

My name is Dr. Uri Ganani. I am a cultural historian, currently a Minerva Stiftung Postdoctoral Fellow (Max Planck Gesellschaft), at the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Technische Universität Berlin. I also serve as editor of Yuval Online, a journal for Jewish Music, published by the Hebrew University.

Between August-October 2013 I stayed in Paris for a research purposes, generously supported by a short term postdoctoral research grant provided by the Embassy of France in Israel ("Bourse de Recherche en Sciences Humaines et Sociales").

My PhD dissertation, titled "Heroines, Female Singers and Spectators: Politics and Aesthetics in the Operatic World of Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal", dealt with German operatic Modernism from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the Nazis' rise to power. I analyzed the operas of Richard Strauss (1864-1949) and Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929) during the years 1909-1933 and showed how those operas offered ways of dealing with two of their times' key challenges. The first was the continued persistence, in Central European culture, of the collectivist myths originating in German Romanticism, one of whose great formulators was Richard Wagner. The second was the rise of atonal Modernism, a precursor of the dissonant, aesthetic fragmentation that began in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Strauss and Hofmannsthal's operas took on those challenges through the gradual development of an alternative aesthetic conception which I have termed "Lyrical Ideology". Despite its apolitical pretensions, Lyrical Ideology in fact wished to rehabilitate the traditional status of the female voice (the one it had enjoyed in pre-Wagnerian opera), while simultaneously fashioning it as post-heroic, a-national and euphonious.

During my postdoctoral research visit in Paris, I extended the historical scope of my claim to include the profound influence French composers of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century have had on German-Jewish operatic modernism. Among the composers whose lesser known works I sought to find and familiarize myself with, were Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864), Fromental Halevy (1799-1862), Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), Charles Gounod (1818-1893), Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880), Ernst Reyer (1823-1909) and Jules Massenet (1842-1912). My goal was to delve deeper into the French lyrical cosmopolitan musical tradition and to examine its roots, aesthetic language and ideological goals.

For these purposes I spent a considerable amount of time at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Bibliothèque Beaubourg as well as other musical libraries, where I found many relevant historical documents, excellent books and numerous rare recordings. During my stay I also met with several colleagues from various universities in Paris and deepened my knowledge of French language as well as French musical culture.

My host in France was Prof. Bernard Banoun, of Paris-Sorbonne University (Paris 4). I am especially grateful for his devoted academic guidance and great help in every possible matter.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the committee for selecting me as a recipient of this most prestigious research grant. Your kindness and generosity are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Uri Ganani