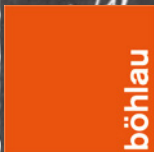
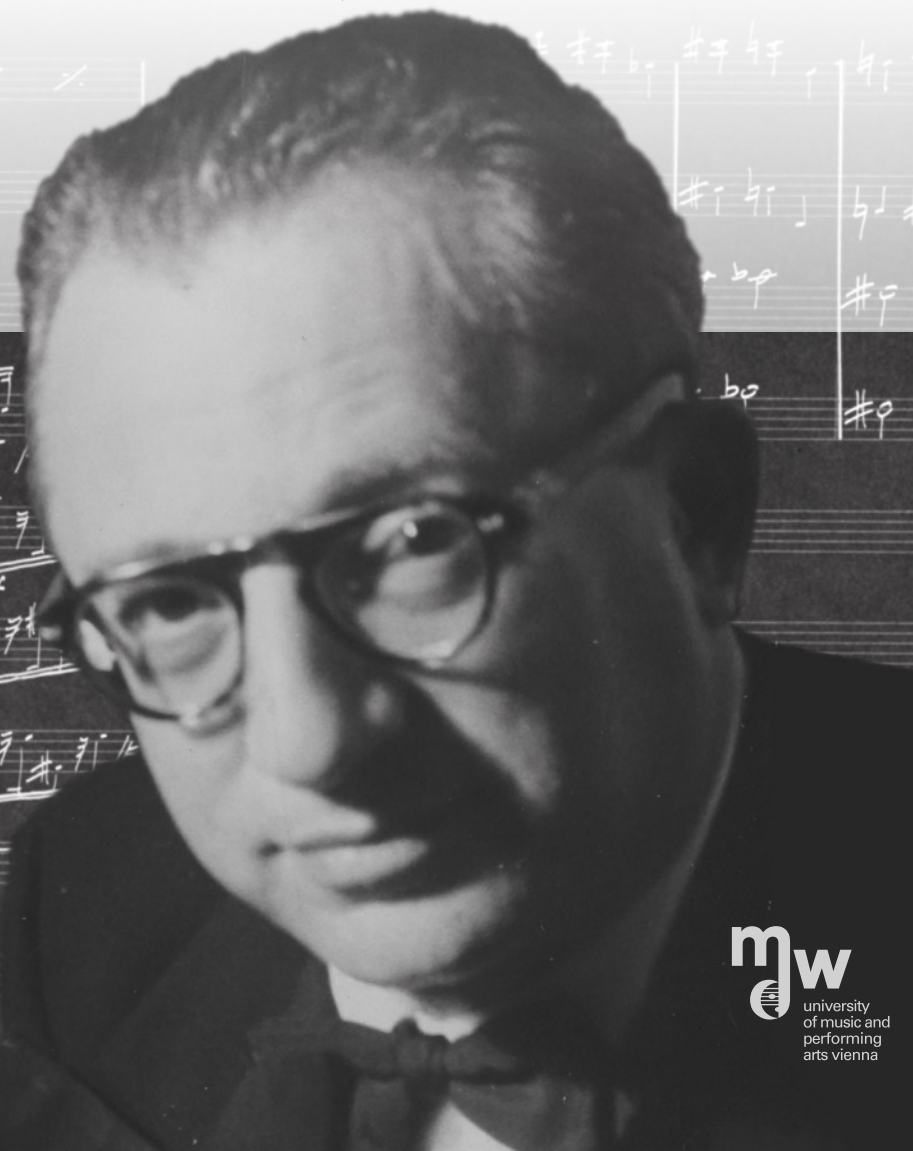


Ryan Hugh Ross

Gerold Gruber (Ed.)

# JULIUS BÜRGER

Composer – Conductor – Vocal Coach







Ryan Hugh Ross

# JULIUS BÜRGER

Composer – Conductor – Vocal Coach

Gerold Gruber (Ed.)

Böhlau



**Zukunftsfonds**  
der Republik Österreich



**NATIONALFONDS**  
DER REPUBLIK ÖSTERREICH FÜR OFFER DES NATIONALSOZIALISMUS

Exilarte Zentrum der mdw – Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien

Ryan Hugh Ross, Gerold Gruber (Ed.)

Julius Bürger. Composer – Conductor – Vocal Coach

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek :  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation  
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie ; detaillierte bibliografische  
Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

© 2024 Böhlau, Zeltgasse 1, A-1080 Wien, ein Imprint der Brill-Gruppe  
(Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, Niederlande; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore;  
Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Deutschland ; Brill Österreich GmbH, Wien, Österreich)  
Koninklijke Brill NV umfasst die Imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Hotei, Brill Schöningh,  
Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau und V&R unipress.  
Alle Rechte vorbehalten. Das Werk und seine Teile sind urheberrechtlich geschützt.  
Jede Verwertung in anderen als den gesetzlich zugelassenen Fällen bedarf der vorherigen schriftlichen Einwilligung des Verlages.

Gestaltung Layout und Satz; Lektorat: Iby-Jolande Varga  
Umschlagsfotos: © A-Weaz

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | [www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com](http://www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com)

ISBN 978-3-205-22075-6

# CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b>	7
<b>2. Julius Bürger's biography</b>	
2.1 Vienna period (1897–1919)	8
2.2 Berlin period (1919–1933)	11
2.2.1. Apprenticeship at the Metropolitan Opera, New York	13
2.2.2. Return to Berlin	14
2.3 London period (1934–1939)	17
2.4 New York period (1939–1995)	28
<b>3. Julius Bürger's opus</b>	
3.1 Instrumental Music	
3.1.1 Chamber music	45
3.1.2 Orchestral works	47
3.2 Vocal Music	
3.2.1 Voice and Piano	56
3.2.2 Voice and Orchestra	70
3.2.3 Choral Works	77
3.3 Sketches and others	
3.3.1. Works for stage	80
3.4 Radio Music	85
<b>4. Conclusion</b>	101
<b>Estate Julius Bürger</b>	103
Photo Credits	110



Julius Burger (Bürger) in the early 1930s © A-Weaz

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the life and work of Julius Bürger (Bürger), a Viennese born composer whose long and varied career intersected with many important European and American musical figures and institutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Despite his large oeuvre and interesting life, little to no musicological research has been conducted on Julius Bürger to date. Thus, the main objective of this paper is to provide an overview of the composer's biography, as well as key aspects of his oeuvre, utilising his estate as a basis. The paper is not intended as a comprehensive reconstruction of said works but rather as a starting point for future studies of Julius Bürger's oeuvre utilising documentation of composer's estate preserved in the Exilarte Archiv der mdw, Vienna.

Julius Bürger's life and work would have been lost to history without the care and dedication of his friend, attorney Ronald S. Pohl, Esq. Through Pohl's efforts, a large portion of Bürger's music was premiered through numerous concert performances in the early 1990s. Selections from the composer's orchestral works were also recorded for commercial release which aided in the composer's rediscovery. After Bürger's death in 1995, Pohl continued to preserve and promote the unpublished compositions until installing the estate on permanent loan with the Exilarte centre at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts, in the same building where Bürger began his studies. A noteworthy concert in promotion of Bürger's works includes the 18 August 2023 Austrian pre-

miere of selections from the composer's orchestral oeuvre—marking his spiritual return to Vienna 85 years after his exile began in 1938. The estate includes Bürger's compositions in autograph manuscript form as well as a large collection of personal documents and papers, recordings, newspaper articles and photographs.

While research has revealed numerous examples of Bürger's works having been broadcast in the 1930s and 1940s (Berlin and London) as well as several recorded works, only one known work, *Launisches Glück*, was published in the composer's lifetime. Additionally, relatively few selections from his concert oeuvre received performances until the 1990s. Thus, this paper has relied on documentation from Julius Bürger's estate preserved at the Exilarte Zentrum Archiv der mdw, Vienna as well as other archival repositories including the Archiv der Universität Wien, the Universitätsarchiv – Universität der Künste Berlin, the BBC Written Archives Centre – Caversham, England, the BBC Sheet Music Library – Perivale, England and the New York Public Library Archives – New York, NY. Additional information has been procured from private collections, among others.

These materials provide a wealth of insight into Julius Bürger's storied career as a composer, conductor, arranger and répétiteur which spanned over seven decades in respected institutions throughout Europe and the United States.



## 2. JULIUS BURGER'S BIOGRAPHY

Julius Burger's biography can be roughly divided into four periods: the Vienna period (1897–1919), the Berlin period (1919–1933), the initial exile period deemed the London period (1933–1939) and the New York period (1939–1995).

### 2.1 Vienna period (1897–1919)

Julius Burger was born on 11 March 1897 in Vienna's 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Leopoldstadt, the fifth child of nine to Josef Bürger – a tailor – and Chaje (Clara) Bürger – a homemaker. Josef, born under the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph in 1859, was born in the village of Olejów in the Kingdom of Galicia while Chaje originated from the town of Kamionka Strumilowa in Galicia (now Kamianka-Buzka in modern Ukraine). While little is known about Julius Burger's early life, the main record of this period stems from an interview with his family friend, Dr. Trude Zörer. Early in the interview, Julius recollected his childhood as being "carefree." She notes father Josef's work provided adequate financial means for the large family. Equally, Burger's parents put a strong emphasis on education and each child was afforded the opportunity to study.<sup>1</sup>

According to Burger, his love affair with music began when, as a toddler, he encountered a Werkelmann (Leierkasten-

mann). He was fascinated by the tones emanating from the hand-cranked instrument and followed the performer through the city until he was eventually retrieved by a family member in the 19<sup>th</sup> district.<sup>2</sup> As an adolescent, Burger was admitted to the Kaiserlich-Königliches Erzherzog-Rainer-Gymnasium where he studied from 1908 until the summer of 1913. The Gymnasium (renamed in 1989 after former pupil Sigmund Freud) was located in the 2<sup>nd</sup> district.<sup>3</sup> Other noteworthy former pupils include anatomist Julius Tandler (1869–1936), and neurologist, psychiatrist and founder of Logotherapy Victor Emil Frankl (1905–1997).<sup>4</sup>

Burger continued his studies at the Kaiserlich-Königliches Maximilian-Gymnasium (Wasagymnasium) in Vienna's 9<sup>th</sup> district until completion in 1916.<sup>5</sup> The prestigious institution served as one of the prime educational centres for children of Vienna's cultivated Jewish bourgeoisie in the early twenti-

- 1 Julius Burger, "Julius Burger speaks to Trude Zörer on his friendship with Joseph Schmidt," interview by Dr. Trude Zörer, date of recording unknown, audio, 24:22, from the private collection of Dr. Trude Zörer.
- 2 Dr. Trude Zörer, "Interview by Ryan Hugh Ross on the life of Julius Burger (Bürger)," Question No. 4, 30 October 2019.
- 3 Walter Jahn, "Geschichte des Sigmund Freud-Gymnasiums," Sigmund Freud Gymnasium website, URL: <https://www.freudgymnasium.at/index.php/schulorganisation/geschichte>, Accessed 19 November 2021.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Reifezeugnis, issued by Prüfungs-Kommission für K.K. Franz Joseph Real Gymnasium, 31 July 1916, Julius Burger Collection, Exilarte Zentrum Archiv der mdw, Vienna, Austria. Accessed 31 October 2018.

Es wird um deutlich lesbare Schrift ersucht. Die  
Organe der akademischen Behörden sind ersucht,  
Nationale mit schlecht lesbaren Eintragungen  
zurückzuweisen.

Gegentwärtig im I. Semester.

## Nationale

für ordentliche Hörer der philosophischen Fakultät.

Vor- und Zuname des Studierenden:	Julius Bürger		
Staatsbürgerschaft:	Österreicher		
Geburtsort und Kronland:	Wien, Nieder-Österreich		
Muttersprache, Alter:	deutsch, 19 Jahre		
Religion, welchen Ritus oder Konfession:	mosaisch		
Wohnung des Studierenden:	Wien I. Obere Bräunerstr. 59		
Vorname, Stand und Wohnort seines Vaters:			
Name, Stand und Wohnort seines Vormundes:	F. W. Sopaustr. 59 Dr. Jakob Bürger, Advokat am Landtag		
Bezeichnung der Lehranstalt, an welcher der Studierende das letzte Semester zugebracht:	K. K. Maximilian-Gymnasium		
Genießt ein verliehen von	Stipendium (Stiftung) im Betrage von	K	h
	unter dem	19	3.
Anführung der Grundlage, auf welcher der Studierende die Zunmatrikulation oder Inskription anträgt:	Maturitätszeugnis		
Verzeichnis der Vorlesungen, welche der Studierende zu hören beabsichtigt.			
Gegenstand der Vorlesung	Wöchentliche Stundenzahl derselben	Name des Dozenten	Eigenhändige Unterschrift des Studierenden, zugleich Bestätigung des Empfanges der Legitimationskarte
Erklären und Bestimmen von Musikwerken	1	Adler	Julius Bürger
Übungen im musikalischen Fretelut	2	Seudo	
Geschichte der Instrumental- musik bis 1800	4	Fischer, Niederm	
Geschichte der Oper im 17. Jahrhundert	1	Wegler	
Die Hornbrüche der modernen Musikperiode	1/2	Dietsch	
Harmonielehre	2	Hadlerer	
Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts	3	Herrmann Wittgenstein Richard	
Liquidierung der Quästur.			
Von der Zahlung des Kollegiengebüh		Bibliothekbeitrag . . . . .	K h
befreit laut Bescheid vom	19	Matrikel- und Stempelgebühr . . . . .	" "
		Kollegiengeb . . . . .	" "
		Zusammen . . . . .	K h

Enrollment Document for Julius Bürger  
Archiv der Universität Wien, Nationale  
von Julius Bürger, Philosophische Fakul-  
tät, Wintersemester 1916/17

eth century.<sup>6</sup> Examples of the Gymnasium's illustrious alumni include writer Felix Braun (1885–1973) and composer Max Deutsch (1892–1982) as well as many influential émigrés including conductor Kurt Adler (1907–1977), composer Hans Gál (1890–1987), composer and musicologist Wilhelm Grosz (1894–1939), conductors Erich Kleiber (1890–1956) and Josef Krips (1902–1974) and writer Stefan Zweig (1881–1942). Zweig detailed his experiences at the Gymnasium in his posthumous autobiographical work *Die Welt von Gestern* (1942).<sup>7</sup> While still a student at the illustrious Gymnasium, Bürger composed his first work in 1915, a lied setting of Heinrich Heine's *Dämmernd liegt der Sommerabend*.<sup>8</sup>

Although it was evident the young Bürger had a fine singing voice (which he maintained throughout his life), he selected music composition as his career focus and commenced formal study at the Faculty of Arts, University of Vienna in autumn 1916. He continued at the University until summer 1917.<sup>9</sup> According to his registration documents, Bürger attended lectures with one of the founders of the discipline of musicology, Dr Guido Adler (1855–1941), as well as Austrian (later British) composer and musicologist Egon Wellesz (1885–1974). Other lectures were proctored by renowned educators such

as Richard Wallaschek (1860–1917), Hermann Grädener (1844–1929), Wilhelm Fischer (1886–1962) and Robert Reininger (1869–1955).<sup>10</sup>

In the autumn of 1917, he began studies at the Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst, Wien (now Universität) where he undertook practical study in harmony and piano and participated in the choral school. In his second academic year at the academy, Bürger also added piano accompaniment and lessons on the cello to his workload. Most notably, he also began studies in composition and counterpoint with renowned Austrian composer Franz Schreker (1878–1934).<sup>11</sup> Schreker's influence on Bürger's compositional style is readily apparent and was defined by this important relationship.

Aside from his formal studies, Bürger was employed as a keyboard accompanist in some of Vienna's silent film theatres. The exposure to these accompaniment practices and their similarities to pastiche musical repertoire of early-twentieth-century operetta provide one possible inspiration for Bürger's later Radio Potpourri creations. During this period he also found employment as an accompanist to Moravian tenor Leo Slezak (1873–1946) on concert tour.<sup>12</sup>

6 Marsha L. Rosenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867–1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), p.108-114.

7 Stefan Zweig, "Die Schule im vorigen Jahrhundert," from *Die Welt von Gestern: Erinnerungen eines Europäers* (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1942).

8 Heinrich Heine, "Dämmernd liegt der Sommerabend (LXXXV)" in *Die Heimkehr* from *Buch der Lieder* (Hamburg: Hoffmann and Campe, 1827).

9 Enrollment documents for Julius Bürger from the Archiv der Universität Wien, Winter 1916/1917, p.119-121 and Summer 1917, p.089.

10 Ibid.

11 Julius Bürger, Enrollment document from Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, Matrikel Nr.(285), 1917/18; 1918/19.

12 Malcolm MacDonald, "Julius Bürger (1897–1995): Orchestral Music," Liner Notes, Radio Symphonie Orchester, Berlin, cond. Simone Young, recorded 26–28,30 September 1994, Toccata Classics, TOCC 0001, 2007, CD, p.3.

## 2.2 Berlin period (1919–1933)

Burger left his studies with Schreker at the Universität für Musik Wien in 1919 and enrolled at the Hochschule für Musik Berlin to continue his composition studies with German composer Engelbert Humperdinck (1854–1921). However, Burger's study under the composer of *Hansel und Gretel* lasted only until the Easter of 1920 as Humperdinck's teaching was already limited due to continued illness. During this period, Burger married Olga Emma Fechner in the summer of 1920.<sup>13</sup> Little is known about this marriage although it represents the first of three marriages between 1920 and 1933.

In spring of 1920, it was announced that Franz Schreker had been appointed director of the Berlin Musikhochschule. This prompted Burger to return to Vienna where he rejoined his former teacher's studio and readied preparations for a more permanent move to Berlin in the Autumn of 1920. Other Schreker students who followed to Berlin included Alfred Freudenheim (1898–1941), Alois Hába (1893–1973), Jascha Horenstein (1898–1973), Ernst Krenek (1900–1991),

Alois Melichar (1896–1976), Karol Rathaus (1895–1954) and Isaak Thaler (b.1902–?).<sup>14</sup> Schreker discouraged imitation of his own compositional idiom, opting instead to encourage each student to develop their own individual style. This contributed to an environment in which the students excelled. Their skills were not lost on the examination committee at the Berlin Musikhochschule, including Georg Schünemann, who mused on his first interactions with the students for a 1928 issue of the music journal *Anbruch*.<sup>15</sup>

One aspect of Schreker's new approach to the curriculum included regular performances of works by the composition students for one another in a concert setting. One such performance, on 18 June 1921, featured Burger's *Doppelfuge für Zwei Klaviere* (now lost) alongside works by Ernst Krenek (*Sonate fis-Moll für Violine und Klavier* and *Serenade für Klarinette, Violine, Bratsche und Violoncello*), Alois Hába (*Quartett für Zwei Violinen Bratsche und Violoncello*) and Paul Höffer (1895–1949) (*Sonate in E-Dur für Klavier*).<sup>16</sup>

13 Heiratsliste für Julius Bürger und Olga Emma Fechner, 8 June 1920, Heiratsregister der Berliner Standesämter 1874–1936, Landesarchiv Berlin, Germany, Zertifikatsnummer 252.

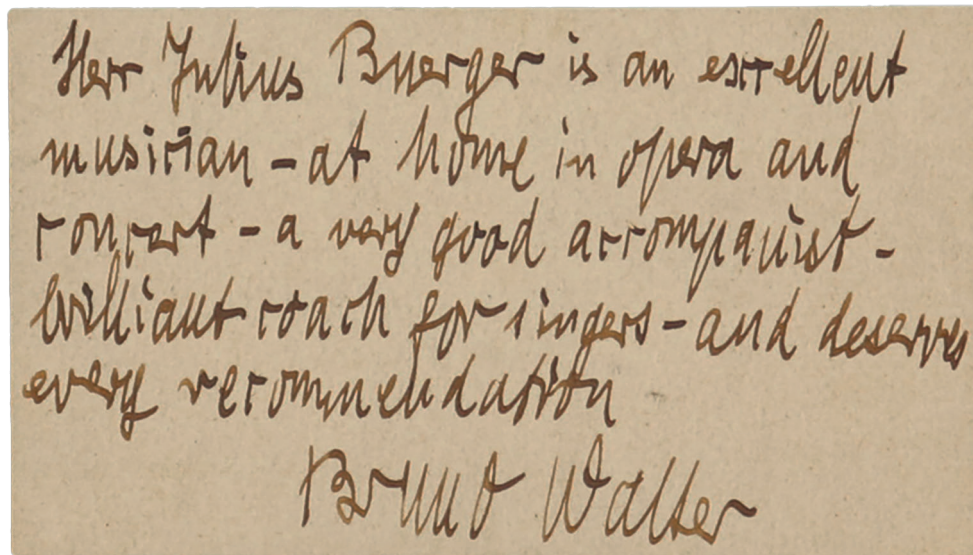
14 Christopher Hailey, "The Call to Berlin," in *Franz Schreker (1878–1934): A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.122.

15 "It was amazing what these young Schreker students could do. We gave them contrapuntal problems to solve, examined their strict and free styles, heard one fugue after another (both vocal and instrumental), gave them themes for modulation and improvisation, examined their musicality and ear training – these students were skilled in everything. As many exams I have witnessed since, I have never again encountered such an artistic level." – from Georg Schünemann's article "Franz Schreker als Lehrer" in Franz Schreker 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday edition of *Anbruch Magazine*, March/April 1928.;

English version: Christopher Hailey, "The Call to Berlin," in *Franz Schreker (1878–1934): A Cultural Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.122.;

Original Source: Georg Schünemann, "Franz Schreker als Lehrer," *Franz Schreker zum 50. Geburtstag* (Schreker issue), *Anbruch* 10/3-4, March/April 1928, p.109-111.

16 This concert was repeated on 26 June 1921. Source: Dietmar Schenk, Markus Böggemann, Rainer Cadenbach, *Franz Schrekers Schüler in Berlin: Biographische Beiträge und Dokumente*. Schriften aus dem UdK-Archiv Band 8 (Berlin: Universität der Künste Berlin, 2005), p.163-166.



Handwritten text on a piece of aged paper, written in cursive ink. The text is a recommendation for Julius Bürger, praising his skills as a musician, accompanist, and coach. The signature 'Bruno Walter' is written at the bottom.

Her Julius Bürger is an excellent  
musician - at home in opera and  
concert - a very good accompanist -  
brilliant coach for singers - and deserves  
every recommendation  
Bruno Walter

A recommendation for Julius Bürger from famed conductor Bruno Walter  
(1876–1962) in English, circa 1924 © A-Weaz

In the same year Bürger began study in conducting which only added to his impressive skill set as composer, pianist, and accompanist. After completing his studies at the Berlin Hochschule in 1922, he began work as a *korrepetitor* for Karlsruhe Opera where he would stay until 1924. It was his abilities as a conductor which later led to recognition by conductor Bruno Walter (1876–1972). Bürger had apparently made a good impression on Walter after proving himself at

a performance of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* with a reduced orchestra and after little rehearsal.<sup>17</sup> As a result, in 1924 Walter recommended that Bürger be apprenticed as assistant to Arthur Bodanzky (1877–1939) at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Walter wrote that: “*Herr Julius Buerger is an excellent musician – at home in opera and concert – a very good accompanist, brilliant coach for singers – and deserves every recommendation.*”<sup>18</sup>

### 2.2.1. Apprenticeship at the Metropolitan Opera, New York

Bürger worked for three seasons with the Metropolitan Opera from 1924 to 1927 in which he served as a repetiteur, coach, and accompanist for auditions as well as the popular Met Gala Concerts which featured renowned singers such as baritone Lawrence Tibbit (1896–1960).<sup>19</sup> Bürger also found opportunity to use his skills as a pianist through a last-minute invitation by Bodanzky to record several piano rolls for the American Piano Company’s (AMPICO) line of reproducing player pianos. Bürger, along with pianist Milton Suskind [pseudonym *Edgar Fairchild*] (1898–1975) and Artur Bodanzky

conducting from the side, recorded four piano arrangements scored for four hands including *Parsifal and the Flower Maiden* (Wagner; Rubenstein), the overture from *Pique Dame* (von Suppè), the overture from *Sakuntala*, op. 13 (Goldmark) and *Symphony No. 40 in G minor* (W. A. Mozart).<sup>20</sup>

In 1926, while still engaged with the Metropolitan, Bürger’s accompanist skills were once again put into practice when he was chosen to perform with acclaimed contralto Ernestine Schumann-Heink (1861–1936) on a multi-stop tour from her home in Coronado Beach, California to San Francisco. The

17 Albrecht Dümling, “Melodien sind dem Emigranten näher als die Fakten der Erinnerung,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, Berlin, 16 July 1994.

18 Bruno Walter, “Recommendation for Julius Bürger,” Julius Bürger Collection, Exilarte Zentrum Archiv der mdw, Vienna, Austria.

19 Met Opera Gala Concert – Twentieth Sunday Night Concert. Metropolitan Opera House, March 22, 1925, Metopera database, Metropolitan Opera Archives, CID: 89870, keyword search ‘Julius Bürger’, URL: <http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives/frame.htm>, Accessed 25/06/2020.

20 According to the company’s 1998 catalogue, Bürger’s recorded titles include:

6590 (65903H): *Parsifal and the Flower Maiden* – Wagner-Rubenstein;

6494 (64943H): *Pique Dama Overture* – von Suppe – Herbert;

6533 (65333H), 6545 (65453H): *Sakuntala Overture* (2 parts) – Goldmark;

6442 (64423H), 6443 (64433H), 6449 (64493H), 6444 (64443H): *Symphony in G minor, No.40* – W. A. Mozart. Source: Albert M. Petrak (ed.), *Ampico Piano Roll Catalog*, The Reproducing Piano Roll Foundation, 1998, URL: [https://www.player-care.com/ampico\\_catalog.pdf](https://www.player-care.com/ampico_catalog.pdf), accessed 23/03/2019.

tour was created to raise funds in aid of disabled veterans. This was likely to have been a convivial experience as Bürger gifted Schumann-Heink a manuscript copy of his lied *Abendläuten* (1920). It now resides in the Schumann-Heink Collection at Claremont Colleges Library in California.<sup>21</sup>

Up to this point, Bürger had completed a handful of noteworthy compositions ranging from lieder for voice and piano

(*Dämmernd liegt der Sommerabend* (1915), *Seliges Ende* (1919), *Abendläuten* (1920), *Lieder im Abend* (1926)) to a pair of orchestral lieder in the line of Mahler (*Legende* (1919) and *Stille Der Nacht* (1923)) as well as a choral work (*Miserere* (1917)) and a symphonic overture titled *Ozeanfahrt*, 1925. The latter was likely inspired by his annual summer voyages to Europe during the Metropolitan's off seasons.<sup>22</sup>

### 2.2.2. Return to Berlin

At the conclusion of his Metropolitan apprenticeship in 1927, Bürger returned to Berlin where he gained employment in a freelance capacity with the Berlin Funkstunde as a conductor and arranger. During this period, he also served as assistant to Kroll Opera resident conductor Otto Klemperer (1885–1973). The company, formerly part of the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, was re-opened as a separate entity with an inaugural performance of Beethoven's *Fidelio* on 19 November 1927.<sup>23</sup> Under Klemperer, the company pursued a vision to bring opera's traditional form into the present by presenting new, progressive works which were representative of the forward thinking and experimental atmosphere of the young Weimar Republic's cultural scene. In total, 44 world premieres were presented in its short existence. These included modern-

ist compositions by the likes of Paul Hindemith (*Neues vom Tage*, 8 June 1929) and Arnold Schoenberg (*Begleitmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene*, 6 November 1930), among other premieres of works by Ernst Krenek (*Leben des Orest*, March 1930), and Leős Janáček (*Z mrtvého domu*, June 1931).<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, Klemperer's attempt to modernise the operatic scene was ahead of its time and audiences didn't readily accept his vision. A conservative backlash and protests ensued. According to a late interview with Bürger, conducted by Dr Trude Zörer, rumours of the company's demise had been circulating in early 1930, including that the Prussian state parliament would no longer support the Kroll Opera. Upon hearing the news, Bürger offhandedly made the comment "*Ich bin die erste Ratte, die dass Schiff verlässt*" ("*I am*

21 Bürger, Julius, "Abendläuten," *Ernestine Schumann-Heink, A Contralto's Legacy Collection*, Honnold/Mudd Library Special Collections, Claremont Colleges Digital Library, No. esh00126, URL: <https://ccd.claremont.edu/digital/collection/p15831coll6/id/688/rec/1>, Accessed 18 November 2020.

22 The latter piece was later performed as part of an orchestral concert by the Berlin Radio Orchestra conducted by Bruno Seidler-Winkler and broadcast on the Berlin Funkstunde on 22 April 1931 at 8PM. Source: Playbill, "Mittwoch, den 22 April 1931 – Berlin Funkstunde," Julius Bürger, '31-'42, R27/40/2, BBC Music-General, File Folder I of II, BBC Written Archives. Caversham, England.

23 Peter Heyworth, *Otto Klemperer: Volume 1, 1885–1933: His Life and Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.253-60.

24 Ibid, p.256.





the first rat to leave the ship") to a fellow member of staff. This was later relayed to Klemperer who made his displeasure known.<sup>25</sup> Ultimately, declining ticket sales as well as the dire economic situation in the 1930/31 season were major contributors to the company's demise. These were also main contributors to Bürger's resignation with the company. He then transitioned to full time employment with the Berlin Funkstunde in 1930. This was indeed timely as the Kroll Opera closed its doors permanently at the conclusion of the 1930/31 season with a final performance of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* on 3 July 1931.<sup>26</sup>

The closure of the company marked a major blow to the German republic's modern cultural scene. The building itself was refashioned to house the German parliament after the Reichstag fire on 27 February 1933, where the theatre became a stage for the literal demise of Germany's Weimar Republic.

From 1930 onward, Bürger was solely employed as a conductor, arranger, and composer at the relatively young Berlin Funkstunde. Here he had an early compositional success with the broadcast of his symphonic overture *Ozeanfahrt*, 1925. However, his most successful compositions with the Funkstunde, and later the BBC, were in a light entertainment genre he deemed 'Radio Potpourri'.<sup>27</sup> While Bürger did not

by any means invent the genre (composers had been creating musical potpourris since at least the eighteenth century), he is credited with remediating this traditional form for the medium of radio by expanding its length and incorporating a storyline and narration over a tapestry of musical themes. One such Radio Potpourri, titled *Hallo London, Here's Berlin* was broadcast from the Funkstunde's studios in Berlin as a simulcast in partnership with the BBC London on 14 November 1932.<sup>28</sup> The programme, consisting of light orchestral and vocal music from musical comedies and operas, featured tenor Joseph Schmidt (1904–1942), soprano Elisabeth Friedrich (1893–1981), soubrette Edith Schollwer (1904–2002), actor Eugene Rex (1884–1943) and was accompanied by the German Concert Orchestra, conducted by Eduard Künneke (1885–1953).<sup>29</sup>

This was not the first occasion Bürger had worked with the Austro-Hungarian and Romanian tenor Joseph Schmidt. The two met first in the Kroll Opera and enjoyed a friendship through concert and operetta broadcasts staged for the Funkstunde. Their friendship led Bürger to compose two commercial successes for Schmidt. The first, titled *Zigeunerlied* or "Gypsy Song", was recorded in February of 1930 for Ultraphon Berlin.<sup>30</sup> The second piece, titled *Launisches*

25 Julius Bürger, "Julius Bürger speaks to Trude Zörer on his friendship with Joseph Schmidt," interviewed by Dr. Trude Zörer, date of recording unknown, audio, 24:22, from the private collection of Dr. Trude Zörer.

26 Peter Heyworth, *Otto Klemperer: His Life and Times. Volume 1, 1885–1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p.366-67.

27 Radio Potpourri utilise themes or sections from existing musical works which are then combined with incidental music around a central theme. They are generally self-contained and performed as a solitary piece. Scripted narration commonly accompanied the piece to supplement the performance.

28 Contributor, "Hallo London, Here's Berlin," *Radio Times*, 11 November 1932, Issue 476, p.44r.

29 Ibid.

30 Joseph Schmidt "Zigeunerlied" by Julius Bürger, Lajos Kiss and his Zigeunerorchestra, Recorded 12 February 1930, 30422, Germany: Ultraphon / Telefunken E 373, Austria: Kalliope K 702. Source: Alfred A. Fassbind, *Joseph Schmidt: Sein Lied ging um die Welt*, (Zürich: Römerhof Verlag, 2012), p.299.

*Glück*, utilised thematic material from Johann Strauss II's song 'O Schöner Mai' (operetta *Prinz Methusalem*) to create a new piece with lyrics by Leopold Hainisch.<sup>31</sup> The work was incorporated into the Strauss operetta *1,001 Nacht* which featured Schmidt and was frequently performed by the singer in concert. One such example includes the 31 October 1937 broadcast performance from New York City's Carnegie Hall.<sup>32</sup> *Launisches Glück* is arguably most readily recognised from the record shop scene in the 1933 German film 'Ein Lied Geht um die Welt' starring Schmidt.<sup>33</sup> By the time of the film's release (9 May 1933), Bürger had al-

ready resigned from his position at the Funkstunde.<sup>34</sup> Following the Nazi Regime's seizure of power through the March 5<sup>th</sup> parliamentary elections and the subsequent passage of the Enabling Act, Bürger's life in Germany became untenable. He returned to Vienna and after two previously unsuccessful relationships, married Rose (Rosa) Blaustein on 20 August 1933. They remained married for 55 years until Rose's death in 1989. Although he returned to the relative safety of the Austrian capital, the political situation in 1933 had also moved towards right wing authoritative rule under Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuß.

## 2.3 London period (1934–1939)

The abrupt severance from his life and burgeoning career in Berlin caused a conflict in identity for Bürger as he searched for work. After several months of unemployment, he made contact with British entertainer and author Eric Maschwitz (1901–1969) who had recently been appointed the director

of the BBC's newly created Variety Department. The department's programming ranged from revue, concert and music hall performances to presentations of old time musicals, radio operetta and light opera. BBC Variety's offerings were broadcast from St George's Hall, adjacent to Broadcasting

31 Although Bürger's name is not included in Fassbind's listing, it does appear on the single which was issued in 1932 on Parlophon. Source: Joseph Schmidt, "Launisches Glück" by Julius Bürger, Leopold Hainisch, Lyrics, Staatskapelle Berlin, cond. by Dr. Weissmann, recorded 18 February 1932, 133438: Germany – B.48154, 133438-3: Germany– Parlophon B. 48154 / Odeon 0-25982, England – Parlophone R 1330, Australia – R 3550, America– Decca P-20311. Source: Alfred A. Fassbind, *Joseph Schmidt: Sein Lied ging um die Welt*, (Zürich: Römerhof Verlag, 2012), p.290.

32 Ibid, p.304.

33 Original German version: *Ein Lied geht um die Welt*, directed by Richard Oswald, (Rio Film, Premiered 9 May 1933 Ufa-Palast am Zoo, Berlin), 0:16:20 to 0:18:36. English Language adaptation: *My Song Goes Round the World*, directed by Richard Oswald, British International Pictures, 1934.

34 In response to previous correspondence with BBC Variety Department director Eric Maschwitz, Bürger provided a short biography for the company to distribute to various news publications. Bürger states: "Left Berlin 1933 April, on account of the Hitler Government." Source: Julius Bürger, "Letter to Eric Maschwitz," 21 January 1935, From Bürger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Bürger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England.



A candid photo of Julius and Rose Burger in promotion of *Liebstraum* (1936). Radio Times, 31 January 1936, Vol. 50, Issue 644, p.20.



Julius and Rose ('Rosa' Blaustein) Burger. © A-Weaz

House in London.<sup>35</sup> The department's early success provided the impetus for the commissioning of new content.<sup>36</sup> Bürger's previous work as a composer and arranger of similar content at the Funkstunde and his proficiency in English, developed during his apprenticeship at the Metropolitan Opera, made him a valuable contributor to the department's programme line-up. These contributions, in the form of Radio Potpourri, would go onto shape and influence BBC Variety programming into the 1950s.

Bürger's first commissioned work for the corporation was the Radio Potpourri *Vienna* (1933). (A previous potpourri, *Hallo London, Here's Berlin* (1932), was given a simultaneous broadcast on BBC and Funkstunde radio frequencies two years previously. However, Bürger was uncredited for this work.) *Vienna*, broadcast on the BBC London regional

programme on 4 January 1934 followed by a repeat broadcast on the national programme the following evening, was an hour-long arrangement utilising music by Johann Strauss II (1825–1899) and Joseph Lanner (1801–1843). The broadcast also marked Bürger's conducting debut in the UK.<sup>37</sup> Although one review in the *Birmingham Gazette* was unfavorable, the work was considered a success by those in the Variety Department.<sup>38</sup> Shortly thereafter, Maschwitz commissioned two further Radio Potpourri programmes from Bürger and his collaborator – Viennese author, Artur Kulka.<sup>39</sup> Titles included a musical tour of Europe in *Holiday in Europe* (1934)<sup>40</sup> as well as a biographic recollection of Jacques Offenbach in the Radio Potpourri, *Life of Offenbach* (1934).<sup>41</sup> The plasticity of the genre, coupled with Bürger's aptitude for innovative thematic concepts, led to seven more Grand

35 Martin Dibbs, "1933–1939: the Show Begins" from *Radio Fun and the BBC Variety Dept., 1922-67: Comedy and Popular Music on Air* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p.48-49.

36 Ibid., p.51-55.

37 *Vienna* premiered on 4 January 1934 on the BBC London Regional Service at 9:15PM. Source: Contributor, "Vienna," *Radio Times*, 29 December 1933, Vol.41, Issue 535, p.972, 976.

38 Contributor, "Not So Dreamy Vienna," *Birmingham Gazette*, 4 January 1934, No. 27,996, p.6.

39 Artur Kulka is credited with writing the narration for two of Bürger's early radio potpourri for the BBC including *Vienna* (1933) and *Holiday in Europe* (1934). Kulka was also forced into exile after the Austrian annexation by Nazi Germany on 13 March 1938. His name is among the Jewish members blacklisted by Austria's society of authors, composers, and music publishers (*Staatlich genehmigte Gesellschaft der Autoren, Komponisten und Musikverleger*). An annotated copy of the organisation's 1937 directory, noting those with Jewish ancestry, was discovered in the Vienna City Library in 2010 by Dr. Christoph Lind.

The citation provided includes a digitized copy of the document with Kulka's name appearing on page 13. Source: Carla Sapreau, "The Austrian Copyright Society and Blacklisting During the Nazi Era," OREL Foundation, August 2014, Accessed 18 January 2022, URL: [http://oreloundation.org/journal/journalArticle/the\\_austrian\\_copyright\\_society\\_and\\_blacklisting\\_during\\_the\\_nazi\\_era#07302014\\_1](http://oreloundation.org/journal/journalArticle/the_austrian_copyright_society_and_blacklisting_during_the_nazi_era#07302014_1)

40 *Holiday in Europe* premiered 17 July 1934 on BBC London Regional Service at 9:15PM. Source: Contributor, "Holiday in Europe," *Radio Times*, Vol. 44, Issue 563, p.105, 112.

41 *Life of Offenbach* premiered 7 January 1935 on BBC National Service at 9PM. Source: Contributor, "Life of Offenbach," *Radio Times*, 4 January 1935, Vol.46, Issue 588, p.7, 28, 31.

# Funkstunde

OFFIZIELLES ORGAN  
DER FUNK-STUNDE

VERLAG: FUNK-DIENST G.M.B.H., BERLIN-CHARLOTTENBURG 9

NUMMER 48 \* JAHRGANG 1931 \* BERLIN, 27. NOVEMBER 1931 \* PREIS 25 PFENNIG



„1001 Nacht“ als Theater-Sendespield

Von links nach rechts: Grete Fintler, Gustav Stabinoff, Alfred Braun, Margit Süssy, Josef Schmidt, Julius Ruffan (dahinter), Heinz Jonas

z. Bismarck



**JULIUS  
BUERGER,**  
whose new  
pot-pourri  
**A Festival of  
Folk Music**  
will be broadcast this  
evening at 6.45 and in  
the National programme  
on Monday night.

Bürger performs a tune on the piano after rehearsals for the May 1936 broadcast premiere of *Festival of Folk Music*. BBC Studios – London.

© Radio Times, 1 May 1936, Vol. 51, Issue 657, p.20.

Photo from the 1931 production of *1,001 Nacht* – starring tenor Joseph Schmidt in the lead role. The production was broadcast by the Berlin Funkstunde and featured Bürger's Strauss inspired lied 'Launisches Glück'. © Joseph Schmidt Archiv, Zürich

potpourris, a serialised 'Chapter potpourri,' as well as dozens of shorter arrangements being produced over the following five years.<sup>42</sup>

The BBC commissions served as a financial lifeline for the composer but the political turmoil in Germany and Austria presented further issues for the young composer. While other émigrés at the BBC, such as Walter Goehr, Mátyás Seiber, Leo Wurmser, Ernst Hermann Meyer, Artur Willner, Franz Reizenstein, and Berthold Goldschmidt, had found security in full-time employment at the Corporation, Bürger's engagement with the BBC as a 'per contract' composer precluded him from gaining a visa.<sup>43</sup> This became an increasingly pressing issue as the Nazi regime exerted more influence in Europe. The threat was recognised as early as January 1934 by one British radio listener who penned an op-ed to the *Leeds Mercury* newspaper regarding Bürger, titled "Should He Be Turned Away?"<sup>44</sup> Since leaving Berlin in 1933, Julius and Rose lived an increasingly transient existence. The couple stayed for shorter and shorter lengths of time in Vienna and

with greater frequency between London and Brussels.<sup>45</sup> An October 1936 petition to the UK Ministry of Labour as well as a subsequent appeal to the Home Office proved unsuccessful.<sup>46</sup> From September 1937, the Burgers resided in Paris, only returning to London for the first few weeks of 1938.

While his legal status was a constant struggle, Bürger was successful in Britain in other respects. Unlike the relatively few works by fellow émigrés which were successfully broadcast by the BBC between 1933 and 1945, Bürger had at least thirteen Grand potpourris as well as multiple Miniature potpourris, arrangements and orchestrations premiered during this period. The majority of these were also rebroadcast or revived. Even during the Second World War, at least six of his Radio Potpourris were included in programming, with several being broadcast more than once. These included *The Empire Sings!* (18 February 1940), *Johann Strauss: A Biography in Music* (19 July 1942, 14 May 1944, 6 August 1944), *Liebesträume* (7 March 1943, 24 September 1944, 25 March 1945), *New World Rhapsody* (3 and 5 March 1944, 20

42 See the Radio Potpourri section for a comprehensive list and more details about specific titles.

43 Florian Scheduling, 'Problematic Tendencies': Émigré Composers in London, 1933–1945" from *The Impact of Nazism on Twentieth-Century Music*. (ed.) Erik Levi. (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2014) p. 247-271.

44 The brief contribution highlights the anti-Semitic discrimination Bürger faced in Germany while focusing on the composer's success and skill as a musician. The contributor then chastised the UK Home Office's policy severely limiting the admission of foreign musicians and draws comparisons between Bürger and Friedrich Händel to emphasise the important contributions immigrants can add to British culture. Source: Op-ed, "Should He Be Turned Away?" *The Leeds Mercury*, 6 January 1934, Issue No.29,376, p.6.

45 In correspondence with Eric Maschwitz, Bürger expresses his intent to leave Vienna for a new life in Brussels on 28 February 1935. Subsequent letters throughout 1935 in the BBC Written Archive's collection show correspondence addresses in Brussels and England.

Source: Julius Bürger, "Letter to Eric Maschwitz," 12 February 1935, From Bürger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Bürger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England.

46 Mark Lubbock, "Dr. Julius Bürger," BBC Internal Memo, 28 October 1936, From Bürger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Bürger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England. Letter from Home Office, Whitehall to BBC Variety Department, RE: Julius Bürger, 10 November 1936, Ref. no. B.7058, From Bürger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Bürger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England.

August 1944), *City of Music* (9 July 1944), and *Life of Offenbach* (3 September 1944, 5 November 1944).

In early February 1938, the Burgers had made plans to travel back to Austria for the first time in several months in anticipation of a possible plebiscite vote on the question of Austria's absorption into the German Reich. According to Burger, the couple were at a scheduled stopover in France when he noticed a newspaper headline exclaiming "Austrian Chancellor meets Hitler." The couple immediately fled the train and abandoned their plans to return to Vienna.<sup>47</sup> They instead proceeded to the French Riviera where they resided at the Hotel Belles Rives in the resort town of Antibes.<sup>48</sup> After news had reached the couple of Austria's annexation by Germany on 12 March 1938, the Burger's returned to Paris. Throughout these life-altering weeks, Burger apparently took solace in composition and completed his ode to the British Empire,

aptly titled *The Empire Sings!* (5 April 1938).<sup>49</sup> The Burgers would not return to Vienna for many years after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War's conclusion.

According to internal documents and correspondence now housed in the BBC Written Archives, the Burgers returned to London in May for the premiere of *The Empire Sings!* (1938). After a final application to stay in the UK proved unsuccessful, the Burgers were granted a limited extension to remain in the UK while gathering supporting material for an asylum application to the United States. In a letter to colleague Stanford Robinson in July of that year, Burger wrote "[o]ur sky is quite dark for the moment, but we do not lose courage."<sup>50</sup>

Fortunately, Burger gained letters of support from the BBC's staff and administration, including P. E. Cruttwell, the programme contracts executive.<sup>51</sup> After an arduous search through a large list of international contacts, his application

47 Dr. Trude Zörer, "Interview by Ryan Hugh Ross on the life of Julius Burger (Bürger)," Question No.25, 30 October 2019.

48 Two letters of correspondence from this period notes the address as Hotel Belles Rives with the next letter, dated 14 April 1938, addressed from the Hotel de Normandie in Paris.

Sources: Julius Burger, "Letter to Stanford Robinson," 4 March 1938, From Burger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Burger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England.

Stanford Robinson, "Letter to Julius Burger," 10 March 1938, From Burger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Burger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England.

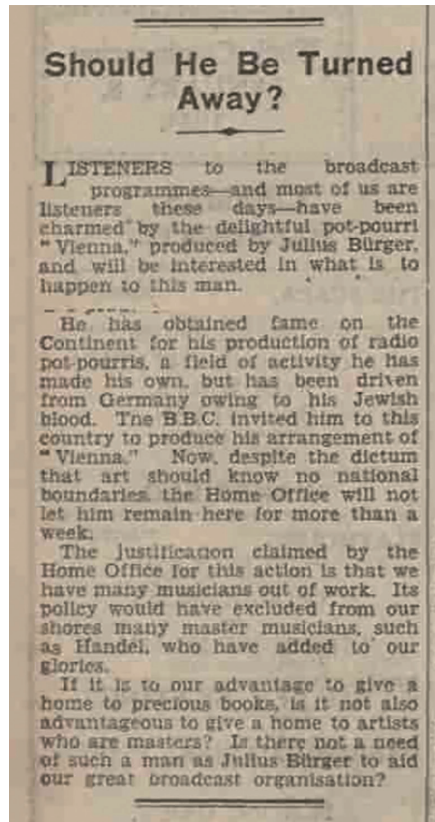
Julius Burger, "Letter to Stanford Robinson," 14 April 1938, From Burger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Burger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England.

49 Also known under the title "Songs of the British Empire", this work utilises traditional native music as well as colonial folk songs from British dominions and colonies from across the world to provide a musical survey of the empire as it existed in 1938.

Source: Julius Burger, *The Empire Sings!*, (unpublished manuscript score, 4 April 1938), BBC No. MSS6401 – Buerger. EaZ-035-03-00021. Box 3, No. 1.3.7. Julius Burger (Bürger) Collection. Exilarte Zentrum Archiv der mdw. Vienna, Austria. p.283.

50 Julius Burger, "Letter to Stanford Robinson," 18 July 1938, From Burger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Burger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England.

51 P.E. Cruttwell, "Letter of support to American Embassy in London for Julius Burger," 19 July 1938, From Burger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Burger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England.



Op-ed article from January 1934 which highlights Julius Bürger's situation as an exile. From the Leeds Mercury Newspaper. 6 January 1934. No. 29, 367. P.6.

Bürger poses on the conductor's podium (BBC Studios – London) in this promo photo for the 1935 premiere of *World Tour*. © Radio Times, 22 Nov. 1935, Vol.49, Issue 634, p.76.





was completed with an affidavit of support from American tenor Charles Kullman (1903–1983) whom he had previously worked with in Europe.<sup>52</sup> Bürger continued to be actively involved with the BBC over the remaining months of 1938, composing and arranging for the series *Songs of the British Isles*. The serial featured arrangements of well-known traditional folk tunes from across the home territories. Several examples of his contributions include three miniature pot-pourri works on various themes including *Morris Dances*,<sup>53</sup> *Regimental Marches*<sup>54</sup> and *Sea Shanties*.<sup>55</sup>

After a successful application to the US Embassy, the Burgers left England for New York from Southampton aboard the

RMS *Aquitania* on 25 March 1939. They arrived in New York City six days later. Poignantly, their nationality is listed as “Stateless”.<sup>56</sup> Back in Europe, Bürger’s name later joined the hundreds of artists and musicians, who were effectively blacklisted, in the notorious Nazi sponsored encyclopaedia *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik* (1940).<sup>57</sup>

Bürger had composed and arranged an impressively large collection of musical creations for the BBC and, along with the two commercial hits written for Joseph Schmidt, had continued to compose noteworthy works of a serious nature after 1927. These include a symphonic suite titled the *Eastern*

52 Julius Bürger, “Julius Bürger speaks to Trude Zörer on his friendship with Joseph Schmidt,” interviewed by Dr. Trude Zörer, date of recording unknown, audio, 24:22, from the Private collection of Dr. Trude Zörer.

53 “Morris Dances” was included in the third installment of the programme “Songs of the British Isles” and was first broadcast on 14 August 1938 on the BBC National Service at 9:05PM.

Source: Contributor, “Songs of the British Isles, No.3,” *Radio Times*, 12 August 1938, Vol. 60, Issue 776, p.13, 27.

54 “Regimental Marches” was included in the fourth installment of “Songs of the British Isles” and was first broadcast 18 September 1938 on the BBC National Service at 9:05PM. The work includes standard marching tunes associated with selected regiments of the British military including *The Lincolnshire Poacher*, *Speed the Plough*, *Wi’ a Hundred Pipers*, *The British Grenadiers*, *Men of Harlech*, *John Peel* and *Life on the Ocean Wave*. Sources: Contributor, “Songs of the British Isles No.4,” *Radio Times*, 16 September 1938, Vol.60, Issue 781, p.22.

BBC Internal Memo, “Julius Bürger’s Miniature Pot-pourri of Military Marches for ‘Songs of the British Isles’”, 18 September 1938, From Bürger, Julius. 31-42. R27/40/2. BBC Music-General: Bürger, Julius. BBC Written Archives Centre, Reading, England.

55 “Sea Shanties” was included in the sixth installment of “Songs of the British Isles” and was first broadcast on the BBC Regional Service on 7 November 1938 at 8:30PM.

Source: Contributor, “Songs of the British Isles, No.6,” *Radio Times*, 4 November 1938, Vol. 61, Issue 788, p.34.

56 Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820–1897. Microfilm Publication M237, 675 rolls. NAI: 6256867. Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36. National Archives at Washington, D.C. ;

*Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820–1897*. Microfilm Publication M237, 675 rolls. NAI: 6256867. Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36. National Archives at Washington, D.C.

57 Theo Stengel, Herbert Gerigk, *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik*, (Berlin: Bernhard Ahnefeld Verlag, 1940), p.44.



Bürger composing in the summer of 1939. Connecticut, USA. © A-Weaz