

MUSIC IN THE INTERNMENT CAMP

MUSICIANS

There were organists, pianists, violinists, singers, music teachers and students, and others with musical talent and the ability to organise entertainment. Here are a few of the musicians:

Organists



Else Haefner (left) was a German organist and operatic singer. She played a significant role at the services in St Mary's Church in Port St Mary. She sang and played mostly classical music. She was billeted on The Promenade in Port St Mary and left the Island to return to Germany in 1945.

Dr Magda Kelber (right) was an accomplished organist. She accompanied soloists in performances and the choral singing in church and sometimes performed solos herself. She was billeted at The Towers Hotel in Port Erin, but she left the Island for Yorkshire in 1941.



Pianists



Helga Krebs (left) was born in Berlin and was a professional pianist. She played an important role in the camp. She was the musical director for a number of the entertainments, performed in them, and accompanied other soloists. She was also a member of 'The Optimists' musical group. She was released in 1941 and became a music teacher in the UK, where she died in London in 1995.



Käthe Boronow (right) was born in Strelno, Germany in 1894 and was a pianist. In the musical events organised in the camp she often accompanied the violinists. After the war, she became a music teacher in the UK. She died from a stroke in 1968 in London.

Singers



Bertha Huttenbach (left), a professional singer, was born in Worms in Germany. She was known in the theatre as Bea Hutton and in 1935 she appeared in the Royal Variety Performance in London. She was the sister of celebrated cellist, Otto Huttenbach. Bertha died in 1958 in London.

Edith Bach-Kaczynski (right) was a well-known soprano and singing teacher. She had made records and was used to broadcasting on radio. However, in 1934 she was banned from performing simply because she was Jewish.



She escaped to England with her young son, William, and his baby brother, Edward. Their passports were stamped 'J' for Jew. Edith's husband, Martin, a wealthy designer and manufacturer of hats, was in a concentration camp, but Edith managed to get him a work permit to come to England. Eventually they both ended up interned on the Isle of Man, separately at first and then, after nine months, as a family in the Married Camp.

After the war, Edith tried in vain to restart her musical career, but remained a housewife and mother, giving singing lessons and helping her husband in his hat factory. Edith died in London in 1975.

In recent years her family were sad that none of her records had survived. However, they were delighted when a record, made in 1927, was discovered. More recently still, Edith's work and her memory are being recognised once again in Berlin, Germany, where a university house has been named in her honour – Edith-Bach-Haus.