Music, Morality, and the Great War: How World War I Molded American Musical Ethics

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MUSIC, MORALITY, AND THE GREAT WAR:
HOW WORLD WAR I MOLDED AMERICAN MUSICAL ETHICS

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“... let yourself be held and carried by God, who has become incarnate in the humanity of those who love you in community... The community can let you experience the fact that, beyond your anguish, there are human hands that hold you and show you God’s faithful love.”

Henri Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love*

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ABSTRACT

In 1917 America found itself embroiled in a worldwide battle concerning the identities and rights of nations. It was all of a sudden required to re-think its ethnic and cultural identity in the light of both its “melting pot” origins and the new nationalized standards for moral goodness and badness (enemy countries were now seen as unquestionably morally bad, allies morally good). One aspect of American culture that was particularly confused by this transition was the music world. American music culture, and especially art or “classical” music culture, had been founded on a deep-seated appreciation for the German tradition. German performers, composers, theorists, historians, critics, and, most of all, repertoire were embraced and beloved by Americans. In fact, many musicians were what we might call “hyphenated” Americans, first- or second-generation German immigrants who made music their livelihood in America. What’s more, in the years leading up to the war, America had developed a widespread understanding of the moral nature of music that was based largely on national musical styles. Popular thought proclaimed that music was a distinctly moral art and that Italian and French styles represented its lowest moral output. German musical style, on the other hand, fulfilled music’s highest potential to be morally good. When in 1917 this understanding collided with the unwavering declaration that Germany (and its cultural output) was the enemy, the embodiment of evil, American music culture responded with understandable confusion and vehemence. Robberies, lootings, bomb threats, riots, trials, restraining orders, police presence, mass demonstrations, internments, and deportations plagued German-American and German musicians, as well as those who dared to perform German repertoire. Many of these incidents can be seen within the sociological framework of “moral panic,” Stanley Cohen’s description of cultural events that represent disproportionate responses to supposed moral threats. To study them adequately is to see them
not only as interesting stories but also as signposts pointing to deeper cultural issues and insecurities. In the wake of these wartime and post-wartime moral panics, America was forced to re-examine its conceptions of musical morality, as well as its relationship to German performers and repertoire. Although it reincorporated German culture quite quickly following the war, it did so self-consciously, with a newfound desire to expand its national boundaries to include American, British, and French repertoire and performers into its core. This diversity of styles found its greatest success as part of the new valuing of plurality that came with modernism. Furthermore, America’s distinct ability to incorporate and celebrate pluralism helped it to become the new world center for art music in the twentieth century despite its long-term struggle to create its own distinct musical style.
INTRODUCTION

In late October of 1919 New York City erupted in moral outrage. Five hundred mounted and bayonetted policemen responded to fierce rioting in the streets, resulting in close to a dozen injuries, one nearly fatal. Rioters brandished stones, bottles, and clubs, threw bricks into passing streetcars, attempted to pierce through police lines, and commandeered motor army trucks with which to oppose military forces. The cause of the rioting was not taxation, conscription, or religion. It was an operetta titled *The Bat*.

Although the Great War was officially over, the Treaty of Versailles having been signed months earlier, America’s refusal to ratify the peace treaty based on objections to the formation of the League of Nations meant that it was still technically “at war.” New York City’s newly elected Mayor, John Francis Hylan, had responded to overwhelming anti-German public sentiment by banning the Star Opera Company’s production of German-language operas (and, indeed, all productions of German-language operas in the city). The company countered by obtaining a restraining order against the New York City police, who would enforce the city’s injunction and put an end to their productions of Johann Strauss II’s *Die Fledermaus* and Albert Lortzing’s *Zar und Zimmermann*. With the performance back on, those whose protests had resulted in the initial ban took to the streets to make their voices heard. Finally, the case was brought before Supreme Court Justice Leonard A. Giegerich, who upheld the right of the city police to suppress German-language operas until America’s ratification of the peace. Just one month later the Star Opera Company, stripped of its core repertoire, closed its doors for good.  

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1 This story is examined in greater depth in Chapter 4, where the *New York Times* articles that reveal it are cited.
It is difficult to imagine the severity of moral confusion – or rather, moral certainty – required for such extremes of government involvement in the artistic life of a population. After all, one production by a small opera company seems easy enough to overlook; those who did not approve of the performance could have simply chosen to stay home. Instead, they rioted. What’s more, this story is not the only one of its kind. Robberies, lootings, and bomb threats accompanied desperate pleas for the cessation of German artistic presentations in America during and after the war years. Although only a small number of citizens participated in this violent drive against German culture, those who did were committed, set ablaze by a sort of moral fire that turned them into self-appointed guardians of America’s ethical wellbeing. Music came to be seen as a conduit through which America’s morality was communicated, and thus the performance of German music was tantamount to treason. To be clear, not all these pleas amounted to such a clear demonstration of the phenomenon known as “moral panic,” a phenomenon that Charles Krinsky describes as “an episode, often triggered by alarming media stories and reinforced by reactive laws and public policy, of exaggerated or misdirected public concern, anxiety, fear, or anger over a perceived threat to social order.”\(^2\) Much of the battling was done in newspaper articles and letters to the editor, by social clubs or groups, religious organizations, and upper-class citizens. Nevertheless, American art music culture seems to have grasped onto the Great War as a way of expressing a set of beliefs concerning the nature of music and its relationship to morality that had been gaining ground throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The notion that music carries moral meaning is not a new one. From Plato, Aristotle, and the ancient Greek doctrine of ethos, to early church fathers’ and Protestant Reformers’ concerns

about the use of music, to modern questions of child-rearing and rock music, music’s creators, philosophers, and recipients have proclaimed its power to influence the development of character. Music’s prominent role in all aspects of life – emotional, physical, intellectual – and in all the activities of life – home, school, entertainment, military activity, religion – identify it as a conveyor of meaning and, for many, of moral meaning. Thus, philosophers, critics, musicians, and citizens have long understood music as possessing inherently good or bad ethical force. Furthermore, once a culture acknowledges the power of music to influence thought and behavior, music can be used intentionally – by composers, programmers, and even governments – to mold public sentiment or create nationalist fervor. Music then becomes imbued with intended moral meaning. During World War I the increasingly vitriolic rhetoric between military enemies heightened both the perceived and the intended moral significance of music. Much has been made of the moral weakness or insufficiency of popular and folk music since its extreme separation and distinction from art music with the advent of jazz and its progeny. This is for good reason; popular music certainly has its place in the formation of musical morality. This study, however, focuses on the morality of art, or “classical,” music.

Art music played such a fascinating role in World War I partly because of its historical background. In a sense, the Western art music tradition had been shared across national lines for centuries before the war; many musical works were studied, produced, and performed across Europe, regardless of each one’s specific origin. Indeed, the tradition of composers traveling to study or work in other countries reaches as far back as the medieval era (goliards and troubadours) and continued through all the periods of Western art music. Thus, despite regional style particularities, the general tonal, harmonic, and rhythmic systems, not to mention centuries of repertoire, were shared by all involved in the Great War. In response to the widespread
political fervor of the nineteenth century, a distinct focus on nationalism and national style arose in the world of art music. As fledgling nation-states like Germany and Italy attempted to unite themselves, they embraced their musical inheritances, especially those that had been received by the entire continent and celebrated as genius. By the twentieth century it seemed that German music had come out on top, having claimed nearly all the great universal or cosmopolitan figures, including Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner. The War, understandably, further complicated notions of cosmopolitan and nationalist musical styles, as well as the relationships between countries already fighting for a place of prominence in the telling of music history. In the culture of heightened patriotism and vilification of enemy countries, critics and commentators often attributed moral value (whether positive or negative) to a country’s cultural artifacts. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the performance and reception of German music among the Allies and, even more specifically, among the semi-removed, apparently “neutral,” United States of America, with its highly complex sense of national identity.

There is much to be gained from an investigation of the performance and reception of art music during the War. Art music concerts (typically the purview of the elite) served as fundraisers for the War recovery effort; the money raised often went to organizations that worked to support the families of dead or wounded Allied soldiers.³ There were organizations dedicated specifically to helping musicians and artists, both those fighting in the War and those attempting to make a living during wartime, such as American Friends of Musicians in France⁴ and the Artists’ Aid Society (or Appui aux Artistes).⁵ In fact, many artists and musicians were

⁴ Walter Damrosch, My Musical Life (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1924), 221.
called upon to fight on the frontlines. A 1917 plea in the *New York Times* for American financial aid for French soldiers entreated:

> Who is there in time of trouble and despair more willing to help than an artist? He sings for you and dances for you and acts for you in order that somewhere somebody may be kept from going under. And now when he can’t help himself or those dependent upon him, when the only singing and acting he can do is in the trenches, what is more natural than that he should come to the public for help? . . . If the world would only stop to think what the artist soldier sacrifices in answering the call to duty it would be more generous in its help. Here is a man full of life and spirit and inspiration and power to make the world a happier place by the expression of his dreams. The call to arms comes, and it all goes, hopes and ambitions, everything, and he gives up the work that means his very being and goes forth to kill when what he wants to do is to create. And then he comes back, powerless and worthless in his own eyes, and faces the thing that he dreads most – charity.⁶

The United States, with its flourishing immigrant communities and burgeoning search for its own musical identity, will serve as our entryway to contemplate art music and its role in wartime moralist rhetoric. Because American art music culture was so heavily grounded in European traditions (both through immigration and through American composers’ and musicians’ study abroad), questions of nationalism, loyalty, and morality during this time were problematic and highly charged. With this heightened attention to morality came increased attention to international cultural exchange and its ethical implications. A study of the repertoire choices, reception, and politics of American art music culture during and after the War will illuminate the ways in which music makers, listeners, and critics in the rapidly changing world of the early twentieth century saw art music as highly moral as well as a meaningful component of national identity formation.

Our story is one of modernism’s violent assault on the relative simplicity and idealism of musical thought in pre-World War I America. It is the story of a fragile musical identity and

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worldview, shaken to its core by the destruction of its most basic assumptions. Having uncovered some sources for the particular type of musical morality that had come to pervade American thought before the War in Chapter 1, we will turn in Chapter 2 to the question of how music cooperates in and sometimes transforms national identity formation, asking in particular what has caused audiences and critics to identify music as “German.” Chapter 3 will explore America’s art music culture and its attempts at creating a national identity therein, with particular focus on German-American identity and music culture. Chapter 4 considers accounts of musical moral panic in America during the War and how citizens’ responses to “enemy” and “allied” music revealed weaknesses in America’s perceptions of morality and nationality in art music. Finally, in Chapter 5, we will look at concepts of music and morality after the War, coming to see that the musical moral panics of the War played a significant role in the re-shaping of an American musical ethic.

This dissertation will attempt not only to develop an informed and complex understanding of this fascinating time in America’s musical history, but to posit a view of this history that sees the events of World War I as pivotal, even crucial, to the development of America’s national musical understanding and identity. This Great War, too often regarded in studies of music history as less epoch-making than its successor, is in fact essential to a complete understanding of the intersection of modernism, identity, and music in America.
CHAPTER 1
MUSIC AND MORALS: H.R. HAWEIS AND PRE-WAR AMERICAN MUSICAL ETHICS

Art music in America was a locus of moral discussion long before the Great War officially proclaimed enemy musics as morally bad. The country, built in many respects on principles of religious freedom, was concerned from its beginnings with morally edifying music. From the hymns of the earliest settlers, to the Moravian brethren, to William Billings and the First New England School, music was integral to American life particularly in its role as communicator of sacred truth. Moreover, music, and especially singing, was encouraged as a method of sanctification, causing an ever-increasing interest in music education for the production of “good” Americans. By the eighteenth century, European art music was being imported to America, especially on the East coast. It was not long before moral proclamations concerning sacred music bled into the world of the secular and European art music was itself imbued with moral meaning. In this chapter we will explore the most popular ideas of music and morality that were circulating in America leading up to World War I, noticing the large role that national style played in Victorian musical ethics and anticipating the difficulties that such a mindset might produce during a world war.

*   *   *   *

. . . all The Arts arise out of a certain instinct, which impels man to make an appeal to the senses by expressing his thoughts and emotions in some external form. When his thoughts and emotions happen to be worthily directed toward great subjects, his Art will have dignity; when, in addition to being happily and wisely selected, what he aims at is represented with fidelity and skill, his Art will have aesthetic worth; and when its general tendency is good, his Art may be called moral.  

The Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis (1838-1901) (Figure 1) was a Cambridge scholar, an Anglican priest, an amateur violinist, and a successful author in Victorian England. His name does not grace many discussions of aesthetics or philosophy or even nineteenth-century British music criticism and analysis. Although he wrote at length on the topic of music, he was not a professional musician, theorist, critic, or composer. His writing is not particularly academic or refined, and it seems at times to represent an old-fashioned point of view, even for the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, his death in 1901 secures his firm position in the pre-World War I generation; he did not live to see the flourishing of modernism or the destruction of a teleological, progress-oriented worldview. So what role does he play in the American notions of the nature of music and its relationship to morality that so shaped behavior during World War I? As Edward Green details in a 2008 study in the *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, H.R. Haweis’s significance in the field of musical aesthetics during the Victorian age is primarily proved by his overwhelming popularity.

Figure 1: Hugh Reginald Haweis

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Haweis rose to prominence as the rector of St. James’s, Marylebone, making it one of the most popular churches in London through his bold and theatrical preaching, his leadership in social reform, the development of a church choir whose quality was “unsurpassed in the United Kingdom,” and his famous “Sunday evenings for the people,” in which orchestral music, oratorios, and displays of visual art served as aids to worship. In 1888 Haweis wrote an article in the budding magazine the *Universal Review* about the morality of ballet performances; the editor of the magazine chose to accompany the article, without Haweis’s permission, with what the *New York Times* called “bewitching drawings of gauze-clad subjects.” The whole incident was so well-publicized that it resulted in a caricature of Haweis in *Vanity Fair* magazine (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: “The Parson, the Play and the Ballet” by Carlo Pellegrini for *Vanity Fair* magazine, 1888](http://www.albion-prints.com/vanity-fair-print-1888-rev-hugh-reginald-haweis-clergy-90360-p.asp)

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Haweis not only lectured in England but also toured North America extensively, serving as Lowell lecturer in Boston in 1885 and as the Anglican delegate to the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. His obituary speaks of his popularity thus:

To a very large number of Londoners the death of the Rev. Hugh Reginald Haweis will seem like the loss of a personal friend. He possessed, more perhaps than any other of the well-known English preachers, the art of endearing himself to his audiences, of making them hang on every word he uttered… in so great personal esteem was he held [that] he escaped censure for utterances for which another man would have been brought sharply to book.\(^{13}\)

Of most interest to our current discussion is Haweis’s work on the intersection of music and morality. His *Music and Morals*, written in 1871, was so beloved that 19 editions were published before the end of the century, and even more after Haweis’s death. This was undoubtedly the most widely read work on musical aesthetics and philosophy of the Victorian age and perhaps also the early twentieth century, both in England and in America. It follows, then, not only that there was a thirst for an accessible theory of musical aesthetics among the general public, but also that Haweis’s approach was satisfactory to them, providing convincing answers to their concerns. Edward Green writes, “if he steadily gained, and steadily kept, his readership – and he did – it follows that the questions that most engaged that readership, he was engaging; and the resolutions to the questions that burned most keenly for them were, at least in some outline manner, presented by him.”\(^{14}\) Unlike Edmund Gurney’s *The Power of Sound*, regarded by later scholars including Rollo Myers as the most important Victorian contemplation on music, *Music and Morals* resonated strongly with its contemporary readers; its economic success attests to its resonance with popular sentiment and belief. For Haweis, music was intimately connected with all of life. It was primarily a means (and a primary means) of


emotional expression, but the attainment of beauty, or of a good and successful life, requires the tempering, balancing, or regulating of emotions. In this way, music itself, and the study of music, could be seen as integral to moral health or wellbeing: “Music, in short, is bound, when properly used and understood, to train us in the exercise of our emotions.” Haweis and his Victorian readership understood music as intensely moral.

Here a digression concerning the language of morality and ethics is worthwhile in order to establish a common terminology and understanding. Although the words morality and ethics are often used interchangeably, and will be here insofar as direct quotations from the author’s own language require them, there is a fundamental distinction to be made between the two. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the term ethics tends to be used by academics and sociologists, while the term morality seems to be most often used by churchmen and theologians, lay people, and critics. In a way, we see ethics argued from the ground up and morality argued from the top down. That is to say that those who think there exist universal ethical norms that transcend particular communities and traditions use the language of ethics, but those who think about human life through the lens of particular moral sources (scripture, tradition, communal practices, etc.) use the language of morals. Morality seems to draw from and explain a set of pre-existing beliefs about good and bad behaviors, while ethics uses logical reasoning to argue for universal and transcendent rights and wrongs. This distinction will prove most helpful insofar as it is remembered while we encounter and examine the language of primary source documents; for Haweis and for his audience (as well as most of America’s musical audience), music’s moral component was based upon the common experience and traditions of Western culture, and thus, the language of morals dominated.

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15 Haweis, My Musical Memories, 76.
In service of the hypothesis that Haweis’s ideas reflect the early-twentieth-century American mindset, it will be useful both to elaborate on his theories and to discuss how they came to be disseminated and received in America. In *Music and Morals* – and in the autobiographical *My Musical Memories* – Haweis proposes a highly moral understanding of the nature of music based upon a set of fundamental convictions about the connection between music and emotions. The foundation of this connection, Haweis argues, is the physical nature of emotional expression: “a certain quickening of the blood as it rushes through the heart . . . and a corresponding disarrangement of molecules in the brain . . . [without which] we should not be capable . . . of experiencing any emotion at all.”\(^{16}\) As he continues, Haweis very nearly articulates a pseudo-Rationalist understanding of the effect of outside stimuli (namely music) on the emotions (or affections): “The nature of our emotions may depend either upon the nature of external objects presented to the senses, or upon internal and unexplained processes connected with what we call our thoughts.”\(^{17}\) Furthermore, he argues, emotions and music share a set of fundamental properties. Here, Haweis paints a picture – or rather presents a graphic representation – of an emotion and its component parts. A simple emotion features one or more of five fundamental properties – elation and depression, velocity, intensity, variety, and form – while a complex emotion contains them all (Figure 3).

\(^{17}\) Ibid.
Figure 3: Emotional Symbol List from Haweis’s *Music and Morals*, pg. 29

Figure 4: Emotional Diagram from Haweis’s *Music and Morals*, pg. 29
The accompanying tale of a thirsty man in a dry desert (Figure 4) is merely illustrative of Haweis’s so-called metaphysics; he is careful to point out that it needs no definite idea.

Nevertheless, the story clarifies Haweis’s otherwise highly abstract portrayal of emotion: the man first experiences *depression and elation* as he suffers from thirst, finds a pool of water, and realizes it is salt-water. Upon meeting a man with a water skin, he relates the story of his thirst and re-passes through these states of depression and elation at a quicker *velocity* than he had at first. The *intensity* of his feelings changes as his thirst is quenched, and as his feelings become less powerful, they yield to *variety*: simultaneous feelings such as contentment, gratitude, joy, and sympathy (in Haweis’s story, another man joins the first two, and our protagonist is able to provide water to him, thus sharing in a common experience and enabling sympathy). Finally, Haweis explains that these emotions succeed each other in such an organized way as to create a distinctive *form*. All of this at first seems a needlessly complex analysis of a particularly abstract phenomenon, but Haweis’s purpose soon becomes clear when he brings music into the picture.

In the next section each of these properties of emotion is tied to a musical characteristic. *Elation and depression* corresponds to pitch, *velocity* to rhythm and tempo, *intensity* to dynamics, *variety* to any particular piece’s ability to express more than one affect either simultaneously (like in a duet or trio) or within itself (as in contrasting themes), and *form* to musical form. Music, Haweis concludes, possesses “all the essential properties of emotion.” He continues: “May we not therefore say that the secret of its power consists in this, that it alone is capable of giving to the simplest, the subtlest, and the most complex emotions alike, that full and

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19 Ibid.
satisfactory expression through sound which hitherto it has been found impossible to give to many of them in any other way?"²⁰

* * *

Having established the fundamental connection between music and emotions, Haweis attempts to extend that connection even further to music and morality – the regulation and discipline of those emotions. He says:

What is the ruin of art? Ill-regulated emotion.
What is the ruin of life? Again, ill-regulated emotion.

For Haweis, moral health is dependent upon balancing the emotions; he condemns as immoral “the deliberate cultivation of unbalanced emotions merely for the sake of producing pleasure.”²² This fear of “unbalanced emotions” echoes St. Augustine’s concept of disordered love; it does not condemn the object itself – love, or in this case, emotion – as immoral, only its disordered or undisciplined form. In contemplating music’s ties to morality, Haweis claims that although music is not essentially or ontologically moral, it does have a unique capacity to be so. Furthermore, music’s morality depends upon two things: its accompanying text or plot and its composer’s intentions. Of the first, he says:

When music becomes a mixed art – that is to say, when it is wedded to words, and associated with definite ideas – when it is made the accompaniment of scenes which in themselves are calculated to work powerfully for good or evil upon the emotions – then it is as easy to see how music is a moral or an immoral agent as it is to decide upon the tendency of a picture or a poem. The song is patriotic, or languishing, or comic, and in each case the music is used, not as a primary agent

to originate, but as a powerful secondary agent to deepen and intensify the emotion already awakened by the words of the song or the operatic situation.\footnote{23} This sentiment would become particularly significant in regard to opera, as we saw with the Star Opera Company. The second agent in the determination of a piece of music’s morality, the “good intention” of the composer, is presented by Haweis as a question: “Does the artist…love what is good while acknowledging the existence of evil, or does he delight in what is evil, and merely introduce what is good for the vicious sake of trampling upon it.”\footnote{24} He continues with an illustration:

How differently may the same subject involving human sin be treated! Given for instance, the history of a crime; one man will represent a bad action as so pleasurable and attractive as to make us forget its criminality, while another, without flinching from descriptive fidelity, will mix his proportions of good and evil, and distribute his sympathies in such a manner as to deprive us of all satisfaction in contemplating the wrong, and inspire us with a wholesome horror of the crime involved.\footnote{25}

Thus the composer who represents the realm of human emotion realistically while promoting good over evil creates morally good music. Furthermore, the music that helps to discipline emotions so that they result in right actions is the most morally successful music. Examples of morally productive music given by Haweis include dance and martial music (used responsibly to encourage pleasure and energy); the Biblical story of David’s harp, which has the power to “change the soul’s atmosphere”; the sensibility of George III who, in his madness, turned to music to “create atmospheres of peace, and restore something like harmony to the ‘sweet bells’ of the spirit ‘jangled out of tune’”; and the potential for music to be used therapeutically for the mentally ill, a sort of early music therapy that Haweis wholeheartedly proposed.\footnote{26} He is even

\footnote{23} Haweis, \textit{Music and Morals}, 50-51.  
\footnote{24} Ibid., 49.  
\footnote{25} Ibid.  
\footnote{26} Ibid., 52.
more direct in *My Musical Memories*, claiming that more performances of morally good music would result in “less drunkenness, less wife-beating, less spending of summer gains, [and] less pauperism in winter.”

He continues with his prescriptive plan, suggesting that

> A few thousands spent on promoting bands, cheap and good, accessible and respectable, would save the country millions in poor-rates. I do not say that music will ever shut up all our prisons and workhouses; but I venture to believe that as a chief and sovereign means of rousing, satisfying, and recreating the emotions, it would go far to diminish the number of paupers and criminals. It would help them to save, it would keep them from drink, it would recreate them wholesomely, and teach them to govern their feelings – to us, and not invariably abuse, their emotions.

and

> Once get the people together by the power of music, you can mould them; one closed chamber of their minds after another might be unlocked; and were the scheme conducted with ability, and carefully watched, we should soon hail the dawn of a new era of popular enlightenment and genial instruction combined with an almost boundless variety of accessible, innocent, and elevating enjoyment.

He even details a particular performance of Handel’s *Messiah* in which the “lowest dregs of Whitechapel” had their feelings “put through such a noble and long-sustained exercise” that “sobs . . . [broke] out from the silent and attentive throng.” Here is the particular power of music: that, “ceasing to be the luxury of the rich and the degradation of the poor,” it has the ability to “open the golden gates of a wider and happier realm of recreation for the masses.”

Much of Haweis’s thought is quite clearly derived from Greek musical philosophy, but it also maintains its own distinctly nineteenth-century character. *My Musical Memories* features a brief discussion of the Greek tradition of musical thought and reveals his point of view concerning both its value and shortcomings:

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28 Ibid., 82.
29 Ibid., 84.
30 Ibid., 81.
31 Ibid., 84.
The Greek was not far wrong when he laid such stress on gymnastics and music. Of music, indeed, in its modern, exhaustive, and subtle developments, as the language of the emotions, he knew nothing; but his faint guess was with a certain fine and unerring instinct in the right direction . . . The Greek at least understood how sound regulated motion, which is, after all, only the physical expression of emotion. Not a procession, not a social gathering, not a gymnasium, nay, not even an important oration, was thought complete without the introduction of musical sound; and that not as a mere jingle or pastime, but to regulate the order, the variety, the intensity of bodily motions, actions, and words, so that throughout there might be an elaborate discipline carried on through musical sound – a discipline which, thus learned at the schools, met the Greek again at every turn in his social and political life, and ended by making his earth-life that rounded model of physical and intellectual harmony and perfection which have made at once the despair and wonder of sculptors, poets, and philosophers of all ages . . . It remains for us . . . to claim modern music as the great organ of emotional culture and emotional discipline . . . Music, in short, is bound, when properly used and understood, to train us in the exercise of our emotions, as the gymnasium trains us in the exercise of our limbs. The Greek understood both these uses; we probably understand neither.”

Haweis clearly subscribes to the Greek doctrine of ethos, believing that music has the ability to affect behavior. However, unlike Plato and Aristotle, who detailed, for instance, the suitability of certain modes, he does not define the specific moral qualities associated with certain musical characteristics (he does not in fact attribute moral value to any specific details of musical style). Nevertheless, like Plato, he believes that certain types of music are particularly morally good, while others are especially morally harmful.

Of great significance to our current study is Haweis’s brief description of which specific musics fall under the category of moral goodness. First, we notice that any discussion of musics from outside of the Western art music canon (generally limited to folk songs from Western European countries with strong art music traditions, such as Italy) tends to condemn them as artistically and morally inferior. Second, moral goodness seems to Haweis to be inextricably tied to national style. This is elucidated in a lengthy discussion of the relative merits and inferiorities

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32 Haweis, *My Musical Memories*, 75-76.
of German and Italian music respectively. First, he places them in a grand context: the “eternal war” between Realism and Sentimentalism in music – Gluck vs. Piccinni, Handel vs. Bononcini, Mozart vs. “all France and Italy,” Beethoven vs. Rossini, Wagner vs. the world. All of these are for Haweis evidence of essentially the same dichotomy, that of “false emotion, or abused emotion, or frivolous emotion versus true feeling, disciplined feeling, or sublime feeling.”

Furthermore, he claims, this distinction, even if unexplained or unrecognized, exists in all musicians minds: “They arrange the German, the Italian, French, and the Franco-German schools in a certain order of musical merit and importance; there is a fair general agreement about what this order should be; and, perhaps without knowing why, an enlightened musician would no more compare Rossini to Beethoven, or Gounod to Mozart, than a literary critic would speak of Thomas Moore in the same breath with Shakespeare, or place Boucicault by the side of Schiller.” It will be useful to reproduce in full Haweis’s condemnation of Italian music and glorification of German music. Of Italian music, he gives this history:

Toward the close of the seventeenth century, in Italy, music began to feel its great powers as an emotional medium. The great musical works were then nearly all of a sacred character, and devoted to the service of the Roman Catholic churches. The art was still firmly held in the trammels of strict fugue and severe counterpoint; the solemn and startling process of musical discovery was nevertheless in rapid progress. The composers seemed a little overawed by the novel effects they were daily producing, and the still powerful devotion to the Catholic religion hallowed their emotions, and gave to their Masses a severity and purity quite unknown to the Italian music of the nineteenth century. We can not now stop to inquire whether it was the rapid decline of the Papal Power, and consequently of the Roman Catholic faith, which caused the degradation of Italian music, or whether, when sound came to be understood as a most subtle and

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33 Haweis, *Music and Morals*, 57. This dichotomy proves an alternative reading to Nietzsche’s Apollonian and Dionysian arts; Haweis welcomes Dionysian emotionality, but insists that it is disciplined by Apollonian intellectuality. The key here is not doing away with strong emotions, but finding the appropriate balance between the Apollonian and the Dionysian and allowing neither to have complete control over the actions.

34 Ibid.
ravishing minister to pleasure, the temptation to use it simply as the slave of the sense proved too great for a politically-degraded people, whose religion had become half an indolent superstition and half a still more indolent skepticism; certain it is that about the time of Giambattista Jesi (Pergolesi), who died in 1736, the high culture of music passed from Italy to Germany, which latter country was destined presently to see the rise and astonishing progress of Symphony and modern Oratorio, while Italy devoted itself henceforth to that brilliant bathos of art known as the “Italian Opera.”

In contrast, German music is seen as “higher” than Italian, “because it is a truer expression, and a more disciplined expression, of the emotions”:

To follow a movement of Beethoven is, in the first place, a bracing exercise of the intellect. The emotions evoked, while assuming a double degree of importance by association with the analytic faculty, do not become enervated, because in the masterful grip of the great composer we are conducted through a cycle of naturally progressive feeling, which always ends by leaving the mind recreated, balanced, and ennobled by the exercise. In Beethoven all is restrained, nothing morbid which is not almost instantly corrected, nothing luxurious which is not finally raised into the clear atmosphere of wholesome and brisk activity, or some corrective mood of peaceful self-mastery, or even playfulness.

Furthermore, extremes of emotion that are not worked through or corrected are condemned as artificial and unhealthy:

The Italian makes us sentimentalize, the German makes us feel. The sentiment of the one gives the emotional conception of artificial suffering or joy, the natural feeling of the other gives us the emotional conception which belongs to real suffering or joy. The one is stagey – smells of oil and the rouge-pot – the other is real, earnest, natural, and reproduces with irresistible force the deepest emotional experiences of our lives. It is not good to be constantly dissolved in a state of love-melancholy, full of the languor of passion without its real spirit – but that is what Italian music aims at. Again, the violent crises of emotion should come in their right places – like spots of primary color with wastes of gray between them. There are no middle tints in Italian music; the listeners are subjected to shock after shock of emotion – half a dozen smashing surprises, and twenty or thirty spasms and languors in each scene, until at last we become like children who thrust their hands again and again into water charged with electricity, just on purpose to feel the thrill and the relapse. But that is not healthy emotion – it does not recreate the feelings; it kindles artificial feelings, and makes reality tasteless.

36 Ibid., 59.
Now, whenever feeling is not disciplined, it becomes weak, diseased, and unnatural. It is because German music takes emotion fairly in hand, disciplines it, expresses its depressions in order to remove them, renders with terrible accuracy even its insanity and incoherence in order to give relief through such expression, and restores calm, flinches not from the tender and the passionate, stoops to pity, and becomes a very angel in sorrow; it is because German music has probed the humanities and sounded the depths of our nature – taught us how to bring the emotional region not only into the highest activity, but also under the highest control – that we place German music in the first rank, and allow no names to stand before Gluck, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Spohr, Mendelssohn, and Schumann.37

One final comment brings French music briefly into the discussion, calling it “essentially frivolous and sentimental,” in comparison with the “essentially voluptuous” character of Italian music and the essentially “moral, many-sided, and philosophical” character of German music.38 English music is given some slight attention much later in the “Critical” section of the book. According to Haweis, “England is not a musical country.”39 This does not mean that its people do not listen to music, but instead that they do not produce it. Its many better-known composers – Tallis, Byrd, Morley, Wilbye, Purcell – Haweis calls “exotic.” Of these exotic composers, who flourished using French, German, or Italian materials, methods and styles, Haweis says:

They did not write for the people, the people did not care for their music. The music of the people was ballads – the music of the people is still ballads . . . The people understand music to be a pleasant noise and a jingling rhythm; hence their passion for loudness, and for the most vulgar and pronounced melody. That music should be to language what language is to thought, a kind of subtle expression and counterpart of it; that it should range over the wordless region of the emotions, and become in turn the lord and minister of feeling, sometimes calling up images of beauty and power, at others giving an inexpressible relief to the heart by clothing its aspirations with a certain harmonious form – of all this the English people know nothing . . . and this will be so until music is felt here, as it is in Germany, to be a kind of necessity – to be a thing without which the heart pines and the emotions wither – a need, as of light, and air, and fire.40

38 Ibid., 61.
39 Ibid., 411.
40 Ibid., 410-11.
England, Haweis prescribes, must first have an appreciation of music “force[d] upon her,” and only then can it create a national school of composers. Thus, according to Haweis, Italy is voluptuous, France is frivolous, England is unmusical, and Germany – only Germany – is moral. It is clear, then, that for Haweis, music’s highest achievement is to act as a powerful moral agent of emotional discipline; and music’s greatest chance of achieving this role is through German musical style.

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A New York Times “New Publications” review from 19 February 1872 provides great insight into the reception of Haweis’s Music and Morals in America. The unnamed reviewer critiques the writing style and organization of the book, calling it “disconnected and sketchy,” but praises its content, expecting that it will be “widely read and enjoyed on both sides of the Atlantic.” He begins by giving an account of the state of musical philosophical thought in America:

The value of a new, amusing, and tolerably just book, which deals in an original manner with the moral and metaphysical as well as the aesthetic and practical sides of music, is not to be slightly estimated; for music being the youngest of the arts, so young in fact that all her possibilities are not yet developed, the science of criticism has not, out of Germany, as yet done much for her. The rationale of her existence is not yet clear, and our information in respect to an art which more than any other occupies and amuses large portions of our population is extraordinarily scanty.41

Haweis himself echoes this assessment a number of times in both Music and Morals and My Musical Memories, claiming that his topic, “the much-neglected study of Musical Psychology,”

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is “untrodden ground.”"\textsuperscript{42} After recognizing the newness of the field and the scarcity of meaningful critical engagement, the \textit{Times} reviewer continues:

\begin{quote}
Few persons have read the History of Burney; few have even seen that of Hawkins. Hogarth’s useful, but incomplete work is now out of print; the works of Fétis and Berlioz, are only to be found in French; those of Chorley are but little known.\textsuperscript{43} Thus the small compendium of Prof. Ritter,\textsuperscript{44} seven or eight volumes of letters written by great musicians, of biographies, or reminiscences, of rhapsodies, with the merest crumbs of criticism intermixed, are all that is generally attainable, and they leave the most interesting questions as to the nature and progress of music and the duty and interest of those who follow it, absolutely untouched.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

It is clear, then, that there was in America a demand for critical thought about the “nature and progress” of that art which “more than any other occupies and amuses large portions of our population.” But as long as the works of Burney, Hawkins, Hogarth, Fétis, Berlioz, and Chorley remained untranslated, unpublished, unread, and unknown, there remained a gap that needed filling. Haweis’s work, the article suggests, was an excellent addition to the scant published, accessible, well-publicized, English-language writings on music. The review continues with its own defense of the moral nature of music:

\begin{quote}
There is an old story of a mathematician who, after listening at the entreaties of a friend, to a long and beautiful piece of music, said, “What does it prove?” Some such query, some such doubt harasses the repose of good people who find that the more they devote themselves to music the more of their best faculties does it
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{42} Haweis, \textit{Music and Morals}, 21.
\textsuperscript{43} Here, the author most likely references the following: Charles Burney’s four-volume \textit{History of Music} (1776-1789); John Hawkins’s \textit{A General History of the Science and Practice of Music} (1776); George Hogarth’s \textit{Musical History, Biography, and Criticism: Being a General Survey of Music from the Earliest Period to the Present Time} (1835, 1838); François-Joseph Fétis’s \textit{La Musique mise à la portée de tout le monde} (1830), \textit{Traité élémentaire de musique} (1831-1832), \textit{Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique} (1835), and \textit{Histoire générale de la musique} (1869) among others; Hector Berlioz’s numerous articles and monographs; and Henry F. Chorley’s \textit{Music and Manners in France and Germany} (1841), \textit{Modern German Music: Recollections and Criticisms} (1854), and \textit{Thirty Years’ Musical Recollections} (1862).
\textsuperscript{44} Frédéric Louis Ritter, \textit{History of Music in the Form of Lectures} (Boston: O. Ditson & Co., 1870).
employ. They feel themselves compelled in a manner they cannot explain to reject
the trivial, to labor at that which is earnest, and, in short, a question of right and
wrong continually enters into what at first had been regarded merely as pastime
. . . to those who know and love the art, there is constant occasion for the exercise
of moral judgment.\textsuperscript{46}

Having defended the presupposition that music has a significant metaphysical and ethical aspect,
the author goes on to recapitulate Haweis’s explication of the emotional and moral nature of
music: its identity as a language, its ability to communicate more accurately than words, its close
correspondence with emotions rather than thoughts, its position at the pinnacle of artistic
emotional achievement (surpassing sculpture, architecture, and painting, in that particular order),
and its pictorial representation of emotional progression. The review quotes directly a full
passage in which Haweis discusses the connection between music and morality, and,
significantly, holds the German/Italian distinction to be the “essence” of Haweis’s discussion,
paraphrasing the argument thus:

German music is always good. Italian music is always bad. Germany is the “true
and tender North,” Italy the lazy, passionate, ever-to-be-reprehended South. Mr.
Dwight, of Boston, and all the best American musicians, hold the same opinions;
the rising generation is trained in them; we ourselves coincide in them; we are
convinced that the temperate, disciplined, comprehensive music of Germany is
infinitely higher in scope and nobler in feeling than the weak, sensuous music of
the Italians of the present day.\textsuperscript{47}

It is, however, with complex feelings that the author accepts Haweis’s position here. He is
sensitive to the type of “dogmatism” that would dismiss an entire style of music as worthless.
Nevertheless, in his argument against the repudiation of Italian music, the author remains
realistic about the prevailing perception of German music, peppering his writing with phrases
such as: “German music is to the cultivated musician the very staff of life; all his strenuous daily
toils, as well as his deepest and most sacred feelings, find their emotional transcript among the

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
varied and multitudinous productions of the Fatherland,” “we . . . aspire to grand and solemn emotion,” “the vigorous and profound genius of Germany,” “granting that the scepter of music has definitely passed from Italy to Germany, a fact as to which there can be no manner of doubt . . .” and “Mr. Haweis expresses just that wholesale condemnation of Italian music which we are in the habit of hearing in certain circles in New-York.” The author calls this “controversy of German versus Italian music” more rightly a controversy of “Germanized thought tending to the extinction of Italian music.” Furthermore, he identifies two related questions: should Italian opera continue to exist, and to what extent should the text of a vocal composition influence the composition of the music? He doesn’t attempt to answer the former, although one assumes based on his previous statements that he believes it should, but spends some concentrated time on the latter. In alignment with Haweis and “composers of all times” (save Wagner), the author suggests that the words of a vocal piece should be subordinate to the music. The title or first sentence of a piece should be used to “set the emotions a-going,” but the music must then take charge, dwelling upon, amplifying and expressing the established emotion. It should not, in other words, be enslaved to each word of the text. It is Wagner’s “failure to do this which renders it so fatiguing to listen to [his] music.” All these issues – the moral nature of national musics, the continuing tradition of Italian opera performance, and the importance of text in music – would become central in the minds of listeners as the advent of the Great War complicated their notions of morality and nationality and musical performance. On the whole, the Times review responds positively to Haweis’s book, calling it “a real addition to our scanty stock of musical literature”

49 Ibid.
and projecting that it “will doubtless find numerous readers who, like ourselves, will alternately be stirred, instructed, irritated and entertained by its lively and suggestive pages.”\(^{50}\)

Indeed, it did find many readers in America, remaining popular well into the twentieth century. With more than 20 editions published over the span of nearly 40 years, it was clearly a commercial success, both in England and in America. Haweis’s ideas were either believed or contended with during the pre-WWI period and as such provide a crucial background to discussions of music and morality during the First World War. Edmund Gurney, whose contribution to the literature of musical-morality, \textit{The Power of Sound}, was much less popular than Haweis’s \textit{Music and Morals} even though it has since been more widely critically acclaimed, asserted that Haweis’s ideas about the respective moralities of various national musics was ridiculous, saying, “I…have never found a partiality for modern Italian or modern German or any other style of music, to be at all more an indication of moral effeminacy, or moral grandeur, or moral anything else, than a partiality for mathematics or sponge-cake.”\(^{51}\) The relative success of Haweis’s and Gurney’s two texts might have some correlation with the extent to which they dramatized and hyperbolized the role of nationality in the determination of morality. Haweis was articulating a position that was already held, or at least desired, by a great swath of the British and American public. In fact, many of America’s music critics, historians, and educators – including Daniel Gregory Mason, Olin Downes, and Thomas Whitney Surette – anticipated or echoed Haweis’s ideas about a musical morality defined by national style. As Haweis’s American \textit{Times} reviewer remarked, one man in particular can be seen as a sort of American counterpart to Haweis. He was a Unitarian minister, writer, music educator, amateur musician,

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and one of America’s first great music critics. Widely respected and read, he helped to form and fashion both an American musical ethic and the repertoire that came to be associated with it.

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John Sullivan Dwight (1813-1893) (Figure 5) was an integral figure in America’s developing music culture in the nineteenth century. In his younger years he was a preacher, even succeeding fellow Harvard Divinity School graduate Ralph Waldo Emerson at a church in East Lexington. Although he eventually gave up preaching, the deep sense of morality it had fostered in him combined with his love of fine European art music in his writing and speaking career. He wrote about music and morality for the Transcendentalist journal *The Harbinger* before publishing his own *Dwight’s Journal of Music* between 1852 and 1881. Dwight’s great influence on American culture is attested to in William Foster Apthorp’s 1894 *Musicians and Music-lovers, and Other Essays*, which devotes an entire chapter to the recently deceased critic. Apthorp remembers,

. . . it was just because Dwight was what he was that *Dwight’s Journal of Music* was so admirable a paper. It certainly was the highest-toned musical periodical of its day, all the world over. In it Dwight’s fineness of artistic instinct and his unflinching intellectual honesty found adequate expression. He has often been praised for the courage he showed in standing to his guns as he did, through thick and thin. Indeed, his moral courage was something wonderful . . . he was a born critic in the highest sense; not a man whose exact technical knowledge of his subject enables him to discourse learnedly and irrefragably on it; not one whose comparison of a work of art with acknowledged standards would be academically instructive; but a man of the keenest perceptions of beauty and grandeur, who could make you see the beauty he saw, and make you feel with him the grandeur he felt.53

Years before Haweis, Dwight was a popular and influential force in America’s music culture. He also anticipated both Haweis’s advocacy of the morality of music and championing of German repertoire.\textsuperscript{55} In a speech given to the Harvard Musical Association in 1841 (and later published in \textit{The Musical Magazine} of Boston), Dwight made an impassioned plea for the viewing of music as essentially moral. He began by breaking down the dichotomy of sacred and secular music in an effort to acknowledge the sacredness of all music and to advocate for European art music (which so often got left behind in discussions of sacred and secular).

\begin{quote}
\ldots there are many things, with us, to weaken the force of any appeal which Music, through the performance of her sublimest works, might make. To say nothing of our comparatively few opportunities of hearing music of the highest kind, and worthily performed; of the neglect of a general cultivation not only of a taste but even of an ear for music; there is the want of sufficient reverence for music as an art, which prevents and makes impossible any full and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{54} Thomas Ryan, \textit{Reflections of an Old Musician} (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1899), 120.
\textsuperscript{55} See Laura Moore Pruett, “Louis Moreau Gottschalk, John Sullivan Dwight, and the Development of Musical Culture in the United States, 1853-1865,” (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2007) for an interesting discussion of Dwight’s musical morality and Teutonophilia as it butts up against composer and performer Louis Moreau Gottschalk’s style.
effectual manifestation of its power among us. This low appreciation of the dignity of music as an art, is due, in a great measure, to the current distinction between *sacred* and *secular* music. Not that there is no distinction . . . But the nature of the distinction, such as it is, is wrongly indicated by these words; it is made by far too wide, more with reference to accidental associations, customs, and circumstances connected with music, than to its own essential meaning. This operates in two ways to the disadvantage of the art.

All that it calls secular or profane it virtually excommunicates thereby from the circle of pure and holy influences . . . So all time spent in it becomes indulgence, not devotion, - a wandering away from the earnest business of life, and not acquaintance with a higher life . . . it well supplies the place of more dangerous excitements, like the bottle and the gambling table; but we may not enter into it seriously; it cannot enrich, ennable, purify and perfect the powers and sensibilities of man . . . It occupies a place in neither of the recognized departments of Labor, of Learning, or of Wisdom; but is consigned, with little ceremony, to that uncertain limbo, never accurately surveyed, where men run to and fro irresponsible, called Taste.

On the other hand, by calling certain music, and that only, *sacred*, we give to all, so named, an arbitrary worth which makes its intrinsic merit less consulted; we limit its natural freedom of expression, and reduce it to a form, a ceremony, till it becomes monotonous and dull, and is cherished more from veneration and old habit, than from any love of its own beauty . . .

Thus is Music clipped at both ends; secular and sacred run away in opposite directions, each with its half, and Art is left a minus quantity in the middle. That is to say; the music of the church, in its dread of the secular spirit, grows lifeless, dull and cold; the music of the parlor and the street, in its dread of solemn dullness, grows altogether trivial and gay; while true music, conceived in the exalted sense of art, is tolerated in neither place, since it falls under neither head. It is rejected from the church, because, being confounded under one sweeping classification with every thing secular, a something not quite sacred seems to appertain to it, and it is unpopular with the multitude, who seek to be amused, but never dream of studying and laying to their heart the deep sense of a symphony, a sonata, or an overture, as they would that of a poem, or a discourse.

Furthermore, in a statement that sounds remarkably like Haweis’s *Music and Morals*, Dwight proclaimed that,

[Music] is the natural language of emotions and aspirations, which imply the existence of more than is seen, which press towards the heart of all things, and cannot bear to believe that nature is lifeless. There is most music where there is most of this spontaneous spirituality, where men are most conscious of the unseen

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world; not where men have most strictness of faith or observance, but where they . . . seem to know that they have souls to satisfy as well as bodies. It is the most intimate of languages. Two Germans, meeting after a long separation, would hardly feel that they had conversed, until they had made music together; it would seem a cold meeting to them without that.\(^{57}\)

It is easy to infer from this statement that, according to Dwight, the place where there is the most music (and the best music) is Germany. In his attempt to give an account of the “best,” or the “truest” type of music, Dwight reached for the Romantic notion of “genius” and its best-known German representations.

. . . as much soul, as much energy of genius, as much depth and earnestness of life, as much fullness of meaning and inexhaustible beauty, may go into the composition of the music, as into that of the poem. All this, however, is left to the enjoyment of a very select few. The whole inner world of a Beethoven, a Weber, a Mozart, all that heaven has communicated to those gifted spirits, and, through them, to the world, in the mysterious language of their art, is a secret with these few . . . For the best and truest music, that which stirs the deepest chords in us, and wakes the strongest yearnings after a better world of harmony and peace; that which fills the mind, while heard, with “sober certainty of waking bliss,” and, as its sound dies away upon the ear, leaves its soul behind to mingle with our aspirations, was written neither for purposes professedly sacred, nor for amusement; but it was the spontaneous utterance of feeling, as much as any poem; a gushing up as of a fountain without a purpose. Sometimes it happened to push up within the precincts of the church, sometimes in the beaten thoroughfares of the world, sometimes in the theatre of pleasure . . . but really, they are moral tragedies and prayers and outgushings of gratitude unutterable by speech; - they are the happiest and most feeling expression of the deep and earnest life there was burning in that man, and which burns on yet, we trust, in purer spheres than this, where he seemed out of place. . . . The works of a man of genius, in any department, are not occasional; or if the works are, the soul of the works is not. . . . Let not the bigot call it secular, because not written for church service, when, nevertheless, it may all thrill and tremble with the natural, the unprofessed religion of the heart; when it may be a full heart’s fond confession, heard and blessed in heaven. And let not the flippant pleasure-hunter, or unideal utilitarian, relaxing from his drudgery awhile, call it artificial, scientific, dull and dirge-like, because it came out of a mind more earnest than his own. But let each, while he cultivates a deep and true life in himself, strive rather to enter into the spirit of the great works of the masters in music, to appreciate them as art, as flowers and fruits of the soul, and not as manufactures; and he will find their influence will be

to raise him equally above bigotry and above frivolity, to hallow pleasure and to
naturalize religion.

... I hazard the assertion, that music is all sacred; that music in its
essence, in its purity, when it flows from the genuine fount of art in the
composer’s soul, when it is the inspiration of his genius, and not a manufactured
imitation, when it comes unforced, unbidden from the heart, is a divine minister to
the wants of the soul. ... To me, music stands for the highest outward symbol of
what is most deep and holy, and most remotely to be realized in the soul of man.
It is a sort of Holy Writ; a prophecy of what life is to be; the language of our
presentiments; the rainbow of promise translated out of seeing into hearing.\textsuperscript{58}

Here, genius is raised to deity, and Beethoven, Weber, and Mozart are identified as genius.

Dwight’s taste for German art music was a well-known fact. A life-long Germanophile,
he spent much of his time translating the great German Romantic poets, especially Goethe and
Schiller, and was renowned for his ability to tackle even the most difficult poems. His biographer
remarked just a few years after his death of the “criticism often made, that Dwight cared only for
German music” and that he was “intensely German in his preferences.”\textsuperscript{59} Time and again,
Dwight turned to Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven as examples of the highest or truest moral
music. In a speech given to the Harvard Musical Association, he preached,

\begin{quote}
Are not some of the adagio movements, scattered through the instrumental works
of Beethoven, almost the very essence of prayer? – not formal prayer, I grant, but
earnest, deep, unspeakable aspiration? Is not his music pervaded by such prayer?
... Does not his harmony affect us, just as when we look up to the stars in a clear
night, and are filled with awe, as well as with unspeakable longing, and with a
consciousness that our home’s not here, – that there is another and an unseen
world which only the heart knoweth, and which the pure in heart shall enter,
though they are not of the successful ones after the world’s way? ... If “sacred”
means elevating, purifying, love and faith-inspiring, then nearly all the secular
works of the masters are sacred.\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

Moreover, Dwight’s love of German culture was so great that it became entangled with his work
as moralist, preacher, speaker, and musician. His biographer notes that “in his visits to the parish,

\textsuperscript{58} Dwight, \textit{Address Delivered before the Harvard Musical Association}, 4-5, 8.
\textsuperscript{59} Cooke, \textit{John Sullivan Dwight}, 156.
\textsuperscript{60} Dwight, \textit{Address Delivered before the Harvard Musical Association}, 6-7.
German books and music . . . went with him, and were freely talked of to those who would listen to him. "\(^{61}\) Thus we see a man who, in the years leading up to and overlapping with Haweis’s influence in America, championed ideas about the moral nature of music and, both implicitly and explicitly, the moral supremacy of the German style. These ideas, articulated by Dwight and Haweis and embraced by the American public, are evidence of that overly-simplified, highly-nationalized, and exceptionally moralistic view of music that would explode upon impact with the war’s clear-cut designations of friend and foe.

CHAPTER 2

MUSICAL GERMANNESS: MUSIC IN NATIONAL IDENTITY FORMATION

... the war, if it be prolonged, will mean the drawing of a line across the ledger and the commencement of a new account. It is impossible for the Continent to pass through so great a strain as this without a setting free of great funds of dormant emotion, and a turning of old emotions into new channels... But there is one danger of which we must not lose sight, — the danger that a bad political settlement may keep the old national animosities alive till they once more find their inevitable outlet in war... It is just possible that each of the great nations, swollen with vanity or blindly nursing a grievance, may build round itself a wall more impassable than exists at present; and if that happens music will have to wait another twenty years for the new flight that we have all lately felt to be imminent. The day has gone by when one country can build up a school in ignorance or contempt of what is going on in other countries; it will reject a foreign culture at its peril. We can only hope that the result of the war will not be a perpetuation of old racial hatreds and distrusts, but a new sense of the emotional solidarity of mankind. From that sense alone can the real music of the future be born.  

British music critic Ernest Newman offered this account of the tension between nationalism and international relations in music at the start of World War I. In an article written for *The Musical Times* less than one month after declarations of war resounded around Europe, Newman pointed to a pre-war musical culture in which national animosities impeded the overall success and development of music. He lamented the recent lack of vitality in the world of music, saying, “were we writing about the situation as if it were five hundred years behind us, and so a subject merely for unimpassioned scrutiny of forces and correlation of causes and effects, instead of something blindingly and terrifyingly near to us, we might perhaps say that some such war was necessary for the re-birth of music.” According to Newman, each nation’s art seems to be struggling: “German music…has settled into a complacent tilling of an almost exhausted field,” “The French are…indubitably small,” “Italian music is strangling in the grip of a commercial

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63 Ibid., 571.
octopus,” and “Russia is divided between men who see the wisdom of building upon the classical tradition but are not quite big enough to give the tradition an unmistakably new life, and men who reject the past before they are sure of the future, or even of the present.” Indeed, according to Newman, England had only the “impressive” figure of Edward Elgar, but no others fulfilling or even showing their promise. Part of the answer to this dilemma, Newman posited, would be “cross-fertilisation.” For example, both French and German music would benefit from some sort of cross-pollination:

French music is still suffering in all sorts of ways from 1870. It is so small because it is so bent on being exclusively French. By its refusal to fertilise itself with the great German tradition it deliberately cuts itself off from permanent spiritual elements in that tradition that would give it a wider range and a deeper humanity. The German tradition in its turn would be all the better for some cross-fertilisation from modern France; but again Chauvinism intervenes, and new harmonic possibilities are not developed as they might be because they are associated primarily with French music.

According to Newman, it was the dissolution of fervent nationalism that would revitalize the music of the twentieth century. What was more, the war had the potential to be the impetus that could accomplish this re-birth of music.

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In contrast to Ernest Newman’s account of highly nationalized and consequently dying musics, French author Romain Rolland, most famous for his novel Jean-Christophe, told a story of utterly cross-pollinated European musics. In this history German composers are Italianized, Italian composers are Gallicized, and so on. In “A Musical Tour across Europe in the Eighteenth Century,” originally published in the Revue de Paris and then reprinted in the book Voyage

65 Ibid., 572.
musical au pays du passé (A Musical Tour Through the Land of the Past), Rolland tells the history of music as a distinctly cosmopolitan phenomenon. Of German and Italian interaction, he asserted:

…the leaders of German music, those who were afterwards to be its foremost liberators, were all without exception profoundly Italianised.\(^\text{66}\)

and

…it is a remarkable fact that Italian opera and Italian music were represented in Europe, about the middle of the eighteenth century, not by Italians, but by Germans; by Gluck in Vienna, Johann Christian Bach in London, Graun in Berlin and Hasse in Italy itself.\(^\text{67}\)

Furthermore, Rolland analyzed what he saw as a thoroughly “Italianized” German musical identity as a hindrance to be overcome:

How could it be otherwise than that a new spirit should find its way into this Germanised Italianism? In these German masters, conscious of their superiority [emphasis mine], there gradually developed a desire, avowed or unconfessed, to conquer Italy with her own weapons. We are struck by the German pride which we perceive increasing in Gluck and Mozart. And these brilliant Italianisers are the first to try their powers in the German Lied.\(^\text{68}\)

According to Rolland, the development of Lieder and the flowering of instrumental music (particularly the symphony) served as the “salvation of German music.” Germany “had the good fortune to find, in the sudden outgrowth of instrumental music, the equivalent, and more, of what she had lost.”\(^\text{69}\) Nevertheless, Rolland lamented, “magnificent as was the development of German music in Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and their successors, it is permissible to believe that this was not the normal development of German music as it would have been had the latter, in


\(^{67}\) Ibid., 225-26.

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 225-26.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 227.
taking shape, relied only upon its own resources, drawing only upon its own capital.”  

Here, we find Rolland bemoaning the cosmopolitan mixing of musical styles, wishing that German music had, from its beginnings, been purely German. Likewise, in speaking of French and Italian interaction, Rolland postulated,

> Italian influence…was brought to bear no less upon Parisian society and Parisian artists; and Italianism, which found a vigorous support among the “philosophers” of the Encyclopaedia – Diderot, Grimm, and above all Rousseau – gave rise to a positive warfare in the musical world, and in the end it was partly victorious; for in the second half of the century we may say that French music was a prey which was divided up like a conquered territory, between three great foreign artists: an Italian, Piccinni; an Italianate German, Gluck; and an Italianate Belgian, Grétry.

Furthermore, once German music had fulfilled its potential in the person of Wagner, it too became a significant – and even dominant – influence on French music. In his 1903 publication *Enquête sur l’influence allemande*, French author Jacques Morland dedicated a chapter to the discussion of the German influence on French music, citing Wagner as the key figure. He wrote,

> The influence that Germany has had during the last quarter of a century, predominantly in France, seems to me to be undeniable…In terms of music, this influence can be summarized in only one name, a name that has filled the world: Richard Wagner…Indeed, we are not ignorant that his work carries, in some part, the imprint of a Germanic spirit which is contradictory to our French genius…All or nearly all, even those who proclaim themselves strangers to Wagnerian art, have legitimately borrowed from him.

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70 Rolland, *A Musical Tour through the Land of the Past*, 235.

71 Ibid., 164.


Il me parait indéniable que l’influence allemande s’est, pendant le dernier quart de siècle, manifestée en France d’une manière prépondérante…Au point de vue musical…elle s’est synthétisée dans un seul nom, nom qui a rempli le monde: Richard Wagner…Nous n’ignorons pas en effet que son œuvre porte, en certaine partie, l’empreinte d’un esprit germanique contradictoire à notre génie français…Tous, ou presque tous, et ceux-là même qui se proclament le plus étrangers à l’art wagnérien, les lui ont légitimement empruntés.
Although this flourishing of foreign-influenced music, both Italian and German, represented France’s fall to the “most miserable depths,” Rolland saw hope in the developments of recent years. In 1870, he argued, the hardships suffered during the Franco-Prussian War brought about the regeneration of the French spirit (undoubtedly through a combination of wartime nationalist fervor and a new distaste for “enemy” culture). In cooperation with a renewed appreciation for the history and potential of French music (most clearly demonstrated by the organization of a Berlioz Festival in March of 1870 to celebrate the recently deceased composer, claimed by Rolland as France’s “greatest musical genius”), this significant time marked the beginning of the renewal of the French musical style. Although French music, like German music, had a history that begins with syncretism, Rolland saw in that same history the potential for independence:

The mind of Paris has made a journey – a hasty journey, it is true – through the music of other countries and other times, and is now becoming introspective. After a mad enthusiasm over discoveries in strange lands, music and musical criticism have regained their self-possession and their jealous love of independence. A very decided reaction against foreign music has been shown since the time of the Universal Exhibition of 1900. This movement is not unconnected, consciously or unconsciously, with the nationalist train of thought, which was stirred up in France, and especially in Paris, somewhere about the same time. But it is also a natural development in the evolution of music.

Furthermore, “…this revolt against foreign influences was directed – one had expected it – against the strongest of the influences – the influence of German music as personified by Wagner.” In fact, Romain Rolland described Morland’s *Enquête sur l’influence allemande: musique* as “a shout of deliverance,” and cited another article, Paul Landormy’s “L’état actuel...

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74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
de la musique française” in the *Revue bleue* (1904) as the new French school’s declaration of independence.

Despite his hopefulness, however, Rolland had concerns about the ability of the two greatest representatives of the new French music movement – the Schola Cantorum de Paris and the “independent party” represented by Claude Debussy – to fulfill their potential as ambassadors of the new French art. He wrote that “the artists, instead of working steadily at their own tasks and uniting in a common aim, are given up to sterile disputes.” Rolland then turned to military language to impress upon French musicians the importance of working together to develop a particularly “French” style:

> It is the historian’s duty to point out the dangers of the present hour, and to remind the French musicians who have been satisfied with their first victory that the future is anything but sure, and that we must never disarm while we have a common enemy before us, an enemy especially dangerous in a democracy – mediocrity.

The unwritten implication of this statement seems to be that German music, especially once it fully developed its “Germanness” through the work of Beethoven and Wagner, no longer succumbed to mediocrity. In order for France to recover from its near-fatal syncretism, it would need to produce works of such greatness – and particularly *national* greatness – that they could compete with the abundance of German nationalist masterpieces.

Rolland, writing at the very beginning of the twentieth century, nearly constantly discussed music in national terms. In his inaugural lecture at the Sorbonne, published in 1915 as “De la place de la musique dans l’histoire générale,” Rolland defined music as “an architecture of sound in certain centuries of architecture and with certain architectural people, *such as the Franco-Flemings* [emphasis mine] of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries”; “drawing, line,

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76 Rolland, *Musicians of To-Day*, 320.
77 Ibid., 322.
melody, and plastic beauty, with people who have an appreciation and admiration for form, with painter and sculptor people like the Italians;” and “inner poetry, lyrical outpouring, and philosophic meditation with poets and philosophers like the Germans.” For Rolland, it seems, the ideal musical world would be one in which each nation develops its own particular and true nationalistic sound, but rather than fighting against each other, each fights against mediocrity. Rolland was thinking well ahead of his time, for here is pluralistic thought: that all national styles are valid and to be encouraged, as long as they produce art of high quality. This is a far cry from Ernest Newman’s call for “cross-fertilisation” of national styles.

Romain Rolland

Rolland’s viewpoint was not particularly popular, and in fact, it seems to be appropriate only for someone who stood firmly on the outside of the war. What made this stance possible – this idea that music, though a powerful national tool, stands above political conflict – was Rolland’s deep commitment to pacifism. In Au-dessus de la mêlée, a series of articles that incited controversy when they first appeared in French journals in the fall of 1915, Rolland denounced the war from all sides. To be sure, he sees Prussian Military Imperialism as the worst of all the enemies of morality. But his even-handed criticism of the Allies and his humanizing attitude toward Germany and German culture caused significant upset among French writers and publishers. In order to communicate his allegiance to Germany, he divided its cultural output into “past” and “present”:

You, my German friends – for those of you who were my friends in the past remain my friends in spite of fanatical demands from both sides that we should break off all relations – know how much I love the Germany of the past, and all that I owe to it. Not less than you, yourselves, I am the son of Beethoven, of Leibnitz, and of Goethe. But what do I owe to the Germany of today, or what does Europe owe to it? What art have you produced since the monumental work of Wagner, which marks the end of an epoch and belongs to the past? . . . What

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German writer can you set up against Tolstoi and Dostoievsky, those giants of poetic genius and moral grandeur? . . . In music, Germany, so proud of its ancient glory, has only the successors of Wagner, neurotic jugglers with orchestral effects, like Richard Strauss, but not a single sober and virile work of the quality of Boris Godunov. No German musician has opened up new roads. A single page of Moussorgsy or Strawinsky shows more originality, more potential greatness than the complete scores of Mahler and Reger.79

Here, Russian art is pitted against German art in Rolland’s declaration that PanSlavism (Czarism) is the lesser of the two evils. The difference between the horrors of PanGermanism (Imperialism) and those of PanSlavism, according to Rolland, is that in Russia artists and intellectuals stood firm against the moral corruption of their political leaders. In Germany, however, the best of the country’s cultural representatives – intellectuals, theologians, writers, artists, and musicians – were slavishly devoted to their political leaders, without questioning their morality. Rolland pointed to the infamous document now known alternately as the “Manifesto of the Ninety-three” and “An Appeal [or Manifesto] to the Civilized World” as the primary and most repulsive example of this capitulation. In the document, written in late October 1914, ninety-three of Germany’s “most distinguished scientists, thinkers, and artists” repudiated any claims of German fault in the outbreak of the war. A series of denials reads as a list of soon-to-be-refuted claims:

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\text{It is not true} \quad \text{[original emphasis] that Germany is guilty of having caused this war . . . It is not true} \quad \text{that we trespassed in neutral Belgium . . . It is not true} \quad \text{that the life and property of a single Belgian citizen was injured by our soldiers without the bitterest self-defense having made it necessary . . . It is not true} \quad \text{that our troops treated Louvain brutally . . . It is not true} \quad \text{that our warfare pays no respect to international laws. It knows no undisciplined cruelty . . . It is not true} \quad \text{that the combat against our so-called militarism is not a combat against our civil nation, as our enemies hypocritically pretend it is.}^{80}
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Moreover, the “Professors of Germany,” who included only three musicians – Engelbert Humperdinck, Siegfried Wagner, and Felix Weingartner – appealed to the authority of Germany’s greatest cultural figures as a means of supporting their argument:

We cannot wrest the poisonous weapon – the lie – out of the hands of our enemies. All we can do is to proclaim to all the world that our enemies are giving false witness against us. You, who know us, who with us have protected the most holy possessions of man, we call to you: Have faith in us! Believe that we shall carry on this war to the end as a civilized nation, to whom the legacy of a Goethe, a Beethoven, and a Kant is just as sacred as its own hearths and homes.81

Rolland’s naming of Goethe and Beethoven as his cultural fathers in *Au-dessus de la mêlée* seems to have been an attempt to reclaim them for humanity rather than solely for Germany. In fact, for most of his career Rolland was preoccupied with Beethoven above all others. David Ewen, publisher of a collection of Rolland’s essays on music, remembers the author saying,

Now that I am old and there cannot be much time reserved for me, I find that such energy and strength that is left to me must be directed exclusively to Beethoven. Of all the composers of the past, he alone remains unfathomable to me. The more deeply you penetrate into his music, the more you discover what you never suspected to be there. A lifetime is not sufficient to uncover all the secrets to be found in his score. I should like to learn a few more of these secrets before I die.82

Sadly, it appears that Rolland’s steady devotion to Beethoven may have eventually been overcome by Imperialist Germany’s politicization of the great composer. Ewen remembers a visit with the composer in 1935:

My second visit . . . was in 1935. Rolland had watched with no little apprehension the rise of Hitler’s power in Germany . . . As we spoke of the terrible things that were happening in Germany, it became apparent that the momentous and terrible events of the time were drawing him away from music. I recall asking him what progress he was making on his Beethoven magnum opus. He replied with weariness that the task was going too slowly. He seemed reluctant to speak about it . . . “Europe is in a state of decay, of which Hitler is only one of many symptoms,” he said. Once again eager to bring the conversation back to music, I

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81 Professors of Germany, “To the Civilized World,” 285.
asked him whether he felt that this decay would also be perceptible in the music of European composers. “It is in everything,” he said.  

Rolland never fully completed his mammoth Beethoven study. Nevertheless, at the time of the First World War, he maintained an overwhelming respect for the universality of Beethoven’s work and a desire to use his memory as a super-national, peace-generating force.

As a “son” of Beethoven, Rolland acknowledged the dominance of Germany’s cultural output, but he feared for its legacy as it turned into the Idol of Kultur. He proposed that “every ideal which ought to liberate is transformed into a clumsy idol. The history of humanity is the history of Idols and of their successive reigns; and as humanity grows older the power of the Idol seems to wax greater and more destructive.” According to Rolland, the idols of the past – religions, nationality, liberty – had given way to “two new species” in the twentieth century: the Idol of Race and the Idol of Kultur. He expounded:

The common feature of the cult of all Idols is the adaptation of an ideal to the evil instincts of mankind. Man cultivates the vices which are profitable to him, but feels the necessity of legitimizing them; being unwilling to sacrifice them, he must idealize them. That is why the problem at which he has never ceased to labor throughout the centuries has been to harmonize his ideals with his own mediocrity.

Here again Rolland describes the enemy not as nationalism but as mediocrity. In fact, we might argue that the ideal that had been adapted into the Idol of Kultur through the evil instincts of mankind was true national cultural expression. Rolland did not wish for the cessation of all German cultural expression but only of all that was not thoughtfully standing against the Idol of Kultur. In Thomas Mann’s article “Gedanken im Kriege,” Rolland finds a terrifying definition of Kultur that pushes the relatively calm and reserved Kultur of chemist-philosopher Wilhelm

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84 Rolland, *Above the Battle*, 101.
85 Ibid., 102.
Ostwald (one of the “93”) over the edge. The difference between Mann and Ostwald, Rolland asserted, was that:

> While an Ostwald endeavors to identify the cause of Kultur with that of civilization, Mann proclaims: “They have nothing in common. The present war is that of Kultur (i.e., of Germany) against civilization.” And pushing this outrageous boast of pride to the point of madness, he defines civilization as Reason (Vernunft, Aufklärung), Gentleness (Sittigung, Sänftigung), Spirit (Geist, Auflösung), and Kultur as “a spiritual organization of the world” which does not exclude “bloody savagery.” Kultur is “the sublimation of the demoniacal” (die Sublimierung des Dämonischen). It is “above morality, above reason, and above science.” While Ostwald and Haeckel see in militarism merely an arm or instrument of which Kultur makes use to secure victory, Thomas Mann affirms that Kultur and Militarism are brothers – their ideal is the same, their aim the same, their principle the same. Their enemy is peace, is spirit (“Ja, der Geist ist zivil, ist bürgerlich”). . . . Ostwald preached the victory of Kultur, if necessary by Force; Mann proved that Kultur is Force.

Furthermore, Rolland followed this train of thought to its next logical step, a statement that essentially said: “Force alone. All else be silent.” German journalist Maximilian Harden, in a discussion of the violation of Belgian neutrality, wrote: “Why on earth all this fuss? Might creates our Right. Did a powerful man ever submit himself to the crazy pretensions or to the judgment of a band of weaklings?” Rolland called this statement a “testament . . . to the moral anarchy of this Empire.” If, then, Kultur stood “above morality” and as a sign of “moral anarchy,” in contrast, true national art of the kind that Rolland desired must be essentially moral, a testament to the moral stability of nations and of the world. Rolland seems to have been operating on the same basic premise as the Reverend Haweis: that music’s unique strength lies in its ability to communicate and build morality, and that music fulfills its potential most radically insofar as it is morally good.

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87 Ibid., 109.
88 Ibid., 109.
Exploring how national lines were drawn, encouraged, and formed, particularly in German music, will help us to form a better understanding of the moral dilemmas that pervaded American music culture during the war. In his seminal work *The Civilizing Process*, twentieth-century sociologist Norbert Elias examines the development of a European concept of “civilization,” particularly as it began to distinguish itself from “barbarism” at the end of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, in *The Germans*, a work of particular relevance to our current study, Elias attempts to follow a historical thread of civilizing and decivilizing processes that allowed for and ultimately resulted in the atrocities of the Second World War. He outlines the changing social patterns that grew out of the process of state-formation, its concurrent centralization of power, and the formation of monopolies of physical force, identifying a number of historical realities that contributed to the particularities of German state-formation (and national identity formation). These included Germany’s geographic location between the Slavic and French nation-states and its vulnerability to invasion, the discontinuous and disjunct nature of the development of the German state, and the superiority of the aristocracy to the middle class in terms of political accomplishments. He recognizes that Germany’s long history of invasion by neighboring peoples instilled in it an idealization and valorization of military action and that the fact that aristocratic military action proved successful in the unification of Germany set a precedent for war and violence as positive political tools. Because the development of the German state was so precarious and fragile, Elias posits, the collective became more important than the individual in an attempt to stabilize national worth. Furthermore, the tension between nationalism and democracy was appeased as national identity came to play a central role in the formation of individual identity. In his discussion of German identity development, Elias affirms
what has come to be known as the *Sonderweg* concept: the idea that Germany had at some point diverged from the path Europe was taking to democracy, forging its own particular way. In her *History in Mighty Sounds*, Barbara Eichner identifies two uses of this term, one by Germans in the latter part of the nineteenth century to “express the superiority of their spiritual culture compared with materialist Western ‘civilisations’” and one by historians in the second half of the twentieth century to identify where Germany history “went wrong” on its way to the horrors of the Holocaust.  

Elias fits into the second camp, understanding the barbarization of Germany – or, otherwise stated, the failure of the civilizing process in the Germanic lands – in terms of its deviation from the path of Western European history. Three main concerns with the *Sonderweg* theory were best articulated by David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley in *The Peculiarities of German History*. First, the idea that Germany came “late” to nationhood requires a “normative” model (for Elias in *The Germans*, this is Great Britain, and, by way of extension, France as discussed in *The Civilising Process*). In the development of this normative model, a dichotomy between Western and Eastern nationalisms was encouraged, with moral judgment overlaid upon it. Barbara Eichner describes it this way:

> “Western” nationalism was . . . assumed to have developed in France and England during the Enlightenment, steeped in positive values such as rationality, liberalism and civic responsibility. “Eastern” nationalism, on the other hand, was constructed as an envious counter-reaction of the not-yet enlightened peoples of Eastern Europe, who, since most did not have nation states, defined their nationhood in terms of ethnicity, heritage and destiny without much regard for the institutions of modern states.

This dichotomy not only idealizes the “early” developed Western nations, but also places negative connotations on the use of cultural expression as a determinant of national identity. A

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second flaw in the *Sonderweg* theory is its location of the German middle class at the center of the failure of timely national formation. According to the *Sonderweg* model, instead of achieving a proper bourgeois revolution in 1848, the educated middle class’s idealization of national community over individuality resulted in the revolution’s failure. Blackbourn and Eley place Germany’s revolutions within their broader continental context, asserting that the ideas of most European revolutionaries (whatever their class) were hardly ever ratified or practiced immediately, and that national unity was never achieved through revolution alone. Thus, even if the German middle class was ineffectual in national identity formation, this fact does not in itself identify the German bourgeoisie as weak or useless or undeveloped. In fact, the German middle class was the cultural and social center of German life in the nineteenth century. Finally, the *Sonderweg* theory is criticized for treating German history as if the atrocities of the Holocaust were anticipated in every event and action. According to Blackbourn and Eley, there is no “normative” course of political development, especially not one that draws a teleological straight line through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, one of the primary facts we will encounter as we pursue the history of German national identity formation is its distinctly wave-like character.

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Barbara Eichner’s *History in Mighty Sounds: Musical Constructions of German National Identity 1848-1914* is a thorough and impeccably researched examination of notions of “Germanness” within the self-conception of German middle-class citizens and the ways in which these ideas were communicated in the under-studied German-composed music of the time. In her introduction Eichner summarizes the complicated history of German national identity, first presenting a fundamental understanding of “German” people as “everybody who made a point
about considering himself or herself as part of the larger German linguistic, historical, cultural or ethnic community, whichever state or region they actually belonged to.”

This broad definition of Germanness, alongside the relatively late development of the unified German nation-state, gave rise to a deep-seated insecurity concerning national identity. As Friedrich Nietzsche astutely observed in his 1886 Beyond Good and Evil, “It is characteristic of the Germans that the question ‘what is German?’ never dies out among them.” This statement only proved itself to be more fully true in the remaining years of the long nineteenth century and continues to be applicable even into the twenty-first. In History in Mighty Sounds, Eichner notes several recent attempts at exploring German national identity, including a 2006 exhibition at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg titled Was ist deutsch? Fragen zum Selbstverständnis einer grübelnden Nation (What is German? Questioning the self-conception of a ruminating nation) and a special issue of the magazine Der Spiegel from 2007 titled “Die Erfindung der Deutschen: Wie wir wurden, was wir sind” (The invention of the Germans: how we became what we are). This insecurity of identity finds a logical basis in the lack of German political unity in the years between the establishment of the German Confederation at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the official nation-state that only emerged in 1871 as a result of the Franco-Prussian War. To be sure, nationalist sentiment was not absent, but it suffered blow after devastating blow throughout the mid-nineteenth century. Beginning with the strangulating Karlsbad Decrees which, in 1819, placed severe regulations and restrictions on nationalist political activity in German universities and in the press, a series of crushed revolutions left the liberal national movement weak. Despite the hopeful regeneration of these political ideas in the 1860s after the lifting of the ban on

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91 Eichner, History in Mighty Sounds, 6.
93 Eichner, History in Mighty Sounds, 2.
political organizations, it meant much for national identity that when statehood finally came, it was not as a result of a collective revolutionary effort “from below,” but rather it came “from above,” in the form of a military scheme devised by Prussian chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Furthermore, the formation of the nation-state was not the final solution to Germany’s decades-long problems; to begin with, it could not possibly live up to the utopian expectations that had been placed upon it. Wolfgang J. Mommsen identifies several fundamental concerns with the new Empire, including a weak parliament, vague rules concerning division of power, and old elites retaining their former power. Finally, the persistence of regional identities among the population made a unified German identity much more difficult to attain than political and geographical unity.

Noting the persistence of the national identity question well after political unification, Barbara Eichner sees three issues as particularly relevant in considering the German effort at identity formation. First is the competition for loyalty between specific regional, religious, or political identities and the broader Vaterland. This tension was exacerbated by the largely federal structure of the German Empire, which consisted of 26 constituent states each governed by its own king, duke, or prince; by the Catholic/Protestant conflict; and by the success of the Socialist Workers’ Party of Germany (Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands, the SAPD). In each case measures were taken to ensure national loyalty over either transnational or local loyalty: the SAPD was banned between 1878 and 1890 under the provisions of the Anti-Socialist Laws (Gesetz gegen die gemeingefährlichen Bestrebungen der Sozialdemokratie); the Catholic church was heavily persecuted by Otto von Bismark’s Kulturkampf, which lasted for most of the 1870s;

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94 Eichner, History in Mighty Sounds, 8-9.
and culture, science, and the arts were promoted and exploited for their unifying nationalist qualities. If this was not enough, intense animosity towards other European countries was encouraged as a means of fostering positive nationalist sentiment.

Of fundamental significance for the development of a German national identity was, paradoxically, the development of a strong French national identity. France served as both inspiration and enemy when it came to identity formation. Post-revolutionary France, the model of modern nationhood, had been able to replace its unifying dynastic bond with a shared sense of “Frenchness,” something that was not only encouraging but necessary for the Germanic peoples who themselves had had no singular dynasty in power. Furthermore, the long and complex history of Franco-Prussian military struggle following the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 made France a true enemy. Eichner notes, “From the start, therefore, the German nation was only thinkable vis-à-vis a hostile ‘other’, and for the most part of the nineteenth century France fulfilled that role.”

This Franco-Prussian opposition was particularly easy to identify and encourage when it came to music, as we have seen in our examination of nationalized narrations of music history. It also became quickly infused with notions of morality; once a national dichotomy is created, it is only natural to superimpose that most ancient of dichotomies on top of it: good and evil. This dichotomized model was applied to other countries as well, most notably with Russia and England. Combined with the ever-increasing militarization of German society and competing local or transnational identities, this antagonism against other countries left Germany poised to fight what could be promoted as a holy war. As Barbara Eichner asserts, “these fault lines meant that Germans tended to think of their national development as a series of narrowly averted failures rather than comfortable achievements, which allowed them to

96 Eichner, History in Mighty Sounds, 7.
conceptualise their history from the perspective of the ‘underdog’, a nation constantly embattled and besieged by outside and inner enemies.”

Another dichotomy stands strangely alongside these national enemy oppositions: that of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. In the introduction to *Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism in German Thought and Culture, 1789-1914*, Mary Anne Perkins examines the development of the concepts of nationalism and cosmopolitanism throughout the long nineteenth century and the role of this dichotomy in the history of German political thought and culture. She traces German thought on the subject through early nineteenth-century Catholic Romantic thinkers and Idealist philosophers, past the defeat of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna, to Nietzsche and the creation of the Pan-German League at the end of the century. Perkins argues that, though at times one or the other has been dominant, the two identities (universality/cosmopolitanism and identity/nationalism) played equal roles in the German idea of nationhood, the tension ultimately being resolved by the idea that the Germany identity was itself a representation of the universal European culture. Thus, nationalism and cosmopolitanism in Germany were not necessarily opposing values. German national identity not only could be claimed to constitute a representative of the values of universal humanism but was also seen as playing a crucial role in saving Europe from degeneration. Here is a cosmopolitanism that served to broaden and intensify nationalistic sentiment. Rather than welcoming diversity, much German thought in the nineteenth century called for a cosmopolitanism that involved German leadership and other countries’ assimilation. Yes, Germans called for a unified Europe, but only if it were to be one that looked very much like Germany.

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In his work on the theory, ideology, and history of nationalism, ethnographer Anthony D. Smith identifies the foundational elements and functions of a national identity. For Smith, national identity is created by “a historic territory or homeland, common myths and historical memories, a public mass culture, common legal rights and duties and finally a common economy.”\(^9\)\(^9\) Moreover, national identity functions primarily as a means of creating social bonds through “repertoires of shared values, symbols and traditions” and by providing “a means of defining and locating individual selves in the world, through the prism of the collective personality and its distinctive culture.”\(^1\)\(^0\)\(^0\) To this list of defining characteristics and functions, Barbara Eichner adds one caveat: these symbols are only meaningful insofar as they are invested with “*Nationalgefühl*” (national feeling/emotion).\(^1\)\(^0\)\(^1\) It is to these qualities, functions, and needs that music responds so effectively.

Making up for a lack of long-established historical homeland is a strong sense of cultural history. Germany, though politically a unified nation for only a few decades before the First World War, clung to a legacy of distinguished writers and composers to create its identity. Musically, Germany could be credited with the production of many of the composers who had begun to be singled out as geniuses in the telling of music history. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were embraced by Europe and claimed by Germany. The character of Beethoven, already salient in our discussion of Romain Rolland, looms largest over German national character. In his *Beethoven in German Politics, 1870-1989* David Dennis argues that Beethoven’s music was used to support a vast swath of political ideas, including German

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\(^1\)\(^0\)\(^1\) Eichner, *History in Mighty Sounds*, 14.
patriotism (when associated with Wilhelm II and Otto von Bismarck), pessimistic and racist
ideas, humanist and socialist-realist ideology, and a broader nationalism (as articulated by
Wagner), as well as the French ideals of *liberté, fraternité* and *égalité*. Dennis notes that
Beethoven himself, even when communicating political messages, was inconsistent in his
political stance. Beethoven’s music and persona contained the material for the support of every
political faction represented in Germany in the years leading up to the war. This is largely to be
explained by the fact that Beethoven’s musical style can be seen as supporting the heroic
biographical image which, Dennis argues, is at the heart of his significance and, as we have seen,
sparks particularly to the German desire for heroism (the victory of the underdog). Beethoven
was, like Germany, both transcendentally universal and ultimately national.

Secondly, the common myths and historical memories required by Anthony Smith in
national identity formation are reflected in musical texts or programs. As Barbara Eichner argues
primarily in *History in Mighty Sounds*, “composers relied on historical topics to make a (more or
less obvious) statement about what being German meant, . . . openly advertised these histories in
titles, texts or programmes, and . . . invited their audiences to identify with the national images
and narratives their music brought to life.”¹⁰² Indeed, part of Wagner’s outstanding national
appeal lay in his use of mythical programs and his creation of historical memories. Moreover,
music is particularly capable of invoking historical memories through melody; folk songs passed
down through generations carry with them a national identity that even transcends speech.

Smith’s third component of national identity, public mass culture, is undoubtedly fulfilled
by music’s overwhelming cultural presence. Music communicates values, helps form traditions,
is fundamentally symbolic, and is particularly well-suited to communicating a sense of collective

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personality. As Pamela Potter and Celia Applegate demonstrate in *Music and German National Identity*, German national identity in the nineteenth century had at its core the concept of *Bildung*: the continual spiritual, intellectual, and cultural self-improvement that results in the improvement of German culture overall.\(^{103}\) Music was a fundamental, even primary, aspect of this self-improvement. If taken as part of the aforementioned discussion of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, the concept of *Bildung* might even be applied to the broader cultural improvement of Europe through the successful cultivation and spreading of German national culture. Furthermore, music is imbued with a distinct ability to create or encourage emotional attachment. It is clear, then, that music has a distinctive – and one might say indispensable – role to play in national identity formation. This is as true in Germany as it is anywhere else, and in the long nineteenth century perhaps even more so.

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A brief diversion towards the history of musicological thought surrounding German nationalism will help us to see how recent ideas have differed significantly from those of the past. Although nationalism has long been recognized as a predominant force in the composition of music (especially since the nineteenth century), it has also been seen as solely the territory of peripheral Eastern-European or non-European countries. In fact, Italy, France, and Germany seem to be the only countries that escaped the primary categorization of “nationalist” in the nineteenth century. Russian music has commonly been placed under the heading of “Nationalism” (particularly with reference to the *Moguchaya kuchka*), as have Bohemian composers such as Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák, Edvard Grieg in Scandinavia, Spanish

composers Isaac Albeniz and Enrique Granados, Edward Elgar in England, and the Americans of the Second New England School. Are Verdi’s operas or Wagner’s music dramas or, for that matter, Carl Maria von Weber’s operas any less nationalist than these? In fact, in some cases, German representatives are significantly more concerned with nationalist expression than their named “nationalist” counterparts; for example, the musical style of American Romantic composers such as Edward MacDowell and Amy Beach generally tends to fit quite comfortably into a European Romantic style, one that had in most cases been learned by study overseas. Why, then, have Germany and Italy so often been excluded from discussions of musical nationalism, especially given the fact that these two late-developing countries were so primarily concerned with their nationhood? An entry by Willi Apel in the 2nd edition of the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (1969) helped to articulate the long-held claim that “the nationalist movement is practically nonexistent in Germany” and that nationalist musical inclinations in other countries had been “a reaction against the supremacy of German music.” Furthermore, Italy “had an old musical tradition to draw upon and did not need to resort to the somewhat extraneous resources of the nationalist movement.” Given the overwhelmingly Teutonic origins of the field of musicology (and the widespread influence of what Richard Taruskin calls the “German scholarly diaspora”), it is not surprising that German conceptions of “mainstream” repertoire shaped the canon as well as the way music’s history was narrated. Nevertheless, recent currents in musicology have rejected this position, confirming the discord we feel given our explorations of

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104 Interestingly, French composers seem to have been much more interested in exoticism than in nationalism, if not in their intellectual pursuit of a French voice, then definitely in their compositions. Lalo’s *Symphonie Espagnole*, Bizet’s *Carmen*, Berlioz’s *Harold en Italie*, Delibes’s *Lakmé*, Saint-Saëns’s so-called “Egyptian” Piano Concerto (number 5), and Debussy’s *Estampes*, featuring “Pagodes” and “La soirée dans Grenade,” serve as only a few examples.

both conscious German musical national identity formation and alternative narrations of music history like those of Romain Rolland, which recognize nationalist tensions in the “mainstream” musics of Germany, Italy, and France.

Richard Taruskin’s article on nationalism in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* devotes a large swath of space to German nationalism. Indeed, although Taruskin bucks the trend of Teutonic supremacy, he places his discussion of German nationalism at the very beginning of the article, recognizing that German nationalism certainly had a singular effect on the development of other nations’ musical nationalisms. Taruskin’s first mention of a German nationalist attitude reaches all the way back to J.J. Quantz’s 1752 flute treatise. Taruskin relays Quantz’s assertion that “the virtue of German taste lay in knowing ‘how to select with due discrimination from the musical tastes of various peoples what is best in each’ and blend it all into a higher unity”\(^{106}\) and reminds the reader that “later . . . this eclecticism could (and would) be taken, under the rubric of ‘universality’, to be a mark of German superiority.”\(^{107}\) To bridge the gap between Quantz’s treatise and this German universality, Taruskin explores the role of cultural nationalism during the rise of German Romanticism. Identifying the Romantic valuing of difference as nationalism’s “natural ally and its most powerful stimulant,” he introduces Johann Gottfried Herder’s 1772 *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (*Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*) as a foundational document in the connection of Romanticism and nationalism. Taruskin summarizes Herder, saying,

\(^{106}\) This sounds remarkably like Ernest Newman’s ideal conception of music with its cross-fertilisation of national styles, yet while Newman seemingly had the whole of twentieth century music in mind, Quantz seems to be communicating the primary or universal nature of German style particularly. Richard Taruskin, "Nationalism,” *Grove Music Online*, www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 13 October 2014).

It is language that makes humans human. But language can only be learnt socially, that is, in a community. Since there can be no thought without language, it follows that human thought, too, was a social or community product – neither wholly individual nor wholly universal. Herder insisted that each language manifested . . . unique values and ideas that constituted each language community’s specific contribution to the treasury of world culture. Moreover . . . since there is no general or *a priori* scale against which particular languages can be measured, no language, hence no language community, can be held to be superior or inferior to any other. When the concept of language is extended to cover other aspects of learnt behavior or expressive culture . . . Those aspects will be seen as essential constituents of a precious collective spirit or personality . . . It became an explicit goal of the arts, not just an inherent property, to express the specific truth of the “imagined community” they served, and assist in its self-definition . . . What united all Germans was their linguistic heritage and the folklore that gave that heritage its most autochthonous (or, to use Herder’s word, *urwüchsig*), hence authentic, expression.\(^{108}\)

In the arts, this valuing of German language and folklore was given the name *Volkstümlichkeit*. An upsurge in published collections of folklore, poetry and song such as *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* reflected a new artistic respect for what had once been “simple” or “rustic.” It was not long before the “folk” was valued over the civilized, in a movement Taruskin calls primitivism. The quintessential primitivist concept, according to Taruskin, is clearly communicated in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*: “man was born free and is everywhere in chains.”\(^{109}\) Thus, when “the values celebrated in the German tales – the ‘Prince Charming’ values of honesty, seriousness, simplicity, fidelity, sincerity and so on – were projected on to the German language community, which in its political fragmentation, economic backwardness and military weakness (its primitiveness, in short) represented a sort of peasantry among peoples, with all that that had come to imply as to authenticity,”\(^{110}\) German expression


came to be seen (at least by its own people) as the best or most primitive cultural expression, not in spite of but because of its “underdog” status. The German values of pure spirituality and inwardness (das rein Geistige and das Innige) were not only superimposed onto music (and particularly instrumental music), but were also seen to be in fundamental opposition to the values of French and Italian culture and music. At this time, many German writers and critics (Forkel, Hoffmann, A.B. Marx, and others) began making public knowledge of the lives and works of great German composers, with Bach and Beethoven looming large. As Taruskin suggests, “By the middle of the century, instrumental music was identified in the minds of many Europeans, not just Germans, as being (to quote the Russian pianist and composer Anton Rubinstein) ‘a German art’ [Taruskin’s italics]. Thus what began as a philosophy of diversity became, in the case of music, one of hegemony.” Taruskin thus confirms what we had seen in our account of the confusingly un-nationalistic telling of German music history: “In the history of no other modern art has nationalism been so pervasive – yet so covert – an issue.”

In the Vormärz period leading up to the revolutions of 1848, popular Romantic musical genres such as the Lied (which set Romantic poetry of which Goethe’s Erlkönig was an overwhelming favorite), the Romantic Singspiel or German opera (of which Carl Maria von Weber’s Der Freischütz was the first), and the new Handelian-Bachian hybrid chorale oratorio (exemplified by Mendelssohn’s Paulus) ventured an answer to the ever-echoing question, “What is German?” They pointed to, respectively, “nostalgic or neo-primitivist themes of hidden reality, invisible truth, the superiority of nature over culture (or, to put it Germanically, of Kultur over

112 Ibid.
Zivilsation) . . . the imagery and diction of folklore”\textsuperscript{113}; the representation of peasants as main characters rather than sidekicks, representatives of their country rather than their class; and traditions of volkstümlich singing (such as Männerchöre) and the grand choral festivals that unified the German population in the second quarter of the nineteenth century as well as stylistic connections to the increasingly popular J. S. Bach.

In the decades after the 1848 revolution, a new layer was added to the Germanic identification: ethnicity. This insistence on race as a German identifier seems to flow at least partly out of the fear that transnational identities, like Jewishness, would take precedence over a broader German loyalty. Nonetheless, these biological claims took on a new vibrancy in the second half of the nineteenth century. In music, the first victim of this exclusive nationalism was Felix Mendelssohn. Once the poster child for German Romanticism – conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestra, director of the Leipzig Conservatory, director of the Berlin Cathedral Choir, and champion of German composers – Mendelssohn’s cultural worth was now distilled down to only one thing: his race. An article in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik titled “Das Judenthum in der Musik” (“Jewry in Music”) claimed that Jews, by virtue of their biological difference, could not contribute to fundamentally gentile German music. Since they were incapable of calling forth “that deep, heart-searching effect which we await from Music,” that “expression of an unsayable content,”\textsuperscript{114} they were therefore a “corrupting” or “diluting” influence on true German national music. Although published under a pseudonym, K. Freigedank (“K. Freethought”), the article was later claimed by Richard Wagner who, we will see, came to embody the rest of the qualities required of a German nationalist musician.


Wagner was a key figure in the subtle and finely-crafted shift from an attitude claiming the superiority of German music to a belief in the universality of German musical style characteristics. This shift was also aided greatly by a neo-Hegelian and teleological narration of music history in which the development of a distinctly European spirit (that “world soul” of Italy, Germany, and France) was of greatest concern. Music critic Franz Brendel seems to stand at the center of this universalizing of German values, both in his popular history of music Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich von den ersten christlichen Zeiten an bis auf die Gegenwart (“History of Music in Italy, Germany and France form the Earliest Christian Times to the Present”) and in his position as editor of the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. According to Alexander Rehding, Brendel shaped music history into two strands: the German or nationalistic strand, led by Bach and Beethoven, and the universal or cosmopolitan strand, led by Handel, Gluck, and Mozart.\(^\text{115}\) This sentiment finds its echo in Romain Rolland’s narration of the Italianized history of German music. Like Rolland, and in opposition to Ernest Newman, Brendel saw the future of all music depending on the propagation of this German nationalistic style (the nationalist style becoming the universal). It was Brendel who coined the term Neudeutsche Schule (“New German School”) to identify the German music being created by living composers inspired by the old nationalistic style. The old school, led by Bach and Beethoven, had elevated German music to its preeminent status through the encouragement of a Protestant Reformation-inspired sense of individualism.\(^\text{116}\) Now Brendel positioned two non-Germans, Berlioz and Liszt, at the center of the new German style. In his statement that “the birthplace cannot be considered


decisive in matters of the spirit,”¹¹⁷ Brendel introduced a type of Germanness that ironically transcended ethnicity (just as long as the subject was not Jewish), claiming the German spirit as a universal ideal. He posited that Berlioz and Liszt, though born elsewhere, “would never have become what they are today had they not from the first drawn nourishment from the German spirit and grown strong with it. Therefore, too, Germany must of necessity be the true homeland of their works.¹¹⁸ Moreover, Liszt, Berlioz and Wagner would lead the musical world to its logical peak: “. . . Wagner’s art is currently a national one; the artwork of the future, however, for which the ground is paved by Wagner’s art, is of a universality that predestines it, in my view, to gather all nations around it, and to become the basis of a world art.”¹¹⁹ As Taruskin summarizes:

Germanness was no longer to be sought in folklore. One showed oneself a German not ethnically but spiritually, by putting oneself in humanity’s vanguard. The new concept obviously made a far greater claim than the old. Germany was now viewed as the “world-historical” nation in Hegelian terms, the nation that served as the executor of history’s grand design and whose actions led the world (or at least the world of music) to its inevitable destiny.¹²⁰

Of course, there existed nationalism apart from the New German School, Johannes Brahms being one exemplar. Richard Taruskin identifies the *Triumphlied* of 1872 as “the most blatant example of sacralized nationalism in the whole literature of German music,” citing Brahms’s use of text from the Book of Revelation to compare Bismarck’s Reich with God’s

¹¹⁸ Ibid.
reign and defeated France with the Whore of Babylon.\footnote{Richard Taruskin, "Nationalism: 7. After 1848," \textit{Grove Music Online}, www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 13 October 2014).} The \textit{Triumphlied}, which was composed in celebration of Prussian victory and German unification, obeyed German ideals in other ways also. It was undeniably “big,” featuring the largest orchestra Brahms ever employed and two mixed choruses placed antiphonally; it communicated a German subject through its title, which reference both military triumph and \textit{volkstümlichkeit} through the use of the term \textit{lied}; and it borrowed stylistically from Bach, in the lineage of Mendelssohn, particularly in the style given to its three trumpets.\footnote{Ibid.} The \textit{Triumphlied}, however is rare among Brahms’s works in terms of its obvious program. Brahms’s alternate German style, of which Joseph Joachim served alongside Brahms as guardian, placed a high priority on absolute music as the most distinctively German. The symphony, in particular, was thought to communicate something essential about the German spirit. In \textit{Symphonic Aspirations: German Music and Politics, 1900-1945}, Karen Painter discusses the symphony’s role in conceptions of German musical identity, specifically in light of the early twentieth-century shift to shorter forms required by Schoenberg’s new atonal vocabulary. She identifies within the symphony certain traits of Germanness: a concept of individualism within unity (multiple movements within a larger whole reflecting the political reality of German unity in difference), the notion of heroism or overcoming (Beethoven’s \textit{Eroica} legacy reflecting Germany’s eventual military success after decades of underdog struggle), and an association with a certain social class (undoubtedly, the nineteenth century saw a blossoming of art music in middle class culture, with amateur choirs, concert societies, journals, music education, and cultural participation being valued as never before). There was also a sense in which absolute music communicated with a power that could not be matched by words, placing
it in line with Germany’s reigning connection with emotion (that universal human experience). This association between absolute music and Germanness did even more to declare German music as the ideal universal musical style.

Franz Brendel, who did much to define Germanness in music, was only one of a thriving pool of writers and thinkers who shaped German musical nationalism through words rather than notes. The nineteenth century saw the rise of both music criticism and music history, both of which were intimately tied to the steady formation of a German identity. Alexander Rehding posits a theory that such looming figures as Bach and Beethoven led would-be composers to be overly concerned with their position in history, saying, “. . . it is perhaps not surprising that many of the creative minds of the 1850s would rather turn to theoretical speculation than to composing works that might not pass the test of time.”123 Similarly, Pamela Potter and Celia Applegate argue in the introductory article to the collection *Music and German National Identity* that the connection between music and German identity is more appropriately attributed to music critics, music educators, conductors, impresarios, audiences, and thinkers than to the composers themselves. Although it is important to remember that it was common in the nineteenth century for composers to take on multiple roles, including critic, educator, conductor, and impresario, the basic notion is well-received; Schumann and Mendelssohn shaped music at least as much through their writing and conducting as through their compositions. While the growing field of music criticism sought to turn the question of “What is German?” to the field of music, a growing interest in the musics of the past (best known through Mendelssohn’s Bach revival) helped critics find their answers.

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There was in the nineteenth century, as we have seen, a steadily developing repertory of concepts of “Germanness” in music, one which encompassed a diversity of styles, political affiliations, and ethnicities (Mendelssohn, Brendel, Wagner, Berlioz, Liszt, Brahms, Joachim, and infinite others). As it turns out, though the question of what constituted Germanness had been asked and many answers attempted, it was still fraught with confusion.

In the end, intention and reception seem to be the final determinants of German national identity. As Carl Dahlhaus writes in his discussion of nationalism and music in *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*,

> [If] a composer intended a piece of music to be national in character and the hearer believes it to be so, this is something which the historian must accept as an aesthetic fact, even if stylistic analysis – the attempt to “verify” the aesthetic premise by reference to musical features – fails to produce any evidence.\(^{124}\)

Thus, as much as historical, cultural and stylistic analysis can help us to determine Germanness in music, there is also a broader sense in which Barbara Eichner’s definition of a German as anyone and everyone who “made a point about considering himself or herself as part of the larger German linguistic, historical, cultural or ethnic community”\(^{125}\) is applicable to Germanness in music: a “German” piece of music is one which is either intended or perceived to be distinguishably German.

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As we have seen, German national identity formation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was an arduous, lengthy, and undulating process, with nearly as many contributing factors as there were causes for the eventual War. Moreover, we have come to agree


with Philip V. Bohlman’s argument, as summarized by Barbara Eichner, that music “not only symbolizes and articulates nationalism but actively participates in its formation.”\textsuperscript{126} Thus, we have concluded that German music, through both intention and perception, was undeniably intertwined with German national identity formation in the century leading up to the First World War. In Chapter 3, we will examine a parallel and, for this study, even more important conception of “Germanness”: that of German Americans. Undoubtedly, these two are connected by a common root. But the way Germanness developed in America, and particularly in American art music culture, is distinct. We will ask: How were notions of Germanness changed by the struggle to assert German culture as one cultural expression amongst many? How were they changed by generations of living apart from the German homeland (what role does place play in musical identity formation)? How was musical and cultural identity development changed by the study abroad culture (and its shift from German centeredness to French affiliation) as well as the development of the American university system? How was American art music culture particularly primed for the significant difficulties associated with national and cultural identity that arose during World War I?

\textsuperscript{126} Eichner, \textit{History in Mighty Sounds}, 29.
CHAPTER 3

HYPHENATED NATIONALITY: THE GERMAN-AMERICAN PROBLEM

In Chapter 2 we traced the long history of Germany’s difficult – and perhaps even incomplete – quest for national identity leading up to the First World War. In America a simultaneous but much shorter period of political disunity similarly complicated national identity formation. The Civil War and the political divisions that caused it quite literally split the country in two and although the Reconstruction Era saw great gains in the rights of the black population, it also saw a defeated and humiliated white South. Furthermore, division between Lincoln (and later Johnson) and Radical Republicans in Congress over the correct approach to take in the restoration of the South to the Union meant a further divided country and, ultimately, the failure of the reconstruction effort. Combined with a century of nativist and anti-immigrant policies and attitudes, these divisions overwhelmingly increased the difficulty of the already problematic American identity formation project.

If American national identity was complex at the beginning of the twentieth century, then American musical culture, beholden as it was to the idea of Germany as the ideal purveyor of art music culture, was even more so. It, like most other aspects of American culture, struggled to define itself in light of the country’s “melting pot” origins and ever-increasing immigrant population. With institutions of high quality musical education only beginning to emerge, most serious hopeful musicians traveled to Europe for their professional training. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Germany was one of the premiere countries in which to study. Its long legacy of masters of the Western art tradition (including, most notably, Bach and Beethoven) made it a center of musical life in Europe and a desirable place to go to learn from the greatest living composers, conductors, and performers at established conservatories in Leipzig, Weimar,
Munich, Berlin, Dresden, Stuttgart, and Frankfurt, among others. Composer Amy Fay’s famous *Music Study in Germany* (1880) describes in detail her experiences as an American student abroad. Furthermore, art music culture in America was dominated by German-Americans, who had immigrated to America equipped with the highest quality of musical training. This German heritage was so strong that rehearsals were sometimes held in German. Perhaps most significant, however, was the prominence that German repertoire held in all genres (orchestral literature, opera, songs, chamber music). When the Great War turned Germany into an unequivocal enemy and France into an ally (even long before America entered the War), music culture had to either follow suit or defend its right to be neutral. There were, indeed, proponents of both positions, and an examination of newspapers and journals from the era reveals the struggle between them. A 1915 article from *The Times* (London) elucidates the struggle in Britain, offering both sides of the argument while also giving insight into French thought on the subject and finally offering a solution. Selected portions read,

> Early in the war our concert-givers met with some rather puny protests against the performance of modern German music, particularly Wagner, but these protests were soon shelved with the phrase “Art knows no frontiers”. . . . But we cannot ignore that which links artistic expression with the ideals of an individual or a community, and even music, which is less dependent than the other arts upon this subject-matter, is to some extent affected by it . . .

> The French, with their keen penetration into the human significance of art, have fought against the German domination for years and have set up a strong bulwark against it by the expression of their own ideals in music. They have not ignored foreign music, least of all Wagner, but they have not been conquered by it. They have formed a standard of their own from which they can extend their appreciation. We, on the other hand, have accepted foreign [German] standards, by which we judge and frequently condemn, our own artists. . . . What we have to do is to cultivate our own standards, not to trust blindly to those of any one else,

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and it will be helpful to this if we can begin by searching the music of our own country and asking ourselves what comes nearest to the expression of our ideals and aspirations.\footnote{129 "Sum Up Symphony Seasons," \textit{The New York Times}, 28 March 1915.}

This same problem was made manifest in American musical culture, if to a lesser degree until the United States officially entered the War. A 1915 \textit{New York Times} article titled “Neutrality Presents Problems for Musicians” is presented here in its near entirety to serve as an introduction to many of the central issues of relevance to our discussion of American – and particularly German-American – musical culture at the beginning of the twentieth century:

Walter Damrosch, the Conductor of the Symphony Society of New York, has become an expert in the principles and practice of neutrality. At first thought it would seem as though there was no man less likely to be affected by the results of the great war than the musician, especially the musician on neutral territory, and that the necessity for thinking of neutrality would be far from him. . . . His task will be to maintain his orchestra on the same basis it would be if there were no war, although its membership is made up of thirteen different nationalities, including all those that are now at war with each other. . . .

The psychology of Mr. Damrosch in the role of enforcer of neutrality is interesting. He was born in Germany, and during the early years of his life here was associated through family connections and family friendships with the leading spirits of the German element in this country. But he is a thorough American in spirit, and looks on the European conflict entirely through the eyes of an American citizen, more concerned with its bearings and influences on American fortunes than on those of any other country. With these circumstances in mind, it can be seen that neutrality, musical and political, means something real to him.

The question of musical neutrality and German-Americanism are closely bound together, since there is no school of music or musicians that had more influence in building up American musical life than the German and no nationality more largely represented today among our musicians. Therefore Mr. Damrosch’s viewpoint on “hyphenated Americanism” is not without point, particularly since he illustrates it largely in musical values.

“I can well remember in my youthful days in this country,” [Damrosch] said last week to a TIMES interviewer, “the influence and standing among the Germans resident here of two leading singing societies. They were typically German in every respect. In their commodious rooms only the German language was tolerated. It was typical of them that at the annual meetings the Presidents would speak in their addresses about ‘planting the seed of German civilization and culture in the land of American barbarism,’ &c. It may well be understood
that a singing society would be a centre of German life and interest, and that the attitude of its gatherings would be the attitude of the Germans here. Nothing would be more indicative of a cleaving to habits brought over from the other side than just such institutions as these singing societies were in the old days.

“But nowadays these same singing societies are no longer prosperous. The great influx of Germans stopped some years ago. The old generation died out. Now we find their children but half-hearted in their support of typical German institutions. They prefer to adopt associations and terms of life of the land they were born in. They do not consider the singing societies the centre of interest. Those that do keep it up are no longer intolerant of anything but the strict German habits of living and thinking. You hear English spoken in the rooms of the singing societies, and you find an adaptation to the habits of ordinary American life.

“From this standpoint, and it is just as significant of the real state of affairs as many more pretentious ones that are advanced, I argue that it is absurd to speak of ‘hyphenated Americanism’ as a menace to our American institutions. There are only a few genuine hyphenated Americans, but they make a great noise. They are aided by the German newspapers that strive to keep extreme Germanism alive because it is a matter of life or death to their circulation. But the whole movement is distinctly a minority one, and, but for the efforts of an extremely active few, it could never make headway enough to get itself mistaken for a movement of sinister significance – that is, as far as American citizens of German extraction are concerned.

“As a musician who travels over the country frequently and mixes with the people of many towns and cities, I have every opportunity to observe how the European influence decays gradually among those who come here from other lands. I am sure I am safe in saying that it cannot survive the second generation. That is, to a certain extent, unfortunate, if for no other reason than because it means a loss of the languages these peoples bring with them. It would be well if Italians, Frenchmen, Slavs, or other nationalities besides Germans could preserve here a pure branch of their native tongue, for America would be better for it.

“If the extreme idolatry of the original land’s customs cannot survive the second generation of the immigrant’s family it is even true that the original generation loses some of its dependence on the foreign land. Among my musical acquaintances were many of the Germans who came here in the first rush of immigration. Some of them looked forward to saving up money and going back to Germany to live the remainder of their lives. Many of them did go back. But I could count on my fingers the number who stayed permanently.

“Even if they did find in their native land better ordered conditions, more comfort, and paternal care on the part of the Government toward the citizen, they began to feel a subtle sense of oppression in the eternal supervision of the State. There was an indefinable feeling of the loss of some element that made their lives uninteresting. Though, perhaps, they did not altogether realize it, this was in reality the freedom and individual liberty that we have in America. And its loss made them more and more discontented until finally they came back to live in our perhaps more slovenly, but certainly more delightful state of existence.
“As a democracy we must make our minds up that we will have a certain lack of neatness and efficiency in methods of administration. But that is part of the system by which we gain infinitely more than a paternally-administered land. . . . “By these remarks, remember, I am not seeking to make out a case either in favor or against any of the sides in the European war. I am simply a musician caught in what he flatters himself is a philosophic mood, speculating on conditions as he sees them and their results.”

Five months after the publication of this article, it appeared that Damrosch’s shout of neutrality had fallen upon deaf ears, as the New York Times reported that “one of the leading newspapers of Ottawa, Canada, where [The Symphony Society of New York] is to give a concert on Feb. 16, had published on its front page an editorial article protesting against the engagement and the presence of the orchestra on the ground that it is a German organization.”

Furthermore, the editor of the Canadian paper had called upon “the official in charge of the internment of alien enemies to wait upon Mr. Damrosch’s men when they arrive in Canada and make them thoroughly at home – in an internment camp.” The Times article defends the nationality of the Symphony Society thus: “there are only four Germans in [the orchestra’s] membership, and . . . every other player who was not born in this country has a set of American citizenship papers.” The reader is reminded that “Mr. Damrosch, though he was born in Germany, has long been recognized as an American citizen of thoroughly American qualities” and that “he was recently taken severely to task in Germany for expressing ideas which did not please there.” Finally, the reader is assured that Damrosch “has been quoted as saying that he was not in sympathy with all the political ambitions of the German nation, and in a musical way his sympathies have been recognized to be with the field of modern French composition instead of with what Germany has been doing lately in this field.” In this last statement we hear a whisper that Damrosch might not be completely “neutral” when it comes to nationality. This

chapter will explore issues of German-Americanness through the lens of Walter Damrosch (Figure 6) and his story. It will look at Damrosch’s nationality and repertoire choices, both of which were seen as evidence for his worthiness to be an “enforcer of neutrality,” and then turn to the issues that he brings up in his 1915 *Times* article: the overwhelming German influence on American music culture, the work of singing societies in that culture, and the alleged decay of German culture in America. We will learn through Damrosch just what was required of a German-American musician in order to survive the attack on German culture that would plague America during the war.

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Figure 6: Walter Damrosch, c. 1906

Eight years after these two articles appeared and well after America’s long-held neutrality had turned to war with Germany and she had prevailed, Walter Damrosch narrated his own nationality in his autobiography, *My Musical Life*. He wrote,

... I had been born in Germany, even though only the first nine years of my life had been spent there. My father emigrated to America in 1871, and as I had received my education here, had lived in America ever since, and had married an American, I had never felt myself anything but an American and of the most enthusiastic variety. When the Germans invaded Belgium, when they sank the *Lusitania*, and when they seemed to have broken all laws of international relations, I expressed myself, both personally and in newspaper interviews, so strongly that long before we entered the war several Berlin newspapers violently took me to task and honored me by calling me a renegade and a traitor to the country of my birth.\(^{133}\)

The pride with which Damrosch receives the accusation of traitor to his native land is shocking. His response to the war is crucial for our study, since he sits squarely at the center of all of the issues we are considering; Damrosch was not only the embodiment of the difficulties of the German-American identity, he was also American musical royalty.

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Singing societies, as Walter Damrosch claimed in “Neutrality Presents Problems for Musicians,” were indeed one of the premier communicators of German culture in America. Formed by political refugees between 1820 and 1848 in cities with large German populations – Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and later New York – these choral groups most commonly bore the designation Liederkranz, Männerchor, Gesangverein, or Sängerbund. Sometimes the more inclusive term Choir or Society was used to encourage broader membership.\footnote{Ellen Koskoff, \textit{Music Cultures in the United States: An Introduction} (New York: Routledge, 2005), 176.} Usually all male,\footnote{According to Ellen Koskoff (\textit{Music Cultures in the United States}, 176), mixed choruses were also common by the turn of the twentieth century.} they performed works by Schubert, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, as well as four-voice arrangements of German folk songs. Songs that were originally distinctly regional in the homeland were, upon arrival in America, accepted by all and turned into symbols of generic national pride. In this way diversity in the homeland was turned into German unity within the broader diversity of America. Historian Victor Greene claims that, in comparison with other singing immigrant groups, such as the Irish, who wrote new repertoire about the struggles of immigrant life in America, the distinctive feature of German singing was that their repertoire consisted mostly of traditional ballads, with a few new tunes about their migration, but very few tunes about their new life in America. Greene asserts that “their high regard for the transcendent

quality of the old songs sung in the homeland was part of that secure sense of Kultur, their feeling of cultural superiority.” For most German-Americans, singing in a club became one of the best ways to celebrate their cultural heritage, and thus singing clubs became very popular. In the 1850s groups began to come together to hold festivals called Sängerfeste, in which they competed for valuable prizes, first on the local level, then on statewide, regional, and even national levels. One well-publicized “Saengerbund Festival” in Brooklyn in 1900 was advertised to have drawn 10,000 singers and as many as 25,000 out-of-town visitors. Hosted by the Saengerbund of the Northeastern States, it featured an over-the-top opening pageant and four days of festivities. City Council President Randolph Guggenheimer, whose wife was a German political refugee, spoke at the opening pageant, affirming the delicate nature of hyphenated Americanism:

I believe that I express the inmost conviction of every man and woman in this assemblage when I assert that first of all we are loyal to the traditions and splendid political teachings of this great Republic, the Giant Daughter of the West, from whose civilization we have built up our personal well-being and business prosperity. But while we voice this unmistakable sentiment of loyalty to the duties imposed upon us by our American citizenship in this land of liberty and of equal rights, there are some of you now listening to my words who were born in Germany, the nurse and gentle mother of music, the Queen of all the fine arts. Such Germans love Columbia and her institutions with all the ardor and passion due to a wife, and they cannot be persuaded that their fidelity to American can be justly called in question because they refuse to forget the affection that is due to their German mother, and the artistic inspiration with which she filled them from their earliest years.

I have come here to-night chiefly to discharge the pleasant duty of assuring you that the City of New York rejoices that many of its citizens will have an opportunity of listening to the superb and tumultuous harmonies for which the Saengerbund has become famous throughout the length and breadth of the land . . . The value of the art, of which your society is such an exquisite exponent, is

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recognized not by one nation only, but by all the peoples of the earth. We can impart, without stretching the meaning of the term, a new and a universal significant to the word “Saengerbund.” Music is the subtle, the impalpable bond which binds together all nations of the world. In music and in music alone shall we ever see the fulfillment of the high dream of universal brotherhood, because music represents the supremacy of the heart and of the affections over the head and over all political and international animosities.

This complex but joyful German-Americanness was successfully articulated at events like the Brooklyn festival, but more typically these singing clubs demonstrated their Americanness by being highly involved in the lives of their local communities. They sang at civic events, church services, and art music performances. Moreover, they frequently included patriotic selections such as *Hail, Columbia* and *The Star-Spangled Banner* along side German folk songs and the works of Beethoven and Schubert. As evidenced by the singing club tradition, German-Americans were both eminently proud of the culture of their homeland and grateful for the political stability and freedom they enjoyed in America.

New York’s Arion Society, for which Walter Damrosch’s father Leopold had immigrated to America, was an all-male, nearly exclusively German singing society that had been founded as an alternative to the New York Liederkranz Society. In his “Review of the New-York Musical Season” for 1887-1888, Henry Krehbiel claims that “the characteristic German elements have more vigorous representation” in the Arion Society than in its father organization, the Liederkranz. He continues,

The Arion membership is almost exclusively German, and the proportion of active singers is larger. Its members lay more stress upon the use of the German language within its walls, and one does not need to be a very close observer to note that the second generation of Arionites is more thoroughly Teutonized than the second generation of Liederkränzler. This does not mean, however, that they are any the less patriotic Americans. In fact, if one were in search of the temples

in which the fires of American patriotism are kept brightly burning, he would have to count Liederkranz and Arion Halls among the first. It is only the customs, not the politics, of Germany that the German-American citizen clings to with such tenacity – beer, not Bismarck; music, not Moltke.\footnote{“Mäennergesangverein Arion: An Organization That Sings and Travels Overs the World,” \textit{The New York Times}, 17 June 1894. “Molkte” refers to Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke, the Chief of the Prussian General Staff from 1857 to 1888.}

By the time it hired Leopold Damrosch, the Arion Society had developed a reputation in New York art music culture; no longer constrained to popular song singing, it had expanded its repertoire to include conductor Carl Bergmann’s operettas \textit{Mordgrundburck} and \textit{Der Gang zum Eisenhammer}. When Bergmann conducted America’s first performance of \textit{Tannhäuser} (and indeed, the first American staging of any work by Wagner\footnote{Joseph Horowitz, \textit{Wagner Nights: An American History} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 41.}) in 1859, the chorus was gleaned from members of the Arion Society. The group won first prize in the Sängerfest of the North American Sängerbund in 1866 and performed another grand opera, the eminently Teutonic \textit{Der Freischütz}, in 1869.\footnote{“Mäennergesangverein Arion: An Organization That Sings and Travels Overs the World,” \textit{The New York Times}, 17 June 1894.} Leopold Damrosch was the ideal choice to succeed Bergmann, since he had developed a corresponding reputation in his home country, both for excellence and for Wagner.\footnote{Krehbiel, Aldrich, Colles, Lott, and Shadle, “Damrosch.”} Damrosch held the post of conductor of the Arion Society for thirteen years, during which time he also founded and led the Oratorio Society of New York. A great champion of German repertoire, he rose to fame with a performance of Beethoven’s violin concerto, gave the American premieres of Brahms’s First Symphony and Berlioz’s Requiem, and brought the fledgling Metropolitan Opera back from severe deficit with a season of purely German-language repertoire (featuring the works of Wagner and other German composers, as well as French and
Italian works sung in German).\textsuperscript{149} He also conducted his own compositions, which tended to draw largely from Wagnerian style.

Leopold had two sons, Frank Heino and Walter Johannes. Both were born in Breslau, but Leopold’s calling to the Arion Society brought the family to New York City when Frank was eleven years old and Walter nine. Both sons followed in their father’s footsteps, with long and successful careers in music, as conductors, composers, and educators. Walter began his career as director of the Newark Harmonic Society and assistant conductor to his father at the Metropolitan Opera. After Leopold’s death, Walter served as successor of both the Oratorio Society and the New York Symphony Society. Leopold’s death had been untimely, and Walter had been thrust into the spotlight at the tender age of twenty-three. His brother, Frank, described the resulting difficulties in a letter to \textit{The New York Times}:

Through the premature death of my father, my brother was too soon placed under the necessity of assuming a higher position than his experience as a conductor warranted at the time, even if his talents enabled him to do very creditable work. This brought him much unfavorable criticism, under the fire of which he has been fighting his way, onward and upward, working hard to improve himself. . \textsuperscript{150}

Acutely aware of his lack of training, Walter had written a letter to his father’s acquaintance Hans von Bülow in Germany, asking for private instruction. In the late 1880s America’s conservatories did not yet have a comprehensive program for instruction in conducting or interpretation for conductors; most successful conductors tended to be either self-taught or have served as assistants to other conductors.\textsuperscript{151} So it was to Europe that Walter looked for his continuing education. In 1887, with all of his conducting responsibilities on hold for the summer, Walter left New York, bound for Frankfurt and the reluctant tutelage of von Bülow. On this

\textsuperscript{149} Krehbiel, Aldrich, Colles, Lott, and Shadle, “Damrosch.”
\textsuperscript{151} George Martin, \textit{The Damrosch Dynasty: America’s First Family of Music} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), 94.
voyage he met Andrew Carnegie, who had been elected to the board of directors of the New York Symphony Society at the same meeting at which Walter had been elected the Society’s conductor. Carnegie would later provide the funding for a new music hall to house the New York Symphony and Oratorio Society, as well as support for many of Damrosch’s other endeavors. Of the time he spent in Frankfurt with von Bülow, Walter later wrote, “During these three months…I received so much from him…such a wealth of ideas regarding interpretation and the technique of the conductor’s art, that it took me years to digest it properly.” Walter’s brother Frank also spent some time (three months in the summer of 1891) studying in Europe with Moritz Moszkowski. Concerning his trip, he commented to his wife Hetty, “Let the art student who can see understandingly come here [Germany] and learn both how to do and how not to do, and then go home and labor in his art inspired by American ideals.” The results of Walter’s study abroad were proclaimed by critics, who saw a notable improvement in his conducting and interpretation.

In 1894 a quarrel erupted between Walter and Anton Seidl, who had replaced Leopold Damrosch as conductor of the Metropolitan Opera and for whom Walter still acted as assistant. The disagreement centered around the performance of Wagner. Walter, disheartened by Seidl’s choice of primarily Italian and French repertoire and fueled by a semi-successful “scratch” performance of Die Walküre that had been given for charity, decided to plan a season of German opera, much like his father had done ten years earlier. Seidl simultaneously (or immediately; the timeline is not exactly clear) announced his own plans for a German season. Thus began the

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152 Martin, *The Damrosch Dynasty*, 95.
153 Ibid., 122-23.
difficulties. The two men, along with “almost all lovers of music,” felt clearly that there was not room for two separate German opera seasons. Into the fray stepped William Steinway, marketing and finance genius and first-generation German immigrant of the renowned Steinway piano company. Steinway took on the role of mediator, setting up an ultimately unsuccessful meeting between the two conductors at the clubhouse of the Liederkranz Society. The meeting, which had been scheduled for 9 o’clock in the evening, did not begin until 11 o’clock, as William Steinway was late and the conductors “both declared that they could not do a thing till Mr. Steinway came.” Indeed, “Mr. Damrosch sat at one end of a long table and Mr. Seidl at the other. A large, dark silence spread between them.” Once Steinway arrived, the three discussed the necessity of their union in presenting German opera until “the small hours of the morning.”

The *New York Times* described the meeting and its outcome:

> After Mr. Steinway arrived with peace in his eye and a deep desire in his heart to bring about an understanding between the two men, the real conference began. Point by point Mr. Steinway argued the case with the two conductors, and point by point they agreed with him. Finally the rock upon which they were to split was sighted and they bore down on it under a full spread of canvas.

> “The artistic responsibility must be divided,” said Mr. Steinway.

> “Ah,” said Mr. Seidl, “but how?”

> Mr. Damrosch heaved a large and weighty sigh, for he knew that Mr. Seidl did not want anything but the meat, and was perfectly willing that the younger man should have all the bones.

> “You shall conduct the ‘Flying Dutchman,’ ‘Tannhäuser,’ ‘Lohengrin,’ and even ‘Meistersinger,’ and I shall conduct the Nibelung trilogy and ‘Tristan.’”

> And then they all went ashore on the rock with a dull, sickening thud. Mr. Steinway argued and pleaded, but his efforts were in vain. Finally, Mr. Damrosch was induced to concede everything Mr. Seidl asked, except the second drama of

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156 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
the Nibelung series. He resolutely demanded that “Die Walküre” be allotted to him, and Mr. Seidl with equal resolution refused to be a party to any such allotment.

This was the condition of matters when the three gentlemen parted company long after midnight, with the understanding that they were to meet again last night at the same place, and confer some more. But that new conference was never to take place. At 9 o’clock yesterday morning William Steinway, who is one of the busiest men in the metropolis, arrived at his office in Steinway Hall. Ten minutes later Anton Seidl entered.

“Mr. Steinway,” he said, “I have come to tell you that I have been awake most of the night thinking over this German opera matter, and I have come to the conclusion that any agreement on which we can divide the artistic responsibility is impossible. Therefore, I have decided to withdraw from the field. I shall not push my plans further, but shall wait till next year.”

. . . Mr. Damrosch has now a clear field, and will proceed actively with his preparations. His season will be a brief one, and will be confined to the Wagnerian list . . . Mr. Damrosch and Mr. Seidl had between them subscriptions amounting to nearly $50,000. It is not believed to be likely that many of Mr. Seidl’s adherents will transfer their subscriptions to Mr. Damrosch’s books. But Mr. Damrosch has a large and influential social backing, and there is no reason to doubt that he will secure a sufficient guarantee fund to make his season certain.158

The dispute quickly took on a political nature with the aid of the press, which inflamed it by billing the row as a “war” between two armies. More than that, however, it became a test of nationality; which of these conductors was “more German” and thus more deserving of producing Wagner and other German operas? “Herr Seidl” and “Herr Damrosch” (as they were called in one Times report) were both considered thoroughly German, although Seidl was technically Hungarian and Damrosch had lived more than half his life in America. A New York Times article discusses the Seidl/Damrosch war in terms of which one of them was more qualified to conduct the grand Germanness of Wagner:

Mr. Walter Damrosch, who is to be classed, if at all, as a Wagnerian, seems to be upon one side of the controversy, and all the other Wagnerians upon the other . . .

158 “Seidl Gives It Up: Mr. Damrosch Will Have the German Opera All Alone,” The New York Times, 4 May 1894.
the most blatant and flagrant of them insist that Mr. Damrosch is not a Wagner conductor, that nobody but Mr. Seidl is a Wagner conductor, and that all performances of Wagner that are not conducted by Mr. Seidl, in this community, are foredoomed to bring the conductors, and also Wagner, into odium and contempt. The plain man, who likes to hear music, and who is neither a Wagnerian nor an anti-Wagnerian, must be much puzzled by this controversy. He may have brought himself, with some qualms, to the point of admitting that Wagner is like any other composer, in the respect that it is necessary to him to be sympathetically interpreted. He may even have come to believe that it is desirable that Wagner should be interpreted by Wagnerians, and not, for example, by “Dagoes.” He may even deny that any musician of Latin birth or training can sympathetically interpret Wagner. But that will not help him much, when a musician of the straitest German sect proposes to interpret Wagner, and when other musicians, also of the straitest German sect, object to the proposition upon the ground, and, so far as can be perceived, the exclusive ground, that the name of the German musician who makes the proposition is not Seidl.159

Seidl himself responded to the journalistic characterizations of the dispute in an article entitled “Not A War Between Leaders.” He wrote,

But I must protest again most energetically against the widespread notion that this is a war between “the two great leaders.” It has been my belief that “the great leaders” are Richter, Levi, and Mottl. Whether or not I am also one of them the New-York public may judge, in view of my accomplishments in the past seasons of German opera . . . but this I do know, and along with me all the musical cognoscenti of New-York, namely, that Mr. Damrosch will have to make his reputation as an opera director next year. I hope he will be able to prove the correctness of his claim to be the peer of Richter, Levi, and Mottl.160

Furthermore, he seems to think that there is something about German opera particularly that requires the vaguely moral qualities of authority, responsibility, and competency, and that despite possessing these qualities less strongly than he, Damrosch nevertheless seems to have the backing of the influential German New-York community:

Being convinced that a German opera undertaking can only be directed by one high in authority, fully and solely responsible for the artistic outcome, and finding, also, that, by reason of experience, past achievements, and demonstrated competency, I am more likely to be such a man than Mr. Damrosch, but that, for

the present at least, he can control the financial means more easily than I—
considering, too, that influential Germans, like Mr. Steinway, are not of my
opinion concerning the direction of the enterprise—I shall, for the present, refrain
from pursuing my plan, and wait for a more favorable time.¹⁶¹

With reluctant permission from Seidl, Walter Damrosch traveled to Germany and Austria to
collect singers, directors, sets, and designers for his productions. Two years later music critic
William James Henderson described Damrosch in the New York Times as an almost mythical
savior of German opera:

Mr. Walter Damrosch sometimes reminds me of the ghosts in “Macbeth.” Certain
Thanes of Cawdor have declaimed at him: “Down; thy crown doth sear mine
eyeballs.” But he persistently refuses to “down,” and goes right on wearing his
crown. He is certainly a young gentleman of large purposes and unflagging
energy. He deserves all the honor and the glory of having resurrected German
opera at a time when its few remaining opponents were crying for joy over what
they supposed was its grave. He deserves some credit for the great German
performances given under the direction of Mr. Grau at the Metropolitan, for it was
the success of Damrosch that induced the impresario to comply with the dearest
wish of Jean de Reszke’s life and give “Tristan.” This season we behold the
joyous spectacle of a coalition of the two forces . . . The demand for German
opera in this community is not a “fad.” It is the genuine demand of the most
responsive public in the world. All singers agree that in no city do they so quickly
feel the influence of the invisible current of sympathy flowing to them from their
auditors as in New York . . . This is a musical community, and it will always have
a big place in its heart for German opera properly given. Walter Damrosch has
worked hard to restore German opera to a permanent footing here, and he
deserves the generous support which he receives.¹⁶²

Damrosch continued to present seasons of German opera, both in New York and throughout the
country, until 1899, often under the moniker the Damrosch Opera Company (which had also
been used to refer to Leopold Damrosch’s German opera seasons). After the death of Anton
Seidl, Damrosch served as the sole conductor of German operas at the Metropolitan Opera from
1900 to 1902. After this his musical interests shifted, as he primarily took on the challenge of
orchestral conducting (as director of the New York Philharmonic) and music education. As a

composer, Damrosch followed in his father’s footsteps, with a Wagnerian tendency at the center of his work; as a selector of repertoire, however, Damrosch began to broaden his tastes in the early twentieth century. His U.S. premieres included not only Brahms’s Symphony No. 4, but also Tchaikovsky’s Fourth and Sixth symphonies, two of Saint-Saëns’s piano concertos (with the composer performing as soloist), Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 3 (again, with the composer as soloist), and Gershwin’s *An American in Paris* and *Piano Concerto in F* (which Damrosch had commissioned).\(^{163}\) In his autobiography Damrosch recounted his attempts to receive papers to travel around France during the war, claiming his performance of French music as evidence of his worthiness:

> The French high commissioner cabled to the latter and in most cordial terms recommended that I be permitted to enter France, both because of my office as president of the Society of American Friends of Musicians in France, and because of a life-long admiration for French music, which I had demonstrated for thirty-three years by producing in our country nearly every important symphonic work that French composers had written before and within that time.\(^{164}\)

Clearly, Damrosch thought that performance of music said something about national loyalties, and that his loyalties, at least in part, lay with France. Perhaps more significantly however, Damrosch wholeheartedly supported American composers, consistently programming works by John Alden Carpenter, Charles Martin Loeffler, Daniel Gregory Mason, Deems Taylor, and Amy Beach.\(^{165}\) Damrosch was, however, unwilling to give up the works of the great German masters, claiming their music as nationally neutral, belonging to the entire civilized world. The contents of his speech are recounted in the *New York Times*:

> Mr. Damrosch made a speech before beginning his program concerning the playing of German music in this country. While we are at war with Germany, and

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\(^{165}\) Krehbiel, Aldrich, Colles, Lott, and Shadle, “Damrosch.”
we must strike as hard and as quickly as possible till victory is assured, the civilization of our country, he said, must not halt, and the needs of religion and of art must be met to the full. Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms are not to be looked on as Prussians, but as great creative artists contributing to the development of the world; they no longer belong to the country in which they were born, but are part of the artistic life of the civilized world.\textsuperscript{166}

Damrosch balanced these ideas (which, for some, must have been a convenient way to hold on to their favorite music while remaining “patriotic”) with a refusal to perform works by living German composers and with an unparalleled zeal for \textit{The Star-Spangled Banner}. On 18 March 1917, Damrosch added the piece to the end of a concert, and “the entire crowd leaped to its feet and joined first in singing the air and then in applauding and shouting. Pandemonium reigned, from the top galleries down, in a demonstration such as has not been matched for noise in half a hundred symphony concerts this year.”\textsuperscript{167} Damrosch also prided himself on presenting an unmatched number of musical “novelties,” despite the fact that “creative music has almost entirely stopped in Europe, due to the war.”\textsuperscript{168} The vast majority of these pieces seem to have come from French composers (such as Boulanger, Roger-Ducasse, Lekeu, Messager, and Rabaud), but Americans were also celebrated. Damrosch supported French musicians in other ways as well; he was the president of an organization called “American Friends of Musicians in France,” which collected monetary donations to help the suffering and destitute families of French musicians fighting on the front lines. In 1918 he had made his way to Paris at the suggestion of composer Francis Casadesus and the French Ministère des Beaux Arts, Alfred Cortot, with the plan of conducting an orchestra of French musicians and traveling around the country performing for the troops during their times of rest and recreation. Although

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\textsuperscript{167} “Symphony Plays Farewell – ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ Brings a Patriotic Outburst,” 18 March 1917.
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circumstances conspired to make this tour impossible, Damrosch did conduct a few successful
concerts in Paris. Damrosch later remembered an encounter during this trip with an American
bandmaster who

implored me to do something for the bandsmen in the American army in France. He told me that he had drilled his little band of twenty-eight men for six months before being sent overseas, that they had continued to work faithfully during their stay in France, and that they had achieved a good standard of efficiency. But, according to old American army custom, they had been sent into the firing-lin at Seicheprey as stretcher-bearers, and in consequence so many had been either killed, wounded, or shell-shocked that his band had become completely disorganized…He said: ‘It takes at least six months to train a good bandsman, while a stretcher-bearer can be trained in as many hours. We serve a real purpose, while the men are in camp, in taking their minds away from the drudgery and monotony of army life. Our music cheers them; a silent camp is almost unendurable. Can’t you persuade General Pershing to change this custom, just as the British and other nations have done?’169

A short time later Damrosch was invited to dinner at the Chateau de Chaumont, where General
John Pershing, the Commander of the American Expeditionary Force, asked him to form a
school for American military bandmasters. Pershing had noticed that the American military
bands were overwhelmingly inferior to those of France and England. Damrosch recollected that

General Pershing told me that after hearing some of the crack military bands of France and England he had been so overwhelmed by the consciousness of our inferiority that he was eager to know if something could not be done to improve the general standard of our army bands, and, more particularly, whether it might not be possible at least to take out the best players from among the bands then in France and to form a headquarters band of superior excellence, led by the best bandmaster among them, and in this way form a model which the others could endeavor to copy.170

Damrosch immediately accepted the proposition, saying: “as our army had had the help of
French military and aviation officers as instructors, loaned to us by the Ministère de la Guerre, I thought that a similar arrangement could be made, under which we might obtain the necessary

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169 Damrosch, My Musical Life, 233-34.
170 Ibid., 248.
musical instructors also from the French army, as nearly all the musicians of France were at that
time in uniform.” Before long, “un petit conservatoire de musique pour les Américains” was
formed in Chaumont, where band members would receive instruction in their instrument and
bandmasters would receive instruction in conducting, harmony, and orchestration.
The school flourished, with both American musicians and French professors entering into the
endeavor wholeheartedly. Although the American army returned to its homeland at the close of
the war and the bandmasters’ school became defunct, Walter Damrosch and Francis Casadesus,
noting the overwhelming success of the school, decided to create a summer “American
Conservatory,” which would expand on the ideas and values of the bandmasters’ academy, but
would be open to civilians. Taking advantage of the Franco-American bond formed by World
War I, they easily obtained funding, both from American donors and the French government,
which not only donated the Louis XV wing of the Palais de Fontainebleau for classroom and
living space, but also provided 100,000 francs to help Casadesus develop the school and another
25,000 francs for “necessary musical materials” (all during a struggling postwar economy). Damrosch and Casadesus had a vision of a school where Americans who had already received
complete musical educations could come to study with the best musicians Europe had to offer
(professors from the Paris Conservatoire). American students had somewhere to study other than
Germany, as was the custom prior to the war, and the French professors could widen the
dissemination of the French body of musical literature. In this way Damrosch’s service to French
repertoire and French musicians, which was in large part fueled by the war, continued to blossom
in the years and decades afterwards.

171 Damrosch, My Musical Life, 251.
Press, 2007), xxiv.
We have seen that despite his fierce claims of neutrality and his elevation by the press as a particularly well-qualified neutrality enforcer, Walter Damrosch’s national and musical identities were deeply complex. Somehow he was able to be simultaneously a recent German immigrant with a career built on German music, a well-respected public figure lauded as a perfectly patriotic American, and an upholder of neutrality. Damrosch managed to avoid the derision and persecution heaped upon many of his contemporaries by building himself up very clearly as a true patriotic American (not only did he support American composers, but, as we shall see in Chapter 4, he was one of the first conductors to make standard the playing of The Star-Spangled Banner at art music concerts, and thus found himself on the winning side of the dichotomy created by Karl Muck’s infamous struggle) and by wholeheartedly and overwhelmingly supporting French music and musicians. Here is a man who walked the German-American tightrope nearly perfectly during the First World War and achieved great musical and cultural success.

* * *

Our New York Times Damrosch-profiler posited, “there is no school of music or musicians that had more influence in building up American musical life than the German and no nationality more largely represented today among our musicians.” As we have seen in our discussion of German singing clubs, German immigrants and their culture were welcomed and celebrated in America prior to the war. An 1896 article in The Atlantic Monthly titled “The German and the German-American” does much to illuminate the American attitude toward German immigrants at the turn of the century. The article was written by Josiah Flynt, an American sociologist just back from study at the university in Berlin at the time of the article’s

publication. He begins by noting the overwhelmingly negative view that Germans had of their emigrant brethren, saying “death and exile to this country [America] mean pretty much the same thing to the well-situated German” and “it has become customary to look upon America as the dumping-ground of Europe’s refuse population.”

Thus it took great financial and political pressure for Germans to emigrate to America, and they did so because they believed that a better life awaited them. Flynt enumerates the good innate qualities of Germans (“respect for law and order, intelligence, thoroughness, perseverance, industry, honesty, and general good health”) as well as their bad traits (their treatment of women, military spirit, pettiness, and emotional impulsiveness), before considering the changes that these characteristics undergo upon emigration to America (mostly the good qualities have improved even further and the bad begun to fade, with particular improvement in the moral realm – “they are just as honest, and they are decidedly more virtuous”). Flynt summarizes his thoughts on German-Americans thus:

We are indebted to them for good . . . Our first and greatest debt to the Germans is for their help in developing our country . . . Let us recognize all the good that German hands have wrought by honest toil among us, all that German love of freedom and independence has added to our own high thought along these lines, all that German hearts have cast into our common store of peace and good will, and still hold fast with firm and patriotic purpose to the finer, truer American ideal.

Flynt is, however, empowered to affirm this positive view of hyphenated American culture by his claim, which is in accord with what we have seen expressed by Walter Damrosch, that second-generation German-Americans are remarkably quick to lose their German cultural allegiance. He says,

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175 Ibid., 659.
176 Ibid., 662.
177 Ibid., 663-65.
The striking thing, however, in German children born in this country is the ease and almost eagerness with which they throw off their nationality. Except possibly the Irish, there is no other race which so quickly becomes American and anti-European. In a way the Pennsylvania Dutch are an exception to this rule, but their case is unique. Outside of Pennsylvania and in all communities where American influences predominate, the second generation of Germans give up their nationality; and in a great many instances it is impossible, try as the parents will, to have them learn their mother tongue. Indeed, there are large towns where they are ashamed, provided they have learned it, to speak German in public. It is the latest German immigrants who make up our so-called “German quarters” and wards, and it is they also whom we hear speaking German in the street.

German writers in the Fatherland complain that their countrymen thus “go back on their nationality,” and claim that Germans on other soil become mere fertilizers of other races; but America gives them a better chance than this. The Pennsylvania Dutch afford pitiful evidence of what they all might have become had they refused to adapt themselves to local institutions and customs, and it is to their credit that they have made the best of the situation in which they find themselves. There is little likelihood that this situation will change; the Anglo-Saxon is supreme in America. Now and then one reads that the Germans are trying to introduce their language into schools, and it is taught even now, in certain German communities, almost on a par with English; but this effort can never lastingly influence our civilization. The time for the Germans to carry the day has passed forever, and while politicians may talk about “the German vote” or any other foreign vote, the native Americans can and will vote it down whenever they combine interests and overlook petty jealousies.178

Although Flynt was accurate in his assessment of German adaptation to American culture, this loss of German culture is not the full story. As Walter Damrosch asserted in "Neutrality Presents Problems for Musicians," there were small groups of Americans who were devoted to maintaining German culture. In 1915 Damrosch claimed,

There are only a few genuine hyphenated Americans, but they make a great noise. They are aided by the German newspapers that strive to keep extreme Germanism alive because it is a matter of life or death to their circulation. But the whole movement is distinctly a minority one, and, but for the efforts of an extremely active few, it could never make headway enough to get itself mistaken for a movement of sinister significance.179

The most prominent and noisy pro-German group was the Deutsch-Amerikanischen National-
Bund or National German-American Alliance (NGAA). Formed in 1901 by representatives from
twelve states and the District of Columbia, the goal of the NGAA was to preserve German
culture in America. Its constitution begins with this claim:

The German-American Alliance aims to awaken and strengthen the sense of unity
among the people of German origin in America with a view to promote the useful
and healthy development of the power inherent in them as a united body for the
mutual energetic protection of such legitimate desires and interests not
inconsistent with the common good of the country, and the rights and duties of
good citizens; to check nativistic encroachments; to maintain and safeguard the
good friendly relations existing between America and the old German
fatherland.\(^{180}\)

The NGAA strove to protect German culture using a number of methods: by preserving German
language teaching in public schools, by participating actively in the political system to combat
immigration restrictions and limits on personal liberties (such as prohibition, which would affect
that huge cultural and economic commodity of German-Americans: beer), and finally, by
creating educational societies to disseminate and encourage knowledge of German language,
history, science, literature, and the arts. These societies also published material, such as the
journal *Americana Germanica*, which promoted German art, music, theater, and literature, and
the Alliance’s own *Mitteilungen* (bulletin).\(^{181}\) By 1905 the Alliance had gained a strong foothold
in American life, as proven by the pro-German speech given by vice president Charles W.
Fairbanks at the Alliance’s third national convention.\(^{182}\) Between 1905 and 1914 the NGAA
became the largest German organization outside of Germany, with 2.5 million members and

\(^{180}\) Charles Thomas Johnson, *Culture at Twilight: The National German-American Alliance,
1901-1918* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 11.

\(^{181}\) Ibid., 12-13.

\(^{182}\) Ibid., 27.
chapters in 44 of the 48 states.\textsuperscript{183} During the War, the NGAA worked not just to maintain American neutrality but to provide war relief to Germany. Furthermore, the Alliance was to aid in the maintenance of Germany’s good reputation. The President, Charles Hexamer, wrote to the heads of state chapters at the outbreak of the War, urging that “we must stand firmly united to safeguard the good German name against maliciousness and ignorance.”\textsuperscript{184} In the atmosphere of President Wilson’s 100% Americanism this mindset could not stand. As Barbara Tischler explains in the third chapter of her book \textit{An American Music}, Wilson’s administration, led by George Creel and his Committee on Public Information, encouraged the unanimity and consensus of the American people, particularly in relation to their patriotism.\textsuperscript{185} Although the war was officially against the German government and not German culture, the way the mentality of 100% Americanism filtered down to the average person left little room for the tolerance of German culture in America. To tolerate German culture was to be less than 100% American, and to celebrate it was dangerous. After months of both internal and external pressure, with members arguing over their stance on American neutrality and persecution coming from outside forces, both in the government and in the broader American populace), the NGAA voted to disband on 11 April 1918.\textsuperscript{186} The vote took place just a few months before a Senate hearing resulted in the official revocation of the group’s charter. The story of the NGAA serves to emphasize Walter Damrosch’s conclusions about hyphenated Americans. This, the strongest group of German supporters in America, suffered confusion within its ranks and criticism from the American public, and it could not ultimately withstand the pressures of the War. In the next

\textsuperscript{183} Johnson, \textit{Culture at Twilight}, 30, 3.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 99.
\textsuperscript{186} Johnson, \textit{Culture at Twilight}, 157.
chapter we will look at the cultural confusion in America from a different vantage point. We will see how the pressures of 100% Americanism affected not just people but institutions and composers and repertoire.
CHAPTER 4

MUSICAL MORAL PANICS: WORLD WAR I AND AMERICAN (OVER)REACTIONS TO ENEMY MUSICS

The story of Karl Muck, “the Kaiser’s own,” conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, is by now quite a familiar one in the world of musicology, having become the quintessential example of World War I anti-German hysteria.187 A Swiss citizen, Muck was born in Germany and had established his career there, serving as Kapellmeister and Generalmusikdirektor at the Royal Opera House in Berlin, making a name for himself as a gifted interpreter of Wagner at Bayreuth, and leading the Vienna Philharmonic. He was brought to America in 1906 to replace Wilhelm Gericke as director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra by its founder, Henry Higginson. While on tour with the orchestra, he failed to include the Star-Spangled Banner at a performance in Providence, Rhode Island, unaware that a group of citizens had written a letter to Higginson requesting it. Despite his subsequent agreement to perform the piece, his resignation of the position of director of the BSO, and his claims of Swiss citizenship, Muck was demonized, denounced, arrested, interrogated, interned, and deported over the course of nearly two years. As we approach this dramatic story of hysteria and confusion, press and

187 Although there is no English-language biography of Muck, there has been increasing interest in the story of his American residence in the past ten years. The story stands at the intersection of multiple interests, including the history of the American symphony, the Boston Symphony Orchestra in particular, the history of the Star-Spangled Banner, and the American reaction to German culture during World War I. Notable recent accounts of the story are found in the following publications: Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 190-203; Glenn Watkins, Proof through the Night: Music and the Great War (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 297-305; Edmund A. Bowles, “Karl Muck and His Compatriots: German Conductors in America during World War I (And How They Coped)” American Music 25, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 405-40; Joseph Horowitz, Moral Fire: Musical Portraits from America’s Fin de Siècle (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 62-67; Matthew Mugmon, “Patriotism, Art, and “The Star-Spangled Banner” in World War I: A New Look at the Karl Muck Episode” Journal of Musicological Research 33 (March 2014): 1-3, 4-26.
public and patriotism, music and morality and nationalism, we will view it with a particular focus on the city responsible for transforming the incident from a mistake into a disaster.

The minute the city of Baltimore laid eyes (and ears) on Dr. Karl Muck (Figure 8), it was in love.

Figure 8: Karl Muck (1913)

In November 1906 the Baltimore American reported Dr. Muck’s first appearance in Baltimore as director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, proclaiming, “To say that it was one of the best concerts ever given in this city would not be enough. It would be nearer the truth to say that no better concert was ever given here.” The program was a joyous celebration of Teutonic accomplishment: Beethoven’s triumphal Symphony No. 5 was followed by Richard Strauss’s tone poem Don Juan and a pair of Wagner pieces, Siegfried Idyll and the Prelude to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg. The rave review contained such sentiments as “Dr. Muck is a

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188 Boston Symphony Orchestra, Programme (Boston, Mass.: The Orchestra, 1913-14), 1582.
perfect master of tonal proportion and expression,” “Dr. Muck’s ‘beat’ is precision and
expression itself,” and “No slovenly playing is possible under his baton. He makes it alive with
his thought and determination. He delights in finish, and finish to perfection.” Baltimore had
little trouble accepting Muck or his German repertoire even after the war began, a sentiment that
was shared by other American cities and made explicit in a *New York Times* concert review
published only three months after the initial wave of war declarations:

The first concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in this city Thursday evening
proved conclusively that German music will not suffer through any feeling there
may be in this cosmopolitan country against Germany. Probably there is no such
feeling so far as any of the products of German art are concerned, and the matter
would scarcely justify comment if so many poets and artists of the nations at war
had not been loudly proclaiming their renunciation of the art of their enemies.
Their mood will not last. Empires are temporary, art is permanent. The militarism
of Beethoven’s Eroica symphony may have been inspired by the victories of
Napoleon, though the composer’s admiration for the Corsican vanished after he
made himself Emperor. But Beethoven’s music is German music, one of
Germany’s greatest glories, and the tribute to the military spirit in this
composition is far beyond the powers of expression of a Bernhardi.190 Performed
under the leadership of a German musician by an orchestra of diverse
nationalities, this noble work had its usual effect upon an audience of typical
Americans, descended from the various peoples of Europe. The same is true of
the works of Haydn and Weber, Richard Strauss and Brahms. The aesthetic did
not come in conflict with the political. Dr. Muck made no error in arranging his
programme.191

For three years Muck led the Boston Symphony Orchestra to great success. Even after America’s
neutrality had been abandoned and the country had fully engaged in the war, Muck and his
orchestra – which in 1917 included twenty-two German and eight Austrian citizens – were
accepted and even celebrated. By the time they performed the first of three concerts in
Providence in late October 1917, it had become quite standard for orchestra conductors to
include the *Star-Spangled Banner* on their programs, thanks in large part to Walter Damrosch’s

190 The author refers to the popular Prussian military historian and general Friedrich von
Bernhardi.
enthusiastic (and well-publicized) patriotic fervor. Nevertheless, after Charles Ellis, the BSO’s manager, received a telegram from a number of Providence citizens requesting that the piece be performed on October 30, he and Henry Higginson decided, without so much as a whisper to Muck, that the request would not be indulged. After all, this was a world-class orchestra performing an art music program, not a military band. The _Star-Spangled Banner_ was deemed beneath the orchestra’s artistic standards. For Higginson, and for others, art music stood not only apart from war sentiment but above it. Higginson commented in the _Boston Globe_, “It [ _The Star-Spangled Banner_ ] has no place in an art concert. If it did it would be played. Last Summer during our Summer concerts . . . we played that and “America” every night, and those who went there know it . . . Those were popular concerts. These are not – they are art concerts and ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ has no place at them.”¹⁹² When the concert was first reported on October 31, the missing _Star-Spangled Banner_ was not even mentioned, perhaps an indication that it was not yet a universal expectation in art music concerts. In fact, the review, titled “Geraldine Farrar Is Warmly Greeted – Appears With Boston Symphony Orchestra in First Concert of Season,” makes little mention of Muck at all. It briefly comments on his sympathetic and highly intelligent interpretation of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony, but its main thrust is to compliment the famed soprano.¹⁹³ It wasn’t until November 1 that muckraking reporter John Rathom turned the miscommunication into a story of espionage and betrayal. An anonymous News/Opinion piece (perhaps by Rathom, or perhaps by someone else) in _The Evening Times_ (a publication of _The Pawtucket Times_) elevated the rhetoric substantially when it said [all emphasis mine]:

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The spunk displayed in Rhode Island against the pro-German *contumacy* of Dr. Karl Muck in *refusing* to put the national anthem on his Symphony programme is bearing quick fruit. Government Agent Tom Howick tendered the Department of Justice advice in entire consonance with Rhode Island opinion when he suggested that it take up Muck’s case with a view of relieving him of his right to conduct an American orchestra unless he can explain his course. Public indignation is, in fact, running high against a bearing that has every appearance of being *a studied insult* to the American flag. It requires no great stretch of the imagination to conceive of Muck as possibly *an eminently proper subject for internment* during the remainder of the war, for if *it has been his intent to slight the flag* he has chosen a *subtle and mischievous* means. To *lure* patriotic people by good music to give seeming indorsement [sic] to a *pro-German orchestra’s anti-American* acts would itself constitute a *dangerous propaganda* against the United States. There are, indeed, many Rhode Islanders already so incensed over Muck’s attitude that they have refused to purchase tickets for this Symphony season, but there are others who have not as clearly perceived that in patronizing the pro-German conductor they are being *cleverly exploited for the benefit of Kultur.*\(^{194}\)

When Muck, already on his way back to Boston, was informed of the growing upset, he told Higginson that he would be willing to play the piece in the future. If level heads had prevailed, these explanations may have been enough to put an end to the story of Karl Muck and the *Star-Spangled Banner*, but the BSO was scheduled to play a concert at the Lyric Theatre in Baltimore on November 7, and one particularly un-level Baltimorean head took it upon himself to adopt the anti-Muck cause.

Edwin Warfield had been the Governor of Maryland from 1904 to 1908, but at the time of the Muck affair the sixty-nine-year-old Maryland native was acting as president of the Fidelity Trust Company, the Fidelity and Deposit Company, and the Maryland Historical Society, and he was an active member of the Maryland Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and the Society of the War of 1812.\(^ {195}\) As such, Warfield knew all about the story of fellow Baltimore citizen Francis Scott Key and his composition of the text of *The Star-Spangled Banner* in

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\(^{194}\) “Getting After Dr. Muck,” *Pawtucket Times*, published as *The Evening Times*, 1 November 1917 (vol. 87, issue 28), 8.

reaction to the British attack on Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. The patriotic tune had just celebrated its centenary, having been composed in 1814, and Baltimore had served as the locus for the celebration. Although it was not the official national anthem (and would not be declared so until 1931), it had occupied a growing place in the American consciousness in the previous dozen years. In 1898 it was declared the official flag-raising anthem of the U.S. Navy. In early 1907 an official rule required military personnel to stand for the duration of its performance. Later that year several associations – including the Andrew Jackson Star-Spangled Banner Association and the Star-Spangled Banner Association of America – joined together in an effort to “prevent the desecration of Francis Scott Key’s immortal words . . . restore the song in its original form in textbooks and schools, and to prevent foreign and hostile influences from operating to cheapen its patriotic tone or to alter its true meaning.”

In 1909 a bill was passed in the state of Indiana requiring the singing of the song, in its entirety, in public schools. Later that year the Library of Congress tasked its “Chief of the Division of Music,” Oscar Sonneck, with compiling a special report on the “historical evolution” of The Star-Spangled Banner and other American patriotic tunes, which, according to Sonneck, “undoubtedly stimulated a revival of interest in the history of the songs discussed.” Furthermore, the report was expanded and re-released in 1914 in anticipation of centenary fervor. Although the centenary proved to be an important year for The Star-Spangled Banner (with celebration planning beginning four years in advance in Baltimore), Francis Scott Key’s state celebrated his legacy annually on September 12.

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196 “To Immortalize the Song of the Flag – Star-spangled Banner Associations Consolidate to Preserve Key’s Poem,” Baltimore American, 20 July 1907.
a “distinctively Maryland day,” known broadly as “Defender’s Day.” In 1916 President Woodrow Wilson declared the piece the official flag-raising anthem of not just the Navy but all the military forces. This executive act brought to light issues surrounding the many variations in text and music that had gained currency since the piece was written. To ensure a historically correct and musically appealing standardized version, the Bureau of Education put together a task force consisting of a few familiar musical figures – Walter Damrosch, John Philip Sousa, and Oscar George Sonneck – as well as authors and music educators William Earhart and Arnold J. Gantvoort. The agreed-upon final version was premiered by the Symphony Society of New York under Walter Damrosch just as the Muck scandal was unfolding. Furthermore, an article in the *Baltimore American* in May 1917 reveals a touchy insecurity surrounding the merits of the piece; the title and subtitles read: “Key’s Anthem Will Live Forever – Will Be Popular as Long as This Nation Lasts. – It Is Not Hard to Sing – Proved When 20,000 Sang It at Sunday’s Meeting. – Efforts to Secure a National Song to Take Its Place Are Not Likely to Produce a Real Rival to the Star-spangled Banner…” The article argues:

Francis Scott Key’s immortal anthem, The Star-spangled Banner, has for more than 100 years withstood all of the attacks made upon it by musicians, highbrow and lowbrow and by reformers who want something less difficult to sing. There have been criticisms of the words as well as of the air to which it was set…But the anthem is more popular today than before in the history of the nation, and more persons are able to repeat the words and carry the tune through than ever before. Despite these very evident facts a contest has been started here among composers to produce a substitute for the national anthem. The backers of the contest evidently labor under the delusion that no great even is needed as an inspiration for the composer of a national anthem, and that some composer under the stimulus of a newspaper-conducted competition will be able to do better than did the Marylander from his prison. The contest is interesting, chiefly as showing the difficulty of bringing out any union of words and music to even approach the

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successful efforts made with the Star-spangled Banner. There has been a suggestion that Dixie is a more inspiring air because of the simplicity of the music, but the words are scarcely better suited to a national anthem than the words of My Old Kentucky Home or Suwanee River. Those who have heard The Star-spangled Banner sung in Billy Sunday’s big tabernacle, led by Rodeheaver and joined in by 2,000 voices have reason to think that the public gets along very well with both music and words. David Bispham, the baritone, says the music of The Star-spangled Banner is quite simple and is not as difficult to sing as is supposed. “Besides, says Mr. Bispham, “it has survived more than a century.” Criticism of the music of the national anthem by local composers is suggestive of the criticism of Byron’s Childe Harold by the English and Scotch reviewers of a century ago. The critics passed out unhonored and unsung, being unable to produce anything so great as Byron produced. They are forgotten, but Childe Harold still lives as a masterpiece of English metrical composition. The Star-spangled Banner will live long after its New York critics have been laid under the sod and the dew.  

There were clearly some tensions surrounding the piece and its acceptance well before Karl Muck was reported to have refused it, and the city of Baltimore was at the center of the piece’s support. Thus, when Maryland’s former governor Edwin Warfield (Figure 9) became aware of the Muck controversy, which had been so heavily sensationalized by both Providence and Baltimore newspapers, he made it his personal patriotic project, likely seeing it as his particular duty as a citizen and representative of that great city from which the national tune had been birthed.

News of the events in Providence made its way to Baltimore quickly. The Baltimore American printed a November 2 headline claiming that “MUCK WILL NOT PLAY ANTHEM HERE,” but the article’s first sentence undercuts its initial claim by admitting that in fact “The Star-spangled Banner may not be played” (emphasis mine). Although the article admits that “inquiry yesterday failed to reveal that any requests had yet been made by persons in Baltimore for the orchestra to play it here,” it nevertheless submits that “the New York Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of the able Walter Damrosch, plays it, and most people in

200 “Key’s Anthem Will Live Forever,” Baltimore American, 13 May 1917.
Baltimore know that ever since the Lusitania went down the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Gustav Strube, invariably closes its concerts with The Star-spangled Banner. 201 Furthermore, the article seems to re-write history, claiming that “Dr. Muck’s popularity with the American public has never been very large. He did not hold American taste and appreciation in high esteem.”

By the time the *Baltimore American* had clarified that “Bostonians Will Play Anthem Here. – Mr. Karl Muck, of Germany, Has Capitulated.,” Muck had made a public comment echoing Henry Higginson’s sentiment: “The playing of merely national or political compositions is not our business. Art is greater than any national considerations.” But then, in what would come to be seen as an inflammatory anti-American statement, he continued, “I am not a naturalized American citizen. Naturally one would not expect me to do exactly the same as if I were a citizen

of America.” In light of the rapidly expanding controversy, Muck quickly performed the national anthem with the orchestra in Boston and then resigned his post as director. Higginson refused to accept the resignation, predicting the downfall of the orchestra and his own financial ruin. With the first of the BSO’s 1917-1918 Baltimore concerts scheduled for 7 November, Ex-Governor Warfield’s crusade began.

On the first of November Warfield took his case before the Board of Police Commissioners, demanding that the permit for the concert be withheld until it was clear that the anthem would be performed. Warfield quarreled with General Lawrason Riggs over whether or not the problem would cause a significant disruption in Baltimore. Commissioner Edward F. Burke proved to be a sympathetic voice for Warfield (and against Muck):

General Riggs: We have power to stop the concert if assured that there will be disorder. At the same time, we know that the most loyal and patriotic citizens of Baltimore have subscribed to the concert. I have no doubt that there will be Germans in the audience. It seems to me that it is a question to be taken up with the orchestra or its business manager. The people who go to the symphony concert do not create disorder.

Governor Warfield: Could disorderly persons gain admission to the hall?

General Riggs: I do not think so. It seems to me that Mr. Higginson has so dealt with the questions as to add to its irritation.

Commissioner Burke, who appeared in the commissioners’ room: Governor, I agree with you.

Governor Warfield: You will recall what happened in Annapolis when the Peggy Stewart brought tea against the protest of American citizens. I am a peaceful citizen. I think I am patriotic. We should not tolerate this temporizing. We must be either for the government or against it: for the flag or against it. My son and

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204 Here, Governor Warfield refers to an incident frequently called the “Annapolis Tea Party,” in which shipping merchant Anthony Stewart’s vessel the *Peggy Stewart* was burned in the Annapolis harbor in protest of the British government’s defiance of the colonies’ tea boycott following the Boston Tea Party.
thousands of sons of other loyal Marylanders have gone into this war to protect the American flag which this fellow Muck would destroy.

Mr. Burke: If the citizens of Baltimore want the concert, of course, they shall have it; however unwise it may be [to] withhold the playing of The Star-spangled Banner. It would be bad enough in times of peace to refuse to play the anthem, let alone war time.

Governor Warfield: It is treason and the sooner we recognize treason the better off we shall be.205

Despite this interchange, the Police Board refused to bar the performance unless there was serious evidence that “the peace was menaced.” The following day the Baltimore American reported that Muck would, in fact, perform the Star-Spangled Banner in Baltimore, but Muck’s capitulation was not enough to assuage Warfield’s anger. The ex-governor announced that he would hold a mass meeting at the Lyric theatre, the auditorium where Muck had been scheduled to perform, with the object of “reaffirm[ing] the allegiance of the people of Baltimore to the country, its flag and anthem and . . . protest[ing] against the insults to The Star-spangled Banner by Dr. Karl Muck, of Germany.”206 Warfield’s inflammatory announcement of the meeting emphasized both the heroic history of America and Baltimore’s unique role in it:

From over the hills of Anne Arundel county, Prince Georges county and others the Maryland patriots trooped to Annapolis in 1774. They were led by Dr. Charles Alexander Warfield.207 They were not content with an apology for the presence of the Peggy Stewart, laden with her tea, in Annapolis harbor. They burned the Peggy Stewart. Dr. Muck’s tardy playing of The Star-spangled Banner does not satisfy us. Dr. Muck does not satisfy us. He must not lead an orchestra in Baltimore. Remember 1774.208

205 “Bostonians Will Play Anthem Here,” Baltimore American, 3 November 1917.
207 Through his leadership in this event Charles Alexander, indeed an ancestor of Edwin Warfield, became known as one of Baltimore’s premiere patriots during the Revolutionary War. More information on the Warfield line can be found here: http://www.snowden-warfield.com/index.htm.
208 “Will Protest Against Muck,” Baltimore American, 5 November 1917.
By November 6, Warfield’s incitement of anti-Muck sentiment (successful to the degree that Muck was “only a little less unpopular with Baltimorians than his patron, Kaiser Wilhelm”\textsuperscript{209}) had convinced the Police Board and a Grand Jury to forbid the concert. Yet Warfield’s job was not done. The \textit{Baltimore American} reported that though the concert had been barred, “nevertheless, Former Governor Edwin Warfield, lest some arrangement be made by which the Police Board may vacillate, and allow the concert without Muck, intends holding his scheduled meeting at the Lyric this afternoon . . .”\textsuperscript{210} It was indeed an option, one desired by many Baltimore music lovers, to go ahead with the concert without Muck. So if even the possibility of someone else’s conducting the relatively innocent BSO in the anthem did not placate Warfield, it seems that his role was closer to that of an “agitator” or “rabble-rouser” than merely a “representative” of public sentiment. On the afternoon of 6 November, Warfield held his meeting, which was described by the \textit{Baltimore American} as “the greatest patriotic demonstration in the history of Baltimore.” He gathered four thousand hissing, hooting, yelling, shouting, clapping, and stamping people to reaffirm the city of Baltimore’s loyalty to the anthem and to protest Dr. Muck’s “Prussian arrogance.” The \textit{Baltimore American} recounts that:

The speakers were state and city officials, presidents and representatives of patriotic societies . . . bank presidents, financiers, eminent lawyers, former judges, prominent physicians, architects, artists and next to them were school teachers and college professors, tradesmen and business men and there were those from more obscure walks of life, all fraternizing, all moved by one great purpose. And there were dear, grey-haired old ladies, whose sons were in France, in training camps or on the decks of our battleships. There were veterans of old battles, their cherished uniforms covered with badges and medals. Some of them limped and some of them could not hear the speakers very well. And there were schoolboys and schoolgirls. Society women were there with their debutante daughters and nieces and cousins. Clergymen were there and an occasional bartender. No part of

\textsuperscript{209} “Will Protest Against Muck,” \textit{Baltimore American}, 5 November 1917.
\textsuperscript{210} “Police Forbid Concert Here,” \textit{Baltimore American}, 6 November 1917.
the city’s life was unrepresented in the throng and every one forgot self in the business of the hour.\textsuperscript{211}

Furthermore, although the primary goal of the meeting was to express support for the anthem and condemnation for Muck,

as the enthusiasm grew and the feelings of the great audience were stirred more deeply, the assembly took on a more significant aspect and became filled with broader purpose. Speakers demanded that all enemy aliens be interned, whether they were orchestra leaders or ditch laborers. They demanded that naturalized citizens who criticized the President of the United States and the conduct of the war be subject to George Washington’s orders in similar circumstances. Washington said, “Shoot them!”\textsuperscript{212}

At the meeting letters were read from those who could not attend, including one from Cardinal James Gibbons, the Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore, who wrote,

I…shall be with you in spirit, and approve with all my heart of the efforts being put forth to surround this sacred emblem of our country with all the respect which it should command. In the first place the anthem was composed in Baltimore. Secondly, it is the national song of the Republic. Thirdly, the flag itself is the embodiment of our political faith, and he who sings this anthem is making a profession of fidelity to the country. As with the Ark of the Old Covenant, he who touches it with profane hands shall suffer.\textsuperscript{213}

Not to be outdone, the Protestant church represented itself as well, with the Reverend Arthur Kinsolving of Old St. Paul’s Episcopal Church reminding protesters that he was the rector of the church where Francis Scott Key had worshipped. Next, the Grand Jury resolution against Muck was read aloud by Judge Henry Stockbridge:

Whereas, Dr. Karl Muck, as leader of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, has refused to play our national anthem, the Star-spangled Banner, when requested to do so by patriotic citizens and referred to it with contempt and in so doing has publicly insulted every patriotic citizen, and especially every citizen of Maryland. And Whereas said Muck defiantly proclaims himself a loyal subject and devoted admirer of a sovereign who for more than three years has deluged the world in blood and sought to terrorize humanity by murder, rapine and wanton destruction.

\textsuperscript{211}“4,000 Denounce Muck and Extol Anthem,” \textit{Baltimore American}, 7 November 1917.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid.
Therefore Be it Resolved That we, citizens of Maryland, in mass meeting assembled, declare the conduct of said Muck an affront to every patriotic citizen both of this state and of the nation, an incitement to riot and disorder, an encouragement to the enemies and traitors in our midst . . . and a blow at freedom and humanity.

. . . Resolved, That under no conditions should said Karl Muck be permitted to lead an orchestra in this city, even though the national anthem be made a part of the program voluntarily or under compulsion.

Resolved, That this meeting most heartily commands the action of the grand jury and of the Police Board of Baltimore City as giving practical effect to the overwhelming sentiment of our citizens, and lending to maintain the order and fair fame of this city.\textsuperscript{214}

Next a representative of the Society of the War of 1812 called upon the government to intern all enemy aliens and, in an allusion to the BSO’s recent concert in Philadelphia (at which Muck conducted the orchestra in the \textit{Star-Spangled Banner}), proclaimed, “Oh, City of Brotherly Love!” You have no right now to that bell which cracked for Liberty!” Speaking on behalf of the company of men who had joined the demonstration from Camp Meade was its commander, Captain Hughes: “Karl Muck is enough to make Francis Scott Key rise from his grave. I hope he does rise from his grave. I hope he rises and haunts Karl Muck until he dies!” Moreover, Maryland Secretary of State Thomas W. Simmons appropriated biblical language, saying, “The time has come when our attitude toward the subjects of those nations which are against us must change. . . . we must realize that he who is not with us is against us and he who gathereth not with us scattereth abroad. The firing squad at sunrise is the answer for those among us who are against us.” Representatives of the Daughters of the War of 1812, the Society for Colonial Wars, and the Daughters of the American Revolution all spoke out against the “Huns” and demanded action. The meeting ended with a hearty rendition of the \textit{Star-Spangled Banner}, that piece which had come to personify American patriotism and morality.

\textsuperscript{214} “4,000 Denounce Muck and Extol Anthem,” \textit{Baltimore American}, 7 November 1917.
Another demonstration was held on November 9, this time at the Frederick, Maryland Courthouse, with Associate Judge Glenn H. Worthington presiding. Warfield was there, as well as Dr. Thomas Freeman Dixon, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Dr. U.S.G. Rupp of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Noah E. Cramer (one of the most prominent businessmen in Frederick City\textsuperscript{215}), Rev. Henry L.G. Kieffer, of the Evangelical Reformed Church, and a number of other respected Frederick County citizens. The Resolution, which called upon the government to “forbid public singing or playing of the national anthem except by loyal American citizens,” reads, in part,

> Whereas, The people of Frederick county have been pronounced and emphatic in their love of liberty and of the free institutions under which they live; and whereas, the author of our proud national anthem, The Star-spangled Banner, was born in Frederick county, and his mortal remains lie buried in our cemetery, and whereas, our people have heretofore evidenced their devotion to the flag and their love of that soul-stirring song by erecting over the last resting place of its author an enduring monument to his memory; and whereas there has recently been manifested in some quarters a want of respect for the flag and for the inspiring song which extols it, and whose strains should ever arouse our pride and patriotism; Therefore, Be it resolved by the people of Frederick county, in meeting assembled, that we hereby renew our pledge of allegiance to our flag and to our country, and our devotion to our national anthem, and we denounce as wanting in patriotism any who refuse to respect and reverence either our flag or this song which exalts and glorifies that flag as the emblem of our nation’s sovereignty and power.\textsuperscript{216}

It was some time before Baltimore relinquished its case against Muck. Always tied up with its anti-“pro-German” campaign were notions of city pride and importance. Often they included comparisons with other prominent East Coast cities, such as Philadelphia and Boston. One newspaper article, titled “Boston for Dr. Muck. Residents of Bean Metropolis Are Angry at Baltimore,” beams with pride over the contempt Baltimore has engendered due to its anti-Muck


\textsuperscript{216} “Will Stamp Out Pro-Germanism,” \textit{Baltimore American}, 10 November 10, 1917. 

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campaign. Recounting what should be Boston’s historical precedent for anti-Muck action, the article declares,

Up in Boston, where they hung a lantern in the old South Meeting House as a signal for Paul Revere, where the battle of Bunker Hill was fought and where the future of America hung in the balance of debate in old Faneuil Hall, they have an idea that Dr. Karl Muck, of Bavaria, leader of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Kaiser’s favorite musician, has been ill-treated by Baltimore. 217

When Muck was finally arrested in Boston in late March 1918, Edwin Warfield’s comments were again inflammatory, claiming the arrest as a victory for himself and for the city of Baltimore:

Nothing could have pleased me more . . . I am glad the eyes of the government have been opened . . . and that the people have come to realize what I believed when I started the movement against his appearance in this city several months ago. I knew that he was a spy and a friend of the Kaiser, and if it hadn’t have been for the Baltimore people the traitor would still have been running at large. Baltimoreans should feel proud that they refused to allow the music director to come to this city. They should rejoice in the face that he has gotten what he deserves. Muck, through his associations, had an opportunity to preach German propaganda and he took advantage of it. He has done more harm by spreading German propaganda in this country than any one other man. He should have been arrested long ago . . . If we can’t get anyone but an alien enemy to lead our bands we’ll do without music altogether. 218

The newspapers of Baltimore continued to cover the story of Dr. Muck, although with much less vigor, from his arrest in March, through his questioning, months of internment at Fort Oglethorpe in Georgia, and deportation in August. This city, which had clearly been primed to react strongly to the Muck episode, had a vested interest in its outcome and considered itself instrumental in its playing out. Indeed, the reaction of the city of Baltimore to the Muck episode can serve for us as a microcosm of the broader concept of moral panic.

218 “Calls Dr. Muck Traitor and Spy,” Baltimore American, 27 March 1918.
The idea of “moral panic” was first introduced by sociologist and criminologist Stanley Cohen to describe the events surrounding the riots between Mods and Rockers in 1960s England. The term, which has entered into common vocabulary in the fifty years since its coining, describes a disproportionate social response to a supposed threat to common moral values. In his seminal book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (the third edition of which was published in 2011 as a “Routledge Classic”), Cohen writes that when a moral panic occurs,

a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the subject of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way society conceives itself.\(^{219}\)

From this initial description we can already see that the requirements for qualifying as moral panic are quite significantly varied. Examples of topics considered within the framework of a moral panic include school violence (bullying and shooting), drugs, child abuse and pedophilia, welfare cheating, refugees and asylum seekers, HIV/AIDS, psychopathy, pornography, terrorism, Islam, climate crisis, and more recently, Ebola. As Cohen emphasizes, these issues can be, and often are, actual (sometimes very serious) threats. What, we might ask, makes the social reaction to these issues a “moral panic” rather than a legitimate response? In his introduction to

the third edition of *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* Cohen notes that commentators have teased out a list of essential elements or characteristics from his initial definition. These include

- **i:** *Concern* (rather than fear) about the potential or imagined threat;

- **ii:** *Hostility* – moral outrage towards the actors (folk devils) who embody the problem and agencies (naïve social workers, spin-doctored politicians) who are ‘ultimately’ responsible (and may become folk devils themselves);

- **iii:** *Consensus* – a widespread agreement (not necessarily total) that the threat exists, is serious and that ‘something should be done’. The majority of elite and influential groups, especially the mass media, should share this consensus.

- **iv:** *Disproportionality*: an exaggeration of the number or strength of the cases, in terms of the damage caused, moral offensiveness, potential risk if ignored. Public concern is not directly proportionate to objective harm.

- **v:** *Volatility* – the panic erupts and dissipates suddenly and without warning.\(^{220}\)

Cohen notes that the concepts of disproportionality and volatility are particularly problematic, admitting that it is difficult to create an objective rubric or scale of measurement for identifying disproportionate responses or over-reactions:

Questions of symbolism, emotion, and representation cannot be translated into comparable sets of statistics. Qualitative terms like ‘appropriateness’ convey the nuances of moral judgement more accurately than the (implied) quantitative measure of ‘disproportionate’ – but the more they do so, the more obviously they are socially constructed. The critics are right that there is a tension between insisting on a universal measuring rod for determining the action/reaction gap – yet also conceding that the measurement is socially constructed and all the time passing off as non-politically biased the decision of what panics to ‘expose’.\(^{221}\)

Yet for Cohen this tension does not make the issue irrelevant. Indeed,

The idea that social problems are socially constructed does not question their existence nor dismiss issues of causation, prevention and control. It draws attention to a meta debate about what sort of acknowledgment the problem receives and merits. The issue indeed is *proportionality*. It is surely not possible to calibrate exactly the human costs of crimes, deviance or human rights violations. The shades of intentionally inflicted suffering, harm, cruelty, damage,\(^{220}\) *Cohen, Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, xxii.\(^{221}\) *Ibid.*, xxix.
loss and insecurity are too complex to be listed in an exact, rational or universally accepted rank order of seriousness. But some disparities are so gross, some claims so exaggerated, some political agendas so tendentious that they can only be called something like, well, ‘social injustice’.\textsuperscript{222}

Thus, whether quantitatively demonstrable or not, the identification of social and media reactions as inappropriate or disproportionate is essential, since it provides a foundation to understand the height of moral and emotional involvement in a particular issue.

The element of volatility is equally concerning to Cohen. He addresses recent claims that rather than “discrete and volatile” moral panics, the media has created a “generalized moral stance, a permanent moral panic resting on a seamless web of social anxieties,”\textsuperscript{223} in which the moral panic always exists, but its focus is constantly shifting. Indeed, he admits, “today’s more sophisticated, self-aware and fragmented media make the original notion of the spasmodic (‘every now and then’) panic out of date.”\textsuperscript{224} Nevertheless, for Cohen, volatility is essential for a moral panic, since the study of two particular questions surrounding the issue can shed significant light on underlying social tensions. We should ask why full-blown panics ever end (Cohen suggests a number of possible reasons, including burn out, boredom, cycles in fashion, and the discrediting of the media), as well as why some sets of events which have all the ingredients of a moral panic never quite develop into full-blown episodes.\textsuperscript{225}

Stanley Cohen examines seven distinctive issues in his precedent-setting discussion of the moral panic surrounding the Mods and Rockers. He first looks at the disproportionality of the responses of the five primary “actors” in a moral panic: the press, the public, law enforcement, lawmakers and politicians, and action groups. Furthermore, he greatly emphasizes the creation of

\textsuperscript{222} Cohen, \textit{Folk Devils and Moral Panics}, xxxiv.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., xxix.
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., xxx.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., xxx.
“folk devils,” people or groups of people who are seen to be deviants, who are stripped of all of their good qualities and seen as unambiguously negative, whose overwhelmingly harmful actions are seen to undermine the moral order and cause societal harm, and who must somehow be stopped. For Cohen and for others, “all moral panics, by their very nature, identify, denounce, and attempt to root out folk devils.” Finally, Cohen acknowledges the formation of a “disaster mentality,” which includes seven phases:

i: Warning: during which arises, mistakenly or not, some apprehensions based on conditions out of which danger may arise. The warning must be coded to be understood and impressive enough to overcome resistance to the belief that current tranquility can be upset.

ii: Threat: during which people are exposed to communication from others, or to signs from the approaching disaster itself indicating specific imminent danger. This phase begins with the perception of some change, but as with the first phase, may be absent or truncated in the case of sudden disaster.

iii: Impact: during which the disaster strikes and the immediate unorganized response to the death, injury or destruction takes place.

iv: Inventory: during which those exposed to the disaster begin to form a preliminary picture of what has happened and of their own condition.

v: Rescue: during which the activities are geared to immediate help for the survivors. As well as people in the impact area helping each other, the suprasystem begins to send aid.

vi: Remedy: during which more deliberate and formal activities are undertaken towards relieving the affected. The suprasystem takes over the functions the emergency system cannot perform.

vii: Recovery: during which, for an extended period, the community either recovers its former equilibrium or achieves a stable adaptation to the changes which the disaster may have brought about.

Although Cohen finds that there are no exact parallels with some of these stages in the Mods and Rockers story, he maintains the usefulness of this rubric in examining moral panics. Of particular

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importance is the idea that each stage responds to or reflects the degree of the previous stage (a “uniformity” that Cohen argues has not been present in studies of deviance).

To this list of characteristics of moral panic (the disproportionate responses of the media, the public, law enforcement, lawmakers and politicians, and action groups, as well as the creation of “folk devils” and the development of a “disaster mentality”), I would add one extra feature: the endorsement of religious figures, those most often responsible for and most highly respected in the determining of community morality.

Since Cohen’s *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, the term “moral panic” has been used primarily to describe current events or historical events no earlier than Cohen’s initial study in the 60s. Using the moral panic framework to examine earlier historical events is quite rare. As far as music is concerned, moral panics have also typically been constrained to a contemporary timeframe and, quite understandably, have focused on popular musics rather than art music. Stories of moral panic can be found in the histories of a multitude of popular music genres, including ragtime, jazz, rock and roll, heavy metal, punk, acid house, emo, electronic/rave, and even today’s hyper-sexualized popular music. Familiar figures such as Elvis Presley, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Ice-T, Madonna, Marilyn Manson, My Chemical Romance, and Miley Cyrus have reverberated in the minds of those searching for evidence that music can be a corrupting influence and have served as fodder for panic. Moreover, if we reach back further in time than our great Western schism between popular and art music, we might find even more evidence for moral panic surrounding musical style and influence. In fact, a certain amount of panic over the moral or ethical weight of music can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle and the ancient Greek doctrine of ethos; Augustine’s and Calvin’s concerns with the use of music in
worship; the Querelle des Bouffons of the eighteenth century; and the premiere of Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*.

Indeed, music’s prominent role in all aspects of life – emotional, physical, intellectual – and in all the activities of life – home, school, entertainment, military activity, religion – have long identified it as a conveyor of values and, for many, a conveyor of moral meaning.

Philosophers, critics, musicians, and citizens have long understood music as containing inherently good or bad ethical force. Furthermore, the fear of music’s potential for moral destruction has long led to disproportionate or inappropriate social and political responses. One of the things that makes the study of moral panic over art music during World War I (a topic only recently brought to light in the world of musicology) so fascinating is its focus on the morally destructive power of art music, even as it was being proposed as a morally good alternative to newer popular musics such as ragtime.

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In Edwin Warfield’s carefully planned anti-Muck mass rally, we see a rather clear-cut case of moral panic. The responses of the media, the public, law enforcement, lawmakers and politicians, and action groups can be seen as disproportionate to the actual threat posed by Muck, which was at first unsubstantiated and later overblown. A simple miscommunication (that Muck had refused outright to play the *Star-Spangled Banner* in Providence) and difference of opinion (that the *Star-Spangled Banner* does not belong on an art music program) was turned

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228 After Muck’s arrest, letters written to a young mistress and communicating anti-American sentiment were found among his belongings; even so, it is possible to read these letters as displaying a combination of loyalty to his home country and a frustration with the way he had been treated in America, which, as we have seen, was less than favorable.
into a murderous outrage, with calls for the internment, suffering, haunting, and shooting of someone who had once been highly respected. Muck – demonized, stripped of all his good characteristics, imprisoned, and removed from America – can be seen as a classic example of a “folk devil.” A disaster mentality is also evident, with Warfield preparing for Muck’s arrival in Baltimore a week in advance, alerting the public to the threat, and remaining committed to keeping Muck and the BSO out of Baltimore even after assurances that The Star-Spangled Banner would be played. The five groups of actors in the drama display evidence of overreacting to the supposed threat: the public, both in the person of Warfield and in the 4,000 protesters who attended his meeting; the press, who published inflammatory descriptions of Muck and gave great attention to Warfield; law enforcement, who were standing by should protest turn to riot; lawmakers and politicians, with a Grand Jury injunction filed against Muck; action groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Society of the War of 1812; and religious figures such as Cardinal Gibbons and Reverend Kinsolving. There is little doubt that the city of Baltimore’s reaction to Karl Muck can be classified as a moral panic.

So what good does it do to categorize and label this story as a moral panic? In their book Moral Panics The Social Construction of Deviance, sociologists Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda argue for the usefulness of the moral panic concept, saying,

The concept of the moral panic expands our understanding of social structure, social process, and social change. It integrates concepts from a variety of disparate areas – deviance, crime, collective behavior, social problems, and social movements. Moral panics are likely to “clarify [the] normative contours” and “moral boundaries” of the society in which they take place, and demonstrate that there are limits to how much diversity can be tolerated in a society . . . Without resorting to conspiratorial thinking, an investigation of the moral panic emphasizes that social reactions to a new and seemingly threatening phenomenon arise as a consequence of that phenomenon’s real or supposed threat to certain “positions, statuses, interests, ideologies, and values.”

We are to ask,

Why a moral panic over this supposed threat, but not that, potentially even more damaging, one? Why does this cast of characters become incensed by the threat the behavior supposedly poses, but not that cast of characters? Why a moral panic at this time, but not before or after? How and why do moral panics arise? How and why do they die out? What role do interests play in the moral panic? Are the dynamics of the moral panic different during different historical time periods, or different from one society to another? What does the moral panic tell us about how society is constituted, how it works, how it changes over time?230

In examining the components of the Muck story, and the many similar stories of moral panic that pepper the war years both in America and abroad, we must ask ourselves these and other questions. What can the details of a moral panic tell us about musical culture and the musical values of a certain time and place? What can they tell us about American art music culture, before, during, and after the Great War? And what can they tell us about American notions of morality and how they intersected with patriotism and with music?

In the story of Karl Muck we see a number of insecurities and their underlying values emerging. Of primary importance was the city of Baltimore’s assertion that it was just as worthy as any of the other early-settled East Coast cities, especially New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. As we have seen, Baltimore newspaper articles about the Muck story frequently cite Baltimore’s early political history in order to claim its place as a great American city and to validate its cultural output. We might also recall from Chapter 3 that Baltimore was one of the largest centers of German immigrant settlement in the early nineteenth century. German singing groups such as the Germania Club and the Arion Club had been welcomed and celebrated in the city, even as late as the early twentieth century. Historian Victor Greene recounts four events in which Baltimore’s German singing community was embedded in the life of the city and the nation. In 1858 the Germania Club sang at a Baltimore celebration for German American

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Revolution war hero Friederich Wilhelm von Steuben. In 1863 the Arion Club sang at the consecration of the national cemetery, at which Lincoln’s famous Gettysburg Address was delivered. In 1880 the festivities celebrating Baltimore’s sesquicentennial were held at the German club and recreational center Schuetzen Park, and these included performances of German folk songs as well as the state’s anthem by several singing clubs. At the event General Charles Phelps spoke of Baltimore’s reliance on German culture, saying, “We owe them music, we owe them lager beer, and to be perfectly candid, it must be added, we owe to them the Sesqui-Centennial [itself].”

Finally, Greene points out, a 1903 gathering of the singing clubs of the Northeastern Saengerbund in Baltimore combined the music of Wagner and Mendelssohn with the folk tune “Muss I Denn” and the patriotic “Star-Spangled Banner” and “Hail Columbia,” reminding all those involved of the “close ideological bond of German culture with American political principles.”

By 1917 Baltimore’s ties with German culture, and especially with German music culture, were strong and deep. When the Muck scandal struck, it likely felt the pressure to prove its loyalty beyond doubt.

Finally, there is the broader issue of musical style and quality. As Matthew Mugmon suggests in his article “Patriotism, Art, and ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ in World War I: A New Look at the Karl Muck Episode,” one of the perceived threats came from the idea that perhaps American music and American music culture were inherently worse than German music and German music culture. Calling America’s beloved patriotic tune bad music was akin to calling America a lesser country. With lingering national identity insecurities from the Civil War and an as-yet-unfulfilled desire to create a distinctly “American” music within the art music realm (as evidenced by Dvořák’s time in America at the end of the nineteenth century), here was finally a

\[\text{231} \text{ Greene, } A \text{ Singing Ambivalence, } 36.\]
\[\text{232} \text{ Ibid., } 36-7.\]
chance for America to assert itself culturally. To get rid of German music culture was to make a space for American music culture; German performers, conductors, educators, composers, and repertoire could be replaced by their American counterparts.

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In light of our discussion of Karl Muck and moral panics, let us return now to the story of the Star Opera Company. The story was first introduced in the Introduction as a foundation for our discussion of morality and music. A *New York Times* article will help to remind us of the details of the dramatic episode:

An unidentified sailor suffered injuries said to be likely to cause death when the police charged a crowd of soldiers, sailors, and civilians who were trying to capture an army motor truck to aid in a protest against the singing of opera in German at the Lexington Opera House last night. . . .

Soldiers and sailors were swarming over the motor truck and had taken it away from Private Perry, the driver, when policemen on foot tried to scatter them but were overpowered. Rapping on the pavement with nightsticks, they summoned a squadron of mounted police, who had been galloping from one point to another in the police lines around the theatre where threatening crowds gathered. The mounted men executed a cavalry charge into the mob surrounding the truck and, using night sticks freely, scattered the disturbers in all directions.

After the street had been swept clear of the mob, the police found the sailor unconscious on the pavement, and he was removed to Flower Hospital with injuries to the skull which may cause his death. The sailor was struck down by a blow over the head with a club wielded by a policeman on foot, according to . . . witnesses.

Various clashes between small mobs and groups of the police, who totaled 500, occurred throughout the evening, while sixty mounted men were kept moving from point to point to reinforce the patrolmen on foot, where they seemed to have their hands full. . . .

Chester Bittner, of the Military Police at Camp Merritt, suffered a fracture of the right hip in the charge of the mounted police at the motor truck. . . .
The house was completely sold out, according to the management, but fear of trouble kept about one-third of the audience away, and there were only about a score of persons in the boxes. One man who occupied a box in the third tier rose to his feet with a bag in his hand near the end of the first act when Herman Weil was singing in the part of Peter the Great, with the full chorus on the stage.

The man picked out an egg, dropped the bag on his seat, “wound up” deliberately like a baseball pitcher and let fly at Weil. The agile singer leaped to one side and the egg splashed upon a table. Shouts and screams in German and in English, more or less broken, rang out all over the house for “Police,” “Lights” and “Help.” The orchestra practically surrendered at the first egg, but Weil laughed and resumed singing.

The thrower, who was left-handed, picked another egg out of his bag and let fly again, with the same formal preparation. Weil dodged again, and made a feint at continuing to sing. The insurgent pitched a third, fourth and fifth egg, while the singers scattered, and hundreds of persons in the audience crowded into the aisles. At the fifth egg somebody grappled with the thrower, but he broke away.

Detective James Duane, one of the dozen plain-clothes men in the house, arrested the offender at a fire escape. At the East Fifty-first Street station, the man was booked as John Doe, salesman, Hotel McAlpin.

Only the singers and the first few rows of the audience suffered from the odor of the eggs early in the performance, but pungent fumes rose all over the house as the crowd filed out at the end of the performance at 11:45. These were produced by little glass “bombs,” containing chemicals, which were scattered in the aisles. After a few of the “bombs” had been crushed under foot many in the audience used mufflers and handkerchiefs as gas masks and the house was emptied in record time. . . .

The injunction which made possible the performance last night was granted by Justice Bijur on Tuesday night. He did not attempt to enjoin the authorities on Tuesday night because of the shortness of the time for notifying the police and the danger that a change in the proceedings at the last minute might lead to disorder. The writ directs Mayor Hylan, Police Commissioner Enright and others to show cause why they should not be permanently prevented from interfering with the production. . . .

Assistant Corporation Counsel Nicholson asked Mr. Steuer [counsel for the opera company] to agree that the opera should not be sung in German last night, while the litigation was pending, but Mr. Steuer would not consent to this. The city’s request for a postponement for twenty-four hours was granted by Justice Giegerich, but he refused meantime to vacate the temporary injunction. Mr Steuer said:
“The City Administration was telephoning to me all yesterday morning, begging me to get an injunction.” Mr. Steuer continued, “The administration is simply passing the buck to the court, and we are willing to accept it. We want a decision on the merits, and I am ready to argue it now. I will accede to an adjournment until tomorrow, but I will not agree to the status quo. The war is all over except on the part of those who want to continue it.”

Many of the characteristics of moral panic that we saw in the Muck episode seem to have also reared their ugly heads in this story: we see clearly the involvement and over-reaction of the public, of law enforcement, of lawmakers, of politicians, and of action groups. The most impassioned action group was the American Legion, which had been successful in efforts to stop German opera performances in the past. An article reporting the riot on October 20 claims that “representatives of the American Legion, who asked the Mayor to stop the performance, had no misgivings as to his authority over the license of the playhouse and were taken off their guard by the company’s action. Last March, when effort was made to revive German opera in this city, the promoters quietly dropped the undertaking at the request of the Mayor.” Interestingly, American Legion representatives (especially of the Manhattan Naval Post) were more interested in fighting the legal battle (at a “dramatic two-hour debate” at City Hall) than in the public demonstration, which was led primarily by servicemen. The press also played a subtle role in fanning the flames of the already growing problem. One example comes from the *New York Times* article that led this section, which despite the dramatic headline “Police Club Mob At German Opera; Sailor May Die,” later admits that “the sailor was taken to Bellevue Hospital, where . . . it was reported that no marks of a club were found and that his condition was believed to be due to heart trouble.” Furthermore, there is strong evidence of the development of a disaster

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mentality, with opposition to the Company’s stated program beginning a month in advance, and appeals to Mayor Hylan before even a note was sung.

One prominent issue concerning both press coverage and disaster mentality is timing. The story of the Star Opera Company riots actually spans the course of a few days. In fact, it is difficult to determine from newspaper accounts exactly when each particular event actually occurred. There seem to have been multiple riots, which may have been conflated and mixed up in reporting, with some particular details being given on different days in different stories. The story first presented in Chapter 1, as told in the journal *Musical America*, implies that the riots occurred during the performance of *Die Fledermaus*. The *New York Times* article that has refreshed our memory here in Chapter 4 claims that the riots and egg-throwing incident occurred at a performance of Lortzing’s *Czar and Carpenter*. The article “Opera in German Given in Defiance of Hylan and Mob” describes the first concert of the Company’s season, which began with a performance of the *Star-Spangled Banner* and consisted of excerpts from Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Kreutzer’s *A Night in Granada*. The announcement of this concert, in a 19 October article titled “Opera at the Lexington,” helps us to establish a clear timeline: on Monday, 20 October, the first concert was held, a “test of the possibility, in New York at present, of a general revival of both grand and light opera in German.” *Czar and Carpenter* was performed on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings (the 21st through 23rd) and Johann Strauss’s *The Bat* was scheduled for Friday and two performances on Saturday (the 24th and 25th), although it is unclear whether all of these performances were completed. The next Sunday, the 26th, was to have seen a performance of *The Flying Dutchman*, but it seems that by this time Justice Giegerich had upheld the decision to ban the performance of German opera in the German language. In piecing together information about the week, we can deduce that the
concert on the 20th came as a surprise to those who had requested its cancellation; Mayor Hylan (Figure 10), who had officially banned the performance, did not discover that the Star Opera Company had obtained a restraining order against the police until two hours before the performance, at which point he was confused about his rights to stop it and thought it too late to assert his authority.

The protesting that night began relatively calmly and intensified as the evening progressed, with “a huge piece of masonry” being thrown in front of the theater from a building across the street and with multiple injuries, both of protesters and of police. There was fierce rioting on Tuesday and Wednesday (with the egg-throwing incident occurring on the later date) and relatively subdued performances on Thursday and Friday (with a strong police presence remaining). Thus, while the legal battle was raging at City Hall, police and protesters maintained a five-day cold tension with occasional bursts of violence.

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Of central importance to an examination of the story of the Star Opera Company as moral panic is the creation of folk devils. Like other stories, such as that of Karl Muck, this one contains a singular folk devil.

![Figure 11: Otto Goritz (c. 1915-1920)](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ggb2005023801/)

The company’s director, Otto Goritz (Figure 11), once a beloved baritone at the Metropolitan Opera, had been accused of singing a song celebrating and mocking the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915, had lost his position at the Met by 1917, and had his home ransacked in September 1919. He was clearly a folk devil, demonized for his Teutonic nationality despite his overwhelming pre-war popularity. In spite of this though, Goritz is never mentioned as the cause of or impetus behind the riots. Furthermore, a New York Times article published three weeks before the first riot gives the Star Opera Company a chance to explain that “70 percent of its members are actually Americans, and more than half of them were born and educated in this country,” largely removing persons of German loyalty as targets for the riot. Moreover, the composer of the opera, Johann Strauss II, was not on the list of typical offenders, of which Wagner was the king, and the content of the operetta was not offensively Teutonic, with none of

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Wagner’s heavy-handed idolization of the German race. It seems that rather than the director or the performers or the composer or the specific opera topic, the primary folk devils here seem to be the German language and its setting to music: the folk devil was the whole idea of German opera. Concerning its attempt to ban the Star Opera Company’s performance, the American Legion published an article in its weekly newspaper, saying,

Without going into a lot of detail, it might be said simply that we do not like the sound of the German gutturals. The trouble with German opera in German is that our mind hears not the theme so much as the shrieks of the Lusitania’s dying. Its measured cadences picture not tender human emotions, but a firing squad marching at the goose step upon defenseless women and children. If it conjures up sequestered sylvan glades, we see lying thereon the moaning victims of poison gas.  

In this statement, we hear both a reviling of the German language, with its harsh guttural consonants, and recognition of music’s ability to add power to a text. Nonetheless, despite the allowance of English language performances, the Star Opera Company still met with failure and bankruptcy. If the idea of German opera performed in English was still so morally upsetting, the protests were clearly more cultural than purely linguistic. When Supreme Court Justice Leonard A. Giegerich ruled in favor of the prohibition of productions of German opera in New York until the ratification of the peace, he did so because of the “unimportant nature of the privilege in question” and the “transitoriness of the deprivation” in comparison with the “serious personal injuries, the drain upon the police force of men needed throughout the city for the performance of their regular duties, [and] the inconvenience and danger imposed upon the community by having important thoroughfares blocked with crowds of angry men.” Giegerich was himself a German-American, having been born in Bavaria. An active musician and advocate of German

culture, he sang in the Arion Society choir and the Beethoven Maennerchor. Upon his death in 1927, his obituary claimed this ruling as one of the most important decisions of his career, reporting that “the justice of his decision and the wisdom and moderation of its language received much praise.” In his proclamation, Giegerich explained,

I have reached the conclusion I have reached in this case because of another important and far-reaching reason. It is highly desirable that the passions of the war subside as rapidly as may be. This process cannot be hastened, however, but will be retarded by ill-advised and premature attempts like the one under consideration. It should be remembered that the wounds of the war have not yet healed nor lost their tenderness, and any step taken toward the restoration of things to normal conditions should be taken in the light of that fact, and if it is found upon trial that public sentiment is not yet prepared for the step, it should not be persisted in.

Here we see the law acknowledging the relatively innocuous nature of opera, and yet capitulating to what had become a fully-formed moral panic. If German opera could be performed again as soon as the American’s ratified the peace, then what was at stake? What was being threatened by the folk devil of German opera? One interpretation might be that the performance of German opera threatened America’s ability to revel in its victory, to subjugate the Germans and their culture, and to create a new artistic identity separate from its highly Teutonic history. As we have seen, American art music culture had been heavily indebted to German musicians, composers, repertoire, and education. Perhaps one of the primary underlying fears driving the Star Opera Company riots had to do with America’s ability to create its own music culture.

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240 Ibid.
Ex-governor Edwin Warfield, the hero of Baltimore’s anti-Karl Muck campaign, was not the only instigator of musical moral panic in America during the war years. One of the most prominent figures working against German musical performances in New York, the city at the heart of America’s cultural output, was a woman named Lucie Jay. Lucie (sometimes incorrectly spelled Lucy) was undoubtedly one of New York’s leading anti-German activists and is particularly relevant for our study since her efforts overwhelmingly centered on the performance of art music. At the end of her tenure as protester, Mrs. Jay described her career in a letter to the editor of the New York Times:

To the Editor of The New York Times:

Peace has come at last! Germany is on her knees before outraged but forgiving humanity. Since our entry into the world war I have stood firmly and consistently against the performances of German opera, German plays, and German music. The committee and league which I founded uncovered ample evidence that German propaganda lurked in these apparently harmless entertainments, while victory was in the laps of the gods and a “soft” peace was a remote and unfair possibility.

Now all is changed. No further protests against the German productions, whenever and wherever given in the United States, will come from me, for I know that henceforth materialism will weigh too heavily against a pro-German attitude, and I pray that the former friends of German Kultur will uphold the principles of freedom, honesty, and justice, which they now see triumphant and everlasting.

LUCIE JAY.
(MRS. WILLIAM JAY.)
New York, June 28, 1919.

Mrs. Jay’s pet project was the prohibition of all performances of German music, both in New York and in America broadly. To that end she founded two organizations (to which she refers in the above letter): the Anti-German Music League and the Committee for the Severance of All Social and Professional Relations with Enemy Sympathizers (the title of which is equally

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frequently seen preceded by the word “Ultimate,” preceded by the word “Intimate,” or left without a qualifier. She began her activities in early November 1917, just as the outcry against Karl Muck’s infamous Rhode Island concert, in which she became a prominent figure, was gaining momentum. At first Jay focused on opera, both on account of its content and because of the use of the German language. She explains her position in an article written for *The Chronicle*\(^\text{243}\) and quoted in the *New York Times*:

> I feel that to give German operas, particularly those of Wagner, at this time would be a great mistake. Given in the German language, and depicting scenes of violence and conflict, they must inevitably draw our minds back to the spirit of greed and barbarism which has led to so much suffering. Perhaps gala nights of German operas could be used as a political propaganda to imply a division of sentiment in this country. As the Metropolitan is practically a national institution, we should take into consideration the sensitiveness of all patrons, and especially the patriotic ones.\(^\text{244}\)

Indeed the Metropolitan Opera had encountered some difficulty in planning its 1917-1918 season. The announcement of the first week’s bill was delayed by a disagreement between “a minority of the Board of Directors” and the opera company’s Director and Chairman Giulio Gatti-Casazza and Otto H. Kahn. Gatti-Casazza and Kahn, recognizing the difficulty of performing the music of the enemy during wartime, had “planned to retain the Wagner dramas, often a third of the seasons [sic] repertory in the past, by having them sung largely by American artists . . . in place of Mr. Gadski, Mr. Goritz, and others now retired.”\(^\text{245}\) They would not,

\(^{243}\) Although this publication is reported in the 2 November 1917 *New York Times* article “Halt German Opera at Metropolitan,” it is unclear to which newspaper, journal, or magazine it refers. I have not succeeding in locating Mrs. Jay’s “German Music and German Opera” article.

\(^{244}\) “Halt German Opera At Metropolitan: Minority of Directors Understood to Oppose Giving Wagner’s Works,” *The New York Times*, 2 November 1917.

\(^{245}\) “Halt German Opera At Metropolitan: Minority of Directors Understood to Oppose Giving Wagner’s Works,” *The New York Times*, 2 November 1917. “Mr. Gadksi” is a typo; this should be “Mrs.,” in reference to the well-known German soprano Johanna Gadski. The reader will also remember Otto Goritz as the director of the Star Opera Company and the infamous singer of the Lusitania song parody.
however, go so far as to perform the operas in English, as had become the practice in London. At the close of the previous season, Richard Aldrich had praised the Metropolitan Opera’s neutrality, as well as that of its audience, in a *New York Times* article, saying:

> The war has undoubtedly introduced many elements of perplexity into the business of running an opera house, even in countries that have been neutral; but the season that closed at the Metropolitan Opera House last evening has been from some points of view, notably the financial, one of the most successful, if not the most successful, ever given there. When the war began there was a feeling of alarm as to how it would affect the “operatic business”; but there has been no falling off in the attendance, and in the last months of the season the audiences, night after night, have taxed the capacity of the house to the utmost . . . The declaration of war with Germany naturally caused some anxiety in the management as to the effect upon the German artists and as to their reception by the public. But the anxiety was unnecessary. This public, patriotic though it is, has the good sense not to allow its patriotism to become chauvinism in matters of art. The German artists who were invited here, and who have served the public to the best of their ability, have been listened to with the respect and admiration that their talents have commanded. Their nationality, their personal feelings, reports as to what they may have done or omitted to do in their private capacities, have not been allowed to affect their relations to the public. Nor have operagoers felt any animosity to German music or German composers, most of them, like Walther von der Vogelweide, “long since dead.” This country does not wage war upon art . . . the United States deserves the admiration given to it by Mr. Gatti-Casazza for its impartiality, and as “the most civilized nation in respect to art.”

Likewise, an April 1917 article titled “The Season at the Metropolitan” boasts,

> There was anxiety . . . about the public’s attitude toward the German singers and the German operas; but it was . . . unfounded. This public does not allow its patriotism to influence its attitude toward art, and it wages war upon neither German artists nor German art. The German singers have been treated with the respect and admiration due to their abilities; the German music has been listened to with the same attitude as before the war, for what it is as music.

The 1917-1918 season had been tentatively announced in September and included *Fidelio, Lohengrin, Tannhäuser, Tristan und Isolde, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Parsifal,* and the entire Ring cycle. On 2 November, however, the Board of Directors made a sudden and last-

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246 “General News and Notes In the World of Music: The Close of the Opera Season – Mr. Gatti-Casazza Carries Out All His Promises” *The New York Times*, 22 April 1917

minute decision to remove the Ring cycle and all German-language productions from the season. The directors explained that the decision was “not due to the Muck incident”; according to the *New York Times*,

> The troubles of the Boston Symphony Orchestra did not figure here, but a corresponding change in popular feeling was operative in both cases . . . The Directors sounded public opinion when the last season closed and found it favorable in general to leaving the repertory unchanged. Again this Fall, the newspaper comment showed a demand for Wagner. In the last few weeks a new turn of affairs appeared to have taken place, a general protest arising which resulted in yesterday’s action.248

This decision may have been influenced in part by an ongoing “Opera War” (as it was called in *The New York Times*) between New York and Chicago.249 The Chicago Opera, which had ceased to perform German works, was coming to the Lexington Theatre (the same one that would host the Star Opera Company just a year later) for a residency. It was competing with the Metropolitan not only for an audience, but also for contracts with America’s premier opera performers. Seen in light of the Chicago Opera’s actions, the Metropolitan’s refusal to make some sort of patriotic concession concerning repertoire could be potentially disastrous.

In her article condemning German opera performance, published just a day before the board’s decision, Lucie Jay qualified her position against German opera, saying, “There can be no imputation of bigotry, since Americans continue to welcome the instrumental music of the great Germans, in spite of the status of the war.”250 At the time, Jay was the only female director of the New York Philharmonic Society, which continued to perform German repertoire under the leadership of Czech conductor Josef Stransky. In January 1918 the President of the Philharmonic Society, Oswald Garrison Villard, resigned unexpectedly. *The New York Times* reports that

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In a discussion of the programs last season, President Villard also called the attention of the public to the fact that “in the matter of the musical education of a great metropolis such as that for which the Philharmonic is laboring, opinions are as many as there are educated men to voice them.” He defended the playing of works of Beethoven, Wagner, and Liszt, composers commended to the society by Pulitzer in his gift, and denied that they were chosen “with a view to increasing the box office receipts,” asserting rather that the Philharmonic “had maintained high artistic standards.”

In fact, the article continues, “Mr. Villard was silent as to the further report that he had told the Philharmonic Directors that he feared the society might suffer because of his expressions of opinion on the war as editor of The Evening Post.” Villard was a German-born pacifist and a writer for The Nation and the New York Evening Post, which were both owned by his father. He spoke out freely and fervently against America’s involvement in the war and supported a compassionate view of Germany. Although the relationship between Villard and Mrs. Jay is unclear, we can safely assume from what we know of each that they would have disagreed strongly concerning German cultural expression in America. In April 1918 Lucie Jay retired from her position on the board of the Philharmonic. The announcement in the New York Times reports,

It became known yesterday, following the Philharmonic Society’s annual meeting at the executive offices in Carnegie Hall, that Mrs. William Jay, who was recently active in the campaign against Dr. Karl Muck of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, had resigned from the Philharmonic directorate, and that a similar attack had now been made upon Josef Stransky, leader of the Philharmonic.

Mrs. George L. Cheney, one of two women members now on the Directors’ board, presented at the meeting a letter received by her calling on the Philharmonic to follow the Boston Symphony and other orchestras in dismissing foreign conductors hitherto active in America. No action was taken on the letter, but Secretary Leifels said after the meeting that Conductor Stransky was born in Bohemia and was “pro-ally” in the war.

252 Ibid.
The article is vague in its attribution of blame, although its wording suggests that Jay may have been involved in the attack on Stransky (perhaps she was even the author of Mrs. Cheney’s letter).\textsuperscript{254} Jay had, in fact, been campaigning hard against Karl Muck. In March she had even taken on responsibility for the musical life of Boston, leading the effort of many (including the former Justice of the Appellate Division of the New York Supreme Court, George L. Ingraham) to have Muck removed as director of the Boston Orchestra. The \textit{New York Times} reports,

Mrs. Jay said last night that she heard from Dr. H.D. Fairbairn of 249 McDonough Street, Brooklyn, that the management of the Boston Symphony Orchestra was accustomed to give away seats to soldiers and sailors in uniform with the result that audiences which listened to the German director had a distinctly patriotic appearance. Accordingly, she said, she got in touch with Rear Admiral Usher, commanding the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and with Major Gen. Mann, commanding at Governors Island, and both officers assured her they would not allow soldiers or sailors in the Government service to accept free tickets to the concerts.

“The abominable use,” said Mrs. Jay, “that is being made of our soldiers and sailors to support an enemy alien in his arrogant conduct could only have sprung from the modern German brain. To use these fine men to support German propaganda through the medium of love of music, should be condemned by every loyal American and lover of fair play.”\textsuperscript{255}

By August, Lucie Jay was openly campaigning against all German music, including instrumental music. As she summered in Newport, Rhode Island (a favorite destination of New York’s elite), she began asking her friends to refrain from including music by German composers in their private home concerts.\textsuperscript{256} She simultaneously protested against the inclusion of German music in professional public concerts, both in Newport and in Bar Harbor, Maine, with some success. Back in New York, Jay took to protesting personally to Mayor Hylan against

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\textsuperscript{254} The attack on Stransky did not amount to anything except Stransky’s capitulation and the reduction (but not exclusion) of German repertoire in Philharmonic concerts. More on the story and other stories of attacked composers can be found in Edmund A. Bowles’s article “Karl Muck and His Compatriots: German Conductors in America during World War I (And How They Coped)” in \textit{American Music} 25, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 405-40.
\textsuperscript{255} “Dr. Manning Joins Attack on Dr. Muck,” \textit{The New York Times}, 13 March 1918.
proposed festivals of German song.\textsuperscript{257} She was still working vehemently in the Spring of 1919, as reported by the \textit{New York Tribune}:

Although Mrs. William Jay, who organized the Anti-German Music League, has protested against the playing of German music by the New York Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall to-night and to-morrow afternoon, it was learned yesterday that this new orchestra, headed by Arthur Bodanzky, would play selections from Wagner, Brahms and Mendelssohn. Mrs. Jay said when Mr. Bodanzky was asked at the rehearsal yesterday to remove the objectionable numbers from the programme, he replied that it was physically impossible at this late date. Mrs. Charles S. Guggenheimer, who is a member of the executive committee of the new orchestra, and one of its principal patronesses, when asked about the matter, said that “when Mr. Bodanzky made up his programme the committee saw no reason why German music should not be played, considering the fact that it had been performed all winter by the leading orchestras.”\textsuperscript{258}

As we have noted, it was not long before Jay announced her retirement from protesting German music performance altogether.

It seems that Mrs. Jay’s vigorous efforts proved effective in changing the minds of many. If we listen closely, we can hear echoes of moral panic in a \textit{New York Times} “Topics of the Times” written the day after Lucie Jay’s announcement that she would no longer pursue the abolition of German music. The author of the article observes the capitulation of the general public, including the press, to the radical ideas of Mrs. Jay (emphasis mine), while noting that they did so only reluctantly:

In announcing her abandonment, now that peace has come, or at any rate is in plain sight, of efforts to prevent the presentation here of German plays and operas and the public playing of German music, Mrs. William Jay puts herself again in accord with the better as well as the greater part of American sentiment. It was not with entire satisfaction, even while the war was something of a terror as well as an unmitigated horror to us all, that we approved of drawing national or racial lines in art. \textit{Approve of it we did}, however, for the circumstances were more than unusual, and German artists, like German scientists, had proved so clearly that they were much more Germans than artists and scientists that it was \textit{right and}

\textsuperscript{258} German Music Stays on Symphony Programme – Mrs. William Jay Says Her Protest Was Overruled by Orchestra Leader,” \textit{New York Tribune}, 1 May 1919.
even necessary to treat them in their individual rather than their professional capacities. They chose to be the enemies of civilization, to justify or deny the enormities committed by the German Government and to the extent of their ability to work against civilization rather than for it. Not quite all of them were thus guilty or misguided, but the acts of the great majority had put the exceptions under a suspicion that was just because legitimately self-defensive. Instinct, if not reason, insisted that even the works of German masters long dead should for the time being be put under the common ban on all things Teutonic. To do that was absurd, but it was also somehow right, and it was done, though reluctantly.259

Indeed, as reluctant as the change may have been, it was nonetheless irrevocable. At the end of the Metropolitan Opera’s 1917-1918 season (from which Mrs. Jay and others had successfully worked to remove all German operas), an account of its success in The New York Times claims that the season featured a welcome and necessary shift in repertoire. It reports:

Dependence had to be placed chiefly upon the work of Italian composers to make up for the large withdrawal of German works. This was necessary, to be sure, but fortunately, whether because of a change in the musical preference of the public or because of war psychology, it was a change welcome to patrons of opera, who were quite willing to forego the severe intellectual pleasures of the German music drama for the delights of more melodious compositions. When the great war has become a memory and the resentments it has aroused have become somewhat less intense, German opera will doubtless again have its due place here. It will never again hold the place of dominance it once held. The ups and downs of German opera here constitute a curious chapter in the musical history of New York City. Some thirty years ago there was what may be called, not a conspiracy, perhaps, but let us say a conjuration to make the Metropolitan Opera House the home of German music exclusively. While the lovers of Italian and French opera candidly recognized the very great qualities of the German composers, the champions of German music showed their narrowness by denying any merit whatever to compositions not of German origin. They had nothing but ridicule for composers of other nationalities. They were amazingly successful, they literally tyrannized the public into the acceptance of opera seasons substantially all German.

The reaction came in the ‘90s, for while New York operagoers listened with deep interest, and many of them with appropriate emotions, to the great productions of Richard Wagner and of Beethoven, they knew that they were still capable of deriving much pleasure from the works of the older and later French and Italian composers. They found the courage to say so and they had their way. The triumphs of Galli-Curci this Winter show what pleasure the public has in the pure beauty of voice and song. However displeasing this may be to those who

regard music as a duty, to be piously performed only according to their own ritual, it is a fact of which opera managements must take due notice. And it was fortunate that the abandonment of opera in the German language came at a time when the public was emancipated from a compulsory and too exclusive devotion to that branch of musical art.\textsuperscript{260}

Here we see a complete reversal of Hugh Reginald Haweis’s musical moral code. The intellectual German music is too severe, too pious and too ritualistic, whereas the melodious Italian music is delightful, pure, and beautiful. It is almost as if the musical world self-consciously turned its standards on their heads, the “war psychology” providing the excuse for a change they had been wanting for some time. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the gap created by the loss of the German repertoire and musicians was also filled with the music and talents of Americans. From the start of the war, newspapers were quick to announce and celebrate the addition of American compositions and performers, with headlines such as “Our Composers Benefited By War – Symphony Society Features Works of Americans as Its Novelties of Season.”\textsuperscript{261} In March of 1918, one month before Lucie Jay retired from the Board of Directors and the attack on conductor Josef Stransky began, the \textit{New York Times} reported on the Philharmonic Society’s 1917-1918 season repertoire.\textsuperscript{262} In January (just after the retirement of Oswald Garrison Villard) it had decided to cut out all repertoire by \textit{living} German composers for the length of the war. In eighty-six programs, the orchestra featured works by seventy composers, of whom twenty-one (less than a third of the total) were German, seventeen were French, eleven American, nine Russian, six Italian, four English, one Scandinavian and one Swiss. The Americans were celebrated for their “prominent place” on its programs, and Henry

Hadley, Edgar Stillman Kelley, Edward MacDowell, George Whitefield Chadwick, Henry F. Gilbert, Nicola Laucella, Albert Chiaffarelli, Emerson Whithorne, and Mana-Zucca are mentioned. In fact, it seems that significantly more attention was paid to the inclusion of music by American composers than to its quality. Supporting American composers and performers had become a demonstration of patriotism and the fact that they were replacing Germans only magnified the benefit.

One American performer who gained from the turn against German artists was Eleonora De Cisneros, a mezzo-soprano at the Metropolitan Opera. Making use of her status as a respected and famous musician, she laid out her opinion on the issue of German musical performance in a lengthy *New York Times* feature in late April 1919. Titled “No German Music – Lest We Forget,” it uses inflammatory language reminiscent of Jay, Warfield, and others we have heard. In fact, Eleonora’s writing even features a dramatic, dream-like sequence intended to pull on the heartstrings, making clear that the issue of national music is a moral one. She wrote,

“If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields!”

It was at a symphony concert. My soul had responded to the eternal beauty and purity of the “Unfinished Symphony.” The world seemed lovely even if the rain made Sunday gloomy and unsympathetic. Krehbiel, that dean of music critics, had been telling of the days when Mozart was sung with a religious simplicity which only the truly great artist evokes, and my memory brought me back to the student days here in old New York, when we learned from the lips of a Sembrich and a Lehmann what tradition in music (singing music) means.

Suddenly it seemed to me that I was on a ship – an old Viking’s ship! In the distance a pale woman lay on a purple velvet couch, on a near-by table stood a golden goblet. I watched the woman, then I watched the blue sea, and again I watched the woman, whose sadness made me sad. And through it all came an insidious music that made me suffer. Music that pulsed with life and love and a longing never satisfied. Suddenly I no longer saw the ship. I saw the Somme! I saw a place in “No Man’s Land” that for a year had not been crossed but by the dead! It was night, a moonless night, and thousands of tiny lights moved over the fantastic field. Strange phosphorescent spirits rushed past me and were lost in the
impenetrable darkness beyond, and through it all came a moaning, a cry of pitiful pleading – “Do not forget us so soon!” – and the glowworms over the slimy bed of death flew wildly as if forced by the ever-increasing volume of unsatiated harmonies.

The vision passed! But it seemed as if my heart would break with sadness and pain! No longer was I “Brangaena” visualizing my “Isoldas,” from the German Gadski to sweet Lillian Nordica (I was her last Brangaena); from the Italian, French, Russian, and Polish soprano who had sung the Irish Princess with me to the Austrian Matzenauer (we sang the last “Tristan” that will be heard for many a day in Paris). Even the frightful Somme vanished and I was listening to a superb rendition of the “Prelude” of “Tristan und Isolde.” The first Wagner music I had heard since 1916.

Around me were hundreds of Americans – I presume they were Americans. There is a certain Dr. Max Winter, who says that there are 800,000 Germans in New York City who want German music! But you men and women who listened to that music, if you have a drop of allied blood in your veins, how could you applaud it? To me it was as full of tragedy as the “Marche Funebre” of Chopin, and I would as soon have applauded as I would have laughed at a procession of the weeping, violated women-children of France and Belgium!

Wagner’s music is a consolation to German ears. I myself, an American, love it. It is not wildly temperamental as the Italian music, nor as sensuous as the French. It is the music of thought, full of unsatisfied desires, of “sehnsucht,” of longing. To the German soul it heals the wounds that even our enemies have. To them it is above all else the spiritual symbol of the German Spirit, the Fatherland! The man or woman who can today listen to German music as in ante-bellum days is either a German, a neutral, or a pacifist!”

The time is not yet ripe for the German music propaganda. Let our dead have time to sleep. Our wounded time to heal. Our maimed time to walk happily, even be it with one leg or on arm! Our blind time to smile with sightless eyes! Then, too, may the flowers bloom over ther [sic] trenches that the Germans glorified with the names of Wagner’s heroes – Wotan! Siegfried! Until then, let them wait –lest we forget!”

Cisneros may have been present seven months later when a group of Metropolitan Opera singers, instrumentalists, and administrators (including Gatti-Casazza) celebrated the 11 November armistice with a grand procession to Times Square. The mob carried a dummy of Wagner’s Siegfried, dressed up in a helmet to look like Kaiser Wilhelm, hung in effigy from the gallows.264

We can safely call this action a type of moral panic. The protesters were professional musicians

with a history of performing and appreciating (even idolizing) Wagner, the fighting was over and victory seemed to be on its way, and Wagner had already been removed from the performing schedule. Neither the Kaiser nor Wagner posed any threat to the Metropolitan Opera, yet they troubled themselves to make a violent public spectacle. Indeed, musical moral panics did not abate after the fighting had stopped; we will remember that the story of the Star Opera Company does not even begin until months after the end of the war. The efforts of Lucie Jay and others had proved so effective that their results were seen well after her retirement.

Given Lucie Jay’s success in swaying the minds and actions of so many, we are bound to ask who she was and whether we can uncover any information that might help us to understand her overwhelming desire to sever all professional and social relations with enemy sympathizers (real or alleged). Lucie was the wife of William Jay (Figure 12), a lieutenant colonel who had served in the army of the Potomac in the Civil War and upon retirement became a successful New York lawyer whose firm represented the *New York Herald*. William was of French lineage, but his family had been woven deeply into American culture (and more specifically, that of New York) for generations; his father was the American minister to Austria and his great-grandfather John was New York’s representative at the Continental Congress, the first Chief Justice of the United States, and one of the authors of the Federalist Papers.265 The first Jay, Augustus, had arrived in America as a French refugee in 1685; the family was American royalty.266

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Mrs. Jay’s own background was markedly different. She was the daughter of Henry Oelrichs, a German immigrant and merchant from Bremen who had founded Oelrichs & Co. Steamship Company in Baltimore in the mid-nineteenth century. The firm soon became the official US agents for the North German Lloyd Steamship Company out of Bremen, Henry became the president, and the business (and family) moved their headquarters to New York. By the early twentieth century, the North German Lloyd Steamship Company had become one of Germany’s most successful and most important shipping companies, and Lucie had become a wealthy young member of the elite, deeply entrenched in the world of the New York upper class. As a young woman she studied in Paris alongside Charles McKim, a budding Beaux-Arts architect who later rose to fame as a member of the renowned firm McKim, Mead & White. Lucie is mentioned briefly in Mosette Broderick’s historical account of the firm, *Triumvirate*:

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268 More details on the Oelrichs family can be found in Lars Maisch’s *German Merchants in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
McKim, Mead & White: Art, Architecture, Scandal, and Class in America’s Gilded Age as a love interest of McKim’s:

Those who flocked around McKim included wealthy young women “finishing” their education in the court of Louis Napoléon. Lucy Oelrichs, the daughter of a Baltimore shipping magnate, was given skating lessons by young Charlie, whom she described as fine and noble, already discoursing on the role of beauty in life . . . Perhaps “Mackim,” as he was known to the French, had a crush on Lucy Oelrichs. On his return, the humble remuneration of his first job was used to purchase a pair of lady’s ice skates with silver-plated hardware, which were nestled in a small leopard-skin bag trimmed in brown velvet. He had them monogrammed with her initials by Tiffany’s, then sent to Miss Oelrichs. This romance went no further. Lucy Oelrichs married an American of patrician breeding, Augustus269 Jay, and the couple were among McKim’s best friends in his last years.270

Lucie became Mrs. Jay in 1878 and remained so until William’s death in 1915; the couple had three daughters, of whom one, Eleanor, survived into adulthood. In 1904 Eleanor married Mr. Arthur Iselin, a New York textile merchant, and the two of them went on to provide the Jays four grandchildren.

At the time she began protesting, Lucie Jay had lost all three of her daughters (two to death and one to marriage), as well as her husband. Nevertheless, she was comfortable financially and likely did not have or need a job. As a member of the New York elite she had long been a student of culture; music and the arts were well within her purview. Without the protection of her husband’s famously American lineage, it is possible that she feared her identity as a more recent German immigrant might surface. If her loyalty was questioned, she might lose her coveted position in New York society. In a world where American loyalty was to be proved, Jay’s attack seems to have been born of a combination of the time and her insecurity. Moreover,

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269 This seems to be an incorrect identification; William had an uncle named Peter Augustus and an ancestor named Augustus.

Jay was not the only woman to take up the anti-German cause (though she was one of the loudest). Reports of society women calling for the abolition of German music performances pepper American newspapers between 1917 and 1919. One Mrs. F. H. Potter proclaimed, “Let us, if necessary, starve for music in this country until our war is ended.”\textsuperscript{271} Mrs. Carolyn Kane Wright and Mrs. William P. Douglas joined Lucie Jay in her official complaint against Karl Muck and attempted to have him barred from performing in New York.\textsuperscript{272} A Mrs. Henry Ashton Crosby wrote in a letter to the \textit{New York Times} concerning Karl Muck,

\begin{quote}
There can be no half measures in the Muck case. It is either loyalty or treason! . . . there is but a handful of women in Boston, my daughter, Mrs. Allan Forbes, being one, who love their country more than their music, and who have been willing to give up the symphony seats. Is there no possibility of awakening in the minds of those who are in power the all-important and vital need and duty of having justice done by public hanging of spies until they are dealt with as other nations treat them? We are ignoring the most alarming menace, and [it?] is an attitude which, as a nation, is ignoble.\textsuperscript{273}
\end{quote}

Mrs. Oliver Cromwell Field, President of the American Relief Legion and Chairman of the American Defence Society’s committee for “suppressing all things German,” began her crusade against German music in May of 1918 by attempting to stop a free organ recital at City College in which Samuel Baldwin planned to perform works by Wagner, Schubert, and Bach.\textsuperscript{274} In Flushing, Long Island, the Vice President of the Park Garden Club, Mrs. H.A. Vivian, resolved to officially change the names of all roses that bore German names.\textsuperscript{275}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{274} “Fight on German Music: Mrs. Field Criticises Organ Recital Program at City College,” \textit{The New York Times}, 8 May 1918.
\end{footnotes}
It is not surprising that women attempted to show their devotion to their country within the spheres that were familiar to them. For the elite the predominant sphere was high society art culture, of which serious music was at the very center. These women’s desire to prove themselves patriotic within the art music sphere was fueled by a budding conservative women’s movement that concerned itself with national defense. In her article “‘So much for men’: Conservative Women and National Defense in the 1920s and 1930s,” Christine Erickson lays out the growth of this movement from its antisuffrage and antipacifist beginnings during the First World War through the formation and work of the Women’s Patriotic Conference on National Defense in the 1920s and ’30s. Erickson argues that conservative women during the interwar period attempted to assert their authority in the public realm by re-situating national defense as a particularly female issue, citing women’s expertise in the home, the school, and the church as evidence for their claim. She also argues that women’s notion of national defense was shaped both by conservative ideas and by patriotic sentiment. She explains,

. . . elements of conservative thought . . . included hostility toward concentrated power in government and toward radical ideologies, especially communism, as well as an uneasy sense that traditional moral and religious values were disintegrating. . . . Patriotism, however, came more from the heart than from the head . . . it demanded an active and uncompromising defense of cherished American institutions and ideas against hostile forces. Moreover, it was a job for women. If patriotism meant serving one’s country, mused the national president of the American War Mothers, women could easily transfer their natural gift for unselfishness, this “God-given privilege,” into political activism.276

Although this movement did not crystallize until after the war, the seeds of these attitudes can be seen in Mrs. Jay and the other anti-German women identified here. Hostility towards the power-hungry Kaiser, a fear that American moral and religious values were disintegrating, defense of American musical institutions from hostile Germanic musicians and repertoire, and a desire to

serve their country all motivated and characterized these women’s crusades against German music. Moreover, Erickson tells us that the Women’s Patriotic Conference on National Defense was borne out of the coming together of sixteen national patriotic organizations, including the American Legion Auxiliary, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Service Star Legion, and the American Defense Society, many of which, as we have seen, had been individually active in attempting to stop German music during the war. The women who were claiming a place for themselves in the business of national defense, who had been trained by H.R. Haweis and others to think of music both nationally and morally, were convinced that it was their mission to alert the country to the perils of German music, even to the point of panic.

* * *

Thus far, we have seen examples of musical moral panic initiated or perpetuated by all of the agents that Stanley Cohen identified in *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*: the press, the public, law enforcement, lawmakers and politicians, and action groups. To his list we added that the cooperation of religious groups and figures was key, since they are a major authority in the determination of collective morality. We saw in Chapter 1 that Hugh Reginald Haweis had particular authority to teach about the morality of music because of his status as an Anglican priest. From the earliest months of the war religious figures can be seen involving themselves in the development of an American war response. One such figure was The Reverend Doctor Newell Dwight Hillis (Figure 13).
Pastor of the Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn, Hillis was a well-known preacher, lecturer, and author with more than a dozen books on theology, morality, politics, and patriotism to his name. At the beginning of the century Hillis had joined a campaign against immoral and lascivious content in Broadway plays, particularly one named *Sapho*. The story of the case against *Sapho* is its own study in musical moral panic, with press, public, law enforcement, lawmakers, action groups (namely The Society for the Suppression of Vice), and religious figures (Hillis) participating in an overblown scandal in which the star of the play, Olga Nethersole, was arrested for “violating public decency” and tried before a jury over the course of a number of weeks. In the war Hillis found the perfect opportunity to champion his moral, patriotic, and artistic ideals. In late 1914 he quarreled with the head of the German-American Alliance over the role of German-Americans in bringing about peace. At first glance, Hillis’s position seems respectful and hopeful. He says,

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The German who has been educated here and who has lived here for years, who may even have been born here of German parentage, is respected in Germany. He has relatives and friends there, he owns land there, he has interests, be they extended or not, in the Fatherland, and all of these things go to make him a person of influence. Added to that, he has been given the opportunity of looking at life through the eyeglass of Americanism, and has seen a broader outlook, which is not marred by any touch of militarism. His friends and relatives in Germany believe in him, his successes have made them positive that he is a person to be reckoned with, and it is, therefore, in him that the hopes of peace must lie.\footnote{279 “Challenges Hillis to A War Debate: German-American Alliance Head Would Answer Pastor’s Attack on Kaiser,” \textit{The New York Times}, 23 December 1914.}

Yet with his final statement, “It is only through the German-American and through his forceful influence that peace with honor can result,” Hillis anticipates the atmosphere that would later require people like Walter Damrosch and Lucie Jay to “prove” their patriotism through extreme sentiment. In 1917 Hillis took on art music with an attack on the violinist Fritz Kreisler. One of his sermons, which was clearly intended to elicit an emotional and moral response against Kreisler (and all German musicians working in America), was reported in \textit{The New York Times}:

\begin{quote}
Our Government forbids trade with States at war with us. Would a merchant enter into a contract to buy goods from a German he would straightway be arrested; but what shall be said about men who enter into business contracts with Muck and Kreisler? It is well known that Kreisler is an Austrian Captain; that to obtain his release from the army he entered into an agreement to send back to the home Government a large percentage of his income. An Austrian gun costs approximately $20. Every night that Kreisler is paid $1,000 Austria can buy fifty rifles with which Germany can kill our American boys.

Young Albert Spalding obeyed the call of his country and is serving in France for $30 a month. To do this he canceled contracts for $45,000 for his Winter’s work. Last night over in New York, men and women who claim to be patriots bought from an enemy State some thousands of dollars’ worth of pleasure, and with the receipts Kreisler can send enough money home to buy fifty rifles with which to kill Albert Spalding.

It is a duty of jurists to consider this whole matter. Even though we are not at open war with Austria there must be some law under which an injunction can be taken out against directors of theatres and music halls that will enjoin them from doing business with an enemy State, or lending aid and comfort to the enemy.

If no other citizen will undertake this task, and a law can be found under which action can be taken, I will myself take those steps that are necessary to end this outrage against American soldiers and sailors.
\end{quote}
Kreisler states that he has been sending his money home to support musicians, wounded, of course, in fighting against England and France and Italy. He thinks that the American people lack so little logic and sound sense as to be unable to perceive that in relieving the Austrian Government of the necessity of supporting these enemies of France they can take their money, thus set free, and buy guns against our allies and ourselves. He tells us that he could not have sent any money to Austria because for eight months there have been no mails. But there was a Red Cross work here in the United States! Does not this Government need money with which to buy rifles?280

Kreisler, having served in the Austrian army until he was injured by a Russian bullet and honorably discharged very early in the war, was public about his support of war orphans and musicians affected by the war. In 1916 he had begged America and all other nations “that a distinction be made between governments and human beings; that political differences be freed of personal hatreds.”281 In 1917 Kreisler responded to Hillis’s accusations, saying,

In his cowardly, irresponsible, and unethical attack upon me, Dr. Hillis said: ‘It is well known that Kreisler is an Austrian Captain, and to obtain his release from the army he promised to send a large percentage of his income back to the home Government.’ This is a baseless and malicious lie. Knowing Dr. Hillis to be a minister of the Gospel, I refuse to believe that he uttered this lie in full cognizance of its falsity and import. I expect him to retract his misstatement publicly and without delay.282

If any such retraction from Hillis exists, it seems that it was not made public. Kreisler, however, did surrender his American career because of the scandal surrounding his citizenship, on the very same day that Hillis preached his inflammatory sermon. The New York Times reports:

Fritz Kreisler, the violinist, yesterday announced his virtual retirement form the concert stage for the period of the war, and asked for a general release from contracts outstanding by which he would have earned $85,000 in concerts that he had yet to play this season . . . [Kreisler] told his decision as follows:

“Bitter attacks have been made upon me as an Austrian and because at the outbreak of the war I fought as an officer in the Austrian army at the Russian front. I have also been criticized for fulfilling engagements under contracts made long ago. I therefore am asking all concerned to release me from my obligations

under existing contracts. My promise will be kept to play, without compensation, for those charities to which I have already pledged my support. I shall always remain deeply sensible of my debt of gratitude to this country for past kindness and appreciation of my art.”

The article goes on to recount the decline of Kreisler’s career:

The same change of sentiment that ended German opera at the Metropolitan this Fall affected the concert artists also. Mr. Kreisler found a woman’s club had canceled his concert at Sewickley, Penn., on Nov. 3. Since then, at Pittsburgh and Williamsport, Penn., as well as at Youngstown, Ohio, and Morgantown, W. Va., other concerts by him have been barred, officially so in one instance, at Pittsburgh, by Charles S. Hubbard, the Director of Public Safety. He filled engagements at Baltimore and at Washington, where he was heard by many of the Diplomatic Corps, and also at Hartford, where the Mayor in person ordered the concert to go on.

Indeed, reports of cancellations of Kreisler’s concerts filled the newspapers in early November 1917 (the same time that the Muck panic was unfolding). After receiving “protests from a number of patriotic organizations and from many individuals,” Pittsburgh’s Director of Public Safety declared that “it would be unpatriotic to permit him to appear at a public entertainment.”

Likewise, “the attitude of Louisville citizens, as indicated in resolutions of criticism passed by several organizations” was enough to convince Kreisler of Louisville, Kentucky’s “widespread hostility” towards him. In Lynn, Massachusetts, Mayor Walter H. Creamer denied Kreisler a permit to perform, based on protests by the American Legion. Kreisler was nevertheless able to obtain a State sanction for a “sacred concert.” In response, the enraged Mayor announced that he would “have a jury of twelve musicians determine whether Kreisler played other than “sacred music” and would have police present to make an arrest in the event of

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284 It is curious to see Baltimore (home of those adamant anti-Muckites) on the list of fulfilled engagements. It is possible that the Baltimore uproar was so closely tied to their historical ownership of *The Star-Spangled Banner* that the issue of Kreisler, which had nothing to do with the patriotic piece, was not of great concern to them.
violation of the permit for such a concert.” The concert was canceled. In announcing Kreisler’s withdrawal from concert life, the New York Times reminds us that Kreisler was married to an American woman and that “all of his earnings since the war had been given to aid the artists of allied nations left stranded in Vienna, and to the support of orphans of Russian and Serbian soldiers whom his American wife had nursed in Austrian hospitals early in the war.”

Although there seems to be no evidence that Kreisler felt any guilt for performing in America (and little evidence that he should have felt guilt, given his charitable intentions), the New York Times participated in anti-Kreisler sentiment by claiming in its sub-headline that “Violinist Finds That He Can’t with Self-Respect Accept America’s Money.” Even though the case against Kreisler seems to be stronger than that against Muck (he had, in fact, fought on the side of the Central Powers), Kreisler had not demonstrated any anti-American or anti-Allied sentiment, only love of his homeland and sympathy for all affected by the tragedies of war. Unlike Muck, Kreisler laid down his arms quickly, saying, “I propose to live quietly and devote myself to composing some serious works that I have long had in mind.” He nevertheless remained hopeful that music would set the world free from hatred and conflict, insisting that “It is my fond hope that after the war has ended we artists will be in a position to carry first the message of peace through all the countries. Surely art and religion will be the first forces that will set about the great reconstruction of world sympathy.”

Newell Dwight Hillis was not the only clergyman to involve himself in the German music debate. One Reverend Doctor William T. Manning, rector of Trinity Church in New York,
came to the aid of Lucie Jay in her fight against Muck. An outspoken war advocate, Manning was a chaplain at Camp Upton on Long Island, and issued this statement against the performance of German music in March of 1918:

> We are in the midst of the greatest conflict in all history, in which every ideal and principle which we hold is at stake. It is our duty to do everything in our power to stir and strengthen the spirit of our people for the struggle before them and not to dull and weaken that spirit by our attitude of tolerance toward those with whom we are at war. While our boys, fighting at the front in our defense, are being assailed by liquid fire, poison gas, and other like inventions of German Kultur, is it not fitting nor decent for us at concerts, or in any other places, to give our countenance and support to the avowed friends and upholders of the Kaiser.\(^{292}\)

These reports of clergy involvement are quite obvious and open, but others were more insidious. Everywhere, it seems, there was an ever-growing intertwining of religious expression and patriotism. Nearly everywhere, this intertwining resulted in a pro-war sentiment, and a call to express one’s faith by expressing one’s patriotism.\(^{293}\) 

Proud declarations that European Christmas music had been replaced by compositions by Americans (including T. Tertius Noble, Clarence Dickinson, Harry Rowe Shelley, and Horatio Parker) filled newspapers early in the war.\(^{294}\) Patriotic music was sung in church settings, and church music at public patriotic gatherings.\(^{295}\) One priest removed his vestments to lead 10,000 people in Battery Park in the singing of the national anthem.\(^{296}\) President Woodrow Wilson called for special days of national

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\(^{293}\) One fascinating exception comes from Rabbi Silverman at Temple Emanu-El in New York, who in December 1915 attacked the mingling of religion and war, saying “How can the Christians in Europe sing Hosannas today and then load their guns to take the life of a man? They sing peace and the cannons cry that there is no peace. On the one side they pray for the fellowship of humanity, and on the other shot and shell roar and sabres flash. This monstrosity makes Christmas a holy mockery.” In “Music of America Fills Our Churches,” *The New York Times*, 26 December 1915.


prayer for victory. Sermons were preached to encourage victory through might, rather than peace. At St. Patrick’s Cathedral on Easter 1918, the Reverend John H. O’Rourke preached a sermon titled “The Victory of the Soldier in Christ.” The Archbishop of York, the Most Reverend Cosmo Gordon Lang, visited the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York as a gesture of thanksgiving for America’s participation in the war, preaching a sermon based on a thoroughly de-contextualized passage from the Gospel of Luke: “They beckoned to their partners which were in the other ship that they should come and help them, and they came.” Evangelical juggernaut Billy Sunday preached the sermon “God’s Grenadiers,” all across the United States, proclaiming that

The soldier who breaks every regulation, yet is found on the firing line in the hour of battle, is better than the God-forsaken mutt who won’t enlist, and does all he can to keep others from enlisting. In these days all are patriots or traitors, to your country and the cause of Jesus Christ.

All this fervor is embodied in the American appearance of Belgian Cardinal Desideratus Mercier, who was famous for his leadership in the Belgian resistance. In September 1919 Mercier was celebrated at the grand ballroom of the Waldorf with “a day of almost continual ovation” and a “dinner, designed to be as representative of the city’s life as possible.” Mayor John Hylan, whom we will remember from the story of the Star Opera Company, spoke to the Roman Catholic Cardinal, saying,

Your Eminence, you are beloved by all creeds – by Protestant, by Jew, by all. In your travels here you will find we are all citizens of a common State, where creeds and inequalities are submerged to the general interest. I think you will realize how a great country exists and goes forward without denying God as the Germans seemed to do. It was this spirit of America, this belief in God, that

298 “War Note to Sound At Easter Services,” The New York Times, 30 March 1918.
inspired you in your lonely pastoral watch on the outposts of civilization during those dark days in Belgium.\textsuperscript{301}

Mercier was draped in the American flag, and the national anthem was sung by all. Clearly, issues of morality, religion, and patriotism had become thoroughly muddled by the end of the war. Remembering our discussions of music’s particular ability to embody both morality (Chapter 1) and nationalism (Chapters 2 and 3), we can understand afresh how discussions of music during this highly charged time could have resulted in panic and extreme actions.

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In this chapter, we have explored musical moral panics in America’s World War I era. We have witnessed the participation of the public, the press, law enforcement, politicians, action groups, and religious figures in creating folk devils and propagating disaster mentalities and in reacting disproportionately to real or imagined threats to American physical and moral safety. Along the way we have asked ourselves what good it did to identify such stories as moral panics, and we concluded that the thorough explorations of these historical moments might allow us greater insight into the fears and insecurities of American music culture at the time. We noticed that the city of Baltimore might have been insecure about its place in America’s historical narrative, that Lucie Jay might have been concerned about her German ancestry, that the Metropolitan Opera was worried about the invading Chicago Opera stealing its customers, and that the Mayors of those towns that refused Muck and Kreisler wanted to prove themselves and their cities to be patriotic. Now we must turn to a broader view. Why were there so many of these stories of musical moral panic, all concerning German music and musicians, at this time?

\textsuperscript{301} “Mercier is Hailed as ‘Hero-Priest’,” \textit{The New York Times}, 18 September 1919.
What can the phenomenon of musical moral panics at this time tell us about the American conception of music’s moral nature before the war, and how did the war and the panics change this conception? As we observed in Chapter 1, America had developed a notion prior to the war that music was essentially and fundamentally moral, that it could and should be divided along national lines, and that the most supremely morally good of all national musics was that of Germany. In our final pages, we will examine the repercussions of this web of wartime musical moral panics by asking how America’s thoughts about music, morality, and nationality after the war differed from those before it.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS: POST-PANIC AMERICAN MUSICAL ETHICS

In Chapter 2 we affirmed the idea that nationalism and music, particularly in Germany, were inextricably linked and mutually dependent, particularly in the period of German nation formation that preceded the war. As we saw in Chapter 3, American identity formation was equally complicated, especially as it applied to both “hyphenated Americans” and American art music culture. In our most recent chapter we saw that the concepts of nationhood and morality and music that had dominated American thought before the Great War resulted in a flood of musical moral panics. This period of tumultuous and emotional moral decision-making had a considerable impact on American musical ethics. In our final chapter we will explore that impact. Was there a significant change in moral outlook? How was it evidenced in musical history writing, criticism, and performance? Was the American change in viewpoint reflected in Germany’s own shifting moral identity? These questions will guide us as we seek to understand the impact of World War I and its moral panics on American concepts of music and morality and national identity.

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In 1915 budding American author, photographer, and critic Carl Van Vechten published his first collection of essays, named after its most intriguing article, *Music after the Great War.* In the article, Van Vechten contemplated the future of art music after the end of the war. He wrote in the introduction,

When the great war was declared, Leo Stein, in Florence at the time, asserted that the day of the cubists, the futurists, and their ilk was at an end. “After the war,” he said, “there will be no more of this nonsense. Matisse may survive, and Picasso in
his ‘early manner,’ but Renoir and Cézanne are the last of the great painters, and it is on their work that the new art, whatever it may be, will be founded.” . . . [It] may be stated that a similar misconception exists in relation to “modern” music. There are those who feel that the steady line of progression from Bach, through Beethoven and Brahms, has broken off somewhere. The exact point of departure is not agreed upon. Some say that music as an art ended with Richard Wagner’s death. There are only a few, however, who do not include Brahms and Tschaikowsky in the list of those graced with the crown of genius. There are many who are generous enough to believe that Richard Strauss and Claude Debussy have carried on the divine torch. But there are only a few discerning enough to perceive that Strawinsky and Schoenberg have gone only a step further than the so-called impressionists in music. \(^ {302}\)

Next, Van Vechten took his reader on a world tour in search of the most promising post-bellum musical styles and composers. In this way he continues the line of thought we saw in Chapter 1 by categorizing musical success and morality along national lines. Of German music, Van Vechten wrote, “It must have been quite evident to even the casual concert-goer that German music has passed its zenith. It has had its day and it is not likely that post-bellum music will be Germanic.”\(^ {303}\) Among the German composers whom Van Vechten dismissed as unworthy are Edmund Kretzschmer, Karl Goldmark, Victor Nessler, August Bungert, Max Schillings, Hans Pfitzner, Engelbert Humperdinck, Ludwig Thuille, Hermann Wolfgang von Waltershausen, Leo Blech, Max Reger, Anton Bruckner, Felix Weingartner, Gustav Mahler, and Richard Strauss, whose music, though great, he regarded as “a part of the riches of the past.”\(^ {304}\) Only two Austrian names seemed worth consideration: Erich Korngold, an eighteen-year-old whose music sounded like Puccini, Strauss, or Reger “with false notes,” and Arnold Schoenberg, whose music is assuredly “of the future” since “no public has yet caught up with his present output.”\(^ {305}\) Nevertheless, with the single exception of Schoenberg, the best music of the past twenty years


\(^{303}\) Ibid., 7.

\(^{304}\) Ibid., 10.

\(^{305}\) Ibid.
had not come from Germany, Van Vechten argued, but from France. He extolled the virtues of Debussy, Satie, Ravel, Dukas, Roger-Ducasse, Chausson, Chabrier, and Charpentier, all “revolutionists in a greater or less degree.” Still, Van Vechten did not see forward momentum in more recent years and concluded that France would not be the home of post-bellum music. Likewise, Italy, Spain, England, and America had nothing to offer in terms of the music of the future. He did not even hesitate on the music of America, “because in a country that has no ante-bellum music . . . there is no immediate promise of important development.” It was to Russia, he argued, that the musical future must look. He recommended the as yet unperformed operas of Rimsky-Korsakov, “if for a time after the war one must turn to the past for operatic novelties,” he praised the music of the recently deceased Scriabin, and he touted Igor Stravinsky as “the greatest of the musicians of the immediate future.” He concluded,

We may pray to Karol Szymanowski for futurist wails from ruined Poland; a rearranged, disharmonic version of the national airs of the warring countries may spring from France or Italy; but for the new composers, the new names, the strong, new blood of the immediate future in music, we must turn to Russia. The new music will not come from England, certainly not from America, not from France, nor from Germany, but from the land of the steppes – a gradual return to that orientalism in style which may be one of the gifts of culture, which an invasion from the Far East may impose on us some time in the next century.  

Remembering that Van Vechten was writing in 1915, we might ask to what degree his hypothesis was proved correct. In fact, classic German repertoire was quickly recovered following the war; moreover, it had not suffered significantly despite the moral panics of the war years. A review of the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s programming in the 1916-17 (the season during which the United States entered the war) and 1924-25 (Serge Koussevitsky’s first season

307 Ibid., 18.
308 Ibid., 23.
309 Ibid., 24-25.
as director) reveals that apart from the music of Wagner, German repertoire suffered very little. In the 1916-17 season, of 98 pieces performed, 8 belonged to Wagner, 7 each to Beethoven and Brahms, and 5 each to Liszt, Strauss, and Mozart.\textsuperscript{310} The following year, after America joined the war, Wagner had jumped from the most performed composer to one of the least, with only one work performed. Beethoven dominated with 8 pieces performed, while Mozart and Berlioz increased to 6 each, and Brahms fell to 4, with Debussy and Saint-Saëns jumping up to 4 each.\textsuperscript{311} After the Karl Muck affair left the orchestra with a new French conductor (Henri Rabaud), the repertoire choices reveal an increasing attention to French compositions, with 8 performances of Saint-Saëns, 7 of Franck, 3 of Debussy, and 2 of Chabrier, Fauré, D’Indy, Lalo, Rabaud, and Ravel. Beethoven still reigned supreme at a total of 10 performances, while Brahms was only featured once, and Wagner was not played at all.\textsuperscript{312} In the 1919-20 season Pierre Monteux was hired as director; despite Monteux’s reputation as an advocate of French style, both Beethoven and Wagner made a significant comeback, being performed 10 and 8 times respectively. Schumann and Debussy were the next most popular, with 5 performances each, and then Berlioz, Mozart, Brahms, Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Schubert with 3 or 4 performances each.\textsuperscript{313} Beethoven held strong in 1920-21, only surpassed by a rising Mozart, while Wagner and Brahms were performed 4 times each.\textsuperscript{314} The next two seasons saw Beethoven and Mozart as the most frequently performed composers, with Wagner holding steady at 5 and 4 performances respectively.\textsuperscript{315} When Serge Koussevitsky arrived as director, Wagner reclaimed his position as the most represented composer, with 9 pieces performed. We can see, then, that German

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{310} Boston Symphony Orchestra, \textit{Programme} (Boston, Mass.: The Orchestra, 1916-17).
\item \textsuperscript{311} Boston Symphony Orchestra, \textit{Programme} (Boston, Mass.: The Orchestra, 1917-18).
\item \textsuperscript{312} Boston Symphony Orchestra, \textit{Programme} (Boston, Mass.: The Orchestra, 1918-19).
\item \textsuperscript{313} Boston Symphony Orchestra, \textit{Programme} (Boston, Mass.: The Orchestra, 1919-20).
\item \textsuperscript{314} Boston Symphony Orchestra, \textit{Programme} (Boston, Mass.: The Orchestra, 1920-21).
\item \textsuperscript{315} Boston Symphony Orchestra, \textit{Programme} (Boston, Mass.: The Orchestra, 1922-23).
\end{itemize}
repertoire never completely lost its place of prominence at the top of the canon, and that it rebounded very quickly from a small dip in popularity. There is, however, another story to be told concerning repertoire choice. In the years we have examined, there is an overall increase in the number of composers represented (even if they only had one work performed). This increasing representation of new composers, mostly French, Russian, and American, meant an ever-increasing diversity of repertoire. In 1923-24 two “Negro Spirituals” were performed, and Stravinsky, who had only received one performance a year, began to rise in prominence (in 1924-25, five works of his were performed).

Table 1: Boston Symphony Orchestra Repertoire

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1916/17</th>
<th>1917/18</th>
<th>1918/19</th>
<th>1919/20</th>
<th>1920/21</th>
<th>1922/23</th>
<th>1923/24</th>
<th>1924/25</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conductor</td>
<td>Karl Muck</td>
<td>Karl Muck</td>
<td>Henri Rabaud</td>
<td>Pierre Monteux</td>
<td>Pierre Monteux</td>
<td>Pierre Monteux</td>
<td>Pierre Monteux</td>
<td>Serge Koussevitsky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieces performed in season</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composers represented</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beethoven</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahms</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozart</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

Boston’s repertoire story reflects that of other American orchestras. The turbulence of the war years actually did little to remove German repertoire from America’s orchestral canon; its main effect was to encourage diversity of national representation, broadening the repertoire to include French, Russian, Scandinavian, and American composers.\(^{316}\)

In 1918, in the midst of America’s war fervor and the anti-Wagner sentiment that reduced performances from 8 to 0 in a matter of months, a headline in the *New York Times* claimed that “Germany’s Paganism Affects Her Ideas – Submission to Invented Deity of Nibelungen Order Primary Cause of Her Policy. – Not A Christian Nation – Little in Common Between the German God and the God of Christian Communities.” The article, written by popular lecturer, author, and poet Harvey Maitland Watts for the *Philadelphia Ledger*, laid out a theory that Germany’s obsession with “primeval deities” was the cause of its recent moral failings. Watts posited,

Those familiar with Germany at first hand within the five years before the war, and who know something of its history, are, of course, aware that the primary cause of what seems to have been a dehumanization of the German people is the acceptance by one and all of the primitive belief in a chief who is under the protection of the taboo of a semi-divine caste that suggests the savagery of Central African tribes, and that the State thus ruled by him is above all and can do no wrong politically. Not only that, but the State can do no wrong even in the matters of morals and religions, and that its right to override all the human functions that make relations between human beings other than mere animal existence is paramount. Once this doctrine was accepted as a sort of primary religion of the people and the Government, everything that the President has denounced followed in its train.

. . . Germany has been really given over for decades to the worship of strange primeval deities, headed by a chief deity definitely referred to as a “German God.” By many identified with the Christian conception of God, at the same time there has been little in common between the German god and the God of the Christian communions, since everything in Germany has been contemplated in developing picturesquely the idea of the old deities of the woods and of the sky, who belonged to the pagan civilization that preceded the conversion of the savage tribes to Roman Christianity as the real deities of the chosen nation.

Along with this curious cult went a devotion in art and literature to the animal and the powerful that was almost beyond belief . . . Not only that, but the very cult of the Wagner operas and the Nibelungen legends have also been adroitly used to convey to the German people the idea that they are today themselves the incarnation of these old heroes and demigods. And nothing is more common in mural decorations than the effort to identify Germans with the Brünnhildes and Siegfrieds of the past, and many a child in Germany might easily be letter-perfect as to Wotan and Alberich while possibly somewhat hazy as to what happened in the manger at Nazareth.
What, indeed, Germany built up in this State religion is known as henotheism. But to find in it its original . . . form one must go back to the days of the Babylonians and the Assyrians who exalted the tribal deities as national gods and believed they were all powerful, also becoming convinced that anything they might do in war time had the approval of these tribal gods down to acts of the most fiendish and heinous inhumanity, which they didn’t hesitate to leave on record in cuneiform or carved on imperishable stone.

. . . It is this weird doctrine, a matter of everyday life, taught in all the schools, reflected in the opera, in the arts, and in the modified religion that, under the guise of the normal Christian communions, and using the normal phrases of Christian liturgy, which has really turned the people over to the old paganism of the B.C. period, and has reconciled them to all the old savageries, including an indifference to human sacrifice that marked the race in its prehistoric period, and is now recurrent to an abnormal degree. This paganism has the call by order of the State, which has seen in this cult a way of developing a peculiar people who would not hesitate at anything in order to secure world dominion. And it is this ignus fatuus of a German god that has led the nation and its leaders into their present slough of fire and brimstone, and erected frightfulness into a creed.317

In this article we see a proclamation that contemporary German culture is inherently immoral. Moreover, and more importantly, music and the arts not only reflect German immorality but contribute significantly to its formation.

One response to the removal of Wagner from American repertoire was to replace it with more classic German repertoire, as Olin Downes reported in 1924. In speaking of Germany’s own struggle to rearticulate its cultural nationhood apart from Wagner, Downes quoted an unnamed professor from Göttingen:

“Wagner’s art, thrilling if you like, often epic and supremely great, is nevertheless of a piece with a proudful and grandiose Germany, with our Kaisers who had themselves painted with scepters and war horses and flowing robes . . . Well, that day is gone – phew! Swept away by 1914 . . . We are not denying Wagner’s genius; we would not be without it. But we are in a state of mind today, faced by the hardest problems that have confronted Europe since the downfall of the Roman Empire, when we are acutely conscious of the falsity that was in him. That is, in part, the reason of the renaissance of Handel that is going on in Germany today, and, in general, our turning back to the sanity, the impersonality, the emotional balance of our great classics. We know that we have to retrace our steps to the crossroads where Wagner, only too willingly, helped to lead us astray.

In the works of old masters we shall rejuvenate and cleanse ourselves, and discover again our true thought and our destiny as a people.”

According to Downes, this anonymous professor was representative of German intellectuals and artists in their post-war struggle to distance themselves from that type of German music that had come to be seen as innately immoral while retaining that which made them distinctly German. Downes himself wrote,

There is present in this man, and a great many others in Germany today, an agonized questioning of the future; a determination to find an honest way out, which turns from Wagner with an intensity of feeling only equaled by the passionate manner in which the same Wagner is upheld – and too often contaminated with baser issues – by his partisans. An American who has not as yet a great national art of his own, or who had not had occasion to observe the deep and enduring relation between the artist and his race, would not realize the intensity of these feelings unless he came in contact with it.

Nevertheless, as we have noticed, Americans followed suit, recovering older German repertoire like Mozart (the most frequently performed composer in the BSO’s 1920-21 season) to fill the space left by Wagner.

Another tactic was to turn to modern German repertoire. The composers of the Second Viennese School, including Schoenberg and his pupils Berg and Webern, were producing new and challenging work. However, their music was burdened both by its intellectual and aesthetic difficulty and by the specter of Germany’s recent cultural ignominy. In 1924 the New York Times reported on the Expressionist movement in a review of a new book, The New Vision in the German Arts by Herman G. Scheffauer. After explaining the underlying aesthetic philosophy, the reviewer claimed,

It is inevitable that such a doctrine must lead the artist perilously close to the chaotic. The work of these experimenters teeters always on the edge of madness. Thus it has come about that just as the child, from the point of view of

319 Ibid.
the expressionist, creates directly out of his inmost feelings, the art of primitive peoples is admired and followed. Two of the leading expressionist painters, César Klein and Max Pechstein, “transmute the whole European cosmos into the glow and heat of the South Sea Jungle, white Caucasian skin into ruddy reds and browns and fallow ochres.” One wonders just what the value of such an effort is to European civilization.

It is likewise inevitable that an art based on such a doctrine, in so far as it deals with the aspect of the visible world, must fail to find for itself a wide level of response. It cannot be possible for the artist to share completely with others his own realization of the external world. Who is to follow him into the recesses of his own mind if he scorns any common basis of approach to his subject?320

The challenge facing modern German composers was laid out plainly in a 1926 essay by German music critic Adolf Weissmann, best known for his biographies of Bizet and Chopin. Modernist style, he argued, was characterized by a complete rejection of sentimentalism and Romanticism. This fight was particularly difficult for Germany, which had been the center of musical romanticism. He wrote,

The fight against romanticism has become a catchword in modern music. Is it, then, to be wondered at that this struggle assumes the most cruel forms in that country which once boasted the masterpieces of romantic music? Is it not easily to be understood that all sweetness and sentimentalism which are so particularly dear to the world’s bourgeoisie find their sworn enemies in the young musicians wanting to be appreciated? The years after the revolution brought to the surface of the musical life some young people who, despising any craftsmanship whatever, contented themselves with uttering revolutionary ideas in the most primitive form. They have all, or most of them, disappeared, like the painters who were their allies. But the movement was necessary; something has survived and is still active.321

It was thus on the other side of both romanticism and anti-romanticism that the future of German music seemed to lie. Weismann submitted that “the critic may . . . have a great deal of dullness to bear; but he finds himself compensated by some works which, not being merely experimental,

320 “Germany the Storm Centre of Revolutionary Art,” The New York Times, 22 June 1924.
give the essence of modern spirit in German music.”

That German spirit, Weismann argued, transcended the “greatest variety of musical opinions,” since there was “hardly a more mixtum compositum than the German race.” In fact, Weismann addressed the characteristics of musical Germanness first and foremost, as a response to “those who assert that if there really exists such a thing as modern German music it is represented more by non-Germans than by Germans.”

The two things that made German music “German” (and could thus survive changes in style), according to Weismann, were “a tendency toward the great form” and “the faculty of long duration,” both qualities that lent to the music an underlying tone of moral goodness. He gave an account of the working German musicians at the time (in the mid 1920s), including Franz Schreker and his pupils Alois Hába, Ernst Krenek, Felix Petyrek, and Karol Rathaus, Schoenberg and his pupils Berg and Webern, Paul Hindemith, Max Reger, Artur Schnabel, Ernst Toch, Max Butting, Philip Jarnach, and Kurt Weill. Most of these composers were found wanting by Weissmann, even Schoenberg, whose influence had “lost in magic power as compared with that of Stravinsky.”

In the post-war years America was still struggling to produce native composers who could forge a path alongside the European greats. In her account of America’s search for a musical identity to call its own, Barbara Tischler argues that though America was unable successfully to cobble together a musical identity (at least an art music one) through folk music quotation, it was eventually able to find its own voice not by disassociating itself from Europe,

323 Ibid.
324 Ibid.
but by joining Europe in its modernist search for novelty. In fact, the modern pluralist instinct actually reflected America’s identity far more accurately than did an association with a common folk identity. To embrace diversity of expression and appreciate a variety of voices simply for their expression of diversity is to play to America’s greatest strength. Beginning in the early 1930s the American music scene was revitalized by a massive influx of foreign artists moving to America not just to perform for a season but to settle down and perhaps even gain citizenship. Composers, performers, and conductors left their European homes for asylum and creative freedom in America. In his account of the vast intellectual migration spurred on by the Russian Revolution, fascism, and the Second World War, Joseph Horowitz writes about the two main nationalities that comprised the majority of America’s cultural émigrés in the twentieth century: German and Russian. From Germany came Schoenberg, Korngold, and Rudolf Serkin, filmmakers Fritz Lang and Ernst Lubitsch, and others. From Russia came Stravinsky, Koussevitzky, actress Alla Nazimova, director Rouben Mamoulian, and others. According to Horowitz, two things distinguished these groups from one another: their respective legacies of cultural unification and their abilities to adapt and change. In speaking of these “twin German and Russian templates,” Horowitz claims that “the first [is] culturally united and prone to preach,

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the second culturally diverse and readier to change.”

For Horowitz, it was Germany’s shared cultural triumphs, its “bibles” – Bach, Beethoven, Goethe, Schiller, Strauss – that kept German-American immigrants in the twentieth century from developing new and successful styles. Likewise, it was Russia’s naturally adaptive nature, its “suppleness,” that allowed its immigrants to settle in alongside existing Americans and forge new artistic pathways. Horowitz, with a half century of hindsight, echoes Carl Van Vechten’s thesis that the music of the future was to come from Russia. More than that, he intimates that Russian style was the most successful insofar as it participated in the American (and modernist) drive for novelty and diversity.

* * *

Turning from the philosophical to the practical, let us examine the evidence that the modernist musical ideal had gained moral currency in twentieth-century America. One story that might affirm this position is the story of the Catholic Church and its relationship with modernism. In February 1948 American composer and critic Virgil Thomson published an essay in the *New York Herald Tribune* titled “The Catholic Church Accepts Modern Music.”

The brief article speaks of two papal encyclicals, one from 1903 and one from 1947. Thomson calls the first, published by Pius X less than four months after his election, *Motu Proprio*, although its full title is *Motu Proprio sulla Musica Sacra* and it is now more commonly referred to by its first three words, *Tra le Sollecitudini*. The first address to the universal church on the sole topic of

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329 *Tra le Sollecitudini* means “among the concerns,” while *Motu proprio* is a more general term designating any document written by the Pope, “of his own impulse,” to his constituency.
music, the *Tra le Sollecitudini* was a radical and controversial document. Its introduction threatens,

Hence, in order that no one for the future may be able to plead in excuse that he did not clearly understand his duty and that all vagueness may be eliminated from the interpretation of matters which have already been commanded, We have deemed it expedient to point out briefly the principles regulating sacred music in the functions of public worship, and to gather together in a general survey the principal prescriptions of the Church against the more common abuses in this subject. We do therefore publish, *motu proprio* and with certain knowledge, Our present Instruction to which, as to a juridical code of sacred music (*quasi a codice giuridice della musica sacra*), We will with the fullness of Our Apostolic Authority that the force of law be given, and We do by Our present handwriting impose its scrupulous observance on all.\(^{330}\)

In its first section the encyclical lays out the general principles of sacred music according to the Catholic Church, which we might also read as a commentary on music’s moral power and a designation of the specific guidelines for its moral goodness. Music is capable of and responsible for adding “greater efficacy to the [liturgical] text, in order that through it the faithful may be more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the reception of the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries.”\(^{331}\) The qualities that it must possess are four-fold. It must be “true art” (“for otherwise it will be impossible for it to exercise on the minds of those who listen to it that efficacy which the Church aims at obtaining in admitting into her liturgy the art of musical sounds”); it must be holy (“and must, therefore, exclude all profanity not only in itself, but in the manner in which it is presented by those who execute it”); it must possess “goodness of form”; and it must be “universal in the sense that while every nation is permitted to admit into its ecclesiastical compositions those special forms which may be said to constitute its native music, still these forms must be subordinated in such a manner to the


general characteristics of sacred music that nobody of any nation may receive an impression other than good on hearing them.”  

Next, and of particular significance in the context of our previous chapters, the pope categorized “The Different Kinds of Sacred Music.” Although the section heading appears to reference a collection of acceptable musical styles, what follows acts more as a hierarchy, where Gregorian chant is the only true sacred music and a couple of other styles may be tolerated if necessary. Gregorian chant, according to Pope Pius X, exemplifies the aforementioned qualities of sacred music in the highest degree. In addition, it is a body of repertoire (the only such body) that has been handed down from the church fathers, and “which she has jealously guarded for centuries in her liturgical codices.” Therefore, Gregorian chant is to be restored to its original function in worship, both by professional clergy and choir and by lay people, “as was the case in ancient times.” Furthermore,

Gregorian Chant has always been regarded as the supreme model for sacred music, so that it is fully legitimate to lay down the following rule: the more closely a composition for church approaches in its movement, inspiration and savor the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple.

According to the Pope, the style that most closely approaches Gregorian chant was “Classic Polyphony, especially of the Roman School, which reached its greatest perfection in the sixteenth century, owing to the works of Pierluigi da Palestrina . . .” Although it is not quite as sacred as chant, it occupies second place in the hierarchy of holiness. After chant and early

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334 Ibid.
335 Ibid.
polyphony, some modern music is allowed in the liturgy, provided it is produced by genius and worthy in its “excellence, sobriety and gravity.” In fact, modern music is given an even more lengthy qualification:

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\ldots \text{since modern music has risen mainly to serve profane uses, greater care must be taken with regard to it, in order that the musical compositions of modern style which are admitted in the Church may contain nothing profane, be free from reminiscences of motifs adopted in the theaters, and be not fashioned even in their external forms after the manner of profane pieces.}^\text{336}
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Still more specifically,

Among the different kinds of modern music, that which appears less suitable for accompanying the functions of public worship is the theatrical style, which was in the greatest vogue, especially in Italy, during the last century. This of its very nature is diametrically opposed to Gregorian Chant and classic polyphony, and therefore to the most important law of all good sacred music. Besides the intrinsic structure, the rhythm and what is known as the conventionalism of this style adapt themselves but badly to the requirements of true liturgical music.\textsuperscript{337}

The document goes on to stipulate that it is forbidden to sing in the vernacular as well as to change liturgical texts through omission, reordering, repetition of words, or broken syllables; that singing should be mostly choral (rather than solo) and should be performed only by males, since singers are exercising a real liturgical office; and that organ and other wind instruments should be used sparingly and judiciously.

When it was distributed in 1903, the \textit{Tra le Sollecitudini} caused a stir in the media and many musicians, including Camille Saint-Saëns, spoke out against it.\textsuperscript{338} The resulting controversy and the subsequent half-hearted implementation of the encyclical’s rules speak to the fact that despite papal disapproval, musical styles other than chant and sixteenth-century polyphony were in favor among Catholic musicians and parishioners. In 1912 the \textit{Revue


\textsuperscript{337} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{338} Saint-Saëns published his opinions in the French daily newspaper \textit{Le Figaro}. 

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liturgique & bénédictine, a publication of the Maredsous Abbey in Belgium, published a report of a performance of Gounod’s Ave Maria at an All Saints Day Mass, acknowledging the transgression with the phrase “Pauvre Motu proprio!” Furthermore, as Anthony Ruff recounts in his detailed Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations,

> The journal lamented in the same year that in Austria, apart from the praiseworthy efforts of Beuronese Benedictines, “it is always the instrumental music of the Viennese classic which reigns exclusively.” There is reference to “profane music of Mozart, of Haydn, of Beethoven, of Schubert . . .”

In America the reaction to Pope Pius’s declaration was also mixed. Some remembered a similarly controversial document that Bishop Giuseppe Sarto had made eight years earlier as the patriarch of Venice, but few recognized him as their newly-elected pope. Both pro- and anti-Motu proprio viewpoints were articulated quite successfully in letters printed in the New York Times. The Reverend Nicholas M. Wagner of Most Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn wholeheartedly supported the reform, saying,

> And now what does Pius X wish to inculcate in his circular? But one thing – music which, instead of distracting the mind, shall elevate it . . . The compositions of Mozart, Haydn, Weber, Cherubini, Bruch, Gounod, and others predominate in the “fashionable” choirs; Lambilotte, La Hache, Mercadante, Giorza, Diabelli, Dachauer, Stearn, Farmer, Millard, &c. form the programme of the poorer. The compositions of all these composers in no way do justice to their sacred text . . . This circular of the Pope therefore deserves a hearty hail from the lovers of true church music, and in fact from all lovers of good music, and ought to become the soul of a thorough and much-needed reform in the Catholic churches of the United States.

On the other side of the issue is a writer using the pseudonym “Catholicus” who says,

> The Pope evidently intends to do what he can toward introducing into the public services of the Catholic churches a better and more elevated style of church music

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340 Ibid.
. . . But that his Holiness will ever press on any Catholic country a command enforcing the plain chant upon the people, to the exclusion of the splendid works already existing of other times, the wonder of the age in which they were written, and still regarded as marvels of genius and scholarship at this period of the world, is very much to be doubted. To speak plainly, the plain chant is not music. It is a barbaric jargon sung by priests and choirs who appear, from their performances, to know very little about it.342

It was not just priests and parishioners who had questions about the reform laid out in the Tra le Sollecitudini. In April 1904 nine of the country’s fourteen archbishops met in Washington and decided that “under the present circumstance it would be practically impossible to enforce the decree of Pope Pius X.343 Frank Damrosch, at the time director of music for the New York public school system and leader of the Oratorio Society, approved of the basic sentiment of the Tra le Sollecitudini, but thought its demands unrealistic. The New York Times reported,

Mr. Damrosch approves the position of the Pope in general, and says that he believes that if the instruction could be literally followed the result would be beneficial, for he says that much of the music now rendered in Catholic churches is very poor, and has neither religious sentiment nor good musical construction. He does not believe, however, that a literal following of the instruction is possible, saying that the music of the Church must be adapted to the people and that the Gregorian music of the seventeenth century is hardly that of the present day . . . “It is my opinion,” says Mr. Damrosch, “that the Pope . . . held up an ideal for the Church with the thought that the various congregations would approach it as nearly as possible.”344

Although there was no consensus in support of the Tra le Sollecitudini or complete ratification of the principles therein, the decree gained worldwide attention, causing musicians and music-lovers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, to consider what the most “holy” or morally “good” music was and why they classified it as such.

We have seen that World War I changed the way the public viewed the moral nature of music; what we see here, articulated in Virgil Thomson’s 1948 *New York Herald Tribune* article, is that it also changed the way the Catholic Church viewed the moral nature of music. In his article, Thomson affirmed the importance of the *Tra le Sollecitudini*, interpreting the hierarchy of permitted sacred musical styles as the document’s most important contribution. According to Thomson, its three “radical pronouncements” were that Gregorian chant is the “official and true” music of the Catholic church, that Palestrina-style polyphony is ordained for use in grander church ceremonies, and that all musical styles associated with opera are not to be used in a liturgical setting, no matter how great their quality. Furthermore, Thomson understood the Italian “theatrical style” to be “in practice, all musical styles developed after 1600.” He explained,

> Masses composed by such sound Catholics as Mozart, Rossini, Schubert, Bruckner, and César Franck were thus removed from Church usage, along with sacred settings of the Sextet from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the Drinking Song from *Lucrezia Borgia*, and Liszt’s *Liebestraum, No. 1*, all of which, believe it or not, were in those days both current and popular.\(^{345}\)

Thomson then zeroed in on the issue of modernist-influenced twentieth-century musical styles, asking what the Catholic Church had made of them in the first half of the century. He claimed,

> . . . that whole revision of musical syntax that has been our century’s most impressive contribution to the art has begun to creep into Catholic services and to add to the mystic medievalism of Gregorian chant and to the Counter-Reformation-style humanism of Palestrinian polyphony a definitely contemporary, a twentieth-century note. This came earliest in France, through the Parisian organists, whose improvisations, from Vierne to Messiaen, have long followed, with archiepiscopal toleration, the most advanced procedures of composition.\(^{346}\)

Modernism, Thomson recounts, had been creeping its way into Catholic architecture and design as artists and architects attempted to liberate themselves from the antimodernist papal influence.

\(^{345}\) Thomson, *Music Right and Left*, 198.

\(^{346}\) Ibid.
Due to the leniency of some bishops, “little by little churches of reinforced concrete, on the cheap scale, and churches designed and decorated by celebrated modern artists, on the expensive scale, have been rearing their modernistic heads over the landscape.” Furthermore, the French Dominicans, “who have been for some time the spearhead of a movement within the Church toward proselytizing twentieth-century intellectuals through friendliness toward twentieth-century intellectual manifestations,” also seem to have influenced papal thought toward acceptance of modernist style. The influence of the two World Wars, which had thrown the political and cultural world into disarray, had required of the Church a new attitude towards the harsh realities of life, even as interpreted by modernist art.

In support of the assertion that modernist style was becoming more acceptable in the Catholic Church, Thomson introduced another papal encyclical, titled Mediator Dei. Released by Pope Pius XII on 20 November 1947, just a year and a half before the publication of Thomson’s article, the Mediator Dei speaks to the liturgy as a whole but makes music one of its primary topics of consideration. Thomson himself translated from the Italian what he calls its “blessing of modern music,” which states,

It cannot be asserted . . . that modern music, instrumental and vocal (la musica e il canto moderno), should be excluded altogether from Catholic worship. Therefore, unless this is profane in character or unseemly of expression with respect to holy places and sacred service, or derived from a vain research for unusual and outlandish effects, it is necessary surely to open to it the doors of our churches, since both kinds of it [instrumental and vocal] can contribute in no small way to the splendor of the holy rites, to the elevation of the mind, and . . . to true devotion.  

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348 Ibid.
349 Ibid., 199-200.
This was no small turnaround from the severe restrictions of the *Tra le Sollecitudini*. A similar blessing, Thomson says, is given to the other modern arts, including architecture, painting, and sculpture. From his assessment of the *Mediator Dei* Thomson concluded that

Modern music is now official to the Roman Church, the very fount and center of musical conservatism. Long ago it was received in the schools, by the theater, at the subscription concerts. No major musical power is today vowed to musical reaction save the Soviet government and possibly the American films. Either might do a U-turn tomorrow. And the contemporary musical world has long since learned to get on without both. Not, however, without the Church. Her reserve we have always regretted. There are still minor points to be decided, of course. How far, for instance, can twelve-tone-row music be called “a vain research”? And may not, perhaps, repetitions of the text and instruments or percussion, if tastefully introduced, be returned discreetly to liturgical custom? All such matters will be decided in the Church by papal counsel and by conferences, in other institutions by custom. But the schism is healed. Not in our lifetime will modern music ever again be seriously a problem to anyone living between the Iron Curtain and Los Angeles.

. . . Little by little you will be hearing, along with the plainsong, a new kind of music in Catholic churches. And the world-wideness with which the Catholic Church operates in liturgical matters cannot fail to lend to its new repertory an influence on Protestant music. It is probable, indeed, that in opening the doors of his Church to musical advance the Pope has spoken, how consciously I could not say, for the whole Judeo-Christian world, at least for the intellectual confraternity within it that holds the children of the twentieth century entitled to speak their own language without shame. To speak it, moreover, not only among themselves but also to God.\(^350\)


In the *Mediator Dei* modern music was not just tolerated, it was celebrated. The pope saw an opportunity, after the physical, emotional, and moral toll of two World Wars, for modern musical and artistic styles to rejoin the church and bring glory to God:

Keeping in mind, Venerable Brethren, pontifical norms and decrees, take great care to enlighten and direct the minds and hearts of the artists to whom is given the task today of restoring or rebuilding the many churches which have been ruined or completely destroyed by war. Let them be capable and willing to draw their inspiration from religion to express what is suitable and more in keeping with the requirements of worship. Thus the human arts will shine forth with a wondrous heavenly splendor, and contribute greatly to human civilization, to the
salvation of souls and the glory of God. The fine arts are really in conformity with 
religion when "as noblest handmaids they are at the service of divine worship."

The papal attitude towards modern music only continued to broaden throughout the twentieth 
century. Documents like the *Instructio de Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia* of 1958, the 
*Sacrosanctum Concilium* of the 1963 Second Vatican Council, and the *Musicam Sacram* of 1967 
continued to encourage modern music, steering away from overly specific requirements for 
sanctity in music (such as the “holiness,” “goodness of form,” and “universality” required in the 
*Tra le Sollecitudini*). While chant and polyphony retained their liturgical preeminence, they 
were joined by a plurality of new twentieth-century styles in the church’s search for musical 
holiness.

So what conclusions are we to draw from the changing attitudes of the Catholic Church 
toward which musical styles it was willing to accept? We might first ask how much influence the 
Catholic Church may have had on American concepts of music and morality. After all, the 
Pope’s decrees only concern music to be used in the liturgy. What bearing does “church music” 
have on the morality of art music in general? I would argue that what we have seen here is 
reflective of broader changes in American thought for two reasons. First, the Pope, being the 
figurehead and arguably the greatest sole arbiter of morality in the Judeo-Christian world, has a 
particular authority to make pronouncements that even non-Christians are inclined to receive as 
moral code, whether or not they actively adhere to them. Second, that the Pope’s 
pronouncements on music favored art music culture, and a particular type of art music culture, 
helps to define art music as morally good. Insofar as papal decrees make their way into 
mainstream culture through media dispersion, they can thus be considered determinants of moral

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351 “Mediator Dei, 196,” http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius12/P12MEDIA.HTM (accessed 20 
April 2015).  
thought. Each of these encyclicals did, in fact, make its way into mainstream American culture through the media, no doubt because music and its moral underpinnings are of great concern to the broader American public. If America had already embraced modern musical styles, it now had its taste confirmed as morally good by the world’s foremost ethical expert.

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We have seen that by the mid-twentieth century the diversity of modern music had taken on a moral goodness that was affirmed even by the conservative Catholic Church. There is, however, another principle that the Catholic Church insisted upon that was also valued more broadly. Music that appealed to and obtained the support of the masses had come to be seen as the music of the future. In her book *Sound Diplomacy*, Jessica Gienow-Hecht reports on pianist Arthur Shattuck’s 1920 pronouncement that American music, with the interest and support of “the masses,” was taking over from degenerating Europe, with its rot-causing futurist element.\footnote{353 “Music Degenerating in Europe,” *Evening Tribune*, 2 December 1920, MNSO scrapbooks, vol. 63, 18\textsuperscript{th} Home Season, 1920-21, UMN, as reported in Jessica Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2009), 213.} In America, this participation of the masses found its expression not only in more sonorous or consonant music, but especially in a focus on music education and a renewed effort to popularize the symphony orchestra (initiated by Theodore Thomas and carried through by figures like Leopold Stokowski and Leonard Bernstein). Although musical moral goodness was still commodified as a nationalized entity, and although American art music was still finding its voice, the moral musical ideal notably began to take on the values that stood at the core of the American vision. Equality, essential rights, liberty, opportunity, and democracy, America’s
founding ideals, took on new musical meanings. A morally good view of music embraced
diversity of expression, freedom of both composer and listener (freedom of the composer to draw
from whichever style inspired her, including both atonality and tonality, and freedom of the
listener, rather than the critic, to decide on both the meaning and quality of a piece), an appeal to
the masses (rather than the intellectual elite), and the opportunity for relative newcomer nations
(like America) to work their way into worldwide cultural recognition. It is clear that the political
fragmentation of the twentieth century strengthened transatlantic bonds significantly and in a
way that particularly benefited America. What is surprising is that the German musical
reputation was not damaged as much as a historian might have expected, given the panics
examined in Chapter 4. It was instead enfolded into a broader, more cosmopolitan moral musical
repertoire through the valuing of diversity.

Returning for a moment to the darkness of the immediate postwar years, let us hear the
voice of a prominent but forgotten German-American musician. Anna Schoen-René was a
German singer who was brought to the United States to sing at the Metropolitan Opera and after
suffering an illness that kept her from performing, pursued a career as a singing professor in
Minnesota and later at the Juilliard School in New York. Working tirelessly to improve
America’s musical landscape, she formed a Midwestern Choral Union, began a series of music
she took on American citizenship in 1896, she returned to Europe every summer to teach, study,
and write for American newspapers as a foreign correspondent. Between 1909 and the outbreak
of World War I, she lived in Berlin, carrying to Germany the legacy of her voice teacher Pauline
Viardot-Garcia. Having developed a reputation for disapproval of the German military agenda, Schoen-René spent the war years in America confronted by the dilemmas of the hyphenated American. Back in Berlin in 1919, she gave an interview by wireless to the New York Times, in which she offered her account of the future of German music:

“Musical Germany is going to have her revolution just as political Germany did,” said Mlle. Schoen-Rene to the Times correspondent as she was summing up the present state and the near future of musical relations between America and Germany . . .

“In Germany before the war,” she said, “music, and indeed most of the arts, had during the long period of material prosperity grown too narrow, which means that nothing but essentially German music or what was considered such was composed or could count on the applause of the audiences. But music, like all arts, must be international, must have a world-wide scope or it will degenerate. Such was plainly the case in Germany, more especially in Berlin, where compositions were produced and singers were applauded that would never have succeeded in some provincial cities where art remained comparatively free from the Byzantine influence prevailing in Berlin.”

“Do you agree, then, with some Entente writers who assert that Wagner’s music had great influence in forming the modern German character?”

“Decidedly,” she replied, “but I am convinced that Wagner’s influence on the German character would be quite different on Germans in a free republic from what it was on the Germans in mediaeval despotism. The free German will cultivate Wagner even more ardently, because his was a virile art that is a stranger to all servility.”

“What about America’s future musical relations with Germany?”

“I am afraid that there will be none whatever in the next few years. Germany’s musical deterioration will soon be felt in America, where comparisons will be drawn with the art of other countries, like Italy and France, and Germany will not be able to stand these comparisons at present, all the more so because those who will draw the comparisons cannot help being more or less prejudiced against Germany for political and other reasons.

“Before the war at least 2,000 Americans a year studied music here. There is none left today and there will not be any for some years to come, if not for the idealistic reasons mentioned before, then for more material ones.

“The political and economic revolutions are bound to impoverish not only Germans but also the German arts. Many institutions, such as the Royal Opera Houses, some of the numerous court theatres in the smaller principalities, many municipal theatres, concert halls, and orchestras are no longer receiving rich subventions and are bound to cease to exist in their present form. They may disappear completely as the vanished glamor of courts and the oddities of Prussian nobles and bureaucrats, which, while they would have none of it at home, pleased the sense of curiosity of American sightseers. Some of these art
institutions may be able to tide over the crisis. But the old splendors are gone and something new has got to take their place, and that will take time.”

“How long?”

“I should say about the next five years would be barren ones, but as I know Germany and her people, after that there will be a vigorous revival of every phase of life and art. There is still an enormous latent strength in the German people which the hard times coming will surely awake. Mind you, I by no means despair of Germany’s future in any field of action, but it will take the next five years to prepare for the new era. I am expecting even worse times than we have had so far because when one pulls down an old and antiquated building one cannot expect a new palace in its place immediately. One must clear away the debris and build anew. It is the same with German arts as it is with everything else German.

“. . . I know several of the largest German court and municipal theatres, which will be closed before the season ends or left to private enterprise. The Standard German Grand Opera must naturally sink. I am convinced that two or three years hence, if the political conditions permit, French and Italian opera companies will tour Germany and a great musical event in Berlin and a few other large cities will be a short visit from the Metropolitan Opera House Company of New York. Doubtless the Germans will find the money to pay for it.”

For the present Mlle. Schoen-Rene thought that lighter kind of musical art was not threatened by a catastrophe like that threatening grand opera. Musical comedy might continue to flourish, if for no other reason than that it was the only pleasure obtainable at moderate means. So might other of the less expensive theatrical enterprises. But as a centre of classic music Germany’s days were over for the present . . .

“I hope, however,” concluded Mlle. Schoen-Rene, “that Wilson’s League of Nations will be imitated by a musical league of nations, the latter having the advantage of expressing itself intelligibly to the whole world, unless, of course, they take to Spartacide\textsuperscript{355} stunts. The sound internationalism of such a musical league would soon cure German art of its too intensive in-breeding.”\textsuperscript{356}

Although a musical league of nations was never actually formed, the musical atmosphere in America came quite close to it. Having turned to new national repertoires during the anti-German war years, having quickly recovered both classic and new German repertoire, and having welcomed a new generation of refugee musicians from Europe, America used its ability to act as a melting pot to bring about a new type of musical morality.

\textsuperscript{355} The term Spartacide refers to a German socialist uprising in Januaryuary 1919, which took its name from the Spartacus League and its pamphlets the Spartacus Letters.

In the epilogue to *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850-1920*, Jessica Gienow-Hecht pits two characters against each other. The first, Wilhelm von Humboldt, was an early-nineteenth century Prussian philosopher, who believed that the term “German entailed universalism as it embedded a free spirit, an open mind, and no geographical constraint.”

The second was British-American conductor Leopold Stokowski, who one hundred years later claimed not only that music was a universal language but that America was quickly becoming the global center of music, asserting that music would “transcend nationalism, find a universal expression, and give rise to an American Palestrina and an American Bach.”

Gienow-Hecht uses these two men to address complicated issues of universalism and nationalism in music. She writes,

> The thinking of Humboldt and Stokowski addressed the unsolvable contradiction in the idea of universalism: according to Humboldt, universalism meant to transcend things German. Stokowski, in turn, believed that universalism meant to transcend things American. Thus, even though music and emotions may be universal, they do receive much of their meaning and their clout through actual circumstances. The connotations as well as the moods by which feelings are raised are culturally conditioned and highly dependent on the listener’s as well as the performer’s disposition. The ways in which musicians realize and audiences understand musical meanings are linked to the beliefs and attitudes of their respective cultures. Such attitudes are subject to cultural change. Or, to put it differently, what matters about music is not only what is played but what people hear and think while giving or attending a performance.

Going one step further, we can see in Germany and America two nations, each at its own time, struggling to identify themselves (both politically and musically) as a whole unit despite their inherent diversity. Each nation’s political response is in fact reflected in its musical

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358 Ibid., 214.
359 Ibid., 223.
response. For Germany, the way to unite was under a charismatic and genius leader, whether a Kaiser or a Wagner, Beethoven, or Bach. For America, the way to unite was by embracing its diversity in the form of democracy, where many viewpoints were represented and heard. In modernism America found both universalism and a reflection of its own values. Thus, as Germany’s unification tactics went out of style after the First World War, both musically and politically, America’s approach began to thrive. It might even be possible to say that America’s political, musical, and moral flourishing depended on the breakdown of nationalized musical morality. The First World War thus served as a liminal period in which national musical morality was broken down in order to make way for the birth of a new universalist musical morality. The musical moral panics of the war can be heard as the birth pangs of this new musical morality, and America can be seen as its primary beneficiary.
REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in Aotearoa, “the land of the long white cloud,” Lucy Church moved from idyllic New Zealand to frosty Cleveland, Ohio as a child. A budding career as a genetic counselor was re-routed when she discovered a taste for Saint-Saëns’s piano concertos and Chopin’s polonaises, resulting in a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance at Wheaton College (IL). During Lucy’s studies at Wheaton, a nascent desire to be a collaborative pianist was once again re-directed, when she learned the story of Dmitri Shostakovich, a discovery that resulted in an obsession with that sweet spot that lies at the intersection of music, history, politics, and religion. Upon discovering the name of that sweet spot, “Musicology,” Lucy moved to Tallahassee, Florida where she obtained a Master of Music from FSU with a thesis titled “Brahms’s Late Spirituality: Hope in the Vier Ernste Gesänge, Op. 121.” During her doctoral studies Lucy presented research on Pete Seeger’s political protests and music and morality in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America at conferences in Little Rock, AR, Sacramento, CA, and Lucca, Italy. Her dissertation, titled “Music, Morality, and the Great War: How World War I Molded American Musical Ethics,” was inspired by the letters of her great-grand-uncle, who served as a medical orderly at Gallipoli. Lucy was hooded as a PhD by her mentor, Douglass Seaton, in August 2015. She is pursuing work as Assistant Music Director and Associate in Youth Ministry at St. Peter’s Anglican Church in Tallahassee and has already started work on two new research projects, one on American female impresarios in the early twentieth century, and one on Maori cultural expression in New Zealand’s Anglicanism.