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## “Exiles in Paradise”

**David Michael Wolff, conductor/orchestrator**

**Constance Hauman, soprano/producer**

While millions of Jews were transported from Nazi Germany to eventual death, others -- including leading composers active in Vienna's arts scene -- found refuge by immigrating to the United States. Although the Nazis had prohibited performances of their music as "degenerate," their emigration resulted in a cataclysmic brain drain for musical life in Germany and Austria, a loss that American soprano Constance Hauman spelled out in music with great dramatic force Wednesday at the Austrian Embassy.

Her arresting show, "Exiles in Paradise," incorporating live song and film, was performed four years ago as the centerpiece for the opening of the Jewish Museum in Berlin. At Wednesday's performance, part of the embassy's "Austrians in Exile" series, Hauman's voice was ably accompanied by a chamber orchestra in arrangements by pianist and conductor David Wolff.

Collages of film clips from Austria's and Germany's Nazi past formed the backdrop for Hauman's singing. The music ranged from sultry cabaret vocals in the signature style of Berlin music-hall nightlife of the 1920s and '30s (even some by 12-tone composer Arnold Schoenberg) to arias from Viennese opera (such as Erich Korngold's "The Dead City").

Hollywood owes a lot to Vienna. The legacy left in American film music by Viennese emigre composers who resettled in Los Angeles is little known here. On Wednesday Hauman's radiant singing combined with a barrage of samples from Hollywood's cinematic past, including songs by Walter Jurmann from the Marx Brothers farce "A Night at the Opera."

-- Cecelia Porter