Jewish Life in Berlin: Music and Popular Culture in the 1920s

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Research Question

How have the **cultural forces** of Berlin in the 1920s shaped the **music** and **music scene** of **Jewish communities** in that era?

How can this be contextualized using archives and archival material?

Concept: Venue–Oriented and Gamified Approach

The Jewish Life in Berlin project is a web-based interactive exhibition that showcases the cultural significance of Jews in music, art and popular culture in the 1920s.

With a gamification approach, it explores different aspects of Berlin's music scene in the Weimar Republic through multiple locations significant to Jewish life.

Personae

English speakers interested in:
- music history
- Jewish history
- ethnomusicology

This may include:
- Music scholars
- Ethnomusicologists
- Students
- Those with a general interest in music

Background Research

Passing Illusions: Jewish Visibility in Weimar Germany by Kerry Wallach (2017)

- Presentation of Jewishness in Weimar-era popular culture

Three-Way Street: Jews, Germans, and the Transnational eds. Jay Howard Geller and Leslie Morris (2016)

- Synagogue architectural history as a reflection of community identity
- Jewish Klezmer music and its political and cultural ties

Docuverse

- Ted Nelson, library of interconnected documents

ArcGIS StoryMaps

- Connections between sound and location

Concept Development

- Storytelling features
- Spatial representation using map of Berlin
- Time-based representation
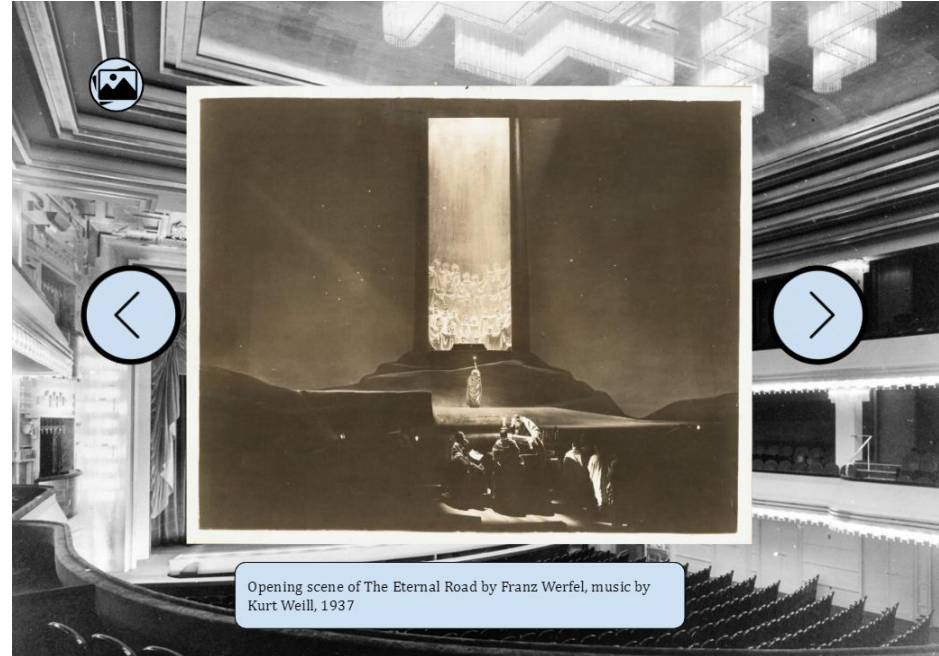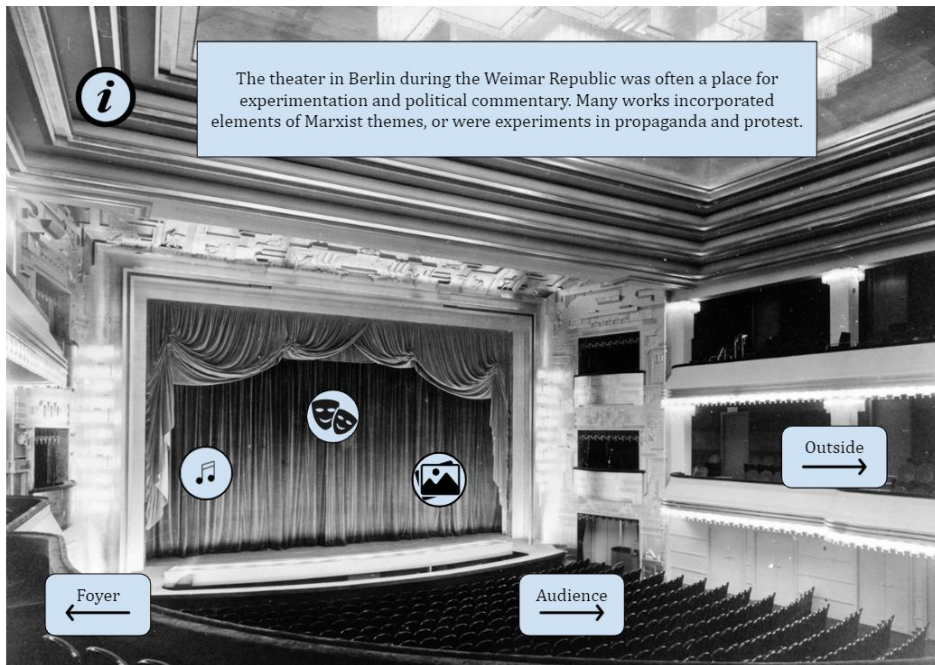- Curated music playlist or collection

Material Collection

Difficulties faced

- Barriers to access
- Lack of relevant material

Key archives and databases

- Europeana collections
- Leo Baeck Institute Archives
- Architekturmuseum
- Naxos Music Library
- Ethnic American Newspapers from the Balch Collection

The theater in Berlin during the Weimar Republic was often a place for experimentation and political commentary. Many works incorporated elements of Marxist themes, or were experiments in propaganda and protest.

Outside

Foyer

Audience

Opening scene of The Eternal Road by Franz Werfel, music by Kurt Weill, 1937

First Digital Prototype

Interface Iterations

- Paper prototyping
- Maps
- Design elements

Where did the first performances of The Threepenny Opera on August 31, 1928 take place?
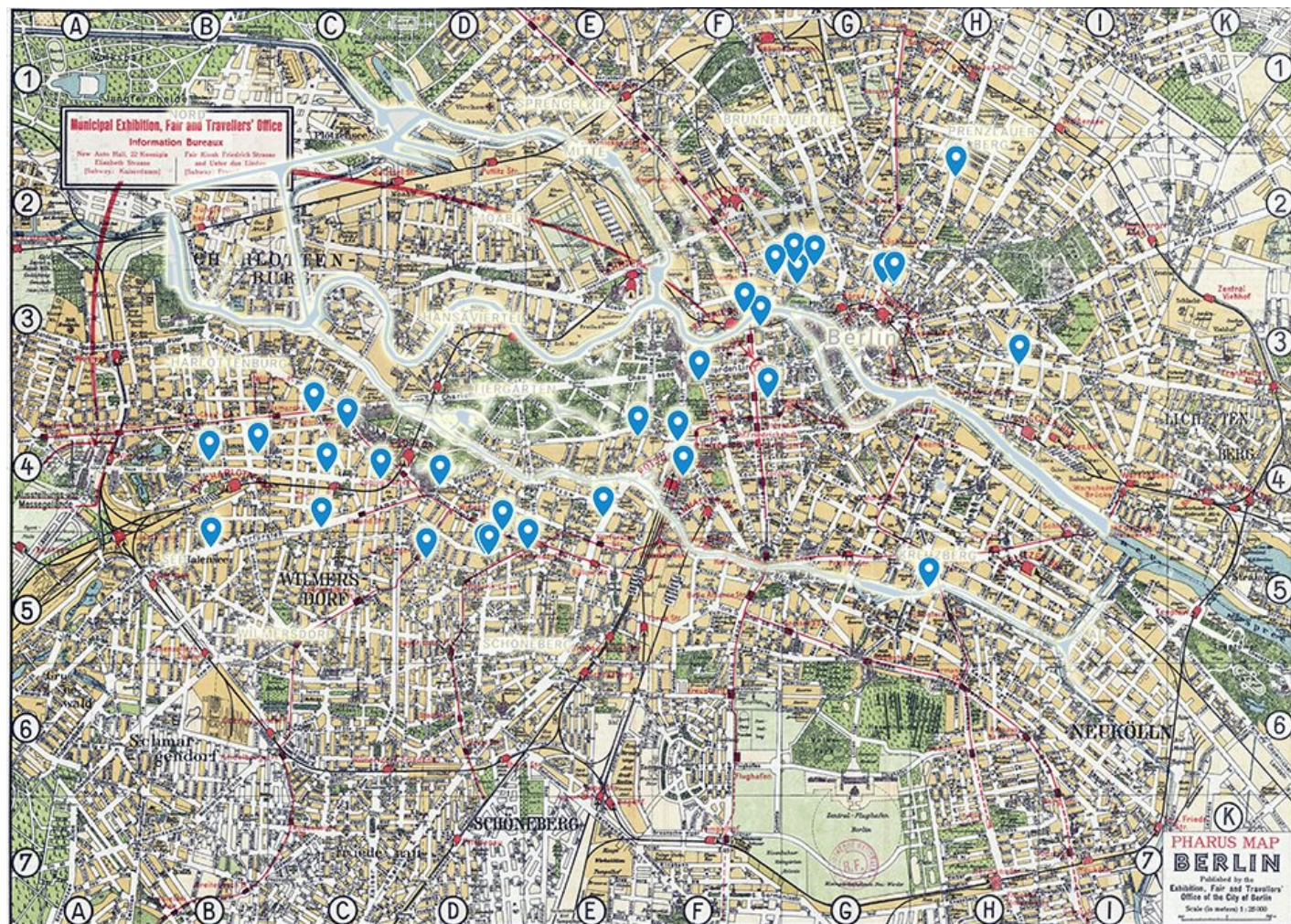
Cover of The Threepenny Opera

▷ Play "Pirate Jenny" to save it to your playlist!

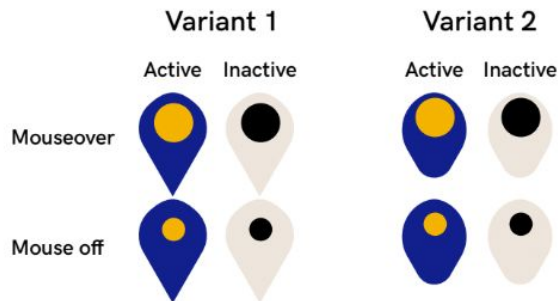| Metropol- Theater | Theater am Schiffbauerdamm | Wintergarten Theater |

1929 map

Schiller   Modern map

Metropol

Your Pl...

Municipal Exhibition, Fair and Travellers' Office
Information Bureaux

New Auto Hall, 22 Koenigin
Elisabeth Strasse
[Subway: Kaiserdamm]

Fair Kiosk Friedrich Strasse
and Unter den Linden
[Subway: Fr...]

PHARUS MAP
BERLIN
Published by the
Exhibition, Fair and Travellers'
Office of the City of Berlin
Scale (in meters) 1 : 25.000

colors

map pins

Variant 1

Active Inactive

Variant 2

Active Inactive

Mouseover

Mouse off

buttons

Click here

Click here

Click here

Click here

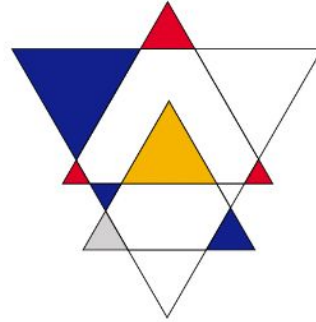# fonts
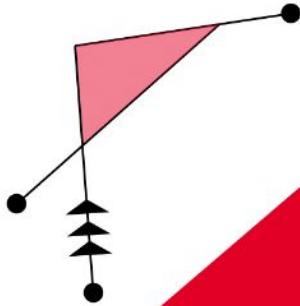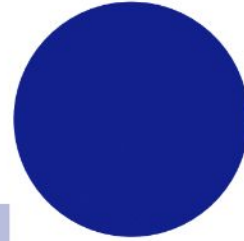
header 1
header 2

Button text

Body text

bauhaus93 65pt
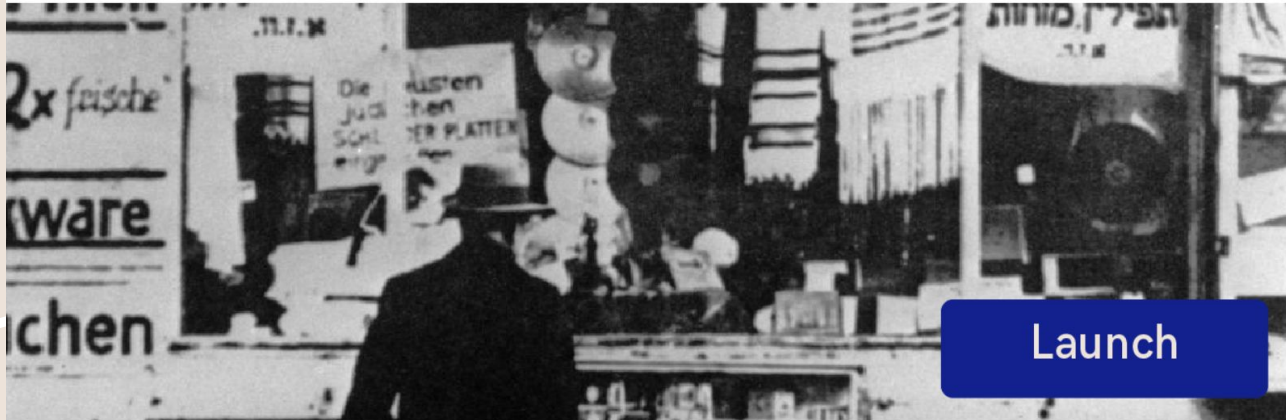
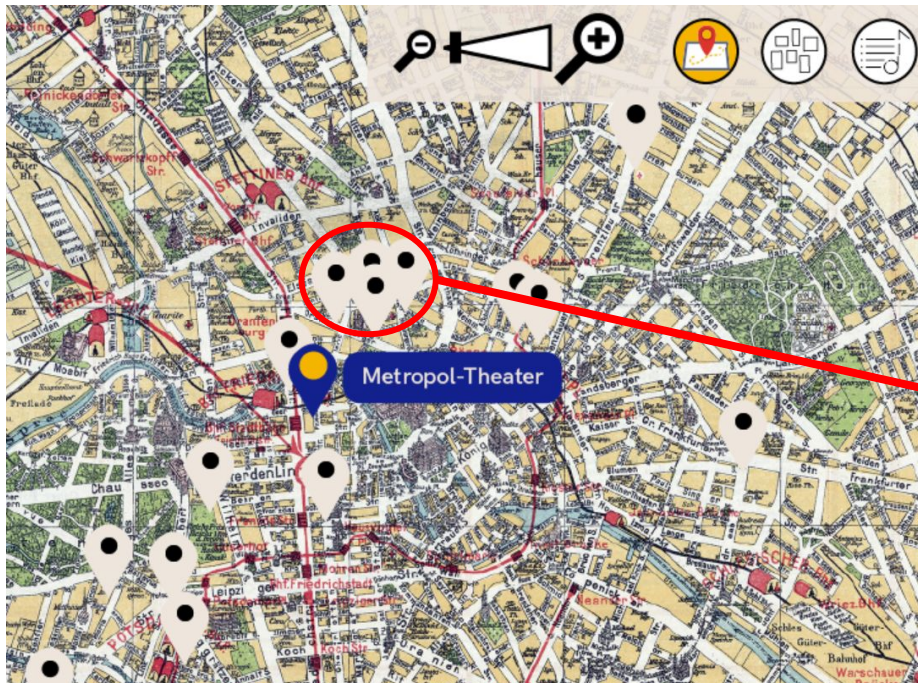bauhaus93 45pt

hk grotesk semibold 18pt

hk grotesk regular18pt
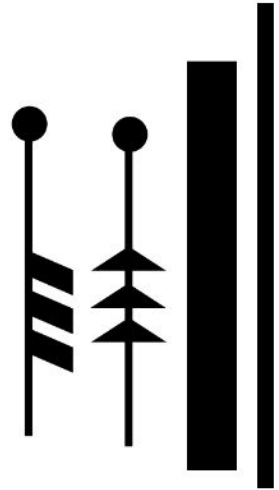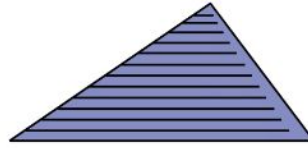
CURT BOIS

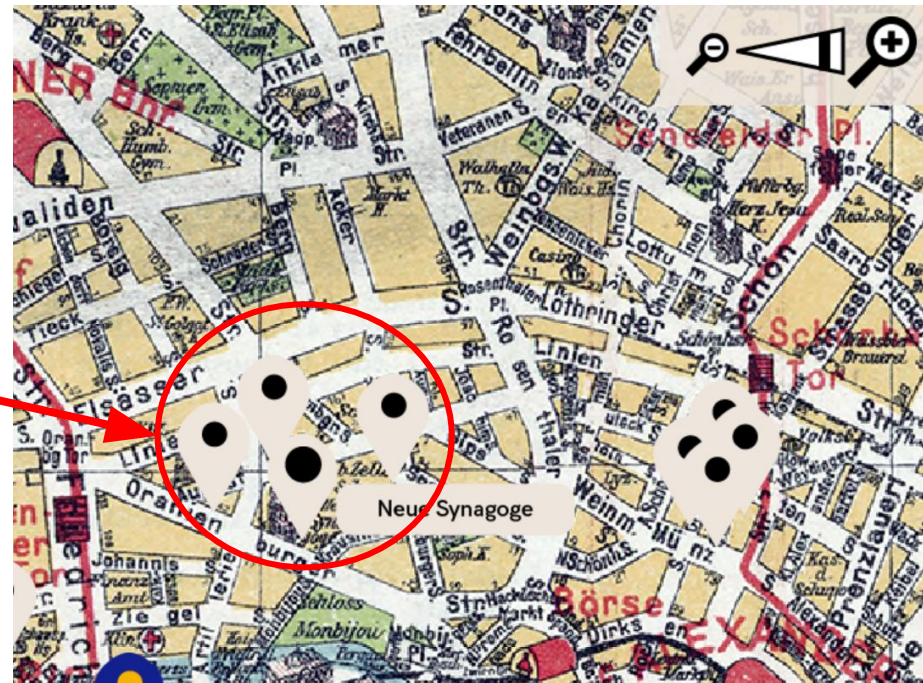# Bauhaus shapes

Final Prototype

Final Prototype Features

- Map View
- Zoom-in feature
- Location View
- Document View
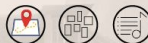- Music View
- Trivia View
- Docuverse

Map view

Zoom-in feature

Metropol-Theater

Berlin's Metropol-Theater was a central venue for showcasing Jewish theater works and productions, among others. It developed into an operetta stage in the 1920s. Friedrich Hollaender's father, Victor Hollaender, composed operettas and revues for the theater for approximately a decade. In 1934, Victor Hollaender followed Friedrich as they were exiled from Nazi Germany due to their Jewish descent. Revues, characterized by singing and dancing, were important in shaping popular entertainment culture with their depiction of political satire and parody, as they became social events in Berlin. These messages were directly influential to other forms of popular media and Jewish musical genres. The cabaret, popular songs, and operettas echoed messages of the Metropol-Theater revues.

Click to listen!

Location view

Document View

Back to Metropol-Theater

Title: "Ice arena in the Admiralspalast"
Image: Ullstein Bild
Date: 1922
Description: The Metropol-Theater was built in 1911 as "Admiralspalast" by Heinrich Schweitzer and Alexander Diepenbrock. The building complex contained a cinema, a luxury spa, a bowling center, cafés, and an ice rink. The ice rink could also be converted to a large ballroom. In 1922, the ice rink was rebuilt to become a variety theatre.

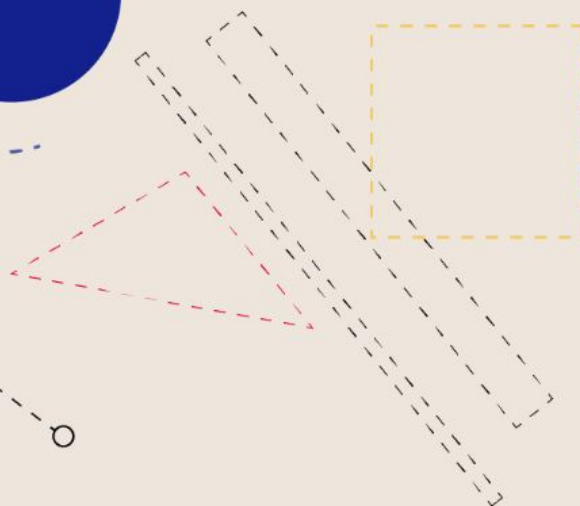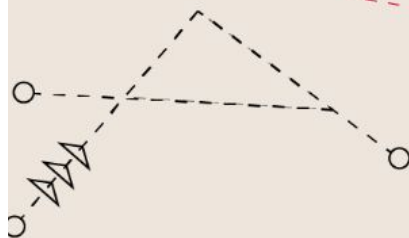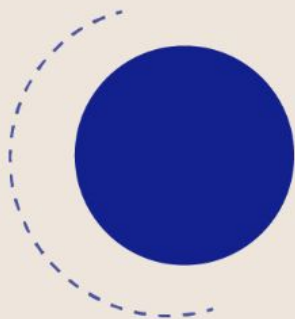Document view

Now playing: "Wo ist mein Baby" by Hollaender/Mehring, performed by The Comedian Harmonists

Added to Music!

Adding a song to music

Music

Listen to more music to increase your collection!

Download Poster

docuverse

1922

1921

Trivia Question:

Theater am Schiffbauerdamm

To unlock the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, you must answer the following Trivia Question:

The Threepenny Opera, written by Bertolt Brecht, was one of the biggest hits in Berlin in the 1920s. The first performances of the Threepenny Opera took place in this venue. The music to this opera was written by what renowned Jewish composer?

Playbill of the premiere performance at Theater am Schiffbauerdamm Berlin, 31 August 1928.

Friedrich Hollaender

Hanns Eisler

Kurt Weill

Correct! Kurt Weill was a prominent German Jewish composer who wrote the music for the Threepenny Opera. Weill developed productions with Brecht in the 1920s, but fled Nazi Germany in March 1933. Congratulations! You have successfully unlocked the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm documents.

Theater am Schiffbauderdamm

Demo

Link to Invision Prototype:

https://invis.io/WGRJCXKCFSK

Enabling Technologies

InVision

- Final prototype actions

Adobe Illustrator

- Assets and screens
- Shapes
- Style guide

Adobe Photoshop

- Digital sketching

Difficulties

Prototyping tools

- Inability to display animated features
- Lack of transitions
- Inability to play audio
- Creating a new page for each individual action
- Difficulties with collaboration
- Lack of user personalization
- No dynamic or randomized material generation

Future Directions

- Bauhaus as a visual identity
- Sorting features in the Docuverse and Music views
- Continue attaching documents and trivia questions to all the locations
- Creating more connections between material
- Connection with AR project

Thank You

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