

Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 5:30pm
Class of 1951 Reading Room, Main Library, Vassar College
Jewish Refugee Musicians in Exile in Shanghai
during World War II

SOPHIE FETTHAUER, PhD of the HfMT University in Hamburg, Germany



Dr. Fetthauer researches and publishes on musical life in the “Third Reich,” focusing on biographies, institutional history, displaced person camps, remigration, and the exile in Shanghai.

Her multimedia lecture tells the little-known story of how Jewish refugee musicians from Europe were integrated into the cafés, nightclubs, and ballrooms in Shanghai, the so-called “Paris of the East.” The bars and restaurants in the Hongkou Ghetto, where most of these Jewish refugees settled, acquired the nicknames “Little Vienna” and “Little Berlin.”



About 20,000 refugees came to Shanghai to escape Nazi persecution. Of those, about 450 were musicians. Some adapted by playing American and Chinese swing music. Others presented their traditional repertoire of *Unterhaltungsmusik* ("light music").

Co-sponsored by Vassar's: Creative Arts Across Disciplines, the Engaged Pluralism Initiative, the Departments of Music and German Studies, the Programs of Media Studies and Jewish Studies. With special thanks to the Consortium on Forced Migration, Displacement, and Education.