



The Political Orchestra: The Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics during the Third Reich

Fritz Trümper

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This is a groundbreaking study of the prestigious Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics during the Third Reich. Making extensive use of archival material, including some discussed here for the first time, Fritz Trümpi offers new insight into the orchestras' place in the larger political constellation.

Trümpi looks first at the decades preceding National Socialist rule, when the competing orchestras, whose rivalry mirrored a larger rivalry between Berlin and Vienna, were called on to represent “superior” Austro-German music and were integrated into the administrative and social structures of their respective cities—becoming vulnerable to political manipulation in the process. He then turns to the Nazi period, when the orchestras came to play a major role in cultural policies. As he shows, the philharmonics, in their own unique ways, strengthened National Socialist dominance through their showcasing of Germanic culture in the mass media, performances for troops and the general public, and fictional representations in literature and film. Accompanying these propaganda efforts was an increasing politicization of the orchestras, which ranged from the dismissal of Jewish members to the programming of ideologically appropriate repertory—all in the name of racial and cultural purity.

Richly documented and refreshingly nuanced, *The Political Orchestra* is a bold exploration of the ties between music and politics under fascism.

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