5 established, DND and MUSAC belonged to the same larger Morale Operations system, within which music, print, and broadcasting supplied material and recognition for one another. DND's newspaper purported to speak for a German peace movement; membership cards gave that fiction an administrative form; Edmund Lindner's *Das Neue Deutschlandlied* gave it a collective musical voice. Anthem sheets circulated inside the newspaper, whose pages also carried "Wie lange noch?" The wartime reports of retained cards, quoted newspaper material, and remembered words and tune made the operation appear to its evaluators to possess an audience that could be addressed again.[15] The May 1 plan proposed sustaining that represented community during occupation. A clandestine party could publish newspapers and pamphlets and potentially operate a radio station. Its political philosophy would support American objectives while appearing to arise from German democratic tendencies. Only after the movement became sufficiently established might control pass elsewhere. The proposal thus extended beyond disguising the origin of an individual leaflet,

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[14] "Discussion of MO Possibilities During Occupation," May 1, 1945, 1–3, box 119, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[15] "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," including "Subversive Music," folder 1594, Washington–MO–OP–31, container 115, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 5, Section V, for the DND anthem, newspaper, membership materials, cross-media circulation, and reports of reception. The musical analysis distinguishes the DND anthem from the different settings of "Wie lange noch?"

editorial, or broadcast. It sought to cultivate a political organization whose apparent German origin would make an externally supported program more usable to German adherents.[16]

The memoranda of May 13 and June 1 sharpen this sequence. The first proposed continuing DND "on a clandestine or disguised basis" for reeducation, invoking reported German belief in its spontaneous domestic origin. The second presented its newspaper as a vehicle for "constructive post-war thinking" and contemplated an actual German party receiving secret Allied support. An institutional interpretation of wartime reception was being converted into an argument for prospective policy.[17] Planners drew on reports of recognition to argue that DND could retain political value under occupation. Music had helped give that recognition a collective form: the wartime anthem voiced the fictional movement in the first-person plural, arranging political affiliation in regular phrases and coordinated rhythm. The postwar memoranda emphasized DND's name, apparent German origin, and claim to an audience as resources for further political organization. The movement's musical and printed forms thus belonged to the history through which a usable position of address had been constructed. The June 1 memorandum is reproduced in Appendix D, Figures D.3a–D.3b.

The danger of disclosure was part of the contemporary debate. A June 19 memorandum asked what would happen if the United States secretly subsidized a German party and its leader later revealed American control. The resulting disillusionment might damage not only the

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[16] "Discussion of MO Possibilities During Occupation," May 1, 1945, 1–3.

[17] "European Mediterranean Pouch Review," May 21, 1945, item 3, "Continuation of 'DND' Proposed," summarizing Warner to Mann, May 13, 1945, reference 33165-512, box 13, OSS History Office, Entry A1 99, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland; Stacy B. Lloyd Jr. to Col. K. D. Mann, "Use of DND for Education of German People," June 1, 1945, 1–2, folder "Project–ETO–Das Neue Deutschland (Operational History)," container 50, Entry A1 154, Field Station Files (OSS Field Office Records), RG 226, National Archives at College Park. Lloyd questioned the reuse of DND for a secretly supported German party while advocating continued covert reeducation through a different publication. See Appendix D, figures D.3a–D.3b.

sponsored organization but genuinely independent groups with similar aims. Apparent autonomy could create credibility while also exposing the operation to a later loss of trust. The memorandum questioned the authority for authorizing "unacknowledged psychological warfare" and "clandestine re-education" without the agreement of the relevant occupation, State Department, and military authorities.[18] MO's operational personnel in the European theater were already being liquidated, and the same memorandum described its remaining authority principally in terms of collecting intelligence about clandestine German propaganda. The proposal to preserve DND therefore brought political ambition into conflict with changing operational capacity and jurisdiction. Continuing to address Germans through the movement required officials to negotiate authority, resources, and secrecy while protecting the credibility they attributed to its wartime voice. The dispute reveals the institutional work involved in adapting covert influence to occupation: an apparently domestic political organization would still depend on the external arrangements that sustained it.

IV. Assets and Personnel after the OSS

Planning for postwar operations also required identifying the people, materials, and accumulated knowledge that could support future work. As Morale Operations prepared for closure, it undertook an inventory of those resources. On September 12, 1945, Herbert S. Little asked MO personnel to identify assets for possible postwar use, including staff, manuals, brochures, recordings, films, and an operational history. The following day, the branch's "Statement of Assets" described personnel and property potentially available "for post-war use by any Central Intelligence Agency." Written before the CIA's establishment in 1947, these

[18] Das Neue Deutschland memorandum, OSS Washington, June 19, 1945, 1–3, box 119, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

documents envisioned a future intelligence organization as a possible recipient of MO's resources. The inventory translated proposals for continuity into an administrative account of resources available for future work.[19]

The inventory placed clandestine-radio master recordings in German and Japanese and "miscellaneous musical selections" alongside field directives, operational histories, intelligence, terminal reports, training materials, and examples of subversive print. On September 4, 1945, Herbert S. Little asked Kay Halle to gather the OSS's existing black-radio recordings for "safe-keeping and other disposition," making their preservation part of her administrative responsibilities. Music was being classified as transferable operational property. Recordings could preserve both performances and evidence of how language, voice, arrangement, and production technique had been made useful. As prospective assets, they embodied decisions about sentiment, satire, vocal authority, and gendered address through which wartime personnel had attempted to influence judgment. The same document required continued security precautions for records revealing deceptive techniques and operations. Preservation and restricted access developed together, allowing the institutional archive to retain practical knowledge while limiting public knowledge of its origins. Sound and the documentation of its production were being assessed together as resources for postwar intelligence work.[20]

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[19] Herbert S. Little, "MO Assets in Personnel, etc. for Possible Post-War Use by a Central Intelligence Agency," September 12, 1945, 1; and Chief, Morale Operations, to Director of OSS, "MO Assets," September 13, 1945, 1–3, both in box 112, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[20] Chief, Morale Operations, to Director of OSS, "MO Assets," September 13, 1945, 1–3. Herbert S. Little to Kay Halle, "ETO Black Radio Recordings," September 4, 1945, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland (loose papers without a folder).

An inventory could preserve a recording more readily than the professional relationships that had shaped it. Metzl's earlier collaboration with Vilma Kurer in émigré theater, examined in Chapter 2 and in Traussnig's account, informed his ability to tailor lyrics to her performative qualities, while Kurer brought her own theatrical judgment to their realization.[21] Their work makes the relationship between a stored object and accumulated expertise concrete: musical timing, characterization, and familiarity with a performer's range entered the recording but were not reducible to the disc. Professional networks therefore belonged to the operation's capacity for musical persuasion and to the knowledge available when its members considered further assignments.

Eugene P. Warner's September 11 memorandum, "Future Morale Operations," proposed a continuing system for observing propaganda as well as undertaking it. Businesspeople, State Department personnel, and officials abroad could report developments; trained Secret Intelligence agents and specialists would investigate producers, motives, and channels. Warner also proposed countermeasures and a "Black Network," with intelligence and operations closely connected. Agents were to know of relevant operations so that they could assist and observe effects. Reports of these observations would bring information from the field back to the officials directing propaganda operations. Those reports could help planners assess how their interventions circulated, what responses they elicited, and whether their methods needed

[21] Florian Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen: Österreicher in US-Propagandainstitutionen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017), 243–50, especially 244. See also Chapters 2 and 4 on Metzl's earlier theatrical collaboration with Kurer and her interpretive contribution to MUSAC.

adjustment. The capability to be preserved therefore included both producing propaganda and maintaining the channels through which institutions could learn from its deployment.[22]

A September 13 memorandum to General John Magruder similarly proposed propaganda intelligence and countermeasures within a future central intelligence organization. It envisioned favorable material entering newspapers, theaters, music, films, radio, and literature through "locally inspired sources." Word-of-mouth interventions would be arranged so that they could not be traced to American sponsors. Within this proposed cultural communications system, music could carry political persuasion through forms of expression presented as originating within the audience's own society. Concealing American sponsorship was integral to the credibility planners sought for that address. The connection to MUSAC lies in this shared relationship among musical persuasion, apparent source identity, and institutional concealment. The memorandum gave music an explicit place in the cultural means through which a future intelligence organization might seek political influence.[23]

Metzl actively sought a place for his expertise in postwar government service. On March 26, 1945, anticipating that MUSAC would have outlived its usefulness by VE-Day, he asked David Williamson about further assignments within the OSS or a transfer to another agency. He argued that his "particular talents" could be useful in a postwar period he expected to be as critical as the years after 1918, and stated that he would choose continued service over a return to

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[22] Eugene P. Warner to Director of OSS, "Future Morale Operations," September 11, 1945, 1–6, box 112, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[23] Memorandum to General Magruder concerning postwar Morale Operations, September 13, 1945, 1–3, box 112, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

civilian life.[24] The autumn personnel records show officials considering how to retain that expertise. Metzl appears among those recommended for European propaganda-intelligence work. An October 2 list identifies Katherine Halle as chief of the reports office and Metzl as a propaganda analyst within a reduced domestic staff. An October 30 memorandum to Whitney Shepardson, chief of Secret Intelligence, describes the rapid liquidation of the European section, recommends Metzl as an ETO area assistant, and urges his retention while discussing his uncertain availability. These records show the branch trying to preserve particular kinds of expertise as its organization contracted.[25]

Metzl's subsequent career provides a concrete connection across that rupture. His obituary records that he joined the CIA in 1947 and remained until retirement in 1971.[26] The lyricist who had prepared German texts, written satirical programs, and explicitly described music as a weapon entered postwar intelligence with practical experience in constructing musical persuasion. His wartime work joined linguistic and cultural knowledge to decisions about lyrics, performance, and the psychological possibilities of entertainment. MUSAC therefore belongs to the professional formation of a long-serving intelligence officer, its institutional closure did not remove that experience from the personnel through whom American intelligence operated.

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[24] Lothar Metzl to David Williamson, March 26, 1945, Office of Strategic Services, New York, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[25] "MO Personnel," October 2, 1945, box 113, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; memorandum to Whitney Shepardson, "Personnel for Propaganda Intelligence Section, SI," October 30, 1945, 1–2, folder 1560, box 113, Entry A1 139, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[26] "Lothar Metzl, CIA Analyst, Dies at 83," *Washington Post*, September 9, 1989, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1989/09/09/lothar-metzl-cia-analyst-dies-at-83/6d82dd1e-2e69-46e0-93e6-88ac5dc93660/.

Metzl's career provides a documented connection between MUSAC and later American intelligence work. His subsequent service establishes personnel continuity; the transfer of particular musical practices requires additional evidence. The cultural knowledge mobilized by MUSAC remained part of the experience of a continuing intelligence professional. His career supplies a human connection through which institutional knowledge could persist even as offices and programs changed.[27] The records also distribute visibility unevenly. Metzl's named terminal report made him a conspicuous interpreter of the project's lessons. Halle's reporting position and the coordinating work of Rhoda K. Hirsch, reconstructed in Chapters 2 and 3, belonged to the circulation through which musical work became available for assessment at all. Hirsch's Washington correspondence shows her reconciling song proposals, forwarding London lyrics, relaying field decisions, and checking for duplication across offices. This administrative authorship linked intelligence and production, helping to keep repertoire decisions responsive to requirements from the field. An inventory of staff or recordings can preserve a name or object while compressing the daily administrative labor behind it. Halle's appearance in the MO personnel list preserves her place within the wartime organization, but the entry alone conveys little of the work that made her presence consequential. Halle was also asked to help define MO's postwar functions: on September 20, 1945, Phillips Trenbath requested a concise statement of its possible work within a continuing secret intelligence agency. Recovering that

[27] See Chapter 2, the biographical discussions of Lothar Metzl, Rudolf Goehr, Kurt Weill, and the MUSAC performers; and Chapter 3, the division of creative and administrative work. The individual histories distinguish Jewish émigré participation from other anti-Nazi and American participation. "Lothar Metzl, CIA Analyst, Dies at 83," *Washington Post*, September 9, 1989.

work brings women's administrative labor into the account of institutional expertise, alongside the compositions, performances, and recordings it helped make possible.[28]

The same October 30 staffing memorandum also considered Sol S. Hirsch, Rhoda's husband, as an alternative if the preferred candidates were unavailable. It described him as "one of the best propaganda experts MO ever had in France" and considered whether he might leave the State Department to return.[29] Sol's postwar career continued in the Foreign Service, with press work in Paris and Washington, and culminated in his leadership of the editorial division of the U.S. Information Agency's International Press Service.[30] His path places another member of the professional network surrounding MUSAC within the later work of American international information services.

The memorandum's recipient connects this personnel planning to political broadcasting. Whitney Shepardson served as president of the Free Europe Committee, which operated Radio

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[28] For Halle's family background and reporting work, see Chapter 2, "Katherine 'Kay' Halle," and Frank E. Wrenick, "Halle, Katherine Murphy," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, Case Western Reserve University, last updated October 6, 2023, https://case.edu/ech/articles/h/halle-katherine-murphy. For Hirsch, see Chapters 2 and 3; "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, container 172; Rhoda K. Hirsch to Lothar Metzl, "MUSAC Project," August 4, 1944, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," container 171; Hirsch to Edward Cushing, December 20, 1944, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," container 172; Hirsch to Cushing, "MUSAC," January 3 and January 16, 1945, and Metzl to Hirsch, "Intelligence for Muzak," January 16, 1945, folder 2295, correspondence January–February 1945, container 172. These MUSAC documents: Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Washington–MO–PRO–6, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. For Halle's postwar planning work, Phillips Trenbath to Kay Halle, "Functions of MO in a Continuing Intelligence Organization," September 20, 1945, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," container 156, Washington–MO–OP–68, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See also Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 59, on Halle's collection of staff accounts for postwar planning.

[29] Memorandum to Whitney Shepardson, "Personnel for Propaganda Intelligence Section, SI," October 30, 1945, 1–2, folder 1560, box 113, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

[30] Ranachqua Foundation, "College Assistance Grant Program," accessed September 28, 2026, https://ranachquafoundation.org/college-assistance-grant-program/. The foundation's biographical account identifies Rhoda K. Hirsch as Sol S. Hirsch's wife and documents his OSS, Foreign Service, and USIA service.

Free Europe, from 1953 to 1956.[31] These careers placed expertise in different institutional settings: intelligence work in Metzl's case, international press work in Sol Hirsch's, and political broadcasting administration in Shepardson's. They document continuity through personnel and professional networks across organizations with different mandates and forms of public visibility. MUSAC's place in this history rests in part on the people who made it and on the relationships through which their experience remained available for further work.

The October 27 liquidation memorandum ordered termination notices for civilian MO employees while permitting selected personnel to move into Secret Intelligence's Propaganda Intelligence Section. The branch was to cease operating as a separate component of the Strategic Services Unit by November 30. During the transition, some personnel might serve in both organizations. The later *War Report* records the retention of a small former-MO group in SI/ETO even as other European operations ended. These staffing decisions gave parts of the branch's wartime expertise an organizational place within postwar intelligence, preserving propaganda-intelligence functions as MO ceased to operate separately.[32] The later cases follow the continued use of covert persuasion across new political settings, with music, broadcasting, and intelligence gathering acquiring different roles within successive operations.

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[31] Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, *The Papers of Whitney Hart Shepardson, 1910–1966: A Descriptive List*, "Registration Statement," PDF p. 3, https://www.fdrlibrary.org/documents/356632/390886/findingaid_shepardson.pdf/f127a67f-603b-45c9-bfc1-1650f43d157b.

[32] "Liquidation of MO Branch of SSU," October 27, 1945, 1–4, box 113, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; History Project, Strategic Services Unit, *War Report of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services)*, vol. 1 (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), 222.

V. Musical Sponsorship and Later Clandestine Radio

The covert plans of 1945 occupied only one part of postwar cultural reconstruction. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht's *Transmission Impossible* and Amy C. Beal's *New Music, New Allies* place American influence within occupation policy, media institutions, cultural work, and German participation. Beal's account follows American experimental music through West German broadcasting, patronage, festivals, and exchange. Its institutions and repertories differ from MUSAC's wartime use of popular familiarity and counterfeit German provenance. Reading these histories beside the MO proposals makes the distinction productive: occupation and later radio institutions could organize musical authority through acknowledged policy, professional collaboration, and German institutional agency as well as through concealed sponsorship.[33]

Danielle Fosler-Lussier's history of Cold War musical diplomacy likewise gives performers, intermediaries, and audiences a role in producing the meanings of state-sponsored music. Emily Abrams Ansari shows composers helping to formulate policy and ideas of musical Americanism. These accounts illuminate the agency of cultural workers whose participation cannot be reduced to the execution of government orders. MUSAC brings an additional condition into view: expertise could be recruited while knowledge of the operation remained compartmentalized, and a performance could claim an apparent national source different from its institutional sponsor. The apparent origin of a performance therefore belongs alongside repertory and patronage in an account of music's political work.[34] The earlier chapters show that such

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[33] Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945–1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999); Amy C. Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

[34] Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 4–12. Emily Abrams Ansari, *The Sound of a Superpower: Musical Americanism and the Cold War* (New

expertise affected the content of the intervention itself: artists and intermediaries helped decide how political insinuation would sound, which emotional conventions could carry it, and how much explicitness the apparent source could sustain.

The later broadcasts carried covert psychological warfare into conflicts in which the identity of the speaker remained part of the intervention. The Guatemalan and Cuban records place music and entertainment within the construction of that voice; audience correspondence and institutional monitoring show broadcasting also becoming a source of information. The following cases trace those continuities through personnel, programming, and the work of interpreting responses. They show how the organization of sound and listening continued within American intelligence as its geographical and political priorities changed.

Guatemala and the Fabricated Opposition Voice

In the CIA's 1954 PBSUCCESS operation against Jacobo Árbenz, radio worked alongside print and rumor to encourage distrust within the armed forces and magnify the apparent strength of domestic opposition. Planning papers called for coordinated use of outlets and described deception as part of the radio campaign. *La Voz de la Liberación* made an organized opposition audible while concealing the American apparatus behind it.[35] That opposition voice was constructed through entertainment as well as political announcements. Nicholas Cullather's CIA history describes *La Voz de la Liberación* combining popular recordings, bawdy humor, and antigovernment propaganda. Its initial Miami production team

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York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Emily Abrams Ansari, "Shaping the Policies of Cold War Musical Diplomacy: An Epistemic Community of American Composers," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 1 (2012): 41–52.

[35] *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Guatemala*, ed. Susan Holly (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), docs. 113 and 141. Document 141, "Paper Prepared in Operation PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida," is undated; its archival source is Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79–01025A, box 103, folder 1.

included four Guatemalan men and two women who mixed announcements and editorials with recorded music. Broadcasts urged women to keep their husbands away from Communist Party meetings and labor unions, assigning domestic relationships a role in political mobilization. An announcer characterized the politically uncommitted majority as "a soap opera audience," while early programming was intended to establish credibility before a planned "panic broadcast."[36] Musical entertainment, humor, and gendered address were assembled within a strategy for directing political judgment and conduct. Women participated in producing that address and were approached as intermediaries through whom political influence might travel. As in MUSAC, the construction of a relationship between apparent speaker and imagined listener formed part of the psychological intervention itself.

After the Guatemalan government acknowledged the clandestine broadcaster, CIA instructions sought to sustain the impression that it might operate inside Guatemala with Guatemalan radio personnel. Other stations were to reinforce the appearance of expanding resistance. As the government collapsed in late June, instructions called for broadcasts representing its weakness and encouraging participation in the "liberation movement." The fiction of the source helped organize how political events could be understood while they unfolded.[37] Like DND, *La Voz de la Liberación* used media to make an organized domestic opposition perceptible. The apparent origin of its voice formed part of its persuasive construction – broadcasts presented as expressions of Guatemalan resistance could give American-directed intervention the appearance of local political action.

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[36] Nicholas Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala, 1952–1954* (Washington, DC: History Staff, Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1994), 55–57, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, DOC_0000134974.

[37] *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Guatemala*, docs. 142 and 247.

The Guatemalan case also connects directly to MUSAC through Lothar Metzl's participation in PBHISTORY. Following PBSUCCESS, the CIA undertook this operation to collect and exploit captured Guatemalan documents for intelligence and propaganda. Max Holland identifies Metzl as a member of the CIA's Counterintelligence Staff among the initial investigators who arrived in Guatemala City on July 4, 1954. The operation sought intelligence about Communist organizations and documentary material that could be used to defend the overthrow of Árbenz before international audiences.[38] The operation's final report identifies Attachment A as the "Report of Burke and Metzl from Guatemala" and credits the initial team's recommendations, presented in Washington on July 20, with prompting the dispatch of the larger interagency team.[39] Metzl's participation provides a specific operational assignment through which to follow his postwar career. The practitioner who had written MUSAC's German lyrics and articulated music's capacity to function as a weapon subsequently worked within a CIA operation that joined intelligence gathering to the construction of political persuasion.

PBHISTORY also brought music and broadcasting personnel into the public presentation of its documentary findings. Its propaganda report describes a six-minute film, *Después descubrimos la verdad*, produced by the operation's propaganda officer with musical background and narration by three announcers from "Radio Liberation." The film circulated through Guatemala City theaters, with provincial exhibition planned, and a copy and its negative were sent to USIA for the release of selected scenes through commercial newsreel companies.[40] The

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[38] Max Holland, "Operation PBHISTORY: The Aftermath of SUCCESS," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 17, no. 2 (2004): 303–4, https://doi.org/10.1080/08850600490274935.

[39] Central Intelligence Agency, "Final Summary Report of PBHISTORY Project," transmitted October 29, 1954, 1, 7, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, DOC_0000920013.

[40] Central Intelligence Agency, "PBHISTORY: Final Summary of KUGOWN Activities," attachment D to "Final Summary Report of PBHISTORY Project," transmitted October 29, 1954, 2–3, DOC_0000920013.

combination of documentary material, music, and narration made the presentation of intelligence an audiovisual argument. Broadcasting personnel carried their vocal work into another medium, helping construct a public account of the political order established after the coup. Music participated in the presentation through which selected documents were made available as a persuasive interpretation of recent events.

The Guatemalan operation also informed subsequent planning against Cuba. Cullather identifies Richard Bissell, Tracy Barnes, and David Atlee Phillips among the returning personnel and describes an initial Cuban plan incorporating a radio operation modeled on SHERWOOD, the Guatemalan radio operation.[41] The next case follows broadcasting within that renewed effort to organize political opposition through covert intervention.

Radio Swan and the Return of Listener Information

Radio Swan began broadcasting on May 17, 1960, after the approval of an anti-Castro covert-action program that included a powerful station outside the continental United States. Its cover differed from a station claiming to transmit secretly from within the target country. The CIA's retrospective describes a change from a planned black facility to an ostensibly commercial broadcaster. Program time was presented as being sold to Cuban organizations, including labor, student, women's, publishing, and political groups, while the CIA also supplied controlled programming. "Commercial" identified the public explanation for who operated the station and how groups obtained airtime. It concealed government sponsorship behind the appearance of ordinary broadcasting arrangements.[42] A January 1961 briefing described a schedule mixing

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[41] Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS*, 84–85.

[42] Central Intelligence Agency, "Brief History of Radio Swan," transmitted May 18, 1961, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, DOC_0000481604.

news, general entertainment, and programs prepared by anti-Castro newspapers in exile. An action-phase plan gave music a more explicit place: after specified political programs, the remaining broadcasting was to consist of music and news produced on the island under headquarters' guidance. The evidence thus places music inside the station's continuing sound, rather than only at the edge of an isolated political announcement. Musical programming formed part of the station's political address, establishing the broadcast setting in which its apparent independence and its directed messages were presented to listeners.[43]

The return of information makes the comparison more specific. According to the CIA's retrospective, a March 1961 offer of an inexpensive ballpoint pen generated almost three thousand letters from twenty-six countries, including correspondence from Cuba. A contemporary briefing described Cuban listeners' letters as both evaluations of the broadcasts and a source of intelligence. The promotional incentive shaped who wrote, making the correspondence the product of a deliberately cultivated audience relationship. The letters show an institution soliciting responses to broadcasting and treating them as useful knowledge. Sound went outward; assessments and information came back through the relationship it helped create.[44]

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[43] *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963*, vols. X/XI/XII, *Microfiche Supplement, American Republics; Cuba 1961–1962; Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, ed. Edward C. Keefer, Louis J. Smith, and Charles S. Sampson (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2021 digital edition), doc. 236, "Briefing Paper for Secretary of State-designate Rusk," January 1961, section II.A, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d236; Central Intelligence Agency, "Propaganda Action Plan in Support of Military Forces (D-Day until the Fall of the Castro Regime)," n.d., reproduced as document 1 in National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book no. 29, *The ULTRASENSITIVE Bay of Pigs*.

[44] Central Intelligence Agency, "Brief History of Radio Swan," DOC_0000481604; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963*, X/XI/XII Microfiche Supplement, doc. 236, section II.A.

That relationship could deteriorate. The CIA's retrospective reported that exile groups increasingly used their airtime for factional or personal purposes, including sensationalism and false claims. A February 1961 USIA memorandum contrasted the uses listeners reportedly made of *Swan* and Voice of America: the latter offered confirmation, while *Swan* supplied excitement and "titillation." The memorandum associated *Swan* with unfounded rumors and declining credibility. These were institutional diagnoses of a programming problem, not simply evidence that the signal had reached listeners.[45]

Radio Swan accordingly reveals both a recurrence and a failure mode. Music and entertainment could help sustain contact; that contact could produce information; and the station's political conduct could weaken the credibility on which future contact depended. MUSAC's working records had treated explicitness, musical quality, and cover as adjustable concerns. *Swan's* evaluations show a later institution confronting the consequences when the apparent speaker's claims ceased to be persuasive. The comparison shows how musical programming and the interpretation of audience response formed connected parts of psychological warfare, with credibility shaping both the pursuit of persuasion and the institution's ability to learn from its listeners.

Sponsorship and Listening in Later Clandestine Radio

Free Voice of Iran shows how perceived sponsorship could shape the resources available to clandestine broadcasting. Contemporary reporting in 1980 described an exile-associated

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[45] Central Intelligence Agency, "Brief History of Radio Swan," DOC_0000481604; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917–1972*, vol. VI, *Public Diplomacy, 1961–1963*, ed. Kristin L. Ahlberg and Charles V. Hawley (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2017), doc. 12, Henry Loomis to Edward R. Murrow, "Broadcasting to Cuba," February 10, 1961, 46, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1917-72PubDipv06/d12.

station mixing news and music with calls to oppose the revolutionary government. U.S. records document CIA contact with General Gholam Ali Oveissi, but a June State Department memorandum records the Agency disclaiming tangible support at that time. The same memorandum argued that the perception of American backing encouraged financial support among Iranian exiles and may have helped secure Iraqi radio facilities.[46]

Here, the attribution of American support was itself a resource for organizing opposition. MO's DND correspondence had treated the disclosure of foreign sponsorship as a threat to trust; in the Iranian case, officials believed that an expectation of American backing could attract financial and technical support. Apparent source identity could therefore operate at more than one level: a station addressed listeners through news, music, and political appeals while beliefs about its sponsorship helped determine who would sustain its transmission. The case extends the history of covert broadcasting by showing how public address and less visible relationships of support could develop together. The strategic significance of sound depended on both the credibility of the voice heard on air and the political relationships that kept it broadcasting.[47]

Radio Quince de Septiembre continued the use of clandestine broadcasting as an instrument of American psychological warfare. Broadcasting into Nicaragua by 1981, the station claimed to transmit from within the country. Soley's account locates the operation in Honduras and identifies covert CIA funding.[48] The claim of domestic origin made the transmitter's location

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[46] Stuart Auerbach, "Clandestine Radio Urges Iranians To Take Arms Against New Rulers," *Washington Post*, May 28, 1980, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1980/05/28/clandestine-radio-urges-iranians-to-take-arms-against-new-rulers/1a3ee585-e47a-4933-9b00-5eeb647e6277/; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980*, vol. XI, part 1, *Iran: Hostage Crisis, November 1979–September 1980*, ed. Linda Qaimmaqami (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2020), doc. 297.

[47] *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980*, XI, part 1, *Iran: Hostage Crisis*, docs. 289 and 297.

[48] Lawrence C. Soley, *Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA Subversive Propaganda* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 3–4. Steve Jones also identifies Quince as CIA-funded; see Jones, "Making Waves: Pirate Radio and Popular Music" (paper

part of the station's persuasive fiction: listeners were addressed as though an opposition voice were speaking from within the society it sought to change. The Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) described the station as its own voice within a communications operation that coordinated propaganda with military action and adjusted appeals in response to audience reactions.[49] In that account, reception supplied practical knowledge for the continuing construction of persuasion.

The station also became an object of organized intelligence listening. In May 1981, the Panama Bureau of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) sampled *Radio Quince de Septiembre's* two daily ninety-minute broadcasts for a week and sent program summaries to headquarters. The station's new format combined interviews, commentaries, and articles attacking the Sandinista government. The bureau then added an evening broadcast to regular coverage three times a week; by month's end, it could no longer hear the transmitter.[50] The report makes institutional listening visible as work: broadcasts were selected, monitored, summarized, and circulated for assessment. Sound became intelligence through the organized practices of those listening to it.

Radio monitors documented the technical struggle over access to listeners. A September 1981 account in *Popular Electronics* described *Quince* and a jammer moving among nearby frequencies after interference began in late May.[51] Audibility was an operational concern

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presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Portland, OR, July 2–5, 1988), 4 and n. 3.

[49] Nicaraguan Democratic Force account reproduced in *Congressional Record—Senate*, June 6, 1985, 14767, section "Coordination of Political Propaganda with Military Action."

[50] Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Panama Bureau, "Panama Bureau Monthly Report May 1981," para. 2, CIA-RDP83-00385R000200110018-0, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP83-00385R000200110018-0.pdf.

[51] Glenn Hauser, "DX Listening," *Popular Electronics* 19, no. 9 (September 1981): 112. "Nicaragua," *FRENDX*, North American Short Wave Association, April 1983, 4.

because political address depended on sustaining a channel through which listeners could encounter it. *Quince* extends the institutional history traced through MUSAC: covert broadcasting constructed an apparently domestic voice, sought to direct political judgment, and made listening a source of knowledge. In the FDN's account, audience response informed further appeals; in FBIS's work, transmitted speech became intelligence. The clandestine nature of these activities makes their organization visible across dispersed records, which must be read together to reconstruct the relationship among sponsorship, persuasion, and listening.

The Vietnam-era Wandering Soul recordings offer a later comparison in the construction of persuasive voices. A 1968 instruction sheet transcribed by Herbert A. Friedman presents funeral music, children calling to their father, and a voice claiming to be that of a dead combatant who urges others to leave the fighting. The performance scripts separation and return through an apparent speaker designed to carry authority for its intended audience. MUSAC likewise made imagined relationships with absent persons available to psychological warfare, although its entertainment programming and the battlefield use of loudspeakers created different conditions of exposure. Chad Spawr's retrospective account of playing a Wandering Soul recording, quoted by Friedman, also illustrates how reported fear could become an operator's evidence of efficacy. Such testimony must be distinguished from independently established changes in conduct. The comparison concerns the production of voices, institutional assumptions about audiences, and the interpretation of responses; the sources considered here do not establish direct transmission of a MUSAC method into the Vietnam operation.[52]

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[52] 6th Psychological Operations Battalion, II Field Force Vietnam, instructions for tape 059-6T, June 24, 1968, as transcribed in Herbert A. Friedman, "The 'Wandering Soul' Tape of Vietnam," https://www.psywarrior.com/wanderingsoul.html. Friedman reproduces the labeled tape and transcribes the accompanying instructions supplied by Albert Yanus. The tape's own number is retained here rather than treating the later "Ghost Tape Number 10" label as its catalogue identification. Chad Spawr's retrospective account is quoted

This comparison concerns planners' selection of beliefs about death, burial, and kinship as resources for psychological warfare; it does not posit a uniform Vietnamese belief or automatic susceptibility. A performed voice of the dead and an apparently German soldiers' station made different claims to authority. Loudspeaker exposure also afforded different possibilities for withdrawal from those available around a radio receiver. Reports of fear, recognition, gunfire, and surrender must therefore remain distinct kinds of response.

VI. The Uneven Survival of Musical Knowledge

The postwar record follows musical expertise through the reorganization of American intelligence. MO officials inventoried recordings and personnel, and planning papers sought to preserve covert influence and observation as connected activities. Metzl's CIA service from 1947 to 1971, including his participation in PBHISTORY, places a practitioner of MUSAC's musical psychological warfare within that continuing institutional history. Sol Hirsch's international press career and Shepardson's Free Europe Committee presidency extend the personnel network into international information services and political broadcasting, giving that continuity more than one institutional form. The Guatemalan materials show music and gendered address in radio propaganda and the combination of music, narration, and documentary evidence in film. *Radio Swan* connects musical programming to audience correspondence and intelligence, while the Iranian and Nicaraguan cases extend the inquiry into sponsorship, transmission, and monitoring. Across these settings, institutions organized sound, apparent source, and knowledge of audiences as resources for political intervention.

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in Friedman, "The 'Wandering Soul' Tape of Vietnam"; the present citation is to that reproduced testimony, not to an independently inspected oral-history transcript.

An *acoustemology of strategic warfare* makes these developments intelligible as a history of how institutions produced, organized, and acted on knowledge through sound and listening. MUSAC's records show cultural research and psychological assessments entering decisions about lyrics, arrangement, casting, and performance. Its musical and gendered constructions made persuasion part of entertainment's form. An *acoustemology of strategic listening* traces the recursive relationship between persuasive construction, the solicitation and interpretation of listening, and subsequent decisions about production and transmission. The postwar plans and broadcasts carried that relationship into changing political settings through the preservation of expertise, the construction of credible voices, and the interpretation of responses. MUSAC's institutional ending thus becomes part of a longer history in which sounding and listening remained means of both intervention and inquiry. The professional networks reconstructed here connect Jewish musical, linguistic, and administrative labor and women's operational expertise to that institutional inheritance. They make music's postwar afterlife a history of people and learned practices as well as of recordings. Metzl himself regarded the strategic possibilities of professional entertainment as unfinished. His May 1945 assessment presented music as a medium of psychological warfare whose uses extended beyond securing an audience.[53] The Conclusion returns to the musical and cultural consequences of that claim, bringing MUSAC's forms of persuasion into the broader account of how American institutions made sounding and listening instruments of strategic warfare.

[53] Metzl, "Muzak," terminal report forwarded May 7, 1945, concluding assessment, unpaginated.

Danielle Stein

Dissertation

Conclusion

An Acoustemology of Strategic Warfare

The MUSAC Project constructed psychological warfare through music. Its producers deliberately transformed familiar repertory into musical propaganda, embedding political intervention in rewritten lyrics and shaping its expressive force through arrangement and performance. The resulting songs were designed as psychological weapons, with broadcast placement extending their persuasive work into the surrounding program. Recruiting attention was one condition of this effort to shape listeners' understanding of the war and their willingness to continue it. Musical pleasure also provided a means of persuasion within the songs themselves: familiar repertory could mobilize nostalgia, while gendered vocal performance could give political insinuation the intimacy of personal address. This dissertation has reconstructed the institutional and creative work through which those musical possibilities became instruments of American intelligence. I show how the operation learned through the practices it organized. Musical production solicited listening; accounts of that listening returned to the institution as intelligence, informing its assessments and subsequent production. Sounding and listening thus helped produce the knowledge through which MUSAC developed its musical psychological warfare.

An acoustemology of strategic warfare explains how military and intelligence institutions produce, organize, and operationalize knowledge through practices of sounding and listening. Steven Feld's account of sound and listening as ways of knowing supplies the conceptual starting point; MUSAC reveals an institutional and adversarial form of that knowing, directed toward

musical psychological warfare. Within this broader framework, the project demonstrates *an acoustemology of strategic listening*. Knowledge of German listeners informed how familiar repertory could be reworked into persuasive musical address. Gendered performance gave that address expressive force, while decisions about source identity shaped the credibility through which it might be received. These judgments entered the construction of music designed as a psychological weapon. Transmission then opened a further stage of inquiry: accounts of listening returned to the institution as intelligence, informing its assessments and subsequent production. MUSAC thus made sounding and listening part of the process through which it developed the knowledge required to conduct musical psychological warfare.[1]

The distinction makes the project's musicological significance precise. An intelligence history can establish that officials commissioned recordings or attributed value to entertainment. Musical analysis shows how that purpose entered the interplay between familiar music and rewritten lyrics, a German rhyme, a returning accordion figure, a gendered vocal persona, or a sequence of comic interruptions. Metzl's terminal assessment made the connection explicit – entertainment could serve as bait, but it could also itself become propaganda and a "strong weapon of psychological warfare."[2] The dissertation takes that claim seriously by demonstrating how the weapon was constructed. Reception evidence addresses what listeners made of the music; the surviving production records and musical materials establish how persuasion was deliberately built into it.

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[1] Steven Feld, "Acoustemology," in *Keywords in Sound*, ed. David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 12–21.

[2] Lothar Metzl, "MUSAC terminal report," forwarded by David Williamson on May 7, 1945, unpaginated, closing assessment, Entry A1 139, container 172, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

I. Musical Construction and Strategic Knowledge

The dissertation has traced how cultural expertise became musical psychological warfare and how knowledge developed through that work remained available after the operation ended. Familiar commercial repertory acquired a new political purpose through German rewriting, given expressive force by particular performers and placed within broadcasts designed to persuade. Its political work took shape through encounters between that deliberate construction and listeners whose own experiences and wartime circumstances shaped what they heard. Reports of attraction or recognition brought selected accounts of those encounters back into the institution, where officials interpreted them as evidence of music's persuasive capacities. The archive's descriptions of a song therefore belong to the history of its meaning: they show how reported listening became institutional knowledge through which musical psychological warfare was evaluated and developed.

Chapter 3 makes this process visible at the level of working communication. London requested material, assessed cover, and approved or rejected proposals; Washington coordinated authority and intelligence; New York supplied linguistic, theatrical, and recording expertise. In January 1945, Metzl called intelligence supplied by Rhoda K. Hirsch valuable and asked to receive it again. The exchange demonstrates information entering the work of the person preparing German lyrics, even when a surviving report cannot be connected to a particular line of a song. Repertory decisions likewise moved through requests, revisions, performance choices, and remakes. Strategic listening involved institutions attending to one another's judgments as well as imagining an enemy audience.[3] The studies of German attitudes and of women as

[3] Lothar Metzl to Rhoda K. Hirsch, "Intelligence for Muzak," January 16, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Wash–MO–PRO–6, Records of the

potential intermediaries, examined in Chapter 4, supplied institutional models of morale and vulnerability. Read beside the documented transmission of intelligence to Metzl, they locate musical judgment within an effort to study the target population, while preserving the difference between a shared strategic premise and a demonstrable report-to-lyric connection.

The May 1945 terminal report provides another view of that knowledge. Metzl described research into current hits and older successes, including the use of *Variety* popularity polls, and the differentiation of selections by mood, type, and tempo. These judgments concerned both appeal and the emotional resources that music offered for intervention. A familiar song brought memories and expectations that adaptation could preserve, redirect, or interrupt. Sentiment could emphasize the distance between home and military life; comedy could damage authority; an altered refrain could attach a political judgment to a melody already available for recall. The same musical feature could support continued listening and carry the persuasive work for which listening was sought.[4]

MUSAC's propaganda classifications become more revealing when read across the repertory. The session-based research index, containing 304 recording entries, brings lyrics and propaganda content into relation with musical form and style, singer gender, and the professional and vocal types examined in the case studies. This is a record of systematic musical construction, not simply an inventory of entertaining titles. It makes it possible to ask how an indirect text was paired with a sentimental performance, how satire depended on a comic persona, and how the

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Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. See also Chapter 3, the discussion of intelligence exchange, repertory requests, and recording decisions.

[4] Metzl, "MUSAC terminal report," forwarded by David Williamson on May 7, 1945, unpaginated, Entry A1 139, container 172, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. See Chapter 4 for Dietrich's performances, Die Blitzbühne, and the distinct "Wie lange noch?" settings; and Chapter 5, Sections IV–V, for Keller's Westwall song and the DND campaign. The distinction between designed possibility and documented reception governs those analyses.

same apparent voice could move among reassurance, insinuation, and attack. The archival classifications and my later research fields remain distinguishable: the "Song Origin" field, for example, identifies repertorial histories rather than an OSS judgment about propaganda.[5]

The current 304-entry index provides a reproducible view of the propaganda categories: 229 entries designated No Propaganda Content, thirty-four Slightly Slanted, twenty-two Propaganda Content, Satirical, seventeen Propaganda Content, Serious, and two without a designation. These counts describe the indexed recording entries, including rerecordings. They do not establish the project's complete production total, the number of surviving audio masters, or a count of unique songs confirmed as broadcast. Their analytical value lies in the relations they permit among propaganda explicitness, style, casting, and performance. The gender comparisons below use this same index, so their denominators remain visible.[6]

No Propaganda Content, abbreviated NOP, designated the institution's assessment of a song's explicit content. It did not place the song outside psychological warfare. A familiar melody, an émigré voice, or a sentimental scene could establish credibility, evoke a lost peacetime world, or make the costs of continued fighting emotionally present without stating a political instruction. Such a number might also maintain variety or draw attention to the next item. Propaganda content and operational function consequently require separate analysis.

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[5] MO Musac Project Terminal Report, "Table of Songs," May 1945, 1–10, Entry A1 139, container 172, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Danielle Stein, *Musac_Project_Consolidated_with_Origin_Research(3).xlsx*, unpublished working dataset, Sheet1, rows 2–305: 304 recording entries, including rerecordings. The index combines retained OSS classifications with the author's research and coding. Its row count does not establish the complete historical output, a census of extant sound recordings, or 304 unique transmitted titles. A retrospective "MUSAC over Soldatensender—Plan/Execution" summary reports 312 songs (Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2287, Book II, RG 226, National Archives at College Park); see Chapter 4. The numerical analysis here is limited to the documented index.

[6] Stein, *Musac_Project_Consolidated_with_Origin_Research(3).xlsx*, Sheet1, rows 2–305, column P. The counts refer to the 304-entry index identified above. See Appendix A for the unit of count and the reproduced historical classification key.

Traussnig's reading of Kurer's "Kein Kuss, kein Mann, kein Frühling," the German adaptation of "No Love, No Nothin'," makes that distinction concrete: he interprets its treatment of romantic waiting as indirect persuasion, while the project's index retains the NOP designation.[7] The comparison shows why the institutional categories must be read alongside what text, musical setting, and performance made available for interpretation. The tables do not establish a fixed transmission order; the three complete *Die Blitzbühne* programs examined in Chapter 4 provide more direct evidence of sequence. Their arrangement of entertainment, interruption, and political implication shows musical persuasion operating within individual numbers and across a program.[8]

Jean-Jacques Nattiez's tripartition helps keep those relationships analytically distinct. The poietic field includes the commissioning, selection, revision, rehearsal, and recording that made an object. The material trace includes the recording, score, lyric sheet, or script through which that work becomes available for analysis. The esthesic field concerns the meaning a listener constructs in an encounter with it. A planner's intended insinuation, an audible musical feature, and a listener's response cannot stand in for one another. Nattiez makes it possible to connect them without treating reception as the recovery of an intact institutional message.[9]

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[7] Florian Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen: Österreicher in US-Propagandainstitutionen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017), 244–50. See Chapters 4 and 5 for the NOP designation and the analysis of Kurer's recording. The historical classification and Traussnig's interpretation are retained as distinct descriptions of the same object.

[8] Metzl, "MUSAC terminal report," forwarded by David Williamson on May 7, 1945, unpaginated, Entry A1 139, container 172, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. See Chapter 4 for Dietrich's performances, Die Blitzbühne, and the distinct "Wie lange noch?" settings; and Chapter 5, Sections IV–V, for Keller's Westwall song and the DND campaign. The distinction between designed possibility and documented reception governs those analyses.

[9] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 10–17, 28–29.

The cases give that distinction musical specificity. Keller's Westwall song recasts a military defense through a woman's comic refusal and the double meaning of *Fall*. Dietrich's vocal timing, lowered register, and movement toward speech place political insinuation within a performance of controlled intimacy. In *Die Blitzbühne*, fragments associated with "Lili Marleen" acquire new implications through their placement in a program about retreat and failed return. The "Wie lange noch?" campaign carries a recurrent question among song, radio, newspaper, leaflet, and other printed forms. Within the larger Morale Operations system, MUSAC and DND supplied material and points of recognition for one another, allowing the printed page to reactivate remembered sound and the song to reinforce a political fiction encountered elsewhere. These analyses identify how the objects were constructed to persuade; reception records address how listeners encountered and interpreted them.[10]

Nattiez's distinctions also clarify what happened when reception became a report. A prisoner's recollection, a German warning, an agent's observation, or a monitoring summary entered a new process of selection and writing. A report of an esthesic encounter became a material trace produced for institutional readers. When that trace informed evaluation or subsequent decisions, it could reenter the poietic field of the operation. The recursive relation is central to strategic listening, but it was mediated at every point. Officials did not receive the listener's experience in an unaltered form.

Chapter 5 therefore treated "comebacks" as both evidence of encounters and products of the offices that collected them. Mann's evaluation placed reported audience attraction beside

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[10] See Chapter 4 for Dietrich's performances, Die Blitzbühne, and the distinct "Wie lange noch?" settings; and Chapter 5, Sections IV–V, for Keller's Westwall song and the DND campaign. The distinction between designed possibility and documented reception governs those analyses. See Chapter 5, Section V, for the DND anthem, newspaper, membership materials, cross-media circulation, and reports of reception. The musical analysis distinguishes the DND anthem from the different settings of "Wie lange noch?"

production, expenditure, and administrative status. DND's reported musical recall supplied a more specific kind of evidence within the same larger MO system, while the newspaper and other media helped reinforce recognition across channels. These materials could authorize continued work as well as disclose something about listening. The records establish an institutional arrangement for learning and reassessment more clearly than they reconstruct a complete cycle from a particular audience response to a particular revised song. Recognizing that unevenness defines what the acoustemology can explain: how listening became available as knowledge, whose interpretations it carried, and what officials did with it.[11]

II. Gendered Musical Persuasion

Gender organized the relation among lyric, propaganda content, musical style, singer, and imagined listener. The analysis therefore extends beyond counting women and men in the ensemble. It asks which kinds of political speech were assigned to which voices, how genre and professional persona made those assignments plausible, and how performers complicated them. The corpus and the close readings establish complementary scales: patterns across recording entries and the particular vocal decisions through which a song stages intimacy, authority, ridicule, or refusal.

The consolidated dataset makes one pattern explicit. Among entries coded for a male singer with a known lyric-propaganda classification, 41 of 134 carry a propaganda designation, or 30.6 percent; among female-coded entries with a known classification, 32 of 163 do so, or

[11] See Chapter 5, Sections II, V, and VII, for the collection of "comebacks," DND's reported musical reception, and the March 1945 institutional evaluation. Col. K. D. Mann, "Evaluation of Current Projects," March 29, 1945, 1–2, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2279, "Musac Project with MO-Twisted Lyrics," MO-Washington, Book I, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

19.6 percent. Within those propaganda-bearing groups, satire accounts for 17 of 41 male-coded entries, compared with 5 of 32 female-coded entries. Slightly slanted material accounts for 20 of the 32 female-coded entries, compared with 14 of the 41 male-coded entries. These are distributions of classifications within the 304-entry index, not measurements of persuasive effect or estimates of the full production total. They show different emphases in how propaganda was distributed among voices.[12] As the analysis in Chapter 4 shows, singer gender also intersects with the uneven distribution of entries among performers and professional types; these proportions do not isolate gender as a causal variable.

Musical form and style sharpen the comparison. Male-coded entries in that workbook more often use the form designation "Rhythm" and the period style label "Gay"; female-coded entries more often use "Ballad" and "Sentimental." Reading these fields together matters because indirectness did not make a performance politically weak. A slanted lyric within a sentimental ballad could organize separation, fidelity, homesickness, or the desire for return into an argument against continued sacrifice. A comic or rhythmically animated performance could make military and political authority available for ridicule. The case studies show how these tendencies became audible while preserving the exceptions that prevent a gender code from becoming an explanation by itself.[13]

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[12] Stein, Musac_Project_Consolidated_with_Origin_Research(3).xlsx, Sheet1, rows 2–305, columns D–E, K–N, and P. The 304-entry version contains 135 male-coded, 164 female-coded, and five mixed-gender entries. Excluding the mixed entries and one entry of each gender without a lyric-propaganda designation leaves denominators of 134 and 163. The 41 male-coded propaganda entries comprise 14 Slightly Slanted, 17 Satirical, and 10 Serious; the 32 female-coded entries comprise 20 Slightly Slanted, five Satirical, and seven Serious. Across all gender-coded entries, "Rhythm" occurs in 69 male-coded and 36 female-coded entries; "Ballad" in 43 and 101; "Gay" in 61 and 26; and "Sentimental" in 47 and 100. These describe the 304-entry index and do not estimate the full historical production total. The historical style label "Gay" is retained as a repertory classification, not a coding of sexual identity.

[13] Stein, Musac_Project_Consolidated_with_Origin_Research(3).xlsx, Sheet1, rows 2–305, columns E, K, and M. "Rhythm": 69 male-coded and 36 female-coded entries; "Ballad": 43 and 101; "Gay": 61 and 26; "Sentimental": 47 and 100. These descriptive counts use the 304-entry index. The historical style label "Gay" does not code sexual

Singer gender, performer type, and vocal manner are distinct dimensions of that work. Cabaret comedian, diseuse, opera or operetta singer, film star, and popular vocalist name different professional resources; crooning describes a mode of microphone-mediated intimacy that could move among them. Allison McCracken's history of crooning clarifies how technology, soft vocal production, and gendered expectations jointly organize proximity. MUSAC extended those possibilities across male and female voices. Dietrich's low, speech-inflected register combined masculine-coded authority with an erotic feminine persona; it cannot be reduced to either her gender or an imitation of a male voice. Projected comic declamation and operatic or ensemble singing provided other modes of address. The operation's range depended on selecting and directing these differences.[14]

The gendered division of labor was consequently patterned but unstable. Women frequently voiced separation, fidelity, sexual refusal, domestic enclosure, and the peaceful past; male voices more often carried collective exhortation and direct attack. Keller's Westwall satire puts military ridicule inside a woman's refusal, while Hendrik's German adaptation of "Hallelujah" moves from remembered religious and domestic security into a repeatable command against the regime. Dietrich's performed yielding remains controlled and self-possessed. These cases demonstrate why persuasion must be located in the relation among text,

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identity. See Chapter 4, Sections I, IV, and V, especially the analysis of audience research, double meaning, and "Voice, Gender, Celebrity, and Recognition"; and Chapter 5, Section IV, for Keller's Westwall song. The analysis distinguishes singer gender, professional persona, vocal technique, lyrical role, and imagined listener.

[14] Allison McCracken, *Real Men Don't Sing: Crooning in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), esp. 74–125. Allan Bell, "Falling in Love Again and Again: Marlene Dietrich and the Iconization of Non-native English," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15, no. 5 (2011): 627–56, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2011.00516.x. See Chapter 4, Sections I, IV, and V, especially the analysis of audience research, double meaning, and "Voice, Gender, Celebrity, and Recognition"; and Chapter 5, Section IV, for Keller's Westwall song. The analysis distinguishes singer gender, professional persona, vocal technique, lyrical role, and imagined listener.

arrangement, vocal delivery, and persona. The same performance could mobilize a familiar gender expectation and unsettle it.[15]

The OSS's April 1944 study of German women as a target for Morale Operations imagined wives, mothers, sisters, and sweethearts as intermediaries who might give soldiers permission to surrender without shame. MUSAC's female performers occupied a different position: they helped construct the persuasive address. Dietrich's documented recruitment as a consultant before her recording work makes that interpretive authority explicit. Breath, diction, register, timing, and professional judgment made them agents in production, even when compartmentalization limited their knowledge of the broadcast's final use. Dietrich's preference for the familiar German text of "Lili Marleen" over an overtly subversive rewrite is a documented intervention in that design. Her decision located persuasive force in the relationship among existing words, performance, and context. A gender analysis must therefore distinguish the woman imagined as a conduit in an intelligence report from the artist making consequential musical choices.[16]

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[15] John Hendrik, German adaptation of "Hallelujah," MUSAC session material, Sound Recording 226.7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. See Chapter 4, Sections I, IV, and V, especially the analysis of audience research, double meaning, and "Voice, Gender, Celebrity, and Recognition"; and Chapter 5, Section IV, for Keller's Westwall song. The analysis distinguishes singer gender, professional persona, vocal technique, lyrical role, and imagined listener.

[16] Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, "German Women as Special Target for Morale Operations," R&A no. 1661, April 4, 1944, summary and 2–4, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, author's NARA digital download. "A MUSAC Project Report," OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, Entry A1 210, box 461, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; Lawrence C. Soley, *Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA Subversive Propaganda* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 125. Lothar Metzl, memorandum concerning Marlene Dietrich's proposed "Lili Marleen" recording, August 7, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. For Dietrich's consultant and recording roles, see "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, undated, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; and Edward Cushing to Morgan S. A. Reichner, "Recordings," August 1, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 2, "Marlene Dietrich."

Kate Lacey gives attention its social and gendered history. German radio moved among domestic rooms, workplaces, institutions, and public sound systems. Focused news listening could alternate with music heard during another activity. The listener imagined in a propaganda plan therefore need not resemble the solitary, continuously attentive person suggested by a retrospective scene around a radio. Retention could mean staying through a song, returning at a familiar hour, selecting a preferred segment, or carrying something heard into conversation. Duration, repetition, and social circulation were related dimensions of listening, and the surviving reports do not measure them equally.[17] Lacey's history also clarifies the transnational work of intimate address. German women's programming had helped develop the scripted conversational voice of the *Plauderei* (the informal conversational address associated with German women's radio), carrying conventions of private speech into public broadcasting. MUSAC and PWE could draw on that broader broadcast grammar through émigré performers and popular music, making mass transmission sound culturally proximate and personally directed. The dissertation extends Lacey's account into the concealed Anglo-American production of German-language address and follows the reports through which that address became institutional evidence. Women as listeners, female performers, and women imagined as intermediaries between home and front remain distinct positions within this history.[18]

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[17] Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 102–9, esp. 107–8.

[18] Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 193–98, 221–45, esp. 241–45. See also Chapters 2–4 for the movement from gendered broadcast address to MUSAC's performers and programs.

III. Acoustical Agency, Attention, and Persuasion

MUSAC's persuasive design depended on the conditions under which a broadcast could be encountered and interpreted. Its producers could select and arrange recordings, but access to a receiver, control of the dial, competing sounds, work, danger, and military discipline shaped the listener's encounter. The analysis must therefore distinguish the institutional capacity to transmit from the capacity to secure *attention*, and attention from agreement. Familiar voices and repertories offered reasons to listen and materials for interpretation; they did not give the broadcaster control of the listener's understanding.

Soldatensender West could not monopolize its listeners' acoustic environment. A listener with access to the controls could retune or switch off; another might withdraw attention, listen selectively, or return only for certain material. The station therefore had to recruit participation in an encounter it intended to make persuasive. Familiar repertory, convincing German, professional performance, humor, nostalgia, and programming variety secured contact while also carrying psychological intervention. Nostalgia invited comparison between present deprivation and remembered life; intimate address reframed sacrifice and surrender; satire attacked dignity and credibility. Acoustical agency shaped the means through which influence had to be attempted, rather than reducing the operation's objective to attention alone. These capacities were unevenly distributed among Germans during the war. Radio access, military discipline, shared receivers, Nazi prohibitions, work, and domestic obligations shaped what people could hear and when. A soldier near a communal set did not necessarily control it, and choosing an enemy station could expose a listener to punishment. "Voluntary attention" names the

participation that the Allied broadcaster had to solicit within those conditions. It should not flatten the coercive political and social environment around the receiver.[19]

MUSAC's working classifications give this configuration of acoustic power a practical form. I understand their differentiation of political explicitness as *calibrated perceptibility*: the effort to make an intervention intelligible and persuasive while preserving the credibility of the voice through which it arrived. A slightly slanted lyric could place a political implication within an apparently personal complaint; satire could make the implication conspicuous while giving its expression the license of a joke. The distinction concerned how political purpose became audible through a musical treatment. An insinuation's force depended on its delivery and on the expectations a familiar tune or performing persona brought into play. As Metzl's account of professional entertainment and the case studies demonstrate, those musical resources could constitute the propaganda itself. The classifications reveal an institution trying to direct the interpretive activity it needed listeners to exercise. The song solicited participation in a way of hearing the war.[20]

J. Martin Daughtry's *belliphonic* places these encounters within the acoustic world generated by war and the practices through which people learn to inhabit, interpret, and survive it. His account of auditory regimes explains how listening is structured through the interaction of social position and lived experience with technologies, training, and regulation. Institutions

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[19] See Chapter 5, Section III, for the wartime conditions of German listening; Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*, 102–9, esp. 107–8.

[20] Metzl, "MUSAC terminal report," forwarded by David Williamson on May 7, 1945, unpaginated, Entry A1 139, container 172, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. See Chapter 4 for the propaganda classifications and the analyses of Dietrich and *Die Blitzbühne*; and Chapter 5, Section IV, for Keller's Westwall song.

participate in those regimes, shaping what people learn to notice and how they interpret it.[21] This makes listening itself a historically organized activity. In MUSAC's case, the apparent familiarity of a German voice or a popular tune drew upon habits of recognition formed before and during the war. Those habits made a concealed intervention possible, while the different circumstances of military and civilian listening shaped its reception. The operation worked within listening practices that already carried knowledge, expectations, and relations of authority.

Daughtry's acoustic territories also give radio's spatial reach a more precise meaning. Sound participates in making the spaces people inhabit and the relationships they experience within them.[22] An Allied transmitter could enter German listening space while its institutional origin remained concealed. MUSAC's recordings helped give that presence a culturally recognizable voice: a familiar musical idiom and convincing performance could locate the apparent speaker within a German social world. The radio encounter nevertheless took place in a particular room, barracks, or workplace, among other sounds and people. The station's imagined intimacy could be shared, interrupted, or interpreted differently by those present. Acoustic territory was therefore made through the interaction of transmission with situated listening. The project attempted to establish a persuasive presence within those spaces by making its musical address credible and worth returning to.

These concepts help specify the contribution of *an acoustemology of strategic warfare*. Daughtry's analysis already brings institutions, learned interpretation, and the organization of acoustic experience into relation. MUSAC provides an archival account of how one operation

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[21] J. Martin Daughtry, *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 128–58.

[22] Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 188–212, esp. 193, 199. See Chapter 5, Section III, for German listening conditions.

made those relations the object of deliberate musical intervention and institutional inquiry. Its personnel studied an audience, translated their judgments into songs and programs, and interpreted returning reports as knowledge about the intervention. The German warning examined in Chapter 5 makes the encounter between these efforts especially clear: features intended to sustain a credible broadcast became recognizable techniques against which another institution instructed its listeners. Strategic listening thus involved competing efforts to organize interpretation. Nattiez helps distinguish the production of the song from the meanings made in listening; Daughtry helps explain how the conditions of both were organized within wartime acoustic life.[23]

Stuart Hall and Tia DeNora further sharpen the place of interpretation. A listener could recognize a voice yet reject the political position assigned to it, enjoy an arrangement without accepting its new words, or retain a refrain as parody. Such uses do not prove that the institution's aims were achieved, but they prevent encounter from being reduced to agreement. Hall's differentiated decoding and DeNora's account of music as a resource within situated action help explain why sustained contact could generate meanings the planners had not designed. The operation needed listener agency and could never fully possess it.[24]

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[23] Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 128–58, 188–212. See Chapter 5 for the German warning and the analysis of reported reception; and the discussion of Nattiez in Section I above.

[24] Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79*, ed. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 128–38; Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–20, 44–74. Hall and DeNora provide later analytical vocabulary for interpreting the wartime evidence.

IV. Jewish Musical Labor and the Knowledge of Exile

The knowledge mobilized in MUSAC had social histories. It was carried by people whose linguistic command, musical training, theatrical practice, professional relationships, and memories preceded their employment by the OSS. Nazi persecution displaced composers, arrangers, writers, and performers without erasing those competencies. The operation's apparent familiarity to German listeners could be produced in part by people excluded from German and Austrian public life. The histories of exclusion, artistic affiliation, and antifascist activity reconstructed in Chapter 2 help explain how particular contributors and their expertise became available to MUSAC. The history of *Entartete Musik* therefore bears directly on this operation. Jewish creative work returned under an apparently German voice, with the origins of that work concealed; cultural knowledge that Nazism had sought to exclude helped construct an Allied instrument of persuasion.

Metzl brought the compression, political allusion, timing, and wordplay of Viennese cabaret to German lyric writing. Goehr brought experience across composition, broadcasting, arranging, and commercial performance. Weill's work entered through both a specific wartime contribution and the reuse of existing repertory. Those were different forms of participation: an original composition, a stock arrangement, a replacement lyric, and a recorded performance did not carry the same authorship or institutional knowledge. Restoring the named work behind each helps prevent "émigré expertise" from becoming an undifferentiated cultural resource.[25]

Philip Bohlman's history of Jewish cabaret places it within the migrations and collaborations through which Jewish and non-Jewish musicians shaped modern urban popular

[25] See Chapter 2, the biographical discussions of Lothar Metzl, Rudolf Goehr, Kurt Weill, and the MUSAC performers; and Chapter 3, the division of creative and administrative work. The individual histories distinguish Jewish émigré participation from other anti-Nazi and American participation.

culture. MUSAC carried that history into a new institutional setting: the theatrical knowledge its émigré participants brought to lyric writing, satire, and vocal characterization became part of an American operation designed to sound German. Metzl's earlier theatrical collaboration with Vilma Kurer shows how such knowledge was held in professional relationships as well as individuals. As Traussnig explains, familiarity with her vocal and performative qualities informed his lyric writing for MUSAC.[26] Kurer's contribution joined those tailored words to the timing, characterization, and expressive choices of performance. Recovering their collaboration locates the musical weapon in shared work, giving Jewish émigré networks and women's interpretive expertise a place within the account of its authorship. Jewish creative work entered MUSAC through émigrés displaced by Nazi persecution and war and through a musical culture already established in the United States by earlier immigrants and American-born Jewish composers and lyricists. Their work could enter the operation through the reuse of their songs, whether or not they knew of that use. American popular songwriting supplied works by Berlin, the Gershwins, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Kern, and other writers whose particular family histories and careers should remain visible.[27] The Westwall session places Weill and Ira Gershwin's "Jenny" beside Berlin's "Easter Parade." Joe Loss's recording of "Come With Me, My Honey" locates that source song within a British commercial dance-band culture with

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[26] Philip V. Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), chaps. 7 and 9, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195178326.001.0001; Traussnig, *Geistiger Widerstand von außen*, 214, 243–50, especially 244. See Chapter 2 for Kurer's Jewish background and her theatrical collaboration with Metzl; Chapter 4 develops the account of her interpretive contribution to MUSAC.

[27] Andrea Most, *Making Americans: Jews and the Broadway Musical* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Howard Pollack, *George Gershwin: His Life and Work* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), chap. 1, "Gershwin and His Family"; Stephen Hinton, *Weill's Musical Theater: Stages of Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), chap. 1, "Biographical Notes"; Laurie Winer, *Oscar Hammerstein II and the Invention of the Musical* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023), 25. Hammerstein's Jewish ancestry is distinguished from a claim about religious observance. See Chapter 2 for the individual biographical histories.

prominent Jewish participants, without establishing that his recording was Keller's model. These connections identify a transatlantic field of creative labor. They do not require a listener to have recognized a composer's identity for the music to contribute to the station's familiarity.[28]

The administrative network belonged to that history as well. Kay Halle's background, including her German-Jewish father and Irish-Catholic mother, should not be collapsed into the experience of a Jewish refugee. Rhoda K. Hirsch's documented responsibility for MUSAC in Washington connected intelligence and recording decisions to the project's creative work. Her reconciliation of repertoire lists, transmission of London lyrics, and relay of field decisions helped determine which materials reached production. This administrative authorship linked the intelligence used to imagine an audience with the practical work of making its music. Reporting, coordination, and access to information were forms of agency within the same system that made lyric writing and performance possible. The wartime division of labor placed cultural and administrative knowledge in continual relation.[29]

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[28] See Chapter 4 for the source-repertory analyses and Chapter 5, Section IV, for the Westwall session and the distinction between a source song and a model recording. "Session #18 (Double Session)," September 28, 1944, MUSAK [MUSAC], listing Greta Keller and John Hendrik repertory, RG 226, Entry A1 139, container 155, National Archives at College Park. A separately matched copy of the session sheet is in Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2286, "All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45," Wash–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. For the source-song credits, see Mark N. Grant, "Lady in the Dark: An Appreciation," Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, https://www.kwf.org/appreciations/lady-in-the-dark-an-appreciation/; and Irving Berlin, "Behind the Songs," entry "Easter Parade," https://www.irvingberlin.com/behind-the-songs. On these writers' Jewish backgrounds, see Neil W. Levin, "Kurt Weill," Milken Archive of Jewish Music, https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/kurt-weill; and Library of Congress, "About this Collection," George and Ira Gershwin Treasures, https://www.loc.gov/collections/george-and-ira-gershwin-treasures/about-this-collection/. Mack David, Joan Whitney, and Alex Kramer, "Come With Me, My Honey (The Song of Calypso Joe)" (New York: Santly-Joy, 1944); *Meet Miss Bobby Socks* (Columbia Pictures, 1944); Joe Loss and His Orchestra, "Come With Me, My Honey" / "Rosanna," His Master's Voice B.D. 5880, 78 rpm; MUSAC lyric sheet, record no. 12. The MUSAC sheet establishes the source title, not a specific model recording. Loss's place in British Jewish dance-band culture is discussed in Jenni Frazer, "In the 1930s, Yiddishe Band Leaders Had Britain Dancing," *Jewish Chronicle*, December 31, 2020, https://www.thejc.com/news/in-the-1930s-yiddishe-band-leaders-had-britain-dancing-b1l9a1oy.

[29] For Halle's family background and reporting work, see Chapter 2, "Katherine 'Kay' Halle," and Frank E. Wrenick, "Halle, Katherine Murphy," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, Case Western Reserve University, last updated October 6, 2023, https://case.edu/ech/articles/h/halle-katherine-murphy. For Hirsch's Washington

The operation also recruited the connections through which music could be produced. Cushing's recording-industry experience, Miller's network-radio work, and J. Walter Thompson's participation connected the OSS to commercial musical and media practice.[30] Together with Hirsch's coordination, these relationships made studios, performers, and production knowledge part of MUSAC's operational capacity. The dissertation's recovery of professional networks explains how intelligence requirements became recorded sound and how the judgments of cultural workers helped give those requirements a musical form.

Weill's repertory makes the reversal particularly audible. MUSAC's sources included "Speak Low," "September Song," and "Jenny," while "Wie lange noch?" belonged to the more specific wartime collaboration between Weill and Walter Mehring. The production correspondence examined in Chapters 3 and 4 distinguishes the composition and early Weill–Lenya recording from Metzl's adaptation, Kurer's recording, and the proposed Lenya remake. It also distinguishes the Weill setting from the separate Mediterranean setting by Eddie Zinder circulated under the cover name "Friedrich Lindner." These distinctions matter because the

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responsibilities, see Chapters 2 and 3; "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172; Rhoda K. Hirsch to Lothar Metzl, "MUSAC Project," August 4, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, "Project–ETO–MUSAC 1944," Washington–MO–PRO–6; Hirsch to Edward Cushing, "MUSAC," January 3, 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295, "Correspondence, Jan.–Feb. 1945," Wash–MO–PRO–6; Hirsch to Cushing, "MUSAC," December 20, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2284, "Correspondence, Nov.–Dec. 1944, MUSAC," Wash–MO–PRO–6; Hirsch to Cushing, January 16, 1945, and Metzl to Hirsch, "Intelligence for Muzak," January 16, 1945, both Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2295. All archival documents: Washington and Field Station Files, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

[30] Robert L. M. Underhill, "Edward Cushing, 1903–1956," *American Alpine Journal* 10, no. 2 (1957): 139–40, https://publications.americanalpineclub.org/articles/12195713900/Edward-Cushing-1903-1956; "Full Description of Project," ca. March 1945, Entry A1 139, container 172; Morgan S. A. Reichner to Kenneth D. Mann, "'Musac Project' Report," July 8, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 171; "Organization," MUSAC project organization sheet, undated, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2277. All archival documents: Washington and Field Station Files, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. See Chapters 2 and 3 for the professional networks and division of work.

wider campaign could repeat a phrase across media without transmitting one invariant composition. Jewish creative work moved through that changing chain of attribution and reuse.[31]

MUSAC weaponized not only familiarity, but exile itself: the people, repertories, languages, and cultural competencies displaced by National Socialism became resources in psychological warfare against it. For the Jewish émigré artists examined here, displacement intersected with continuing artistic work, new professional affiliations, and antifascist commitment. Kurer and Metzl's refugee theater collaborations and Weill's public statements of American affiliation show that efforts to establish cultural and civic belonging preceded MUSAC. These histories help explain how particular artists and their expertise became available and attractive to an American wartime operation. Its anti-entartete reversal was therefore institutional as well as symbolic: cultural participation repudiated by Nazi exclusion became valuable to an operation directed against the regime. The project mobilized experience that these

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[31] Stein, *Musac_Project_Consolidated_with_Origin_Research(3).xlsx*, unpublished working dataset, compiled from surviving OSS Musac Project repertory, production, and classification tables, Record Group 226, Entry A1 139, container 172, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. The researcher-created "Song Origin" field identifies theatrical, cinematic, commercial, and other repertorial sources through additional repertorial research. Edward Cushing to Morgan S. A. Reichner, "Recordings," July 28, 1944, 1–2, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2280, "Musac Misc," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park, matched copy; David Williamson to Edward Cushing, August 23, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, folder 2278, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 3 for the sequence of production decisions and Chapter 4 for the Weill–Mehring and Eddie Zinder settings and their distinct documentation. For the earlier recording, see Kurt Weill and Walter Mehring, "Wie lange noch?," Lotte Lenya, voice, Kurt Weill, piano, Bost Recording Company, New York, June 1944, 3:15–3:16, recording supplied by the author as "Wie lange noch_.mp3"; see Chapter 4 for the recording's catalog attribution and OSS/MUSAC provenance. For the June production documentation, see DeVecchi to Morck, June 7, 13, 26, and 27, 1944, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. For Zinder and the "Friedrich Lindner" cover identity, see the manuscript, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7; "Wie lange noch…?! Lied und langsamer Foxtrott," Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Washington–MO–OP–31, "Subversive Music" section; and David Williamson to Edward Cushing, "Songs Received from MEDTO," November 28, 1944, Entry A1 139, container 171. These three documents: RG 226, National Archives at College Park. These materials are reproduced in Appendix B, figures B.1b–B.1d. Edmund F. Lindner (also recorded as Linder) and Eddie Zinder are names of the same person; "Friedrich Lindner" is the printed cover name associated with this setting. For the personnel identification, see Edmund F. Lindner (Eddie Zinder) personnel file, OSS Personnel Files, Entry 224, box 454, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland.

artists had already put to work in building professional lives and pursuing political commitments. Their histories give the reversal its specificity. For the émigré artists involved, placing their expertise at the service of the United States could also assert a claim to belonging under conditions in which recognition as a loyal participant in American life remained uncertain.

V. Evidence, Secrecy, and Institutional Memory

The system that produced the music also produced the conditions under which it can now be known. A session sheet establishes a recording event more securely than a broadcast. A shipment record establishes movement, while a monitoring record may establish transmission. A prisoner's recollection documents an attributed encounter under particular conditions; an administrative summary reorganizes such encounters for another purpose. The dissertation's musical and institutional claims depend on preserving these differences even where later accounts join them into a seamless story of success.

This discipline does not make the record mute. Production tables, scores, lyric sheets, scripts, recordings, routing correspondence, personnel files, warnings, and evaluations can be read together to recover relations unavailable in any one source. They show the extent of the cultural work and make aspects of its audible design available for close analysis. They also reveal limits: an incomplete surviving recording corpus, uncertain title-level transmission, mediated reception reports, and the uneven attribution of collaborative labor. The contribution is an account of how the operation was made and how it represented its encounters with listeners, with effects specified at the level the evidence supports.

Secrecy was one cause of that uneven visibility. The September 1945 asset inventory sought to preserve recordings, manuals, and operational histories while restricting access to materials that disclosed deceptive techniques. Dietrich's August correspondence similarly

separated possession of recordings from permission to disclose their purpose. These documents establish deliberate control over the circulation of operational knowledge. On September 4, 1945, Herbert S. Little asked Kay Halle to gather the existing black-radio recordings for safekeeping. Later that month, Phillips Trenbath asked her to outline MO's possible functions within a continuing secret intelligence agency. They do not authorize interpreting every missing item as intentional suppression. Loss, separation, incomplete description, and differential declassification also shape the archive.[32] Secrecy shaped both how MUSAC addressed wartime listeners and how its history could later be reconstructed. The operation sought to circulate persuasive music while concealing the institutional authorship behind it. Classification also restricted access to the records that explained how those performances had been commissioned and produced. Recovering that history requires bringing the recorded voice back into relation with the people and decisions that made it an instrument of psychological warfare.

Public commemoration gives this history another form. The CIA's 2020 article "Marlene Dietrich: Singing for a Cause" places Dietrich's voice and anti-Nazi commitment at the center of its account of musical psychological warfare. Its imagined opening scene of soldiers listening to "Lili Marlene" makes the idea of musical persuasion vivid through a recognizable performer and song. Read as commemoration, the article shows how celebrity can give a complex operation an enduring public identity. This dissertation expands that view by recovering the collaborative work behind the performance, including the émigré expertise through which familiar music was

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[32] Chief MO to Director of OSS, "MO Assets," September 13, 1945, 1–3; Lt. Col. Herbert Little to Marlene Dietrich, August 31, 1945, Entry A1 139, box 112, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. Herbert S. Little to Kay Halle, "ETO Black Radio Recordings," September 4, 1945, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, loose papers, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; Phillips Trenbath to Kay Halle, "Functions of MO in a Continuing Intelligence Organization," September 20, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 156, folder 2075, "MO Black Radio—Reports Office," Wash–MO–OP–68, RG 226, National Archives at College Park.

deliberately reconstructed as propaganda. Dietrich's contribution belongs within that larger history of musical labor and institutional purpose.[33]

Dietrich's fame makes a complex operation publicly recognizable. It also risks allowing one performer to stand for the composition, lyric adaptation, arranging, conducting, recording, administration, and British broadcasting on which the operation depended. The Jewish and émigré thread is particularly vulnerable to this compression because the labor of less famous collaborators can disappear behind a celebrated non-Jewish anti-Nazi voice. Recovering those contributions changes the account of authorship without diminishing Dietrich's participation. The work of memory is to hold together the recognizable performance and the distributed system that made it possible.

VI. What MUSAC Contributes

Recovering the collaborative system behind MUSAC also clarifies its place in the broader history of music's mobilization for war. The project connected professional musical labor to an intelligence operation that built persuasion into performance while concealing its institutional authorship. Annegret Fauser's history of American wartime musical life provides a context for understanding these relationships, tracing how entertainment and morale became matters of institutional policy. This dissertation follows those connections through the workings of covert musical production. Christina Baade's study of wartime BBC broadcasting likewise foregrounds the relationship between musical labor and the institutional organization of radio for different publics. MUSAC brings these questions together around the construction of a

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[33] Central Intelligence Agency, "Marlene Dietrich: Singing for a Cause," originally published October 23, 2008, republished March 30, 2020, accessed October 12, 2026, https://www.cia.gov/stories/story/marlene-dietrich-singing-for-a-cause/. This citation refers to the dated version currently displayed on the CIA website.

convincing German performance: choices about how music should sound and who should perform it helped give concealed political purposes an audible and persuasive form.[34]

Carol A. Hess places musical statecraft within the Good Neighbor policy and the longer history of Pan-Americanism, showing how musical exchange organized relations of similarity, difference, and hierarchy. MUSAC belongs to the same broader history of governmental investment in music's capacity to influence international relations, while changing the relation between sponsor and apparent speaker. Its American production system addressed an enemy through counterfeit German provenance. The comparison locates covert impersonation alongside acknowledged cultural representation as a distinct way of making music politically useful. Gienow-Hecht's work on musical diplomacy and emotion further illuminates the preexisting cultural attachments upon which such intervention depended.[35]

Danielle Fosler-Lussier's account of musical diplomacy gives performers, intermediaries, and audiences an active role in producing meanings that sponsors could not fully determine. MUSAC makes the unequal distribution of operational knowledge especially visible within those relationships. Singers could shape interpretation while knowing only part of the intended use, and listeners could appropriate the performance without knowing its institutional origin. Emily Abrams Ansari's work on composers and policy formation identifies cultural workers as producers of the knowledge through which state musical programs take shape. Metzl's lyric and script writing, performers' judgments, and the exchanges among Washington, London, and New

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[34] Christina L. Baade, *Victory through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Annegret Fauser, *Sounds of War: Music in the United States during World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[35] Carol A. Hess, *Representing the Good Neighbor: Music, Difference, and the Pan American Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3–24. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1–19, 40–65.

York extend that question into covert warfare. Expertise helped constitute the operation's policy in practice through decisions about what could sound credible and persuasive.[36]

The postwar histories considered in Chapter 6 locate these contributions within changing institutions. Amy C. Beal's work on American experimental music in West Germany demonstrates the importance of broadcasters, patronage, and German participation in organizing postwar musical authority. Read with Gienow-Hecht, Fosler-Lussier, and Ansari, it prevents occupation, exchange, cultural diplomacy, and clandestine persuasion from collapsing into a single program. MUSAC contributes a detailed account of musical agency under concealed sponsorship and compartmentalized knowledge. Its relation to these histories rests on both shared questions about musical power and demonstrable differences in how that power was organized.[37]

The resulting contribution connects musical analysis to the institutions that gave musical decisions their strategic purpose. A composer-and-work account can leave the intelligence supplied to a lyricist or the operational use of a listener report outside the object's history. An agency-and-operation account can identify entertainment's audience-building role while overlooking its persuasive construction. The corpus, gender analysis, and case studies restore those connections. They show how form, style, lyric, voice, persona, and sequence were coordinated to intervene in feeling and judgment. *Strategic listening* explains how cultural

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[36] Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 4–12. Emily Abrams Ansari, *The Sound of a Superpower: Musical Americanism and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Emily Abrams Ansari, "Shaping the Policies of Cold War Musical Diplomacy: An Epistemic Community of American Composers," *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 1 (2012): 41–52.

[37] Amy C. Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945–1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999).

knowledge entered that construction and how the institution attempted to learn from its encounters with listeners. By reconstructing those relations, the dissertation places Jewish cultural labor and women's operational expertise within an account of musical authorship that includes institutional decisions as well as compositions and performances.

The term *weapon* thus has both a historical and an analytical place in the argument. Metzl used it to describe professional entertainment's capacity to conduct psychological warfare, and the surviving musical and administrative evidence permits reconstruction of how MUSAC pursued that capacity. A song's familiar form, its emotional and gendered address, and its relation to other media could participate directly in persuasion. Their coordination within an operation made music a medium of intervention as well as a means of attracting an audience. The close readings locate that intervention within musical practice: they show how a revised text acquired persuasive force through the particular way it was arranged, voiced, and heard in relation to its surroundings.[38]

The postwar record shows how this knowledge could persist. MUSAC closed and MO was liquidated, but recordings were inventoried, techniques were proposed for new uses, and practitioners continued in intelligence. Metzl's CIA service from 1947 until 1971 is particularly consequential: the author of German lyrics and satirical scripts, who had argued that music itself could be a strong weapon, remained within the American intelligence establishment for decades. His career connects the project's Jewish émigré expertise to the postwar institution through a documented individual life. Chapter 6's account of his 1954 PBHISTORY assignment makes

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[38] Metzl, "MUSAC terminal report," forwarded by David Williamson on May 7, 1945, unpaginated, closing assessment, Entry A1 139, container 172, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. See Chapter 4 for Dietrich's performances, Die Blitzbühne, and the distinct "Wie lange noch?" settings; and Chapter 5, Sections IV–V, for Keller's Westwall song and the DND campaign. The distinction between designed possibility and documented reception governs those analyses.

that continuity concrete in work joining intelligence collection to propaganda.[39] Cultural knowledge carried from Viennese cabaret through exile and wartime production remained part of the professional experience available within American intelligence. The project's afterlife included people who knew how political purpose could be made musically convincing.

The October 30, 1945 staffing memorandum shows officials seeking to retain Metzl's expertise and considering Sol Hirsch as an alternative. Sol's subsequent Foreign Service and USIA career, and Whitney Shepardson's Free Europe Committee presidency from 1953 to 1956, trace related professional networks into international press work and political broadcasting.[40] The resulting history follows personnel and expertise across institutions with distinct functions. Read alongside Rhoda's wartime coordination, it also makes visible the administrative labor through which that expertise had become usable.

The later radio cases extend the argument from retained expertise to the continuing relation between musical intervention and institutional listening. *La Voz de la Liberación* combined recorded music, humor, and gendered address in the construction of an apparently domestic opposition voice. *Radio Swan* coupled musical programming with listener

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[39] "Lothar Metzl, CIA Analyst, Dies at 83," *Washington Post*, September 9, 1989, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1989/09/09/lothar-metzl-cia-analyst-dies-at-83/6d82dd1e-2e69-46e0-93e6-88ac5dc93660/; Max Holland, "Operation PBHISTORY: The Aftermath of SUCCESS," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 17, no. 2 (2004): 303–4, https://doi.org/10.1080/08850600490274935; Central Intelligence Agency, "Final Summary Report of PBHISTORY Project," transmitted October 29, 1954, 1, 7, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, DOC_0000920013. See Chapter 6, Section V.

[40] Memorandum to Whitney Shepardson, "Personnel for Propaganda Intelligence Section, SI," October 30, 1945, 1–2, folder 1560, box 113, Entry A1 139, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland; Ranachqua Foundation, "College Assistance Grant Program," accessed September 28, 2026, https://ranachquafoundation.org/college-assistance-grant-program/; Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, *The Papers of Whitney Hart Shepardson, 1910–1966: A Descriptive List*, "Registration Statement," PDF p. 3, https://www.fdrlibrary.org/documents/356632/390886/findingaid_shepardson.pdf/f127a67f-603b-45c9-bfc1-1650f43d157b. See Chapter 6, Section IV, for their distinct institutional paths.

correspondence that officials treated as both evaluation and intelligence.[41] These cases make the postwar comparison concrete: the arrangement of sound could shape political address while the interpretation of listening supplied knowledge for further action. The later Iranian and Nicaraguan cases extend that history through contested sponsorship, transmission, and monitoring.

MO's inventories and postwar proposals show officials treating musical expertise as a resource worth retaining. Metzl's terminal assessment likewise presented professional entertainment's strategic possibilities as open to further development. These records support a history of retained personnel, materials, and practical knowledge. Claims that a later operation inherited a particular MUSAC technique require evidence of that transfer.[42] What could survive the recording operation was a practical understanding of the relationship between musical expression and political influence. Its makers had learned to treat a voice's credibility and a song's emotional associations as matters of strategic judgment. The postwar history extends the dissertation's acoustemological argument through the continued availability of that knowledge and of the practitioners who had developed it.

MUSAC reveals an institution learning through the musical practices it organized. Cultural research informed production, performance solicited listening, and accounts of listening returned as intelligence through which officials assessed the work and considered its further uses.

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[41] See Chapter 6, Section V, for *La Voz de la Liberación*, *Radio Swan*, Free Voice of Iran, and Radio Quince de Septiembre, including the programming, listener correspondence, sponsorship, and monitoring records analyzed there.

[42] Metzl, "MUSAC terminal report," forwarded by David Williamson on May 7, 1945, unpaginated, closing assessment, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, National Archives at College Park; Chief MO to Director of OSS, "MO Assets," September 13, 1945, 1–3, Entry A1 139, box 112, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland. See Chapter 6 for the postwar proposals and the retention of personnel and expertise.

An acoustemology of strategic warfare brings this recursive process into view while keeping the musical encounter at its center. Performers gave the intended address a sounding form; listeners brought their own histories to its interpretation. The knowledge produced through those relationships informed an effort to reshape German morale and political judgment. The weapon was a system; listening was one of the ways that system knew. Its strategic possibilities took musical shape in the reworking of songs and in the expressive decisions through which performers brought those songs to life.

The dissertation's broader musicological contribution lies in showing how music participated in the production of strategic knowledge. MUSAC required officials to make judgments about what German listeners would recognize, whom they might trust, and which memories or desires a performance could activate. Those judgments shaped repertory, language, casting, and musical delivery. Reports of listening supplied further material for assessment, although the surviving archive does not always permit a report to be linked to a subsequent musical decision. Strategic listening names this institutional effort to make musical experience usable for action. Within an acoustemology of strategic warfare, music becomes a site at which an institution formulated understandings of an adversary and attempted to act through them.

This approach also makes the institution's imagined listener an object of musicological inquiry. Assumptions about morale, gender, and attachment to home translated varied lives into expectations that could guide production. Those expectations helped determine which voices and musical situations officials considered credible or persuasive. The reports that returned to the institution were likewise selective accounts, shaped by what could be observed, recorded, and made relevant to operational concerns. Read in this way, the archive documents both reported encounters with music and the procedures through which officials made those encounters

intelligible. The distinction between a listener's response and an institution's interpretation of that response becomes a methodological resource. It allows musicology to reconstruct how claims about music's power acquired administrative authority while keeping the limits of the reception evidence visible.

The same framework changes the account of musical agency. MUSAC depended on people who possessed different kinds of expertise and different degrees of access to its purposes. A performer could shape a song's expressive force without controlling its subsequent use; a songwriter's work could enter the operation without the songwriter's participation. Creative agency, knowledge of sponsorship, and responsibility for operational use therefore require separate consideration. Recovering Jewish émigré expertise and women's interpretive and administrative labor reveals how the operation acquired its musical capacities and how those capacities were distributed among participants. Concealment also becomes part of music history itself: it shaped the apparent identity of a performance, the conditions under which people contributed to it, and the evidence through which their contributions can now be recovered.

These relationships expand the object of musical analysis to include the organized effort that made a performance strategically usable. Familiarity, pleasure, vocal intimacy, and musical memory offered possibilities that depended on arrangements, performers, broadcast settings, and listeners' circumstances. Their political force must be examined through those relationships. Close musical analysis is essential to this inquiry because it identifies how institutional ambitions took expressive form; administrative history explains how that form was selected, circulated, and evaluated. Bringing these scales together makes music's place within strategic warfare more fully available to musicological study. MUSAC offers a way to investigate musical power

through the connected histories of performance, institutional knowledge, and the unequal conditions under which people's musical lives become resources for state action.

The force of that work comes into focus in Keller's Westwall refrain, which brings the language of military invulnerability into a comic scene of sexual refusal. The double meaning of *Fall* makes the political analogy available within the rhyme. Keller's musical boast invites listeners to hear a military promise as a joke and to reconsider what its confidence is worth. "Lili Marleen" made musical memory itself a means of intervention. Dietrich's choice to preserve its familiar German words gave performance and context a central role in its political use. In *Die Blitzbühne*, fragments of the song accompanied retreat and failed homecoming: the accordion recalled the promise of return as the drama undid it. Where Keller's comic refusal unsettled military invulnerability, the remembered song made the distance between wartime longing and its fulfillment a means of persuasion.[43] Such possibilities depended on the craft of artists whose cultural knowledge, including knowledge carried through persecution and exile, the operation enlisted against National Socialism. Their work made the familiar song a site at which the war could be heard and imagined differently. MUSAC's musical weapon took shape in that transformation – the deliberate reworking of music so that recognition could invite reconsideration, and pleasure itself could carry political persuasion.

[43] See Chapter 5, Section IV, for Keller's Westwall song; Chapter 4 for Dietrich's choice to retain the familiar German text of "Lili Marleen" and the instrumental cues in *Die Blitzbühne* Program III; and Chapters 2–4 for the project's Jewish and émigré participants and their musical work.

War and MUSAC Project Timeline

Aligned with the current chapter set

This selective chronology places the office's choices beside the changing war and follows their postwar afterlives. Reading across a row shows the relationship argued in the chapters; proximity in time alone does not establish causation. References locate the current chapters' documentation. W1–W4 and I1 identify the contextual sources listed at the end.

Exile and institutional formation 1933 to 1943

Date	War and political context	Office or project development and significance
1933–38	Nazi rule begins in 1933; Austria is annexed in March 1938. (W2)	Persecution and exclusion disperse Jewish musical and theatrical expertise. Metzl leaves Austria and reaches New York in September 1938. These histories later shape the people and knowledge recruited for MUSAC. (Ch. 2, nn. 37–39.)
1939–41	Germany invades Poland on September 1, 1939. France falls in June 1940; the Battle of Britain follows. (W1)	Donovan's 1940–41 investigations examine European intelligence and subversion. British practices enter the developing American institutional framework. (Ch. 1, n. 7.)
July 11, 1941	The European war has expanded; Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22. (W1)	Roosevelt creates COI under Donovan, bringing information gathering and analysis into a centralized organization. It provides the institutional predecessor to OSS. (Ch. 1, n. 7; I1.)
December 7–12, 1941	Pearl Harbor, December 7; U.S. entry into the war follows. (W1)	On December 12, Weill proposes German and Austrian émigré artists for radio "cultural attacks" in a letter to Sherwood. The proposal is an antecedent to MUSAC, not its administrative founding. (Ch. 1, n. 4.)
June 1942	War is fought across multiple theaters.	OSS is established on June 13 as COI is divided; foreign-information work passes to OWI. Overt information and concealed intervention acquire distinct institutional homes. (Ch. 1, institutional history, n. 8; I1.)

Date	War and political context	Office or project development and significance
January–September 1943	Stalingrad ends in German defeat in February; Italy announces its armistice in September. (W1)	General Order 9, January 3, effective January 4, establishes MO. Its work includes rumor, forged print, and black radio: the operational setting from which MUSAC will emerge. (Ch. 3, I, n. 1.)

From a writing request to recording production 1944

Date	War and political context	Office or project development and significance
April 2–4	The Allied campaign in Italy continues.	Smith asks Washington for German-language lyrics, jokes, and gags on April 2. R&A's April 4 report treats German women as a propaganda target and channel of influence. These establish demand and audience assumptions, not a documented report-to-song instruction for every title. (Ch. 3, n. 11; Ch. 4, n. 8.)
May 22	Invasion preparations precede the western offensive.	"Radio as a Medium for Subversive Morale Operations" stresses credible voices, current information, and entertainment. Musical familiarity and apparent source become practical requirements. (Ch. 3, I, nn. 3–4.)
June 4–7	Allies take Rome on June 4 and land in Normandy on June 6. (W1)	Smith's June 7 cable requests finished recordings of current American songs with German lyrics, principally women's voices, and credible accents. The request falls immediately after D-Day; the cable's requirements, rather than chronology alone, establish the choice. (Ch. 3, II, nn. 13–15.)
June 15–July 3	The Normandy campaign continues; a major Soviet offensive begins June 22. (W1)	London calibrates overt lyric content and authorizes production July 3, prioritizing credible entertainment. Weill and Lenya's separate June recording precedes the session sequence counted in Metzl's final report. (Ch. 3, II, nn. 15–21; Ch. 3, n. 84; Ch. 4, VII, n. 90.)
July 7–22	Allied operations continue in France.	The Muzak studio series begins July 7; the July 8 report assigns project responsibilities. Donovan's authorization follows July 13, and Board approval July 22. Urgent production precedes administrative regularization. (Ch. 3, II, nn. 24–26, and VII, nn. 92–93.)
Summer 1944	The western campaign produces German prisoners of war.	Laurie reports a Twelfth Army Group estimate that 90 percent of POWs taken that summer listened regularly to Soldatensender. This is reported station-level listening, not a measure of MUSAC-specific persuasion or the general population. (Ch. 1, n. 23; Ch. 5, n. 15; Laurie, 205, 287n43.)

Date	War and political context	Office or project development and significance
August 7–26	Paris is liberated on August 25. (W1)	Dietrich rejects an overt "Lili Marleen" rewrite on August 7; the session log records it August 16. Other Dietrich–Hendrik sessions follow August 23–24. A German warning dated August 26 identifies the soldiers' station's mix of news and music. (Ch. 4, V–VI, nn. 60, 78–81; Ch. 5, I, n. 1.)
August–September	Allied forces approach Germany's border. (W1)	London requests higher output and redistributes lyric work. An August DND summary records possession of its materials and belief in its German origin. The linked music and print campaign belongs to this wider MO system; individual items need their own dates. (Ch. 3, VI–VII, nn. 79–83, 98; Ch. 5, V, nn. 39–40.)
September 28	American patrols crossed the German border on September 11; the Westwall is under pressure. (Ch. 5, n. 25.)	Keller records "Ich bin wie der Westwall." The lyric uses gendered comic refusal to undermine the fortification's claim of invulnerability. The chapter connects the song's persuasive design to this military moment; a title-level broadcast date is not established. (Ch. 5, IV, nn. 22–25.)

Changing pressure and changing address late 1944 to March 1945

Date	War and political context	Office or project development and significance
October–November 1944	Fighting continues along Germany's western approaches.	The October 31 intelligence summary records soldiers listening at a Red Cross center. November 1 occupation planning considers a disguised MO office; the November 29 Pancake report distinguishes broadcast theater recordings from arriving MUSAC discs. Reception, logistics, and postwar planning coexist. (Ch. 5, nn. 9 and 15; Ch. 6, n. 13.)
December 1944	Germany launches the Ardennes offensive on December 16. (W1)	MUSAC receives a further appropriation. On December 20, Hirsch sends Cushing broadcasts, reports, scripts, and translations, sustaining the intelligence–production connection during the winter campaign. (Ch. 3, II, n. 26; Ch. 2, n. 20.)
January 1945	The winter offensive fails; the Soviets begin a major offensive on January 12. (W1)	Metzl's January 16 "Intelligence for Muzak" memorandum values Hirsch's material and requests continued supply. Lyric review also addresses singability and the station's cover. The January 26 Blitzbühne title page documents the expanded dramatic production. (Ch. 3, VI, nn. 89–90; Ch. 4, V, n. 45.)

Date	War and political context	Office or project development and significance
January 18–February 1	The winter campaign continues.	Hirsch's February 5 memorandum reports that 36 "musacs" were used in this interval and notes January 31 as an exception. This is a period total, not a nightly rate. (Ch. 3, n. 112; Ch. 5, n. 11.)
Early 1945 Inferred	Germany faces renewed pressure after the Ardennes offensive.	"Das alte Lied" turns the Westwall into evidence of depleted resources; the associated "Generalsbefehl!" gives surrender instructions. Chapter 5 reads a thematic succession from Keller's September song to print diagnosis and actionable instruction. The leaflet's date is inferred from its wording. (Ch. 5, IV, n. 28.)
February 1945	The Yalta Conference meets February 4–11. (W3)	"The Role of MO in the Postwar Period" proposes covert work for reconstruction as well as continued subversion. The potential addressee shifts from enemy soldier toward occupied civilian; these are proposals. (Ch. 6, II, nn. 9–11.)
March 7–29	U.S. forces cross the Rhine at Remagen on March 7. (W1)	Mann's March 29 evaluation reports, as of March 26, 258 German lyrics with corresponding arrangements, 34 discs sent to the field, and at least eight songs produced weekly. It pairs production with reported audience attraction and possible occupation demand. These are interim figures. (Ch. 5, VII, nn. 47–48; Ch. 6, n. 1.)
March 26–April 2	German defeat is approaching.	Metzl asks Williamson about postwar assignments on March 26. Mann proposes cooperation with OWI on German reeducation on March 30 and April 2. These records show efforts to retain expertise and secure MO's future role; they do not establish adoption or an appointment. (Ch. 6, nn. 12 and 24.)

Surrender closure and institutional transition 1945

Date	War and political context	Office or project development and significance
April 16–29	The Soviet offensive against Berlin begins April 16. (W1)	MUSAC's accompanying song table runs through April 19. On April 27, Hughes orders the project discontinued, with office space available after May 10. The final Soldatensender West broadcast is April 29. Production closure and the station's last transmission are separate dates. (Ch. 6, n. 2; Ch. 5, n. 52; Ch. 4, nn. 111–112.)

Date	War and political context	Office or project development and significance
May 1	Germany's defeat is imminent.	Metzl inventories discs, including three Blitzbühne programs. A separate MO paper considers DND as a continuing organization for occupation. Material preservation and proposed political reuse begin before the formal surrender takes effect. (Ch. 4, n. 110; Ch. 6, nn. 14–16.)
May 7–8	Germany signs at Reims May 7; surrender takes effect May 8. (W4)	Williamson forwards Metzl's terminal report on May 7. It records forty-eight sessions and more than three hundred songs and argues that entertainment itself can become a weapon. This is the operation's retrospective assessment. (Ch. 6, I, nn. 2–5.)
May 10	The European war has ended.	Mann thanks Allen Roth on Mohawk Trading Corporation letterhead; Donovan separately thanks Lester O'Keefe. The letters acknowledge musical labor at termination, while the Mohawk letter retains the project's commercial cover. (Ch. 4, n. 120; Ch. 6, n. 6.)
May 13–June 19	Allied occupation replaces war against Germany.	DND proposals seek continued concealed political influence. Lloyd's June 1 reservation questions reuse of DND's compromised cover while supporting covert reeducation through another publication. The June 19 memorandum questions authority and warns of the damage disclosure could cause. These are contested plans. (Ch. 6, III, nn. 17–18.)
August–September	Japan formally surrenders September 2, ending World War II. (W1)	Little returns Dietrich's recordings on August 31 under continuing secrecy. The September 7 Decca "Lili Marlene" serves in Chapter 4 as a reconstruction of the wartime performance conception, distinct from the unrecovered August 16 master. (Ch. 6, n. 8; Ch. 4, VI, n. 81.)
September 4–20	The wartime intelligence apparatus faces reorganization.	Little asks Halle to gather black-radio recordings September 4. Warner proposes future MO work September 11; asset papers follow September 12–13, alongside a proposal to Magruder. Trenbath asks Halle to outline continuing functions September 20. Recordings, personnel, and methods become prospective institutional assets. (Ch. 6, IV, nn. 19–23, 28.)
October 1–November 30	OSS is abolished effective October 1; the transition includes SSU. (I1)	October personnel records seek to retain expertise, including Metzl. The October 27 memorandum orders MO's separate operation ended by November 30, allowing selected transfers to SI. Capabilities are redistributed rather than transferred as an intact MUSAC program. (Ch. 6, IV, nn. 25 and 32; I1.)

Postwar continuities and comparisons 1947 to 1981

These entries follow the cases retained in Chapter 6. They distinguish a documented practitioner's career from later operations facing comparable problems of sponsorship, musical programming, and audience response.

Date	Development	Connection to the dissertation
1947–71	CIA begins in 1947. Metzl joins that year and retires in 1971. (I1; Ch. 6, n. 26.)	A named MUSAC practitioner remains in intelligence for twenty-four years. Personnel continuity is documented; reuse of a particular wartime song or technique requires assignment-specific evidence.
July 24, 1951	Dietrich requests permission for commercial release of her OSS recordings.	Her letter to Donovan distinguishes possession of the recordings from permission to use them commercially. The request does not by itself establish that permission was granted or a release occurred. (Ch. 6, I, n. 8.)
1953–56	Whitney Shepardson serves as president of the Free Europe Committee.	The organization operated Radio Free Europe. His career extends the personnel network into political broadcasting, alongside Metzl's intelligence work and Sol Hirsch's international press career. (Ch. 2, n. 45; Ch. 6, IV, nn. 30–31.)
1954	PBSUCCESS and La Voz de la Liberación; the subsequent PBHISTORY operation in Guatemala.	Radio combines music, humor, gendered appeals, and political announcements. Metzl arrives with the PBHISTORY team July 4; that operation later uses music and Radio Liberation announcers in a propaganda film. This documents a personnel connection and musical practices, without establishing reuse of MUSAC songs. (Ch. 6, V, nn. 35–40; Conclusion, n. 42.)
1960–61	Radio Swan begins May 17, 1960; evaluations and listener correspondence follow in 1961.	Music and entertainment help sustain contact from which responses and intelligence return. The case also exposes credibility problems. This is the closest later comparison in programming and feedback. (Ch. 6, V, nn. 42–45.)
1980	Free Voice of Iran appears in contemporary reporting.	News and music accompany opposition appeals. U.S. contacts and perceived backing matter, but the cited records do not establish American control of the station. (Ch. 6, V, nn. 46–47.)
By 1981	Radio Quince de Septiembre broadcasts into Nicaragua; FBIS monitors it in May 1981.	Source claims, covert sponsorship, audience response, and jamming frame the station's political address. FBIS's sampling and summaries show organized intelligence listening; its later loss of the signal limits what monitors could hear. (Ch. 6, V, nn. 48–51.)

Sources and scope

Chapter references use the revised Chapters 1–6 and Conclusion, including Chapter 3's approved Riva insertion. Recording, shipment, and broadcast dates denote different events; proposals do not establish implementation. The early-1945 leaflet date remains inferred. The 304-entry research index includes rerecordings; the retrospective total of 312 and Metzl's forty-eight sessions describe different measures. (Ch. 1, n. 3 and corpus discussion; Ch. 4, nn. 57, 106–107; Ch. 6, nn. 2–3.)

W1 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "World War II Dates and Timeline." Holocaust Encyclopedia. Last edited November 15, 2021. Accessed October 12, 2026.

W2 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "The Holocaust and World War II: Key Dates." Holocaust Encyclopedia. Accessed October 12, 2026.

W3 United States Department of State, Office of the Historian. "The Yalta Conference, 1945." Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations. Accessed October 12, 2026.

W4 National Archives. "Surrender of Germany (1945)." Milestone Documents. Last reviewed January 10, 2023. Accessed October 12, 2026.

I1 Central Intelligence Agency. "History of CIA." Accessed October 12, 2026.

Appendix A

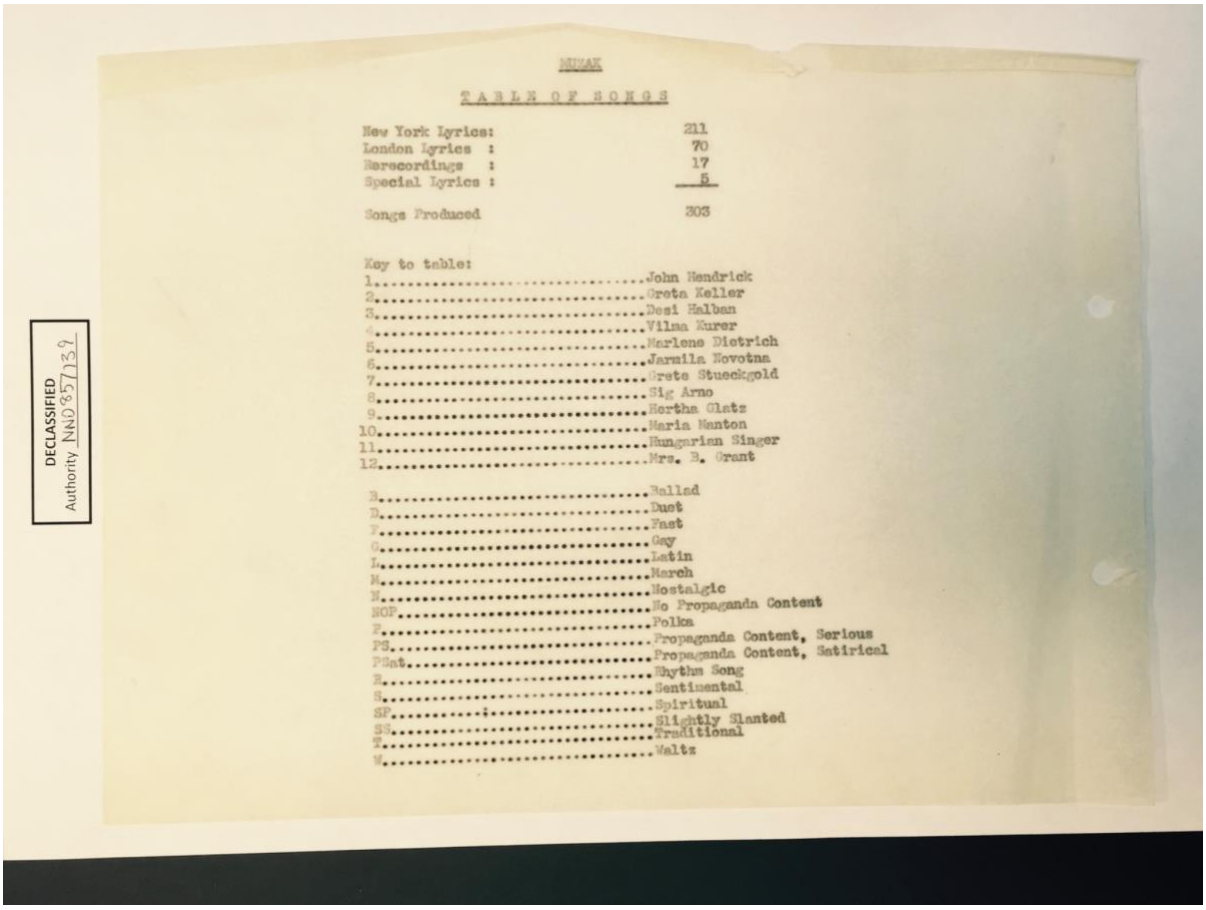
Corpus and Classification Method

The dissertation's session-based MUSAC index contains 304 recording entries, including rerecordings. A recording entry is the unit counted in this index; it is not a count of unique songs, surviving audio masters, sessions, or confirmed broadcasts. The index combines fields retained from OSS records with research fields added during this study. Historical categories such as "No Propaganda Content," "Slightly Slanted," "Propaganda Content, Satirical," and "Propaganda Content, Serious" remain analytically distinct from later fields used to study gender, repertory origin, performer type, and emotional address.

The complete research dataset was built from the surviving session documentation and related archival records and is retained as a separate supplementary research file. This appendix provides the counting rules, the historical classification key, and a small sample of case-study entries so that the quantitative claims in Chapters 1, 2, 4, and the Conclusion can be checked without reproducing all 304 rows in the dissertation PDF.

Counting rules used throughout the dissertation: rerecordings remain separate entries when session documentation records separate production events; shared-performer entries count once in the corpus; the 304-entry index is kept distinct from historical project totals reported on other bases (including the retrospective total of 312); and quantitative gender comparisons exclude mixed-gender entries and entries lacking the relevant historical designation when the denominator requires it.

Historical Classification Key



MUZAK

TABLE OF SONGS

New York Lyrics:	211
London Lyrics :	70
Rerecordings :	17
Special Lyrics :	5
Songs Produced	303

Key to table:

1. John Hendrick
2. Greta Keller
3. Desi Halban
4. Vilma Kurer
5. Marlene Dietrich
6. Jarmila Novotna
7. Grete Stueckgold
8. Sig Arno
9. Hertha Glatz
10. Maria Manton
11. Hungarian Singer
12. Mrs. B. Grant

B. Ballad
D. Duet
F. Fast
G. Gay
L. Latin
M. March
N. Nostalgic
NOP. No Propaganda Content
P. Polka
PS. Propaganda Content, Serious
PSat. Propaganda Content, Satirical
R. Rhythm Song
S. Sentimental
SP. Spiritual
SS. Slightly Slanted
T. Traditional
W. Waltz

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 857137

Figure A.1. "MUZAK Table of Songs," summary and classification key.
Source: "MUZAK Table of Songs," n.d., accompanying Lothar Metzl's terminal report forwarded by David Williamson on May 7, 1945, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, note 57.

Note: "Gay" is retained as a historical musical descriptor, not a sexuality classification. NOP identifies the office's lyric-content designation; it does not establish that a recording had no psychological-warfare function. The summary's printed total of 303 is corrected here to 304 recording entries, as established by the session index (Sheet1, rows 2–305; 48 sessions). The facsimile preserves the original document. The corrected corpus count remains distinct from the separate retrospective total of 312.

Table A.1. Historical classification codes transcribed from Figure A.1.

Code	Descriptor in source
B	Ballad
D	Duet
F	Fast
G	Gay (historical musical descriptor)
L	Latin
M	March
N	Nostalgic
NOP	No Propaganda Content
P	Polka
PS	Propaganda Content, Serious
PSat	Propaganda Content, Satirical
R	Rhythm Song
S	Sentimental
SP	Spiritual
SS	Slightly Slanted
T	Traditional
W	Waltz

Case-Study Sample from the Research Dataset

Table A.2. Selected recording entries and chapter-verified German titles.

Session	Date	Performer	English/source title	German / project title	Form / style	OSS lyric class
6	27 Jul 1944	Vilma Kurer	How Much Longer?	Wann Kommt der Tag (Wie Lange Noch)	Ballad / Sentimental	PC, Serious
9	16 Aug 1944	Marlene Dietrich	Lili Marleen	—	Ballad / Nostalgic	No PC
11	23 Aug 1944	Marlene Dietrich	You've Got That Look	Du hast ’nen Blick	Rhythm / Fast; Gay (secondary)	No PC
11	23 Aug 1944	Marlene Dietrich	Surrey with the Fringe on Top	Schlittenfahrt	Rhythm / Sentimental	No PC
18	28 Sep 1944	Greta Keller	Come With Me My Honey	Ich bin wie der Westwall	Rhythm / Latin	PC, Satirical
18	28 Sep 1944	Greta Keller	Jenny	—	Rhythm / Gay	No PC
18	28 Sep 1944	Greta Keller	Easter Parade	—	Ballad / Sentimental	No PC
42	8 Mar 1945	Sig Arno	Fuzzy Wuzzy	—	Rhythm / Gay	No PC

Source: Danielle Stein, Musac Project Consolidated with Origin Research, author’s research dataset, Sheet1, rows 25, 35, 43, 44, 78–80, and 257, respectively. Current distribution filename: Supplementary_Data_MUSAC_Research_Dataset.xlsx; earlier chapter citations use the working filename Musac_Project_Consolidated_with_Origin_Research(3).xlsx. The sample’s “Du hast ’nen Blick,” “Schlittenfahrt,” and “Ich bin wie der Westwall” titles are supplied from chapter documentation (Chapter 4, notes 31 and 34; Chapter 5, note 22); those Column J cells remain blank in the workbook. A dash means that this sample supplies no German title. The sample is illustrative, not a substitute for the complete 304-entry dataset.

Performer Names and Recording Credits

The dataset retains its recorded performer labels, including “John (Jan) Hendrik” and “Daisy (Desi) Halban,” rather than treating variants as additional people. Unnamed credits remain unnamed. “Mary Manton” is the workbook’s indexed credit; the historical key in Figure A.1 reads “Maria Manton.” This difference is recorded without resolving the performer’s identity from the name alone. Joint credits remain joint entries: four name Halban and Hendrik, and one names Hendrik and Mrs. Granichstaedten. Each of these five mixed-gender entries counts once in the 304-entry corpus. Analyses restricted to male- or female-coded entries exclude those shared entries. See Chapter 2, notes 51, 66, 69, and 85; Sheet1, columns D–E.

Research Fields

The “Song Origin” field (column I) records repertorial research and is not an OSS classification. Columns U–W preserve source URLs, confidence labels, and title-variant cautions for the research additions; “Origin Research Notes” explains their scope and lists nine unresolved titles. A blank origin is not evidence that a song had no prior source. The corpus occupies Sheet1, rows 2–305; rows 306–307 are blank and row 308 is a summary, not another recording entry.

Appendix B

Selected Musical and Cross-Media Campaign Materials

This appendix supplies extended context for a small number of musical and campaign objects whose material form is necessary to evaluate the dissertation's close readings. It follows the original selection rule for the dissertation: reproduce objects when their layout, notation, visual identity, or cross-media relation matters to the argument; leave most administrative paperwork in the chapter citations rather than turning the appendix into a documentary file dump.

B.1. "Wie lange noch…?!": Eddie Zinder's Working Materials and the "Friedrich Lindner" Cover Identity

The Mediterranean-theater "Wie lange noch…?!" survives in several materially different forms. A working manuscript is headed "Words and Music by Eddie Zinder," while the counterfeit commercial cover credits "Friedrich Lindner" and presents the song as a Berlin publication. A November 28, 1944 memorandum refers to the song as by Zinder and states explicitly that it is not identical with the "Wie Lange Noch" written by Weill. Read together, these objects document both the composition's working authorship and the false commercial identity used to circulate it.



Figure B.1a. Front-cover artwork for "Wie lange noch?" The counterfeit commercial design credits "Friedrich Lindner," labels the piece a langsamer Foxtrott, and presents a Berlin Ufaton Verlag identity.
Source: Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park. The object belongs to the Mediterranean-theater "Wie lange noch?" material discussed in Chapter 4.

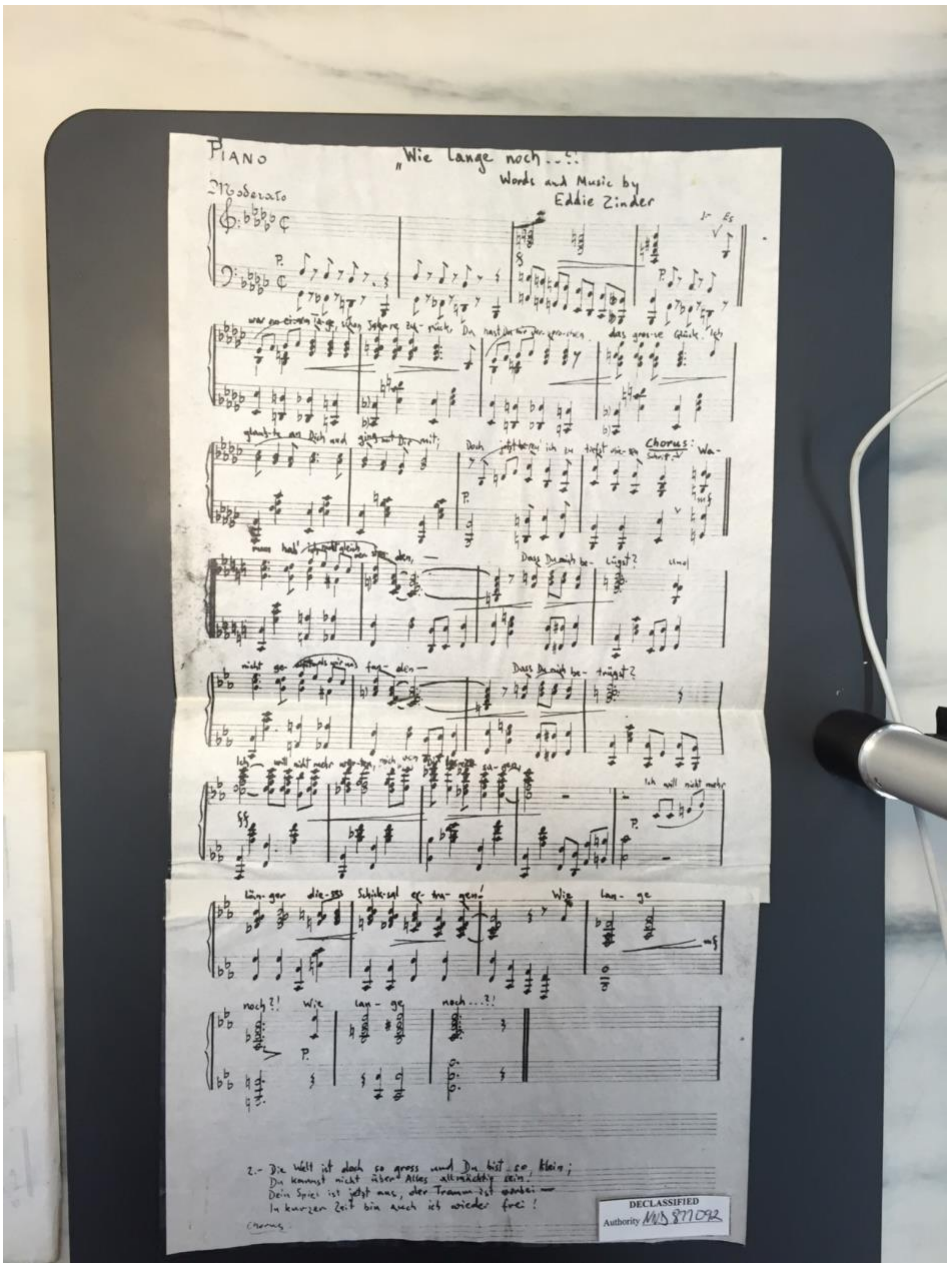


Figure B.1b. Working manuscript for "Wie lange noch…?!" headed "Words and Music by Eddie Zinder."
Source: Eddie Zinder, "Wie lange noch…?!," working manuscript, COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, note 102. For the identification of Eddie Zinder with Edmund F. Lindner (also Linder), see Chapter 5, note 31; "Friedrich Lindner" remains the printed cover attribution.

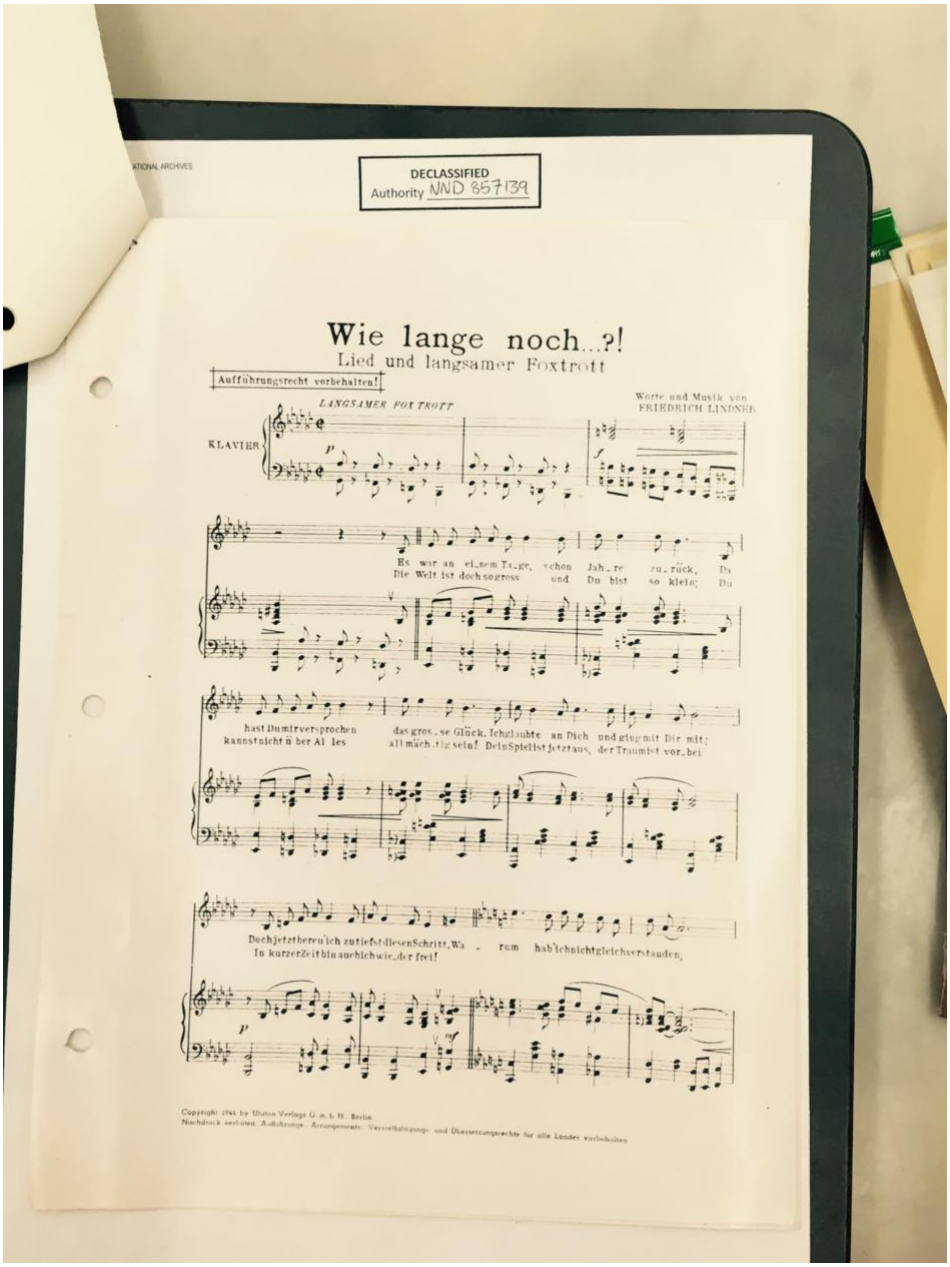
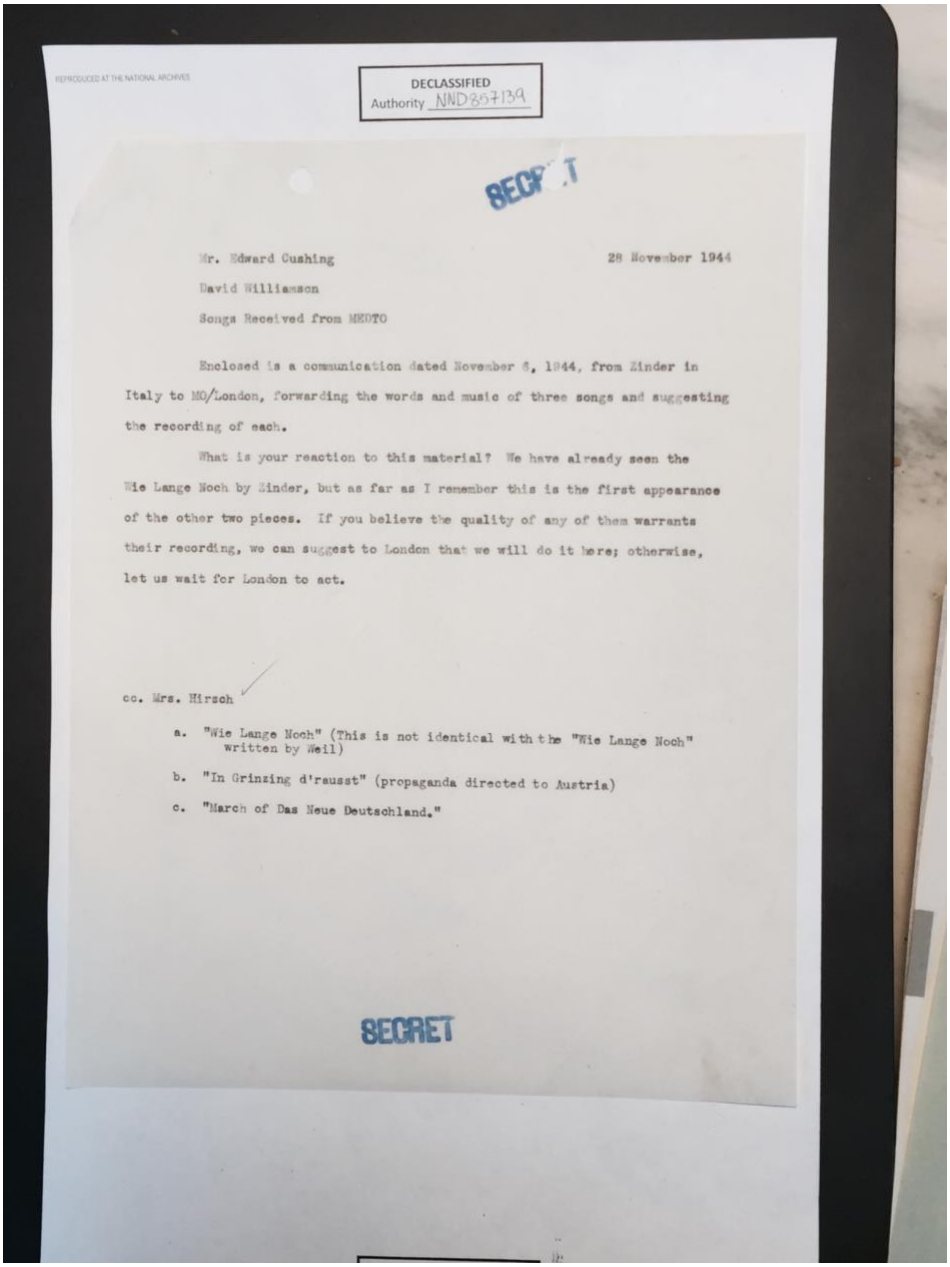


Figure B.1c. Opening score page of "Wie lange noch…?! Lied und langsamer Foxtrott," bearing the counterfeit 1944 Berlin Ufaton Verlag imprint and the printed credit "Friedrich Lindner."
Source: "Wie lange noch…?! Lied und langsamer Foxtrott," Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Washington–MO–OP–31, "Subversive Music" section, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, notes 102–103.

The printed score is the object analyzed musically in Chapter 4. Its false publisher and authorial identity are part of the operation's masquerade, while the working manuscript in figure B.1b preserves Zinder's name inside the production history.



REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 857139

SECRET

Mr. Edward Cushing 28 November 1944

David Williamson

Songs Received from MEDTO

Enclosed is a communication dated November 6, 1944, from Zinder in Italy to MO/London, forwarding the words and music of three songs and suggesting the recording of each.

What is your reaction to this material? We have already seen the Wie Lange Noch by Zinder, but as far as I remember this is the first appearance of the other two pieces. If you believe the quality of any of them warrants their recording, we can suggest to London that we will do it here; otherwise, let us wait for London to act.

cc. Mrs. Hirsch

a. "Wie Lange Noch" (This is not identical with the "Wie Lange Noch" written by Weil)

b. "In Grinzing d'rausst" (propaganda directed to Austria)

c. "March of Das Neue Deutschland."

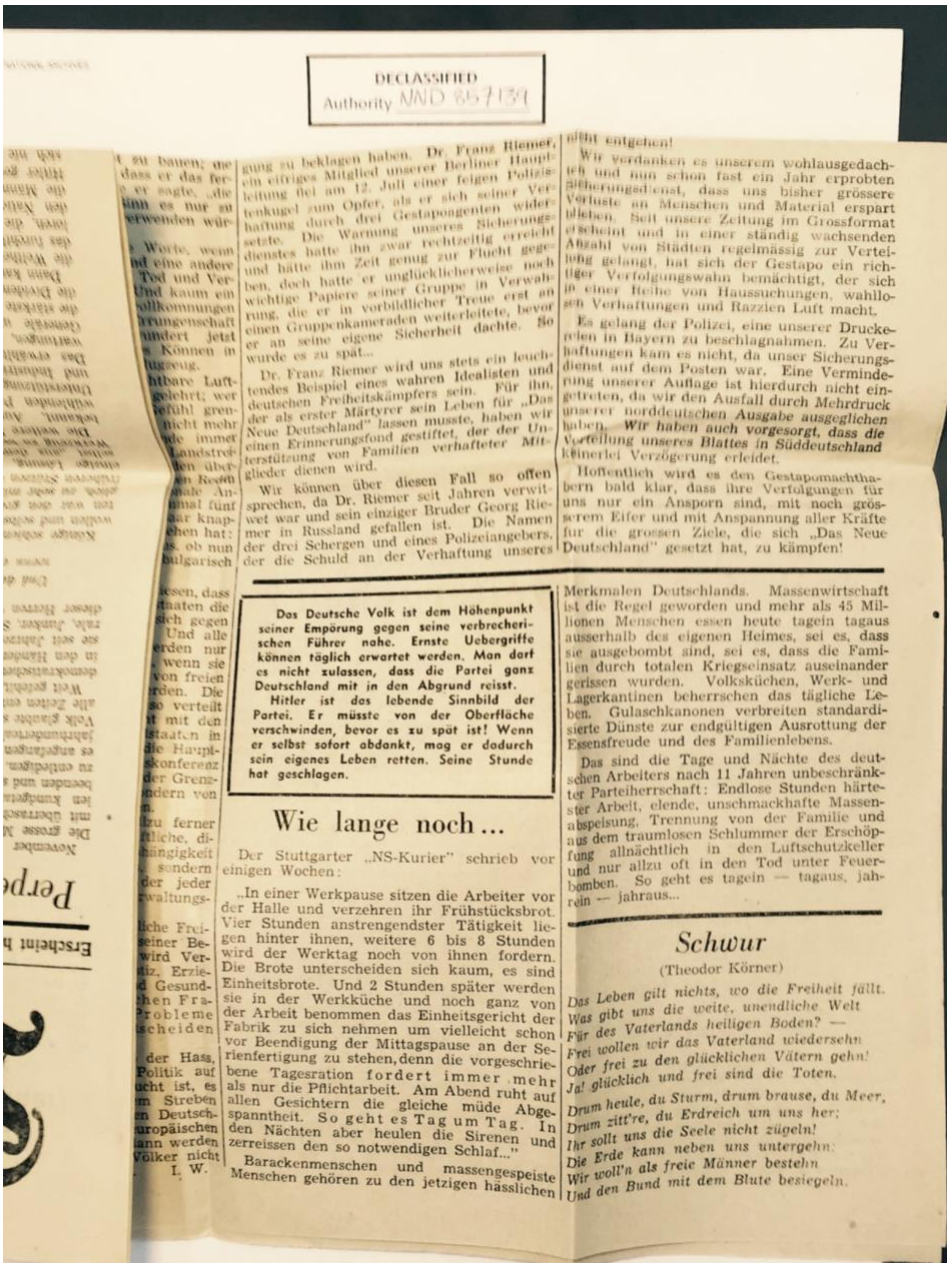
SECRET

Figure B.1d. "Songs Received from MEDTO," November 28, 1944. The memorandum lists "Wie Lange Noch" by Zinder and states: "This is not identical with the 'Wie Lange Noch' written by Weill."
Source: David Williamson to Edward Cushing, "Songs Received from MEDTO," November 28, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, note 102.

This memorandum is included because it resolves a central evidentiary distinction in Chapter 4: the Mediterranean Zinder/Lindner song and the Weill–Mehring composition share a title phrase but are different musical objects.

B.2. “Wie lange noch?” across Print and Campaign Media

The dissertation argues that “Wie lange noch?” functioned as a recurrent verbal and potentially sonic structure across different material forms rather than as one invariant composition. The two selected print examples below show the phrase moving from Das Neue Deutschland into a direct visual appeal that contrasts the burden placed on ordinary soldiers with the privileges of Party leaders.



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gung zu beklagen haben. Dr. Franz Riemer, ein eifriges Mitglied unserer Berliner Hauptleitung fiel am 12. Juli einer feigen Polizistenkugel zum Opfer, als er sich seiner Verhaftung durch drei Gestapoagenten widersetzte. Die Warnung unseres Sicherungsdienstes hatte ihn zwar rechtzeitig erreicht und hätte ihm Zeit genug zur Flucht gegeben, doch hatte er unglücklicherweise noch wichtige Papiere seiner Gruppe in Verwahrung, die er in vorbildlicher Treue erst an einen Gruppenkameraden weiterleitete, bevor er an seine eigene Sicherheit dachte. So wurde es zu spät...

Dr. Franz Riemer wird uns stets ein leuchtendes Beispiel eines wahren Idealisten und deutschen Freiheitskämpfers sein. Für ihn, der als erster Märtyrer sein Leben für „Das Neue Deutschland" lassen musste, haben wir einen Erinnerungsfond gestiftet, der der Unterstützung von Familien verhafteter Mitglieder dienen wird.

Wir können über diesen Fall so offen sprechen, da Dr. Riemer seit Jahren verwitwet war und sein einziger Bruder Georg Riemer in Russland gefallen ist. Die Namen der drei Schergen und eines Polizeiangebers, der die Schuld an der Verhaftung unseres

Das Deutsche Volk ist dem Höhenpunkt seiner Empörung gegen seine verbrecherischen Führer nahe. Ernste Uebergriffe können täglich erwartet werden. Man darf es nicht zulassen, dass die Partei ganz Deutschland mit in den Abgrund reisst.

Hitler ist das lebende Sinnbild der Partei. Er müsste von der Oberfläche verschwinden, bevor es zu spät ist! Wenn er selbst sofort abdankt, mag er dadurch sein eigenes Leben retten. Seine Stunde hat geschlagen.

Wie lange noch ...

Der Stuttgarter „NS-Kurier" schrieb vor einigen Wochen:

„In einer Werkpause sitzen die Arbeiter vor der Halle und verzehren ihr Frühstücksbrot. Vier Stunden anstrengendster Tätigkeit liegen hinter ihnen, weitere 6 bis 8 Stunden wird der Werktag noch von ihnen fordern. Die Brote unterscheiden sich kaum, es sind Einheitsbrote. Und 2 Stunden später werden sie in der Werkküche und noch ganz von der Arbeit benommen das Einheitsgericht der Fabrik zu sich nehmen um vielleicht schon vor Beendigung der Mittagspause an der Serienfertigung zu stehen, denn die vorgeschriebene Tagesration fordert immer mehr als nur die Pflichtarbeit. Am Abend ruht auf allen Gesichtern die gleiche müde Abgespanntheit. So geht es Tag um Tag. In den Nächten aber heulen die Sirenen und zerreissen den so notwendigen Schlaf..."

Barackenmenschen und massengespeiste Menschen gehören zu den jetzigen hässlichen

gänzlich entgehen!

Wir verdanken es unserem wohlausgedachten und nun schon fast ein Jahr erprobten Sicherungsdienst, dass uns bisher grössere Verluste an Menschen und Material erspart blieben. Seit unsere Zeitung im Grossformat erscheint und in einer ständig wachsenden Anzahl von Städten regelmässig zur Verteilung gelangt, hat sich der Gestapo ein richtiger Verfolgungswahn bemächtigt, der sich in einer Reihe von Haussuchungen, wahllosen Verhaftungen und Razzien Luft macht.

Es gelang der Polizei, eine unserer Druckereien in Bayern zu beschlagnahmen. Zu Verhaftungen kam es nicht, da unser Sicherungsdienst auf dem Posten war. Eine Verminderung unserer Auflage ist hierdurch nicht eingetreten, da wir den Ausfall durch Mehrdruck unserer norddeutschen Ausgabe ausgeglichen haben. **Wir haben auch vorgesorgt, dass die Verteilung unseres Blattes in Süddeutschland** keinerlei Verzögerung erleidet.

Hoffentlich wird es den Gestapomachthabern bald klar, dass ihre Verfolgungen für uns nur ein Ansporn sind, mit noch grösserem Eifer und mit Anspannung aller Kräfte für die grossen Ziele, die sich „Das Neue Deutschland" gesetzt hat, zu kämpfen!

Merkmalen Deutschlands. Massenwirtschaft ist die Regel geworden und mehr als 45 Millionen Menschen essen heute tagein tagaus ausserhalb des eigenen Heimes, sei es, dass sie ausgebombt sind, sei es, dass die Familien durch totalen Kriegseinsatz auseinander gerissen wurden. Volksküchen, Werk- und Lagerkantinen beherrschen das tägliche Leben. Gulaschkanonen verbreiten standardisierte Dünste zur endgültigen Ausrottung der Essensfreude und des Familienlebens.

Das sind die Tage und Nächte des deutschen Arbeiters nach 11 Jahren unbeschränkter Parteiherrschaft: Endlose Stunden härtester Arbeit, elende, unschmackhafte Massenabspeisung, Trennung von der Familie und aus dem traumlosen Schlummer der Erschöpfung allnächtlich in den Luftschutzkeller und nur allzu oft in den Tod unter Feuerbomben. So geht es tagein — tagaus, jahrein — jahraus...

Schwur

(Theodor Körner)

Das Leben gilt nichts, wo die Freiheit fällt.
Was gibt uns die weite, unendliche Welt
Für des Vaterlands heiligen Boden? —
Frei wollen wir das Vaterland wiedersehn
Oder frei zu den glücklichen Vätern gehn!
Ja! glücklich und frei sind die Toten.

Drum heule, du Sturm, drum brause, du Meer,
Drum zitt're, du Erdreich um uns her;
Drum zittre die Seele nicht zügeln!
Ihr sollt uns die Seele nicht zügeln!
Die Erde kann neben uns untergehn:
Wir woll'n als freie Männer bestehn
Und den Bund mit dem Blute besiegeln.

Figure B.2a. Das Neue Deutschland page headed "Wie lange noch…," July 15, 1944.
Source: "Wie lange noch . . .," Das Neue Deutschland, July 15, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 115, folder 1594, "Policies and Production, Subversive Movements, Germany, MO/MTO Rome," Washington–MO–OP–31, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, notes 99–100, and Chapter 5, note 36.

The article places the recurring question inside an account of civilian exhaustion, hunger, long work hours, air-raid shelters, separation, and death under incendiary attack. Chapters 4 and 5 use this page to show the phrase functioning as a portable campaign structure rather than as the title of a single fixed composition.

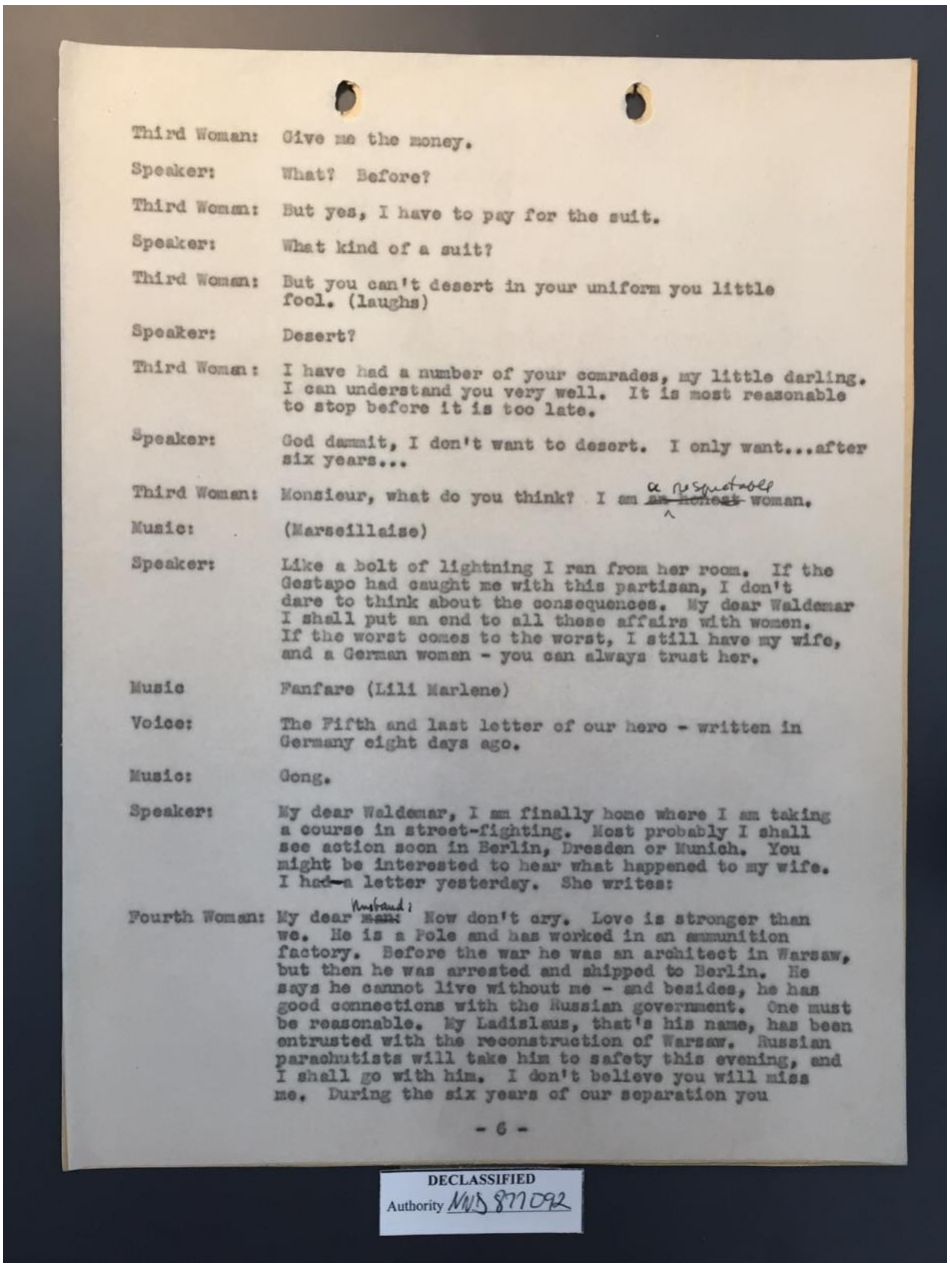


Figure B.2b. Selected "Wie lange noch?" leaflet contrasting "Soldaten" and "Parteibonzen": "Wie lange noch zwei verschiedene Helden?"
Source: Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives at College Park.

This leaflet is the selected representative of the surviving "Wie lange noch?" print variants. Its juxtaposition of the soldier's grave with a saluting Party official makes the campaign's social differentiation immediately visible and directly supports the dissertation's analysis of the recurring question as a vehicle for grievance and demoralization. Other variants are not reproduced here in order to keep the appendix selective.

B.3. Die Blitzbühne, Program III: "Lili Marlene" as Dramatic Cue

These closing pages preserve the program architecture discussed in Chapter 4. "Fanfare (Lili Marlene)" introduces the soldier's final letter; after the wife's letter destroys the expected homecoming, "Accordian - Lili Marlene" precedes the soldier's farewell. The familiar song therefore functions as fragmented dramatic material as well as a complete recording.



Third Woman: Give me the money.

Speaker: What? Before?

Third Woman: But yes, I have to pay for the suit.

Speaker: What kind of a suit?

Third Woman: But you can't desert in your uniform you little fool. (laughs)

Speaker: Desert?

Third Woman: I have had a number of your comrades, my little darling. I can understand you very well. It is most reasonable to stop before it is too late.

Speaker: God dammit, I don't want to desert. I only want...after six years...

Third Woman: Monsieur, what do you think? I am ~~an honest~~ a respectable woman.

Music: (Marseillaise)

Speaker: Like a bolt of lightning I ran from her room. If the Gestapo had caught me with this partisan, I don't dare to think about the consequences. My dear Waldemar I shall put an end to all these affairs with women. If the worst comes to the worst, I still have my wife, and a German woman - you can always trust her.

Music Fanfare (Lili Marlene)

Voice: The Fifth and last letter of our hero - written in Germany eight days ago.

Music: Gong.

Speaker: My dear Waldemar, I am finally home where I am taking a course in street-fighting. Most probably I shall see action soon in Berlin, Dresden or Munich. You might be interested to hear what happened to my wife. I had a letter yesterday. She writes:

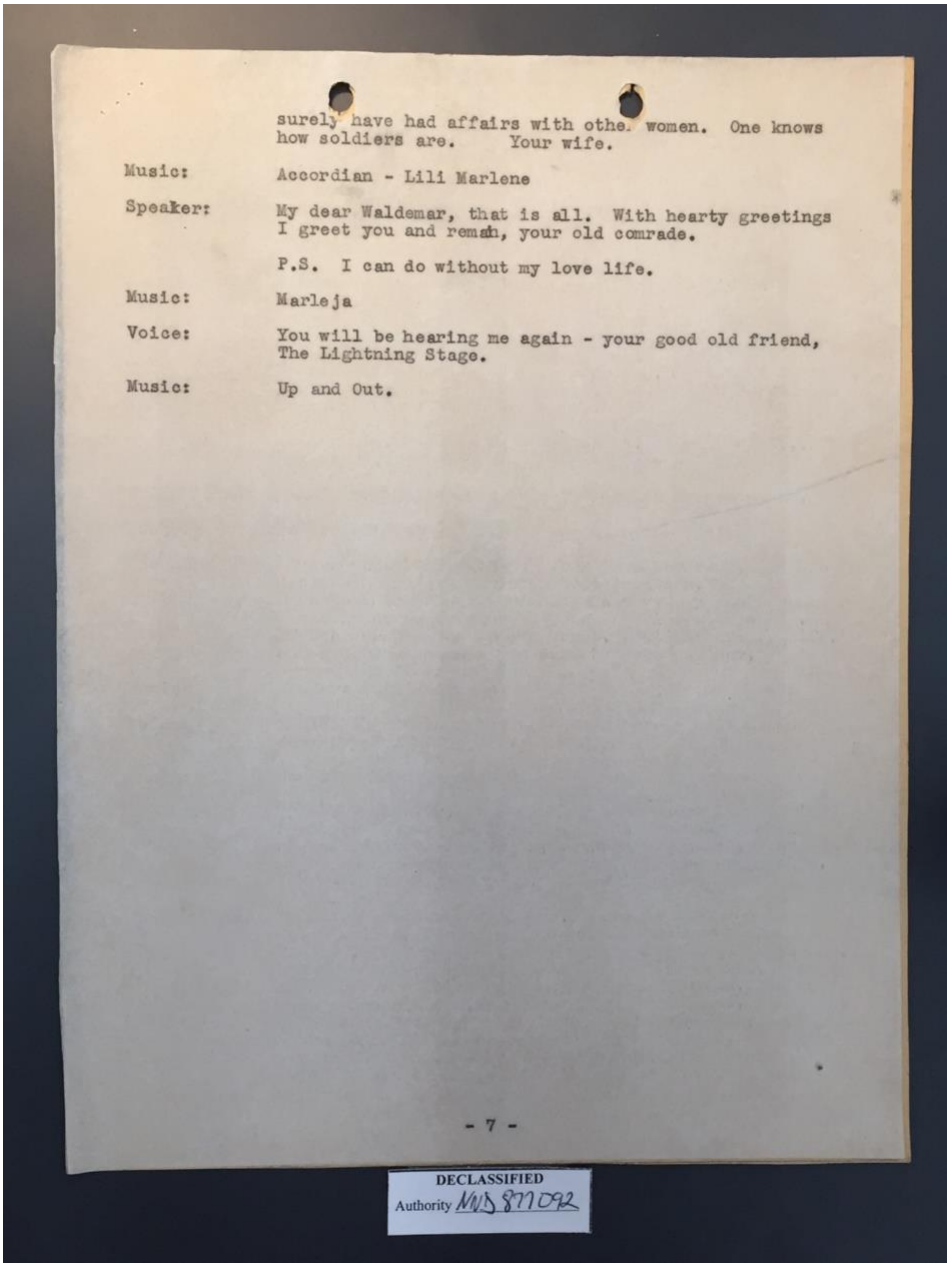
Fourth Woman: My dear ~~Hans~~ husband: Now don't cry. Love is stronger than we. He is a Pole and has worked in an ammunition factory. Before the war he was an architect in Warsaw, but then he was arrested and shipped to Berlin. He says he cannot live without me - and besides, he has good connections with the Russian government. One must be reasonable. My Ladislaus, that's his name, has been entrusted with the reconstruction of Warsaw. Russian parachutists will take him to safety this evening, and I shall go with him. I don't believe you will miss me. During the six years of our separation you

- 6 -

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Figure B.3a. Die Blitzbühne, Program III, "My Dear Waldemar," p. 6. "Fanfare (Lili Marlene)" introduces the final letter.

Source: Die Blitzbühne, Program III, "My Dear Waldemar," COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, notes 85 and 118.



surely have had affairs with othe. women. One knows
how soldiers are. Your wife.

Music: Accordian - Lili Marlene

Speaker: My dear Waldemar, that is all. With hearty greetings
I greet you and remain, your old comrade.

P.S. I can do without my love life.

Music: Marleja

Voice: You will be hearing me again - your good old friend,
The Lightning Stage.

Music: Up and Out.

- 7 -

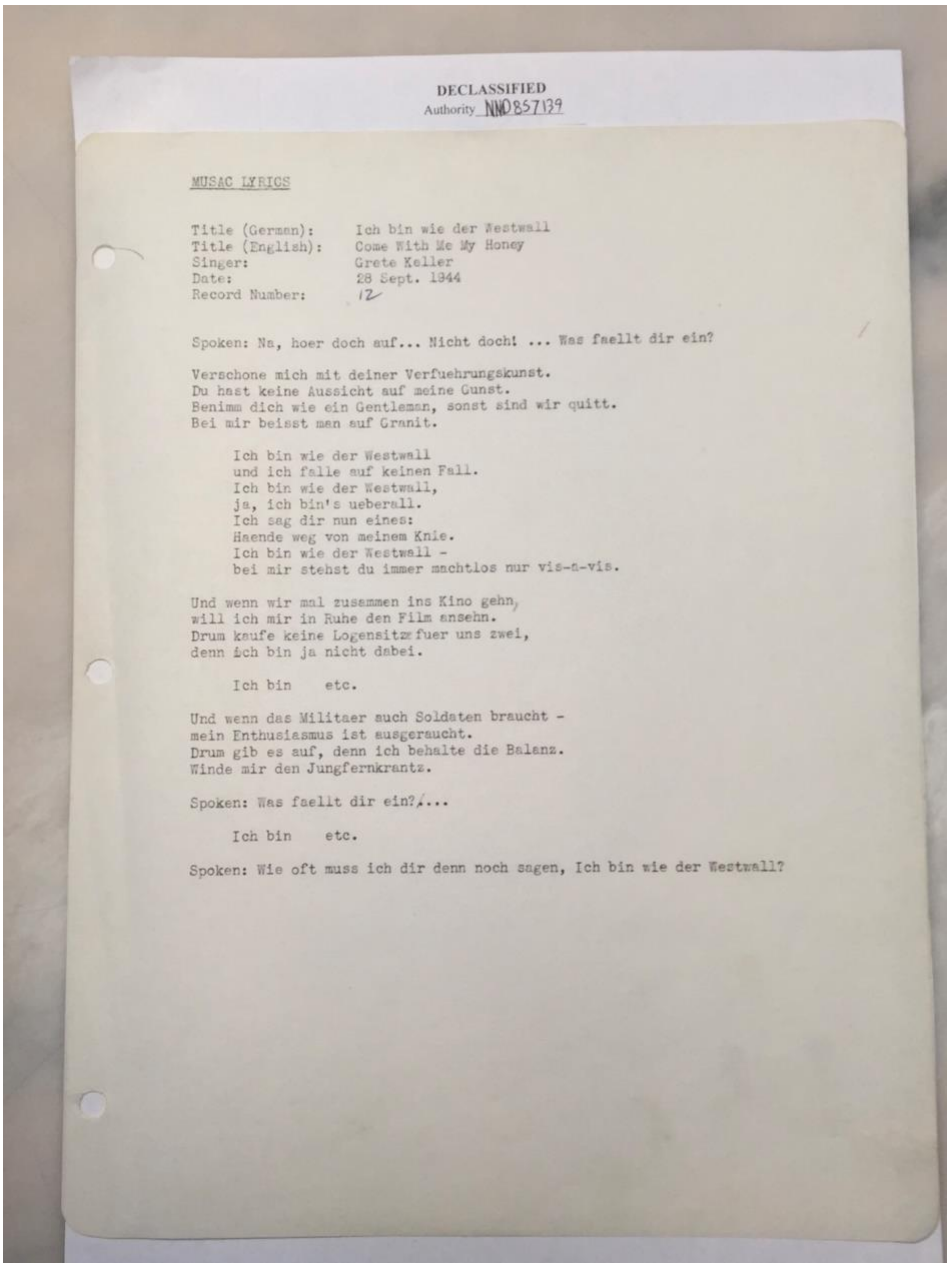
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Figure B.3b. Die Blitzbühne, Program III, "My Dear Waldemar," p. 7. "Accordian - Lili Marlene" precedes the soldier's farewell after the collapse of his expected homecoming.

Source: Die Blitzbühne, Program III, "My Dear Waldemar," COI/OSS Central Files, Entry A1 92, box 487, WASH–REG–AD–7, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, notes 85 and 118.

B.4. Greta Keller, “Ich bin wie der Westwall”: Extended Lyric Context

The full lyric documentation supplies context beyond the refrain quoted in Chapter 5. It preserves the movement between spoken rebuff, comic military metaphor, and repeated refusal, while the archival English translation provides a contemporary rendering of the German text.



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MUSAC LYRICS

Title (German): Ich bin wie der Westwall
Title (English): Come With Me My Honey
Singer: Grete Keller
Date: 28 Sept. 1944
Record Number: 12

Spoken: Na, hoer doch auf... Nicht doch! ... Was faellt dir ein?

Verschone mich mit deiner Verfuehrungskunst.
Du hast keine Aussicht auf meine Gunst.
Benimm dich wie ein Gentleman, sonst sind wir quitt.
Bei mir beisst man auf Granit.

Ich bin wie der Westwall
und ich falle auf keinen Fall.
Ich bin wie der Westwall,
ja, ich bin's ueberall.
Ich sag dir nun eines:
Haende weg von meinem Knie.
Ich bin wie der Westwall -
bei mir stehst du immer machtlos nur vis-a-vis.

Und wenn wir mal zusammen ins Kino gehn,
will ich mir in Ruhe den Film ansehn.
Drum kaufe keine Logensitze fuer uns zwei,
denn ich bin ja nicht dabei.

Ich bin etc.

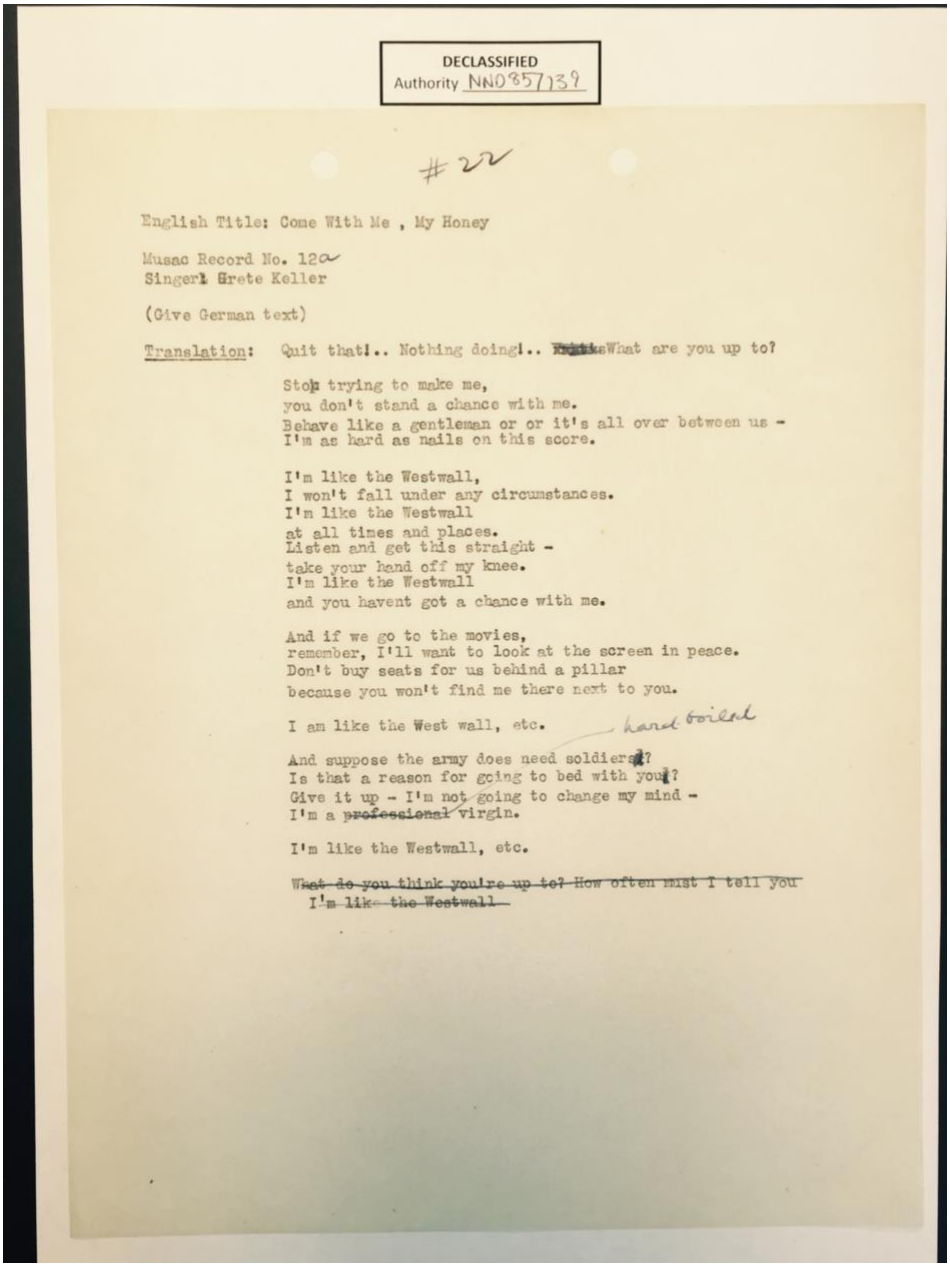
Und wenn das Militaer auch Soldaten braucht -
mein Enthusiasmus ist ausgeraucht.
Drum gib es auf, denn ich behalte die Balanz.
Winde mir den Jungfernkrantz.

Spoken: Was faellt dir ein?...

Ich bin etc.

Spoken: Wie oft muss ich dir denn noch sagen, Ich bin wie der Westwall?

Figure B.4a. MUSAC German lyric sheet for Greta Keller's "Ich bin wie der Westwall," recorded September 28, 1944 under the source title "Come With Me, My Honey," record no. 12.
Source: RG 226, Entry A1 139, Washington and Field Station Files, container 172, Wash-MO-Pro-6–7, National Archives at College Park.



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#22

English Title: Come With Me , My Honey

Musac Record No. 12a
Singer: Grete Keller

(Give German text)

Translation: Quit that!.. Nothing doing!.. [redacted]What are you up to?

Stop trying to make me,
you don't stand a chance with me.
Behave like a gentleman or or it's all over between us -
I'm as hard as nails on this score.

I'm like the Westwall,
I won't fall under any circumstances.
I'm like the Westwall
at all times and places.
Listen and get this straight -
take your hand off my knee.
I'm like the Westwall
and you havent got a chance with me.

And if we go to the movies,
remember, I'll want to look at the screen in peace.
Don't buy seats for us behind a pillar
because you won't find me there next to you.

I am like the West wall, etc. hard boiled

And suppose the army does need soldiers?
Is that a reason for going to bed with you?
Give it up - I'm not going to change my mind -
I'm a ~~professional~~ virgin.

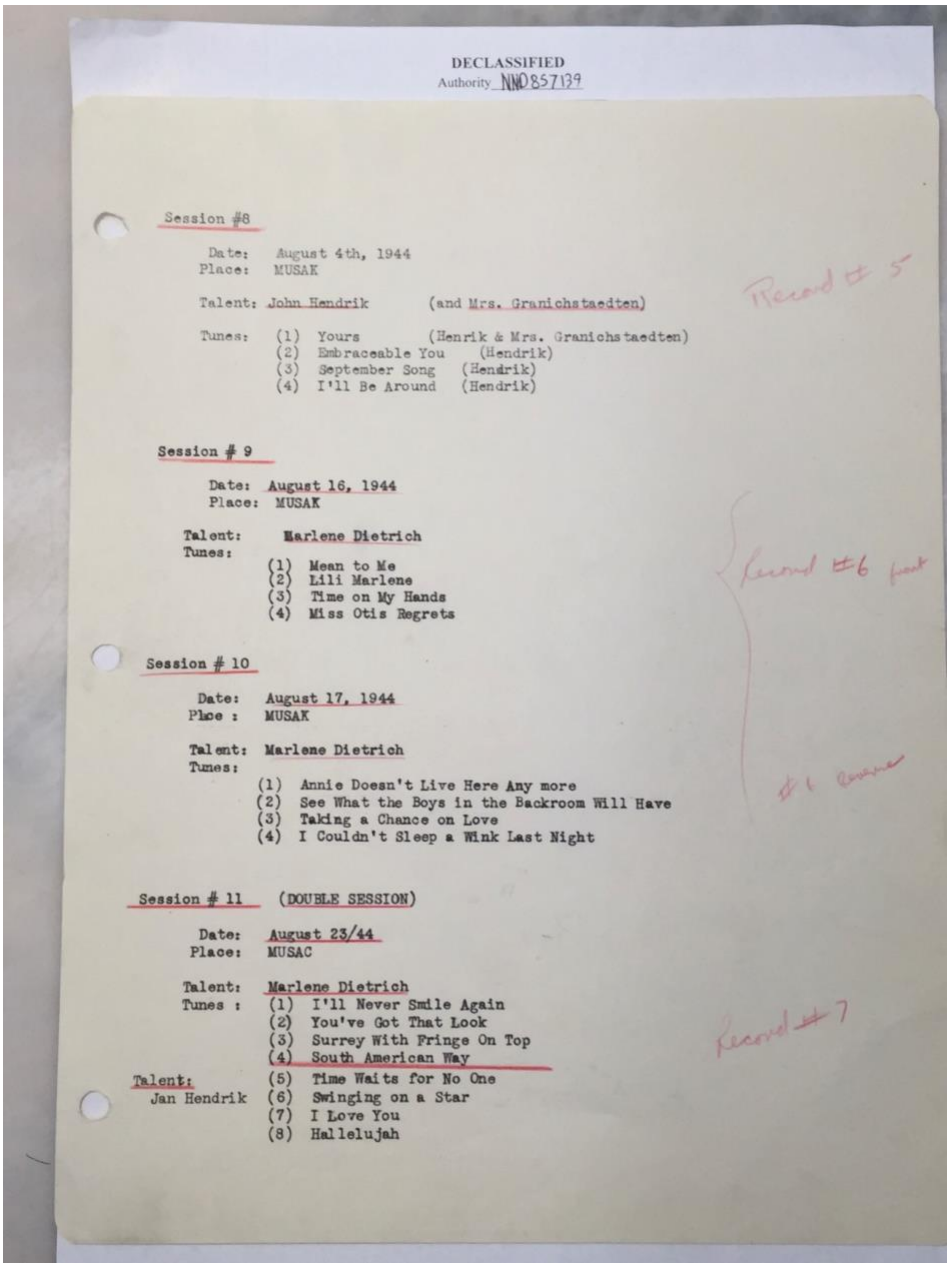
I'm like the Westwall, etc.

~~What do you think you're up to? How often must I tell you~~
~~I'm like the Westwall~~

Figure B.4b. Archival English translation, record no. 12a, for Greta Keller's "Ich bin wie der Westwall."
Source: RG 226, Entry A1 139, Washington and Field Station Files, container 172, Wash-MO-Pro-6–7, National Archives at College Park.

B.5. Documenting Dietrich's Wartime "Lili Marlene" Recording

These two records establish the August 16, 1944 MUSAC recording event without treating a later commercial issue as the missing wartime master. The session sheet places "Lili Marlene" in Dietrich's Session 9; the lyric sheet identifies Dietrich, the date, and record number 6 while preserving the familiar German text that she and Metzl chose not to replace with a more overtly subversive lyric.



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Session #8

Date: August 4th, 1944
Place: MUSAK

Talent: John Hendrik (and Mrs. Granichstaedten)

Tunes: (1) Yours (Henrik & Mrs. Granichstaedten)
(2) Embraceable You (Hendrik)
(3) September Song (Hendrik)
(4) I'll Be Around (Hendrik)

Record # 5

Session # 9

Date: August 16, 1944
Place: MUSAK

Talent: Marlene Dietrich
Tunes:
(1) Mean to Me
(2) Lili Marlene
(3) Time on My Hands
(4) Miss Otis Regrets

Record #6 front

Session # 10

Date: August 17, 1944
Place: MUSAK

Talent: Marlene Dietrich
Tunes:
(1) Annie Doesn't Live Here Any more
(2) See What the Boys in the Backroom Will Have
(3) Taking a Chance on Love
(4) I Couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night

#6 Reverse

Session # 11 (DOUBLE SESSION)

Date: August 23/44
Place: MUSAC

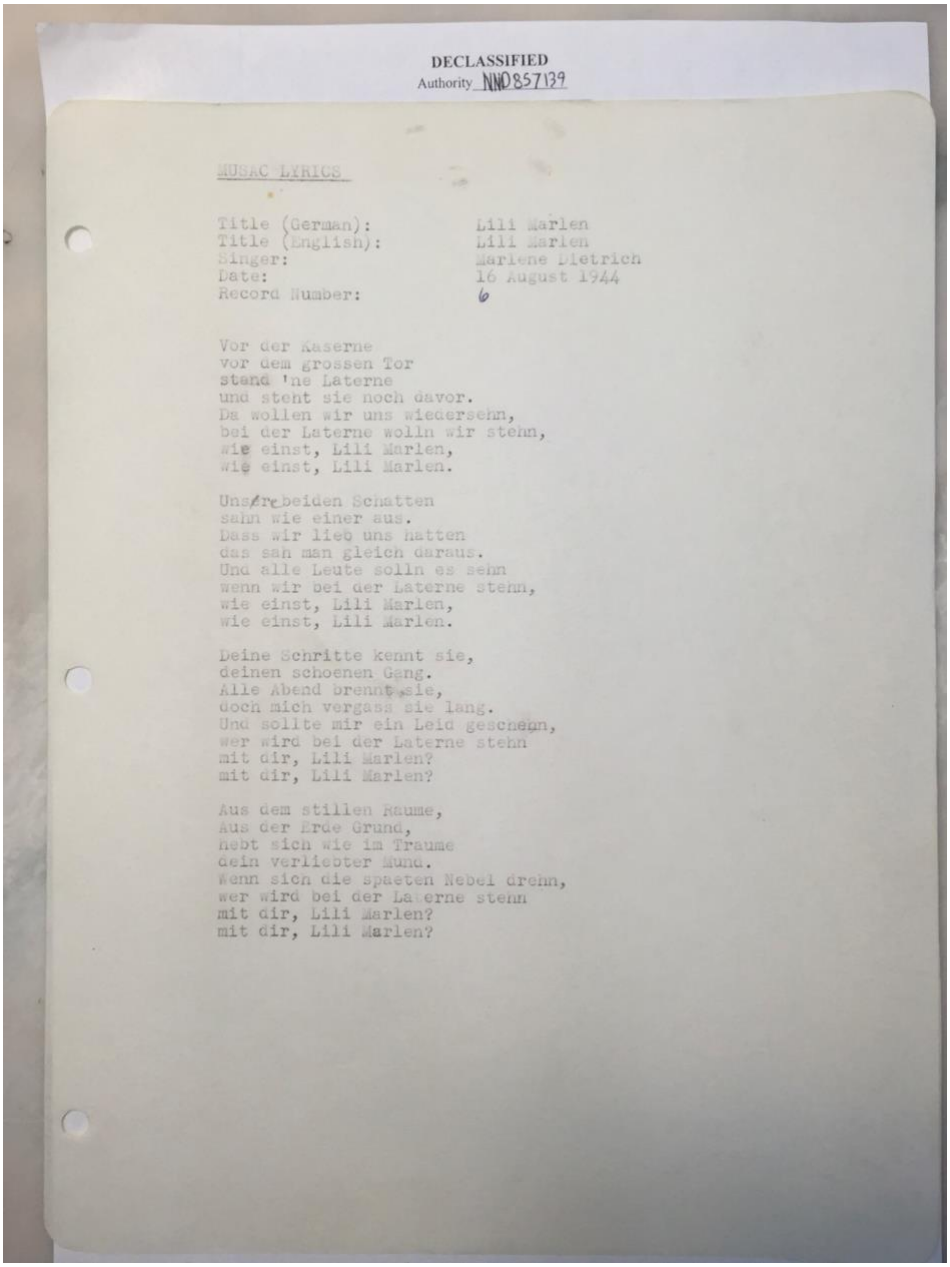
Talent: Marlene Dietrich
Tunes: (1) I'll Never Smile Again
(2) You've Got That Look
(3) Surrey With Fringe On Top
(4) South American Way
(5) Time Waits for No One

Talent: Jan Hendrik
(6) Swinging on a Star
(7) I Love You
(8) Hallelujah

Record #7

Figure B.5a. MUSAC session sheet showing Marlene Dietrich's Session 9, August 16, 1944, including "Lili Marlene."

Source: MUSAC session log, Session 9, August 16, 1944, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 171, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, note 79.



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MUSAC LYRICS

Title (German): Lili Marlen
Title (English): Lili Marlen
Singer: Marlene Dietrich
Date: 16 August 1944
Record Number: 6

Vor der Kaserne
vor dem grossen Tor
stand 'ne Laterne
und steht sie noch davor.
Da wollen wir uns wiedersehn,
bei der Laterne wolln wir stehn,
wie einst, Lili Marlen,
wie einst, Lili Marlen.

Unsre beiden Schatten
sahn wie einer aus.
Dass wir lieb uns hatten
das sah man gleich daraus.
Und alle Leute solln es sehn
wenn wir bei der Laterne stehn,
wie einst, Lili Marlen,
wie einst, Lili Marlen.

Deine Schritte kennt sie,
deinen schoenen Gang.
Alle Abend brennt sie,
doch mich vergass sie lang.
Und sollte mir ein Leid geschehn,
wer wird bei der Laterne stehn
mit dir, Lili Marlen?
mit dir, Lili Marlen?

Aus dem stillen Raume,
Aus der Erde Grund,
hebt sich wie im Traume
dein verliebter Mund.
Wenn sich die spaeten Nebel drehn,
wer wird bei der Laterne stehn
mit dir, Lili Marlen?
mit dir, Lili Marlen?

Figure B.5b. MUSAC lyric sheet for Marlene Dietrich's "Lili Marlen," August 16, 1944, record no. 6.
Source: "Lili Marlene," MUSAC lyric sheet, August 16, 1944, record no. 6, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, "All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45," Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 4, note 79. The wartime recording event is documented here; the 1945 Decca comparison recording remains distinct in Appendix C.

Appendix C

Recordings and Broadcast Sources

This concordance identifies the sound sources actually analyzed and keeps wartime recordings, later reconstructions, comparison recordings, and broadcast captures distinct. Audio files are not included with this dissertation.

"Je ne t'aime pas" — Lys Gauty. 1934 comparison recording. Author's digital copy supplied for this project; running time approximately 3:26. Used in Chapter 4 to establish the mediated source object from which the later Weill–Mehring song departs.

"Wie lange noch?" — Lotte Lenya, voice; Kurt Weill, piano. Wartime Weill–Mehring recording. The chapters cite Bost Recording Company, New York, June 1944, and the June production correspondence; the Kurt Weill Foundation discography separately labels the recording spring 1944/OWI. These descriptions are retained distinctly. Author's digital copy, "Wie lange noch_.mp3," approximately 3:15–3:16. See Chapter 3, note 84, and Chapter 4, notes 90 and 96. This recording is distinct from the Mediterranean Zinder/Lindner song in Appendix B.

"Lili Marleen" — Lale Andersen, with ensemble conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler. 1939 comparison recording, Electrola E.G. 6993. Author's working digital copy is an approximately 1:06 excerpt; Chapter 4, note 73, also identifies the public BR-Klassik listening copy. This source establishes the familiar military/popular profile against which later versions are heard.

"Lili Marlene" — Marlene Dietrich, MUSAC Session 9. August 16, 1944, record no. 6. The recording event is documented by Appendix B, figures B.5a–B.5b. The wartime master has not been securely identified and is not equated with the 1945 commercial recording.

"Lili Marlene" — Marlene Dietrich, with orchestra directed by Charles Magnante. September 7, 1945 postwar comparison/reconstruction, Decca 23456, matrix 73031. Author's working digital copy runs approximately 3:09. It is used as a comparative witness to Dietrich's performance conception, not as the August 1944 MUSAC master. See Chapter 4, note 81.

"Lili Marlene" — Charlie and His Orchestra / Karl Schwedler. January 12, 1942 enemy-propaganda comparison recording. Imperial War Museums object 80010346, catalogue no. 10568. Used in Chapter 4 to show strategic readdressing of the song before MUSAC.

“Du hast ’nen Blick” — Marlene Dietrich. August 23–24, 1944 MUSAC session material. NARA Sound Recording 226.7, author’s copy. Primary sonic evidence for timing, lowered register, speech-like delivery, and gendered address. A more specific item-level track identifier has not been established.

“Schlittenfahrt” — Marlene Dietrich; German adaptation of “The Surrey with the Fringe on Top.” August 23, 1944, MUSAC Session 11, record no. 7. NARA Sound Recording 226.7, author’s copy, within the August 23–24 composite. The German title and date are established by the lyric sheet, Entry A1 139, container 172, folder 2286, “All MUSAC Lyrics, 1944–45,” Washington–MO–PRO–6, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 1, note 22, and Chapter 4, notes 34 and 69. A more specific item-level audio identifier has not been established.

“Hallelujah” — John Hendrik. MUSAC Session 11; the dataset dates Hendrik’s item August 24, 1944 (Sheet1, row 49). NARA Sound Recording 226.7, author’s copy, within the August 23–24 composite. Used for the analysis of collective exhortation and the shift from religious memory toward explicit political command. See Chapter 4, notes 41 and 70. The workbook preserves the source-title spelling “Halleljuah” and flags it in the research note.

“Ich bin wie der Westwall” / “Come With Me, My Honey” — Greta Keller. September 28, 1944, MUSAC record no. 12/12a; Session 18. The analysis draws on the lyric and session documentation reproduced in Appendix B.

Soldatensender West final broadcast. April 29, 1945. Imperial War Museums Sound 5205, object 80005162, eleven-part broadcast sequence. Primary evidence for placement and programming in Chapter 4. The chapter keeps unresolved performer identifications marked unresolved while identifying MUSAC items where the evidence supports them.

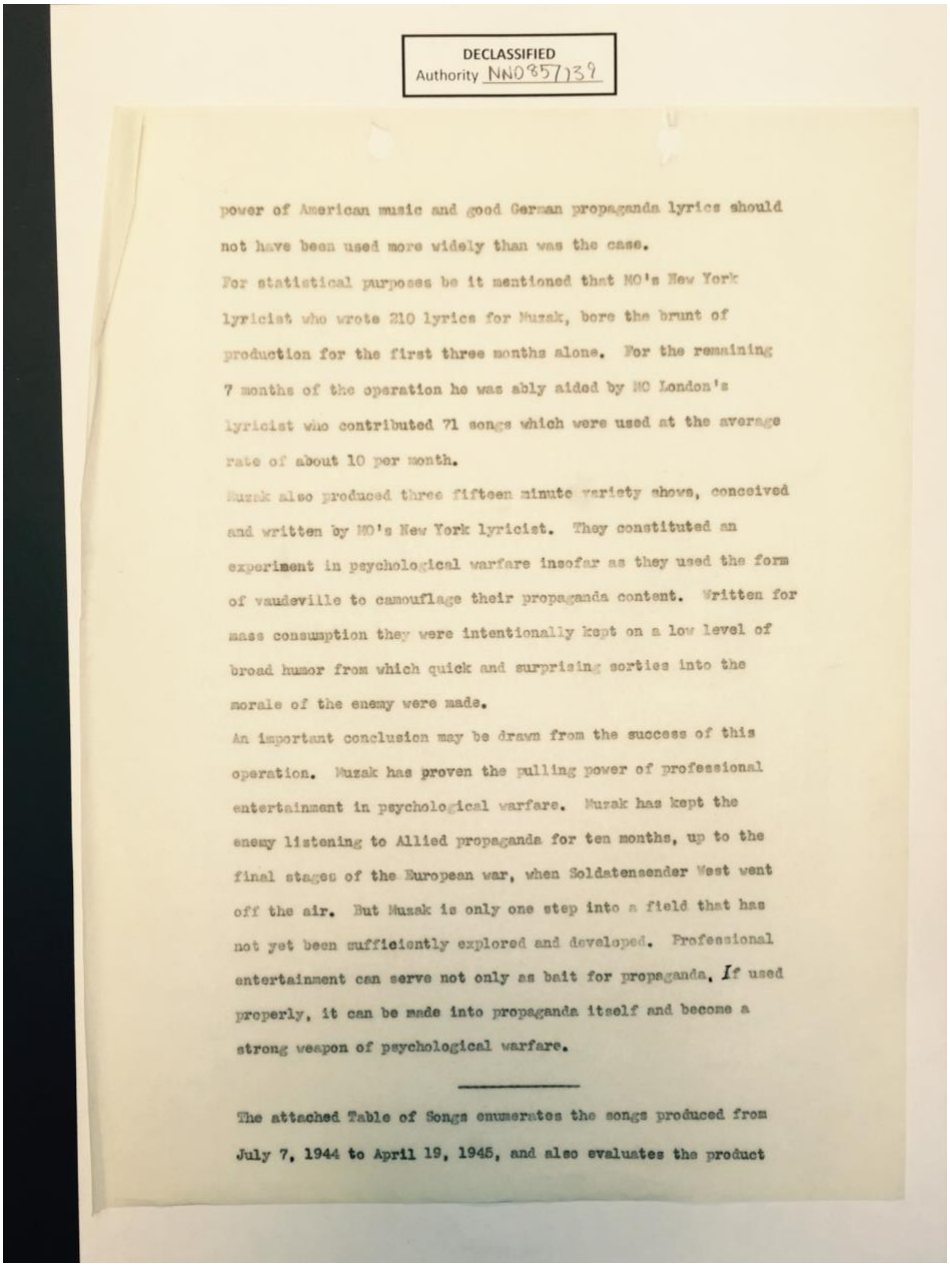
Supplementary research data: the complete cleaned 304-entry MUSAC research dataset accompanies this dissertation as the separate supplementary file Supplementary_Data_MUSAC_Research_Dataset.xlsx. It is distinct from the recording concordance.

Appendix D

Selected Documents Framing the Project and Its Afterlife

This final appendix reproduces three documents whose wording bears directly on the dissertation's largest claims: Metzl's formulation of professional entertainment as a psychological weapon, Donovan's official acknowledgement of the completed recording operation, and the debate over covert postwar reeducation following the DND campaign. Other administrative and reception documents remain cited in the chapters rather than reproduced here.

D.1. Metzl's Terminal Assessment: Entertainment as Psychological Weapon



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power of American music and good German propaganda lyrics should not have been used more widely than was the case.

For statistical purposes be it mentioned that MO's New York lyricist who wrote 210 lyrics for Muzak, bore the brunt of production for the first three months alone. For the remaining 7 months of the operation he was ably aided by MO London's lyricist who contributed 71 songs which were used at the average rate of about 10 per month.

Muzak also produced three fifteen minute variety shows, conceived and written by MO's New York lyricist. They constituted an experiment in psychological warfare insofar as they used the form of vaudeville to camouflage their propaganda content. Written for mass consumption they were intentionally kept on a low level of broad humor from which quick and surprising sorties into the morale of the enemy were made.

An important conclusion may be drawn from the success of this operation. Muzak has proven the pulling power of professional entertainment in psychological warfare. Muzak has kept the enemy listening to Allied propaganda for ten months, up to the final stages of the European war, when Soldatensender West went off the air. But Muzak is only one step into a field that has not yet been sufficiently explored and developed. Professional entertainment can serve not only as bait for propaganda. If used properly, it can be made into propaganda itself and become a strong weapon of psychological warfare.

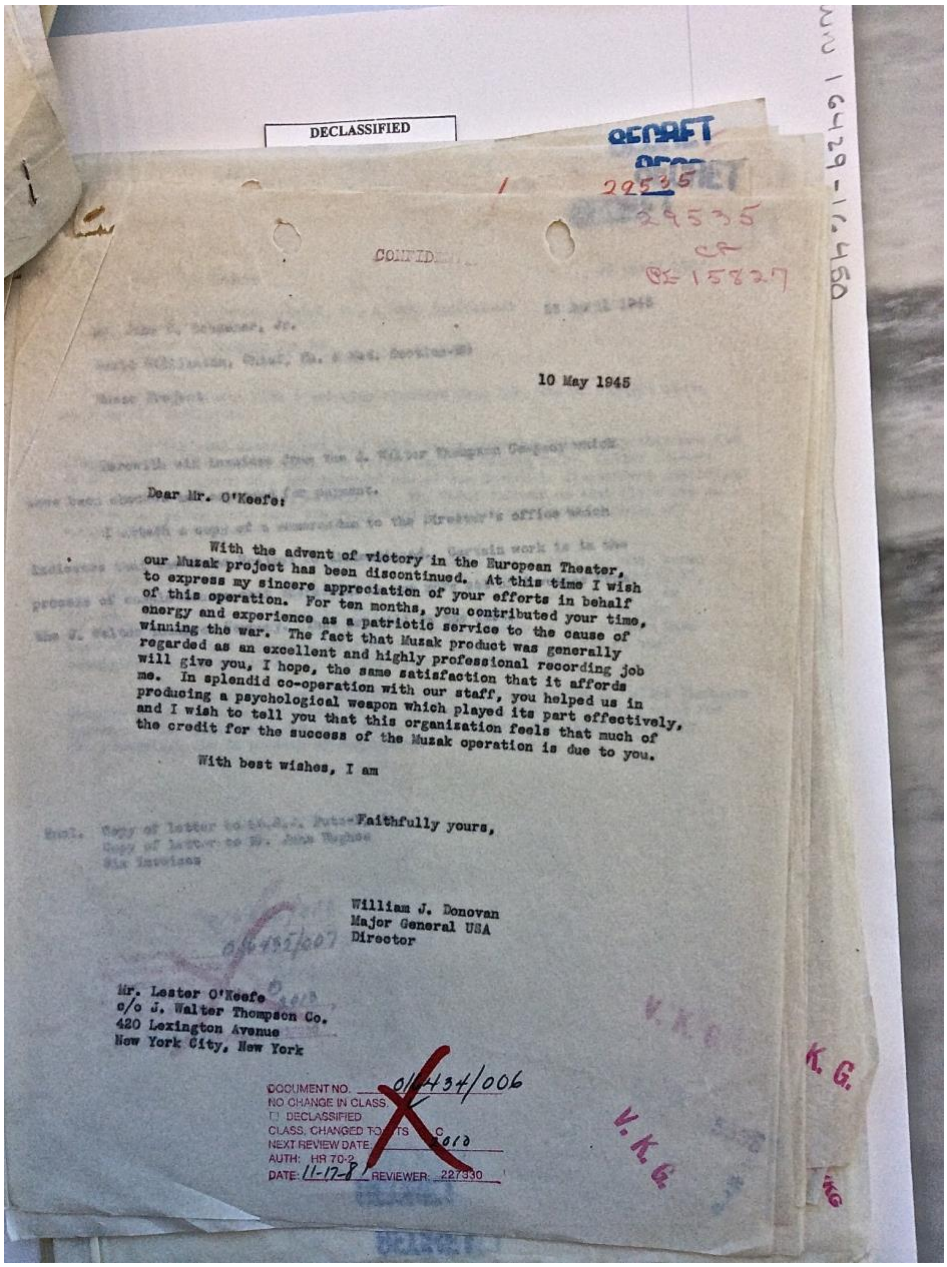
The attached Table of Songs enumerates the songs produced from July 7, 1944 to April 19, 1945, and also evaluates the product

Figure D.1. Concluding page of Lothar Metzl's MUSAC terminal report, forwarded May 7, 1945.
Source: Lothar Metzl, "Muzak," terminal report, n.d., forwarded with David Williamson to K. D. Mann, "Musac Project," May 7, 1945, unpaginated, concluding assessment, Washington and Field Station Files, Entry A1 139, container 172, RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 1, note 1, and Chapter 6, notes 2 and 5.

This is the page quoted at the opening of the dissertation. Metzl argues that professional entertainment had demonstrated "pulling power" and could serve not only as bait for propaganda but, if used properly, "be made into propaganda itself and become a strong weapon of psychological warfare." The same page also describes the three fifteen-minute variety shows as an experiment in using vaudeville to camouflage propaganda content.

D.2. Donovan to Lester O'Keefe: Official Recognition of the Recording Operation

The May 10 letter supplies Donovan's own institutional framing of the completed MUSAC collaboration and links the project's recording labor directly to the language of a "psychological weapon."



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10 May 1945

Dear Mr. O'Keefe:

With the advent of victory in the European Theater, our Muzak project has been discontinued. At this time I wish to express my sincere appreciation of your efforts in behalf of this operation. For ten months, you contributed your time, energy and experience as a patriotic service to the cause of winning the war. The fact that Muzak product was generally regarded as an excellent and highly professional recording job will give you, I hope, the same satisfaction that it affords me. In splendid co-operation with our staff, you helped us in producing a psychological weapon which played its part effectively, and I wish to tell you that this organization feels that much of the credit for the success of the Muzak operation is due to you.

With best wishes, I am

Faithfully yours,

William J. Donovan
Major General USA
Director

Mr. Lester O'Keefe
c/o J. Walter Thompson Co.
420 Lexington Avenue
New York City, New York

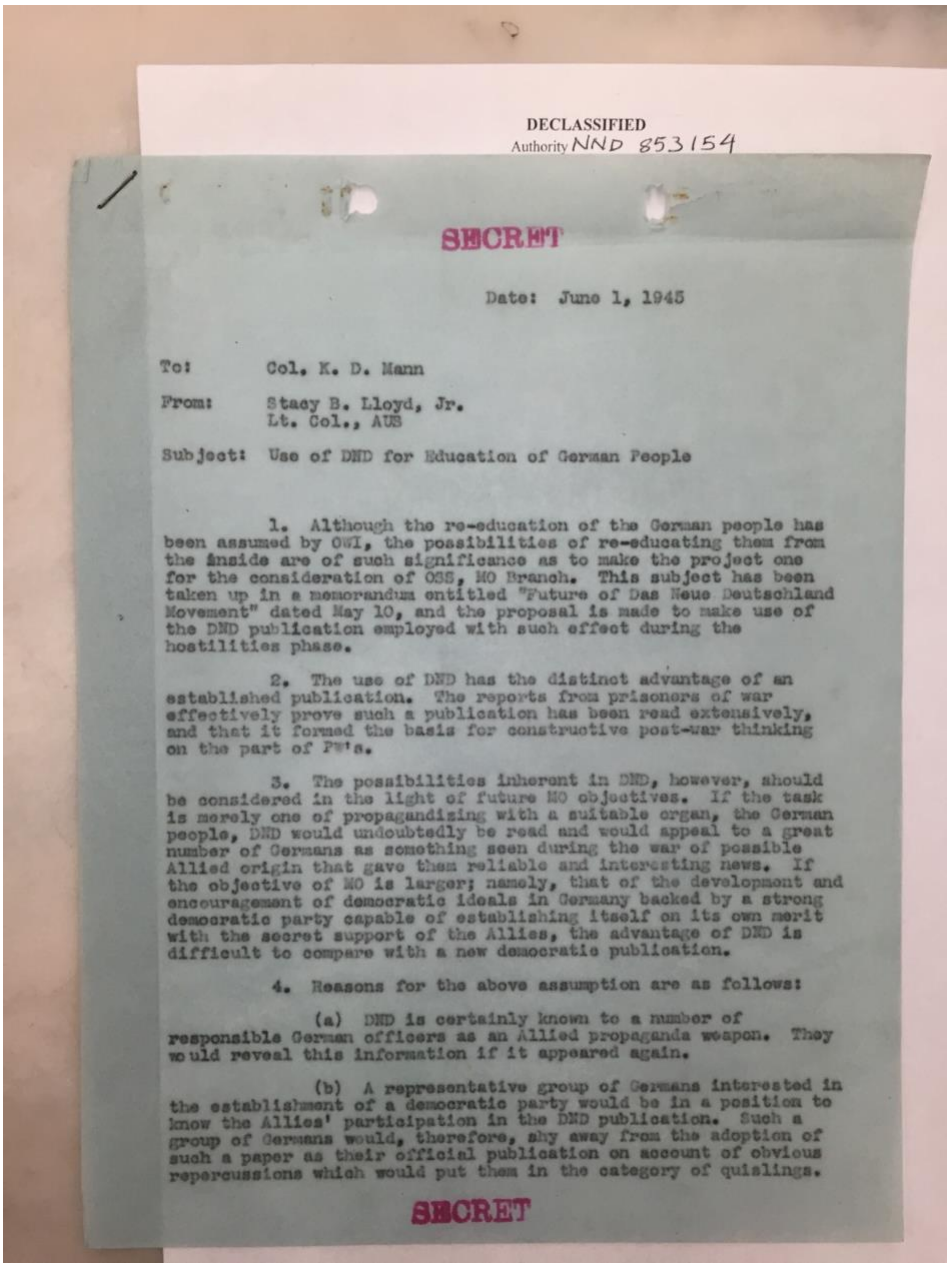
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Figure D.2. William J. Donovan to Lester O'Keefe, May 10, 1945.
Source: William J. Donovan to Lester O'Keefe, May 10, 1945, OSS Classified Sources and Methods Files, "Withdrawn Records," Entry A1-210, Box 429, Record Group 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, National Archives at College Park.

Donovan thanks O'Keefe for ten months of work and credits cooperation with OSS staff with "producing a psychological weapon which played its part effectively." The letter provides official acknowledgement of the civilian production labor through which the project's musical objects were made.

D.3. “Use of DND for Education of German People,” June 1, 1945

The June 1 memorandum connects the wartime DND campaign with proposals for covert postwar political work. Lloyd questioned reusing DND because its Allied connection could compromise a secretly supported German party. He nevertheless advocated reeducation “from the inside” through a different clandestine publication and secret financing, with no visible connection to Allied support. Chapter 6, note 17, preserves this distinction between rejecting an exposed vehicle and continuing covert political work.



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Date: June 1, 1945

To: Col. K. D. Mann

From: Stacy B. Lloyd, Jr.
Lt. Col., AUS

Subject: Use of DND for Education of German People

1. Although the re-education of the German people has been assumed by OWI, the possibilities of re-educating them from the inside are of such significance as to make the project one for the consideration of OSS, MO Branch. This subject has been taken up in a memorandum entitled "Future of Das Neue Deutschland Movement" dated May 10, and the proposal is made to make use of the DND publication employed with such effect during the hostilities phase.

2. The use of DND has the distinct advantage of an established publication. The reports from prisoners of war effectively prove such a publication has been read extensively, and that it formed the basis for constructive post-war thinking on the part of PW's.

3. The possibilities inherent in DND, however, should be considered in the light of future MO objectives. If the task is merely one of propagandizing with a suitable organ, the German people, DND would undoubtedly be read and would appeal to a great number of Germans as something seen during the war of possible Allied origin that gave them reliable and interesting news. If the objective of MO is larger; namely, that of the development and encouragement of democratic ideals in Germany backed by a strong democratic party capable of establishing itself on its own merit with the secret support of the Allies, the advantage of DND is difficult to compare with a new democratic publication.

4. Reasons for the above assumption are as follows:

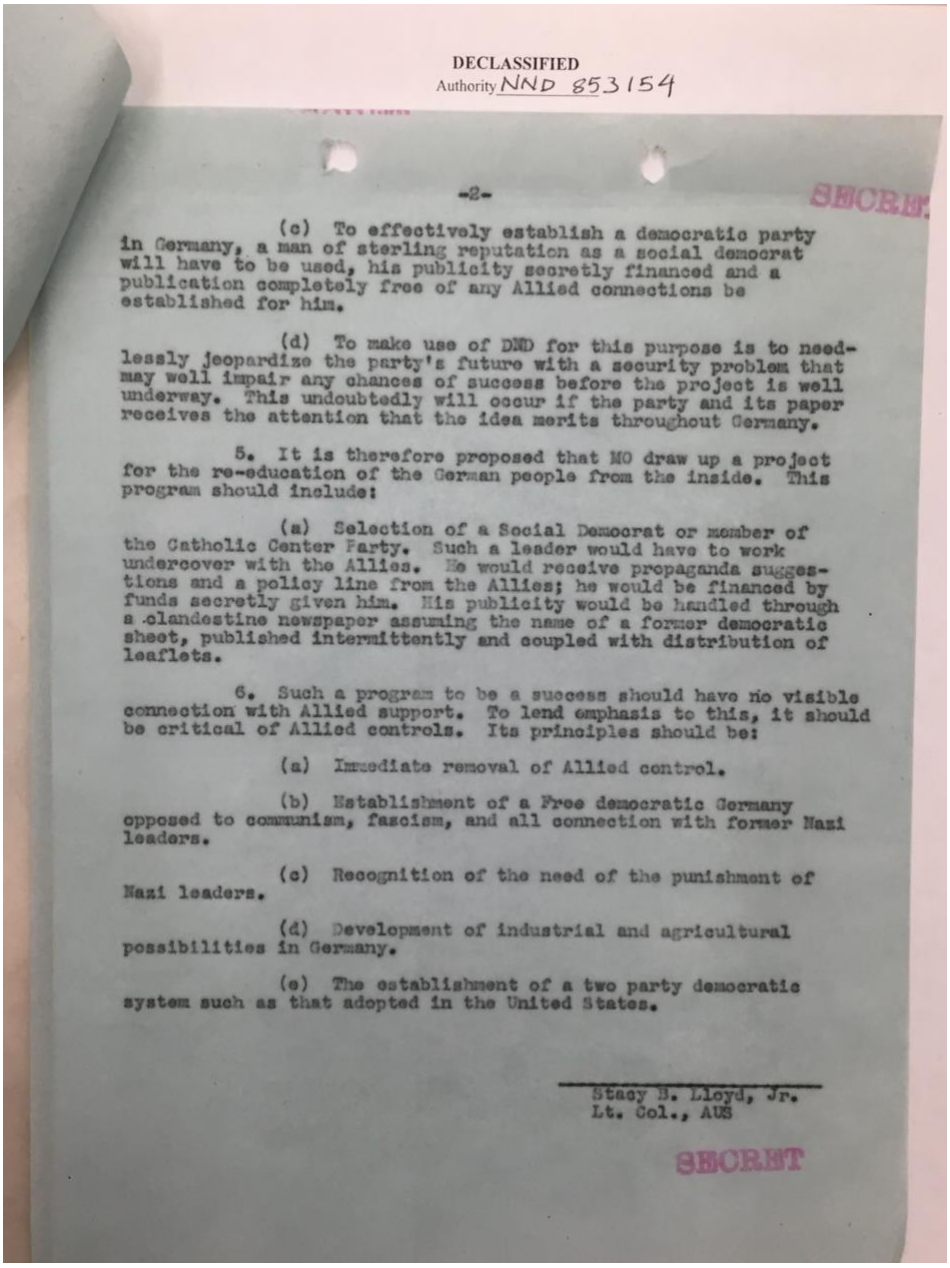
(a) DND is certainly known to a number of responsible German officers as an Allied propaganda weapon. They would reveal this information if it appeared again.

(b) A representative group of Germans interested in the establishment of a democratic party would be in a position to know the Allies' participation in the DND publication. Such a group of Germans would, therefore, shy away from the adoption of such a paper as their official publication on account of obvious repercussions which would put them in the category of quislings.

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Figure D.3a. Stacy B. Lloyd Jr. to Col. K. D. Mann, "Use of DND for Education of German People," June 1, 1945, p. 1.

Source: Stacy B. Lloyd Jr. to Col. K. D. Mann, "Use of DND for Education of German People," June 1, 1945, p. 1, folder "Project–ETO–Das Neue Deutschland (Operational History)," container 50, Entry A1 154, Field Station Files (OSS Field Office Records), RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 6, note 17.



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(c) To effectively establish a democratic party in Germany, a man of sterling reputation as a social democrat will have to be used, his publicity secretly financed and a publication completely free of any Allied connections be established for him.

(d) To make use of DND for this purpose is to needlessly jeopardize the party's future with a security problem that may well impair any chances of success before the project is well underway. This undoubtedly will occur if the party and its paper receives the attention that the idea merits throughout Germany.

5. It is therefore proposed that MO draw up a project for the re-education of the German people from the inside. This program should include:

(a) Selection of a Social Democrat or member of the Catholic Center Party. Such a leader would have to work undercover with the Allies. He would receive propaganda suggestions and a policy line from the Allies; he would be financed by funds secretly given him. His publicity would be handled through a clandestine newspaper assuming the name of a former democratic sheet, published intermittently and coupled with distribution of leaflets.

6. Such a program to be a success should have no visible connection with Allied support. To lend emphasis to this, it should be critical of Allied controls. Its principles should be:

(a) Immediate removal of Allied control.

(b) Establishment of a Free democratic Germany opposed to communism, fascism, and all connection with former Nazi leaders.

(c) Recognition of the need of the punishment of Nazi leaders.

(d) Development of industrial and agricultural possibilities in Germany.

(e) The establishment of a two party democratic system such as that adopted in the United States.

Stacy B. Lloyd, Jr.
Lt. Col., AUS

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Figure D.3b. "Use of DND for Education of German People," June 1, 1945, p. 2.
Source: Stacy B. Lloyd Jr. to Col. K. D. Mann, "Use of DND for Education of German People," June 1, 1945, p. 2, folder "Project–ETO–Das Neue Deutschland (Operational History)," container 50, Entry A1 154, Field Station Files (OSS Field Office Records), RG 226, National Archives at College Park. See Chapter 6, note 17.

The second page proposes reeducation "from the inside," a different clandestine newspaper, secret financing, and a program with "no visible connection with Allied support." Chapter 6 uses this proposal as evidence of continuity in techniques of apparent source identity while keeping wartime MUSAC, DND, occupation policy, and later clandestine broadcasting analytically distinct.

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