

Hitler's lost music collection reveals 'forbidden' Jewish and Russian composers

Researched by George Plohn

I just came across this intriguing information, published in the British journal Daily Mail.

Adolf Hitler kept a vast record collection of 'forbidden' music by Jewish composers. Recordings by Mendelssohn and Offenbach were hidden in sealed boxes -and scratch marks suggest they were among his favorites.

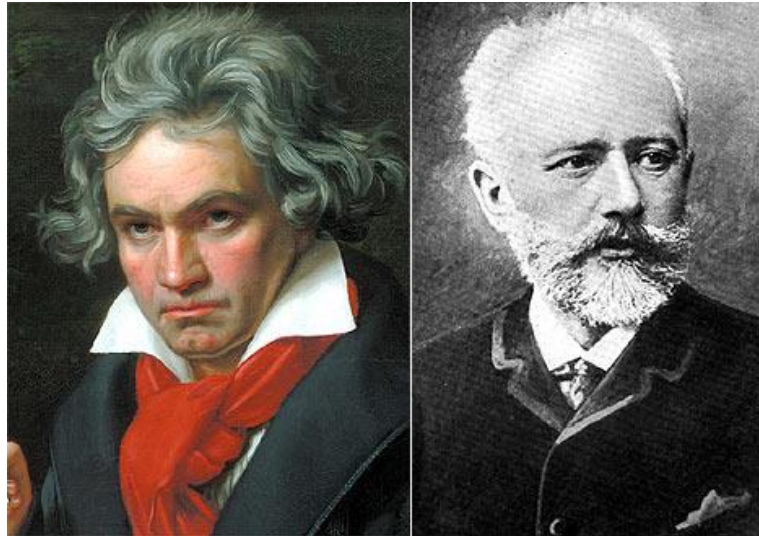
Russian composers were also banned under the Third Reich, but in private Hitler repeatedly played Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky and hundreds more works he publicly labeled "sub-human music".



The secrets of what the Nazi dictator really liked to listen to were revealed by the family of a Russian officer who stole the music from his bunker in 1945.

Captain Lew Besymenski, who was Jewish, was ordered with other Red Army troops to make an inventory of artifacts in the bunker after Berlin fell. He found the huge collection in sealed crates and sent it back home to Moscow on a train.

According to his daughter Alexandra, he kept the records as souvenirs and first showed them to her at the family dacha outside Moscow in 1991.



Beethoven

Tchaikovsky

He was ashamed of having stolen them and played them only for himself and a small clique of trusted friends.

Besymenski died at aged 86. His daughter tried to decide what to do with the collection of 78 rpm shellac recordings, which also contains works by Hitler's German favorites, mainly Wagner and Beethoven.

"I think my father found it astonishing that millions of Jews and Russians had to die because of the ideology of Hitler yet here he was all the time enjoying their art," she remarked wisely.