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Education and culture

"Rappers, rockers, romantics": lecture on anti-Semitism in music history

City invites you to a free lecture // Guest musicologist

A free public lecture entitled "Rappers, rockers, romantics - on anti-Semitism in European music history" will take place on Thursday, 18 January at 7 p.m. in the media centre at the Alter Bahnhof. Musicologist Dr Ya'qub El-Khaled will talk about racist, nationalist or anti-Semitic statements and content in European music history.

What do rappers Haftbefehl, Bushido and Kollegah, Pink Floyd co-founder Roger Waters and composers Richard Wagner and Hans Pfitzner have in common? Not much, you might think. Or perhaps they do?

Racist, nationalist or anti-Semitic statements and content have been part of European music history for a long time. They are not new phenomena within contemporary rap or ideas that were developed and propagated during the National Socialist era from the 1930s onwards and have not disappeared since.

Even Richard Wagner's infamous pamphlet "Das Judenthum in der Musik", first published in 1850, is just one example of many in which anti-Semitic attitudes are clearly revealed. But of course Wagner did not invent anti-Semitism either. Over the centuries, many Jewish composers were openly or less openly discriminated against and had to contend with anti-Jewish stereotypes, while composers of other denominations brought Jewish characters to the stage - often enough in a caricaturing or offensive manner.

In his lecture, music historian Ya'qub Yonas N. El-Khaled, PhD, explores the historical origins and developments of anti-Semitism in the 19th and 20th centuries and explains how nationalism and racism also permeated music. He vividly illustrates how famous composers, such as Gustav Mahler or Arnold Schönberg, dealt with anti-Semitic resentment and that some elements of the past are still with us today. Against this historical background, current examples from popular music can also be examined and problematised.

The speaker, Ya'qub Yonas N. El-Khaled, PhD, studied philosophy, classical guitar, song composition and musicology. He received his doctorate in historical musicology and most recently worked as a university assistant and senior lecturer at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz in Austria. He is currently a research assistant at the West Saxon University of Applied Sciences in Zwickau, where he conducts research into the materiality of musical instruments as part of the Musical Instrument Making programme.

The lecture is being organised as a cooperative event between the VHS Bocholt-Rhede-Isselburg and the City of Bocholt's Culture and Archive Department. The event is sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.





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Musicologist Dr Ya'qub El-Khaled gives a lecture on racist, nationalist or anti-Semitic statements and content in European music history