

# PUBLIC SEMINAR

THE NATIONAL EUROPE CENTRE AT THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY IS PLEASED TO INVITE YOU TO:

## Music in the antechambers of hell – Composing and making music in concentration camps

Dr Stefan Kames

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**Wednesday 3 August, 12.30 – 1.30pm**

at the National Europe Centre

The Australian National University, 1 Liversidge Street,

Parking available in Balmain Lane, opposite University House

(Light refreshments will be served after the seminar)

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### Music and concentration camps – a contradiction in terms

Camps established for humiliation, dehumanization and extermination as opposed to music, that wonderful art. But music did exist in the concentration camps. At first in the songs of the prisoners, from which developed songs of the resistance such as the song of the bog soldiers. As the camps became larger and more musicians were among the prisoners real camp orchestras were formed.

The victims used that cultural activity to preserve their dignity and self-respect. But the music was misused for propaganda purposes and for the inhuman interests of the SS in the camps. Even in Auschwitz, that terrible place which today is a synonym for the crimes of the Shoah, there were several orchestras. The Symphony Orchestra in the main camp had over hundred members. The lecture will try to give picture of the music situation in the concentration camps, from the first "reeducation" camps to the Death camps, with special emphasis on the women's orchestra in Auschwitz under their leader Alma Rosé.

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