INTRODUCTION

NEIL GREGOR AND THOMAS IRVINE

In 2002 Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter’s groundbreaking edited collection, *Music and German National Identity*, mapped the historical terrain on which the notion of Germans as the “people of music” was constituted and an intellectual terrain on which that trope might be fruitfully historicized. Its opening essay registered clearly the constructed notion of the proposition that Germans were, and always have been, inherently musical, or musically superior. Applegate and Potter proposed that “Germanness in music” was an idea that had been called forth by writers, critics, pedagogues, and philosophers; inscribed in literary genres such as journals, catalogs, and critical editions; institutionalized in concert associations, conservatories, and university departments; and monumentalized in statues and commemorative culture. At the same time, they acknowledged its longevity, its rhetorical power, and its capacity to transcend the specific politics of time and place. Animated by a critical spirit that drew on the thought of Benedict Anderson, they placed music at the center of an ongoing process of imagining national community throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. German national identity, they argued, had been talked, written, and printed into existence, and with it the notion of Germans as the “people of music.”

Applegate and Potter simultaneously acknowledged the effects that this “invented tradition” had on the wider culture of which it was part and cautioned gently against overemphasizing its historical significance in retrospect. The book was instrumental in encouraging historians to engage with a field of human activity that many had hitherto regarded as the recondite preserve of others; it also played a key role in helping musicologists, then grappling with the implications of the predominantly Anglophone “new musicology,” to think productively about how they might historicize musical works, musical practice, and the discourse of musicality that cleaved, and still cleaves, so firmly to discussions of what it may mean to be German.
In the intervening decade, inspired by the questions Applegate and Potter raised, historians and musicologists have explored further how to think about musical cultures in Germany within a national frame. At the same time, a number of wider shifts in focus across the humanities have underscored the importance of the skeptical note that unmistakably underpinned Applegate and Potter’s intervention. The master categories with which Applegate and Potter worked—“Music,” “German,” “Nation,” and “Identity”—have all undergone sustained critique for the manner in which they transport stable, essentialized, and often reified understandings of what they seek to describe. Scholars have realized that each category is loaded with normative understandings that, we would argue, still structure—in ways unspoken, unacknowledged, and often simply unrecognized—habits of thought that we find intellectually, politically, and ethically constraining.

For example, one long-lasting legacy of the historical culture that Applegate and Potter sought to dissect has been the survival of intellectually conservative criteria regarding the definition of “music”—or, at least, music worth making the object of sustained scholarly inquiry. These criteria both reflect and sustain conventional notions of heritage, canon, and aesthetic value and have ensured that until recently the overwhelming focus of musicology as a discipline was on “art music.” It is also surely no accident that, when seeking to juxtapose “art music” with materials and insights drawn from other repertoires, commentators have so often been drawn to the field of folk music, a genre and tradition that scholars of German music have long validated and sanctioned for academic study because of its capacity to draw on discourses of permanence and authenticity tied to a vague idea of being specifically “German.”

In the last two decades the cultural power of such aesthetic hierarchies has eroded significantly. At the same time, musicologists (and, increasingly, historians with interests in music) have widened the scope of their enquiries. New fields such as popular music studies and the interdisciplinary field of sound studies—with its even more trenchant questioning of hitherto stable notions of what music is—have engaged with a much wider spectrum of musical activities. Such processes invite reconsideration of the questions Applegate and Potter raised from vantage points that were not available at the time. They also allow the posing of other questions that, a generation ago, scholars simply did not ask.

Similarly, the national frames of conventional historiography, and master narratives of German history in particular, are not what they once were. German studies now attends with greater urgency to the question of how the national may be related to other spatial markers of identity, be they supranational (“central Europe”) or subnational (“Thuringia,” “Hamburg”). At the same time, due to shifts in scholarly sensibility engendered by the dynamics of globalization, mobility, and migration, histories of modern (and indeed
premodern) Germany have become more transnational and global in scope.\textsuperscript{8} As a result, the “national” in German history has acquired far more texture, even if more skepticism is called for concerning its explanatory potential (or at least its claims to explanatory hegemony). In previous narratives of national history, local and regional cultures appeared, implicitly, as prenational residues to be bulldozed over by the homogenizing march of national integration. Now not only are civic, local, and regional cultures permanently present in modern German history; they emerge as the sites on which various iterations of “national” identity were constituted.\textsuperscript{9}

Notions of “identity” are perhaps the biggest challenge to using the “national” to frame a coherent object of study. It has become a commonplace that any given subject position embodies a range of different identities and that these exist both independently and in relation to one another in malleable and fluid dispositions. It is equally common to note that they are formed in highly specific and historically situated ways. Beyond this, the emergence of other subdisciplinary or interdisciplinary fields such as memory studies, the history of emotions, gender studies, and postcolonial studies have opened up compelling perspectives on more visceral aspects and moments of human experience. These too encourage us to revisit the questions Applegate and Potter posed and to ask them afresh.

The evolving approaches that have inspired our book are governed by shifts in intellectual culture that are not the preserve of scholars working in one or two disciplines (in our cases, history and musicology). Yet it also bears pointing out that there has been a pronounced rapprochement between our two disciplines in the last decade or so. Indeed the “cultural history of music” has largely naturalized itself as a domain of study located somewhere at the interstices of the two.\textsuperscript{10} Such labels can themselves too easily imply the existence of a coherent, stable field of scholarly practice informed by a shared set of clear assumptions about what the object of study is and what theoretical and methodological approaches should be brought to bear on it, assumptions that belie the varied, open, messy, and still fundamentally incoherent nature of the field they seek to describe. A cursory glance at the multitude of different approaches that sail under the banner of the “cultural history of music” should suffice to make that immediately clear.\textsuperscript{11}

If there is one move that has made this interdisciplinary conversation easier, however, it is the shared willingness of increasing numbers of musicologists and historians to acknowledge the methods, insights, and commitments that govern a cognate discipline, anthropology (or, as it is more readily recognized in this area, ethnomusicology). This willingness includes a commitment to thinking not just about the discourse that surrounds music—the writing about music that was so central to Applegate and Potter’s approach—but also about music’s own “generative role,” i.e., its capacity to call forth sentiment, affect,
and also behavior through its own material in performance, albeit almost always (and this is perhaps precisely the point) temporarily. Secondly, and relatedly, we might point to Thomas Turino’s definition of culture as the “habits of thought and practice that are shared among individuals,” highlighting here his emphasis not just on “thought,” which would take us back again to the discursive construction of music, but also on “practice.” For it is precisely where historians and musicologists have successfully dislodged the erratic block embodied in aesthetically conservative understandings of what “music” is to explore the myriad social practices that center on it in all its varied forms—domestic music-making, concert-going, attendance at festivals, commercial broadcasting and radio listening, dance-floor chanting, and so on—that the potential for a conversation has hitherto been greatest.

Mindful particularly of the need to absorb more fully a notion of practice into our understanding of the identities that Applegate and Potter sought to foreground, we have sought to organize the notions of Germanness in music represented in this volume around the concept of the social imaginary. The political philosopher Charles Taylor proposes that the concept of the social imaginary represents the unspoken principles that govern a social order and the commonsense regimes of knowledge that shape behaviors under it. We share his sense that students of culture need to find ways of considering the forms of “wordless knowledge” that constitute identity—knowledge that is not always detectable in written discourse. In reaching for notions of the imaginary we are just as interested in capturing something of the simultaneously fluid, mobile, and unstable—and yet long-lasting, persistent, and resistant—qualities of the visions we are discussing across long durations as we are in their allegedly governing capacities.

We seek to capture visions of Germany that were present, whether temporarily or persistently, in a variety of different communities; to emphasize that they did and do not map easily onto conventional markers of political space, least of all onto an analytically overprivileged national one; to stress that they simultaneously moved across and through temporal boundaries, weaving in and out of political moments, taking on those political inflections but not becoming reduced to them and that, in a German context, their visceral dreaminess has taken on aspects of both fantasy and nightmare. Like Taylor we start from the assumption that social imaginaries “are never just ideology” and that “like all forms of human imagination, the social imaginary can be full of self-serving fiction and suppression, but it is also an essential constituent of the real.” Dislodging the aesthetic hierarchies that governed the intellectual preferences of an older generation in the academy does not render it any less valid to consider “classical music” as a set of historical social practices too. A lot of people used to listen to it, after all. It would not be too far from the truth to see
it as having been one of a number of forms of middle-class popular music for much of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The historical presence of the Austro-German canon is acknowledged in this volume, accordingly, in two essays on that most “monumental” of composers, Anton Bruckner; the cultures of listening that cohered around that canon are reflected in an essay on symphony concert hall life in the early twentieth century.

And yet we have long reached a point where the habitual privileging of this canon in the stories that we tell surely obscures as much as it reveals, and conventional habits of narrating the history of German musicking now work to reinscribe inherited assumptions in ways that are simply constraining rather than to promote exciting new lines of inquiry. One of the central contentions of this volume, demonstrated by our juxtaposition of symphony concert attendance, rock and roll, and queer-scene electronic dance music in our opening section, is that many of the most interesting themes that this field presents become far more visible, and far more open to fruitful analysis, if those distinctions between different genres, and those conventional habits of chronological narrative, are simply dissolved. In what follows, we seek to trace some of the avenues of thought that our individual essays suggest when read against one another. We close with some reflections on the ethical implications for future scholarship.

**Spaces and Moments of Affect**

For all of its innovation and diversity, the new cultural history of music, at least in a modern European context, has been governed—as are so many histories—by an unacknowledged and yet unmistakable sense of telos. Scholars have traced the transition from aristocratic to bourgeois cultures of musicking; the replacement of courtly with civic and commercial modes of organization; the emergence of modern musical professionalism and the concomitant marginalization of the amateur; the regulation of musical entertainment; the gradual domestication of the “spontaneous”; and the establishment of the musical “work” as the main object of music history.\(^{18}\) One particularly seductive telos is the emergence of the “listening subject.”\(^{19}\) As the rich vein of literature on the choral singing practices of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe underlines, the producing and listening subject could still, in fact, be one and the same, and active participation in the production of sound could thus remain the key generative agent in the production of “community.”\(^{20}\) In other fields of musical activity, the nineteenth century did witness, in tendency at least, the emergence of the distinct listening subject who sat, at first sight, in a relationship of distance to that which was being produced insofar as he or she was the consumer and the consumer only. Somewhere near the center of such stories

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usually sits a new listener defined by his or her distance and difference to the body producing the musical sound. The locus classicus of this listening subject was the symphony concert hall.21

The age of the concert hall is our starting point. Hansjakob Ziemer explores issues of ideology, affect, bodily comportment, and community as they were experienced in the concert halls of Germany during and after World War I. This was the moment, it is so often assumed, when a particular ideal of the listener was most firmly and clearly sutured to a corresponding vision of the ideal nation. Even here, however, this is an ambiguous story. It is indeed true that an emerging consensus about Bildung drew on Enlightenment ideas of the autonomous knowing subject capable of forming his or her own judgment according to the correct moral and aesthetic criteria. On the other hand, he or she was simultaneously recognized as part of a public governed by shared codes, practices, and sensibilities. But as Ziemer demonstrates, all of this was constantly the stuff of argument and dispute rather than a matter of settled opinion: the discourse was open and plural, the arguments trenchant but the visions correspondingly tentative.

Some took a more Romantic view and foregrounded music’s alleged capacity to engender emotion and to overwhelm the autonomous listener by subsuming him or her within something broader and more powerful.22 Such associations between music and power, music and the irrational, music and the mysterious became the stuff of bellettistic cliché. That should not stop us asking how, in the modern era, both the nature of the musical object and the conditions of its performance continued to call forth a sense of shared affect that approximated the phenomenon the cultural anthropologist Victor Turner once termed “communitas”—a liminal state in which the conventional rules of a polity temporarily dissolve, if only (and precisely) for the purpose of reinscribing their otherwise permanent presence.23

To approach the establishment of musical community this way is to foreground the momentariness, fleetingness, and situatedness of the individual musical event and the sense that at least one of its key characteristics lies in its being “in the moment” that it is performed, listened to, or experienced. Ziemer has emphasized elsewhere that the cultural dynamics of German concert hall life around the time of World War I cannot simply be inserted into an unfolding telos of bourgeois social practice, but instead reflected the highly specific and situated context of the hypernationalist climate of World War I.24 Concertgoing, then, was not merely a continuation of the bourgeois social routine of the pre-1914 period, but a site on which patriotic sentiment was publicly displayed, reconstituted, and fortified. As he argues here, defeat and chaos after 1918 generated a different dynamic again.

It is some distance—physically, temporally, culturally, metaphorically—from the concert halls of World War I Frankfurt to the rock and roll dance
floors of 1960s Hamburg. Yet many of the issues raised by Ziemer appear in Julia Sneeringer’s study of the emergence of rock and roll in Germany’s main port city. The spaces in which such musical events took place could hardly have been more different. If those attending symphony concerts rose on gilt stairwells to enter the auditorium, undergoing a moment of elevation that was simultaneously physical, symbolic, and aural, then working-class youth descended into the basements of the Hamburg pleasure zone, moving literally and figuratively into an underground space.

Space, in other words, worked very differently, but space was always at work. It co-constituted a liminal moment, in which social rules were at once suspended and reinscribed. It was the site of a performance—the act of “musicking” in the narrower sense—a background against which new and ideal social relationships were imagined. But it was also the site of multiple performances, in which a variety of behavioral scripts were acted out. In Ziemer’s example it was those of the bourgeois and/or national subject; in Sneeringer’s those of the young, the “cool,” the liberal and emancipated. If, in the concert halls of Frankfurt in World War I and the 1920s, concertgoers and critics were working out what it meant to be German, young club-goers in Hamburg were working out how to get away from it—or at least how to get away from a certain kind of imagined, and now highly suspicious, Germanness that they saw in the politically compromised generation of their parents. They were doing so, moreover, through encounters with young British musicians and other travelers for whom this musical scene signified a very different dream—a dream, ironically, of excitement and emancipation from what they experienced as the drab, dull culture of everyday postwar life at home. Different ideals, motives, and interests drew locals and visitors into this scene, and out of this transnational encounter a new musical culture was constituted.

Music’s multivalent capacities to generate affective community are highlighted by Luis-Manuel Garcia’s account of queer club culture in contemporary Berlin. Here the dynamics of erasure of boundaries between performers and audiences that Sneeringer discerns in Hamburg are yet more visible. Here, too, the transnational qualities of the musical encounters—between DJs, bar staff, international visitors, and local dance club frequenters—are at the center of the story. Garcia’s ethnography engages with visitors to the “Snax” gay club night at Berghain, where listening, dancing, and sexual encounter become so inextricably linked that all participants, “producers” and “consumers” alike, simultaneously figure as performers, listeners, and observers. During Snax the experience of music is only intelligible as an integral part, firstly, of a wider act of consumption—in this case, travel and tourism—and, secondly, as part of a wider, multisensory experience (the lights, the sounds, the smells, the touch of the dance floor, and the sex booths) that is itself embedded in the fuller...
set of corporeal experiences that constitute dancing or, indeed, having sex (or watching others do so).

It is an even longer way from Germany’s interwar concert halls to Snax. But many striking similarities of both substance and methodology emerge. Space, Garcia shows, is highly constitutive of affect. Affect is temporary and is allied strongly to a sense of the liminal; it is located, and available for analysis, within a wider set of corporeal dispositions and experiences. In Ziemer’s case, the rules of the space insist that the correct corporeal disposition is one of stillness; in Sneeringer’s and Garcia’s, musicking means movement. Yet whether in the aural space of the symphony concert hall, the sweat-drenched and smoky dance floor of the basement nightclub, or the mise-en-scène of the Berlin gay sex party, space, sound, and bodies interact to produce a momentary sense of communal participation. This participation may, or may not, be filled with national meaning.

We do not claim that the three moments that Ziemer, Sneeringer, and Garcia examine are analogous or interchangeable. Indeed, the differences in their essays point to a key issue: the impossibility of essentializing accounts of “how music works” to call forth shared affect in any given context. Of course each author cautions against taking the rhetoric of community at face value and allowing the language of community to become naturalized. “Public,” “audience,” and “community” are all words from the sources (Quellenbegriffe) and thus concepts that should be the objects of analysis rather than its tools. There were many alternative and countervailing subjectivities in each story that were hardly overcome by whatever momentary sense of shared affect music was able to generate. German cities contained strong strands of opinion opposed to World War I. Encounters between British and German teenagers, sailors, and sex workers also sometimes ended in fisticuffs aggravated by a sense of national difference. The terms “queer” and “straight” do not do justice to the gradations of self-identity that are found in the Snax audience; it is unlikely that the music fully dissolves those competing sexual identities in a haze of communal affect. Perhaps above all, as far as complicating notions of musical “Germanness” is concerned, all three accounts make clear that the object of analysis in these essays is as much a culture anchored in a particular city as it is one that reflects the presence of something generically national. Postwar pleasure-seekers were being drawn to Hamburg as much as to Germany, as are queer dance-scene tourists to Berlin in the contemporary world, so that any sense of “Germanness” that animates the encounter is refracted through very specific experiences of particular urban cultures. Even in the era of high nationalism, the early twentieth century, articulations of “Germanness” were inseparable from musical practices anchored in a profound sense of the civic.
The Civic, the Regional, and the National

German national identity has never been a unitary phenomenon. German national feeling has evolved across the vicissitudes of Germany’s emergence, making, unmaking, and remaking as a nation-state, with all the attendant moments of crisis and rupture. It has also presented itself in a wide variety of local and regional manifestations. The word *Heimat*, and the landscapes that go with it—physical, cultural, emotional—is not just an atavistic residue of a prenational era, a site of resistance to the unfolding project of the modern nation-state, but rather the site, and the endless set of sites, on which that nation was imagined and forged. In what follows, we take Bavaria as a space in which to explore in more detail how local, regional, and national stories were entwined. Focusing more directly on the place of National Socialism within the broader narratives of Germany’s musical histories, the three essays in this section demonstrate how, both at the moment of hypernationalism’s temporary triumph and in its immediate aftermath, regional and civic identities remained central to the story.

The local and the regional were also far more, however, than a variety of places in which a larger set of narratives unfolded with particular inflections. As the essays in this section underline, musical imaginaries emerged not only in space but also through and across time. Accordingly, historically meaningful spaces such as Bavaria or Munich were not just political or territorial containers. They were also sites of memory, repositories of experiences and stories that gave cultural imaginaries much of their visceral quality. The reopening of the Bavarian State Opera house in Munich in 1963 ostensibly marked a moment of reconstruction, an important symbolic point in the transition between the rubble years of the late 1940s and 1950s (the years of shortage, of introspection, of cultural “restoration”) and the more vibrant 1960s (years of plenty, of liberalization, of the “second Enlightenment” of the Federal Republic). Yet Munich in that era—as both city and state capital—was also a site of multiple memories reaching back to the turn of the century. Elderly music-lovers would have remembered Bruno Walter conducting during World War I, or even Gustav Mahler directing the premiere of his own fourth symphony in 1901. Indeed Richard Strauss, whose own family recollections included those of his father having played in the state (at the time royal) opera’s orchestra at the premieres of Wagner music dramas, had died in Garmisch-Partenkirchen only a decade previously. His late works echoed with nostalgia for the haute-bourgeois musicking that centered on institutions such as the Bavarian State Opera and were heard as such by contemporaries.

Such mentalities cut across the conventional divides of local political cultures. Today’s hyperaffluent Bavaria seems shaped by the culturally
conservative legacy of Franz Josef Strauss’s Christian Social Union. But in the 1950s it was one of West Germany’s poorer regions. At state level, where issues of cultural policy such as the rebuilding of theaters were determined, until the latter part of the decade its politics were strongly codetermined by the Social Democratic Party. The city itself, meanwhile, was a citadel of moderate Social Democratic politics; the tone for its political classes was set by the comparatively liberal Süddeutsche Zeitung. As Emily Richmond Pollock’s account of the campaign to rebuild the state opera house and the opening gala festival shows, there were strong civic and regional cultural memories and identities in operation in the choice of works performed. Wagner, Strauss, Egk, Orff, and Hartmann were all composers strongly associated with the city. The very different experiences during the Third Reich of the latter three composers suggest, however, that in the micropolitics of Munich’s postwar musical scene tensions anchored in conflicting memory were never far from the surface, just as they were in the politics of German cities after 1945 more generally.

Mention of Walter, or the many other Jewish musicians who passed through Munich, and of Strauss, the founding president of the National Socialist Reich Music Chamber, reminds us that the city played host to the full range of horrifying stories that unfolded in Germany from World War I to the end of World War II. Radical nationalism left its traces in musical life in the inflection of performance and reception histories of “monumental” composers such as Bruckner, as Neil Gregor traces. But contrary to what is often assumed to be the case, Nazi Germany exerted a considerably less homogenizing influence on music reception than one might expect. Rather, a wide variety of cultural imaginaries that centered on Bruckner echoed through the period and through each other, mingling, coagulating, occasionally contesting but as often as not simply coexisting. All gained easy traction within the contained ideological pluralism of the Third Reich. Postwar tropes that appeared to carry specifically National Socialist residues and reflect mental continuities from that era reveal themselves to have had a longer archaeology. If anything, the success of National Socialism in naturalizing itself in German society reflected its own ability to insert itself into those deeper cultural continuities.

At the same time, Bavaria, like all areas of the Reich, witnessed the vicious, and ultimately murderous, processes of marginalization, exclusion, expulsion, and genocide of the Jews between 1933 and 1945, leaving a memory that haunted the local landscapes as a largely unspoken, but palpably present knowledge. The towns of Bavaria—above all, Munich—hosted not just a variety of conservative, nationalist, and racist musical cultures but also a beleaguered minority that sought to assert its own identity musically as the persecution intensified. Dana Smith explores these themes in her account of the Bavarian branch of the Jewish Kulturbund. Her essay offers a valuable counterpoint not just to histories of the dominant gentile culture of exclu-
sion, but also to stories of the *Kulturbund* that have hitherto been told from a strongly Berlin-centered perspective. Crucially, she brings gender to bear on her analysis. In her focus on the female musicians who played such a central role in the Bavarian *Kulturbund* she demonstrates the importance of recognizing that musical—and, by extension, other—imaginaries have a strongly gendered aspect that much scholarship conventionally ignores. The end of this story is well known: Bavaria’s Jews were driven into exile, incarcerated and murdered en masse; very few survived in Germany at the end of the war, haunting the postwar landscape.

Local and regional spaces were not, then, simply variants of a national story. To examine them is to discover archaeological layers of often troubling emotional experience and memory, each overlayering the previous one yet inflected with its echoes. Such echoes had and have the potential to rupture the surface of any given moment. They were a substantial part of what gave events such as the reopening of the Bavarian State Opera their complex power. The presence of memories of extreme violence that haunted local communities in such moments demonstrates how histories of “musical Germanness” need telling inside of, and as part of, histories of colonialism, massive violence, and war, but without reducing histories of either military aggression or cultural activity to simple cause or effect of the other.

**Globalizing Musical Germanness**

The history of musical Germanness, and German “musicality,” is not the same as the history of Germany. This book also asks how the story of musical Germanness unfolds in larger contexts. Marx and Engels theorized the “global turn” in class terms more than 150 years ago: “The bourgeoisie … [compels] all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.”31 The dissemination of German musical values in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from ringing declarations of the “universal” value of German music to the first performances of Wagner in Japan to the persistence of German-derived values of “process” and “depth” in Hubert Parry’s conception of musical evolution, remade, or attempted to remake, musical worlds—sometimes on pain of extinction—in the image of a certain kind of German *Bürger*, in tension of course with the local conditions of Japan or Britain around 1900.

Our quotation from the *Communist Manifesto* does not necessarily signal an explicit political or theoretical position. We wish to emphasize, rather, Marx and Engels’s own global outlook and to point out the unparalleled success of
German art music as an export product, a success that surely had something to do with the concomitant worldwide adaptation of “the bourgeois mode of production.” The contemporary “global turn” in historical scholarship, one of the most important sites of disciplinary innovation in the years since the publication of Applegate and Potter’s *Music and German National Identity*, has yet to make a substantial impact on the cultural history of music. Our book seeks to place German national feeling experienced in music in a global frame. This global frame need not in any way erase the national. Far from it: following Sebastian Conrad, we would like to suggest ways in which the growth of global structures of trade, migration, and imperial power are “not only … the necessary context, but also … the necessary precondition for the emergence of particular forms of nationalism.”

How far back in time one should go in seeking a peculiarly German story regarding the nation’s relations to its internal and external others is a question that has, *nolens volens*, governed the writing of German history for decades. Over the last thirty years, scholars have beat a comprehensive retreat from the notion that German history traveled along a Special Path (*Sonderweg*) marked by a native authoritarianism and a structurally determined, continuous expansionism. Whatever catastrophes Germany visited upon Europe and the world in the first half of the twentieth century, the longue durée of its history was considerably less “peculiar” than many scholars of the 1960s and 1970s once argued. Yet, at least as a heuristic tool, the idea that there is something “special” about German music has lost none of its seductive explanatory power. Indeed, we would hardly be writing these words were this not the case.

One way to overcome this is to acknowledge consistently the agency of the non-European “others” who became musical Germany’s interlocutors from the early modern period onwards. Just as, for example, Germans were constantly traveling, encountering, interpreting, and imagining the East, making sense of it in frameworks learned at home, so were Eastern counterparts engaged in complementary, and mutually implicated, processes. The need to draw attention to the equal agency of German and non-German actors in the making of any global cultural history of music underlies our juxtaposition of Thomas Irvine’s text with Brooke McCorkle’s study of the reception of Wagner in Meiji Restoration Japan.

McCorkle explores the ways in which Wagner became known in Japan before he was heard there. Literary scholars discussed the composer’s political, social, and aesthetic ideals; conservatoire students performed extracts of Wagnerian dramas; poets adapted libretti to the forms of Japanese epic poetry; and abridged versions of Wagnerian stories circulated in forms suited to Japan’s literary and cultural marketplace. Much as many Germans first experienced jazz during the Weimar Republic visually rather than sonically, Wagner’s work first made its way through Japanese society in written rather
than aural—let alone fully staged—form. McCorkle shows that this was not simply a process of cultural transfer in which Western musical texts traveled through non-Western contexts to be embraced by Japanese and other non-European Germanophiles. Rather, Wagner was translated in a double sense. The text did not simply move: it was transformed into genres and forms that made sense in Japanese traditions.

Ideas and assumptions about musical “Germanness” sometimes functioned as an unspoken governing presence in contexts that were always highly specific rather than interchangeable. This, indeed, underscores the importance of the recent turn from the “transnational” to the “global.” Transnational histories (and related ideas of “culture transfer”) assume that nations and the discourses that accompany them are immutable and that their cultures can transfer from one national “envelope” to another. Global histories, by contrast, follow networks that transcend simple spatial markers. Irvine’s account of composer Hubert Parry’s engagement with musical “Germanness” is no less global for the fact that it played out in the micro frame of reference represented by the educational and pedagogical institutions of London’s South Kensington, from the Great Exhibition of 1851 to the South Kensington (later Victoria and Albert) Museum to Parry’s own Royal College of Music to the Royal College of Science (later Imperial College of Science and Technology) next door. Indeed, networks of colonialist thought at work in and across those institutions provided precisely the setting in which Parry’s Germanocentric and white-supremacist account of global musical history could be worked out.

Parry, Irvine argues, reconfigured musical “Germanness” by subtly altering the frame of world music history. Founders of modern music history writing in German from the mid eighteenth century onward had positioned Germany as the right geographical place for a supposedly special “mixed” taste of (superior) music to form. As the nineteenth century unfolded, (mostly) German writers embellished this narrative to include ever more personal and historical traits supposedly specific to German people: industriousness, spiritual profundity, ties to soil and history, transcendent idealism. By 1914 in some quarters musicality itself became a special property that marks Germans as German. Thomas Mann even argued after 1914 that Germany’s deep, “irrational” musicality (as opposed to her enemies’ “civilized” liberalism) made war inevitable.

Into this discourse strode Hubert Parry, director of the Royal College and Heather Professor at Oxford, a leading composer, and author of numerous widely read texts on music history. Parry, who spoke fluent German and had met Wagner personally, was by his own admission a “pro-Teuton.” Yet in his history, the backbone of which is provided by Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Wagner, and Brahms, the guiding principle is not Germanness but (white) “Northernness,” as opposed to (brown and black) “Southernness.” Parry’s “South,” it must be said, started at the Danube.
He once wrote that his beloved student Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, a Londoner with an African father, found his compositional voice when he discovered Dvořák, “between whom and himself there was some racial analogy.” The elision of German and North in Parry’s writing, Irvine shows, allows for a vision of music history in which British composers can share German profundity and the networks of the British Empire (centered in South Kensington) can transport “great” music on a global scale. Today one might argue that such “great” music is everywhere. The two essays in this section suggest that this “everywhere” has a history.

**Fantasies, Reminiscences, Dreams, Nightmares**

To parse conventional notions of musical canon, to consider discourse alongside practice, to examine the relationship between different layers of political space, to globalize the stories that we tell, and to interrogate them for the emotional landscapes they reveal are all approaches that may be applied to other national spaces and national historiographies. Yet as our consideration of the complex emotional resonances echoing through the reopening in the 1960s of an opera house destroyed by wartime bombing has already shown, modern German history—both its experience and its telling—has been shaped by a distinctive set of histories of extreme mass violence. The character and qualities of this violence demand that we listen for its echoes in musical life. Fantasies of conquest, and nightmares of multiple histories of appalling suffering visited upon others and experienced oneself, are central to any account of modern German history. At the same time, today sensibilities regarding the Holocaust and its immediate aftermath are taking on a palpably different tone. This is the product of the slow but inexorable historicization of the National Socialist era. With this historicization other forms of reverie that flourished alongside the Nazi dictatorship and in the years after its defeat are also coming into view. Nostalgia for the Habsburg era in post-1918 Austria, for the habitus of Wilhelmine Bürgerlichkeit in 1950s West Germany, or for the various lost lands of former eastern Germany among the many different refugee and expellee communities after World War II are but some of the most obvious.

A generation ago scholars of memory were given to explaining the formation of memory cultures primarily in terms of political utility. In the case of the post–World War II era the framing context of the Cold War, Western integration, and political “restoration,” or, conversely, the establishment of a new ideological dictatorship under the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), facilitated the creation of a set of usable pasts that distanced the present from the National Socialist era and quarantined its ethical and political challenges. We have now come to understand that the visceral legacies of
the pre-1945 era and their capacities to erupt into the present in challenging, unpredictable ways cannot be reduced to politics in this way. This is not to say that pragmatism and political utility did not play a role. Lap-Kwan Kam demonstrates that a conscious act of self-distancing was in operation in the attempts of Austrian cultural arbiters to define a non-Nazi version of the Austro-German canon and to re-annex it for a distinctly Austrian cultural patrimony after 1945. In the course of reimagining Austrian history, cultural commentators transformed their country from defeated rump state to a vessel of timeless culture; from an integral element of “Austro-Germanness” to the guardian of a specifically Austrian musical inheritance that was superior to its (tainted) German counterpart; and from actor in a story of heroism to passive victim of the forces of history. Kam reminds us that, for all the continuities stressed by Gregor, it mattered who was in power. Nonetheless, the lost legacies of the “Greater German” vision of 1848 echoed through nostalgic laments for Austria’s cultural heritage on the occasion of its 950th anniversary commemorations in 1946. The profound resurgence of this vision in the post-war era was a complex phenomenon, not least because elements of National Socialism’s own nationalist, colonialist, and racist fantasies had drawn on the same rhetorical traditions. Their resonances demonstrated the presence of set of attachments, orientations, experiences, and memories that had clearly not simply been expelled from German national history in 1866. Short-term political exigencies and long-term cultural processes remained as entangled as ever.

The capacity of histories of violence and their aftereffects to rupture the surfaces of formal political and ideological frames forms a central element of Martha Sprigge’s account of Georg Katzer’s 1983 sound collage Aide – Mémoire in the context of wider compositional tradition in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). As with other recent studies that have sought to texture the musical life of East Germany and take it beyond clichéd, reductionist accounts of culture, propaganda, and totalitarianism, she explores how the culture of antifascism was both an imposed expressive constraint and the site of memory work vested with a considerably greater anchoring in authentic experiences and commitments than some critiques would allow. As much as the SED sought to impose an official narrative of recent German history and to celebrate the agency of working-class resistance in the creation of the GDR, more troubling memories of racist violence and murder in which ordinary Germans (now the citizens of the GDR) had figured as perpetrators could never be entirely domesticated. The outcome, again, is a sense of cultural life that, even under conditions of single-party domination, cannot be reduced to a simple set of political narratives, but rather needs to be analyzed for the ways in which it transported something considerably more multivalent, open, ambiguous, and complex.
The presence of multiple layers of historical memory and their capacity to echo in many musical media is underlined, finally, by Sean Nye. His essay is surely the first long-form scholarly engagement with several iconic moments in US popular culture toward the end of the millennium: the films *Die Hard* (1989) and *The Big Lebowski* (1998) and, between them, Mike Myers’s dancing German creation, Dieter, for *Saturday Night Live*. All three involve Germans acting as pseudo-intellectual German “others” (in the films as villains) to Americans of all stripes, and all three invoke techno as a specifically German music. Nye demonstrates, again, the importance of examining the constitution of national imaginaries across, and in spite of, national borders. On first sight, the representations of Germans in the North American film and commercial television he dissects simply embody an easy, ahistorical set of stereotypes: efficiency, ruthlessness, and humorlessness. The reinscription of such stories is as tiresome as it is superficial. Yet something far more interesting is at work here. In particular, the trope of the (Berlin noir) designer suit–wearing Euroterrorist both moves beyond the insistent foregrounding of the Nazis and Holocaust in global popular cultural evocations of “bad Germans” and simultaneously reanimates something older. It is not, after all, difficult to see in the austere, obedient figure of the German Euroterrorist popularized in films such as *Die Hard* the descendant of the cold, disciplined Prussian of the late nineteenth-century European imagination, at once provoking admiration, hostility, and fear. Here, again, we are reminded of the capacity of such tropes to weave in and out of the political frames for which we conventionally reach when telling the history of Germany, constantly evolving, yet persistently returning and repeating, resisting their domestication by conventional narrative as they do.

**German Musicking, “Culture,” and Eurocentrism**

Ironically, national identity arrived as a compelling context for interrogating inherited histories of Germany’s musical cultures just as the events of 1989 and the wave of euphoria about globalization that followed swept national frameworks from the conceptual repertoires of many historians. Today we live in an age of global history, in which national envelopes (in Sebastian Conrad’s words, “regimes of territoriality”)—and in the case of German music the Eurocentrism that unavoidably goes with them—are rightly viewed with suspicion.41 The essays in this book, by interrogating and complicating the special status of the idea of “Germaness” in music, reassess the ways in which national ideas can shape musical practices in light of the “global turn.” The inadequacy of the category of the national, beholden as it still is to processes of nineteenth-century nation building, as a simple frame
for historical analysis should be clear. Global approaches can open historical studies to new and far more nuanced ways of assessing what Conrad calls “positionality.”42 As the authors in this book argue, musical “Germanness” can appear in unexpected places, such as 1890s Japan or Saturday Night Live. It can appear between cultural geographies and can help to make new ones where it does.

After the Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, uninterrogated celebrations of global, transnational, cosmopolitan, and other such “open” methods appear in another light. The essays here engage with borders: those between Germany and its national others, but also those between “high” and “low” art, nation and region, men and women, rich and poor, queer and straight, the remembered and the forgotten, and, crucially, Europe and the rest of the world.43 Recently Europe’s borders, including Germany’s, have been the subject of passionate political debate and the site of violence and an appalling loss of life. They are once again materially real. The mass migration of refugees to Europe fleeing war and inequality around the Mediterranean and farther afield—and the concomitant rise of “identity”-based ultrarightist movements in Europe, Britain, and the United States—has sparked a resurgence of what Conrad calls “culture talk”: the insistence, which never really went away, on a specifically European or Western civilization whose “values” need defending from—as former British Prime Minister David Cameron, a politician with a reputation for liberal “cosmopolitanism,” put it—a “swarm” of people heading our way who might not share them.44

The resurgence of “Western culture” as Leitkategorie, especially in the years since 9/11, has also found echoes elsewhere. In China and Japan, for instance, one reaction to the long processes of decolonization and deimperialization has been recourse to talk of Chinese, Japanese, or “Confucian” civilization, even when this serves as cover for a renewed imperial gaze toward neighbors or increasing repression within.45 The same could be said of the rise of Hindu nationalist parties in India and the allures of an imaginary “global” (read: Sunni) caliphate on the borders of Syria and Iraq. And even the global perspective, as Conrad reminds us, can slip too easily into a transcendental, all-knowing subject position that is itself a hallmark of Western thinking determined and legitimated by centuries of (as it happens, often German) philosophical world-making.46 Conceptual “centrism” is harder to shake off than we think.

What could a study of German music history free of “conceptual Germanocentrism” look like? The idea might sound absurd at first: Can there be any kind of German history that dispenses with “Germanness”? We would argue that there could be. The first step in the direction of such a history would be to build on the successes of the methodological tools of reception history and

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culture transfer by opening ourselves up to larger and less stable frames. Cultural historians of music have used both tools, with great and lasting effect, to interrogate stale national categories. Particularly in the realm of culture transfer, the best work is open, as Annagret Fauser and Mark Everist write, to “the idea that identity and difference are not contradictory but complementary.” Yet as Walter Mignolo argues, the idea of culture itself is not neutral: lying somewhere “between ‘nature’ and ‘civilization’ it has helped Western thinkers classify (and divide up) the world from the eighteenth century onwards.”

Those who proclaim a “new cultural history of music” would be advised to take account of this blind spot. Mignolo’s discussion of the terms “acculturation” and “transculturation” illuminates this issue. Acculturation, applied to the case studies in this book, would mean that non-Germans—or indeed those who are not the classic white, male, heterosexual, bourgeois subjects of German music history—exposed to German musical culture would take it on and make it their own: Germans act, others react. On a broader scale, reliance on overdetermined structures has (inadvertently) hobbled postcolonialist thought as well. Unlike postcolonialism, acculturation theories often look past the violence (conceptual and real) that might have accompanied such exposure. “Transculturation” offers a less hegemonizing alternative, but still depends on static models of cultural practices in motion “across” arbitrary borders.

An alternative term would be what Mignolo calls “cultural semiosis,” the precondition of “border thinking.” Border thinking, Mignolo claims, happens in the moment when those living in the modern, globalized world—with its claim to be united by one history of progress leading to the present—realize that they really live on the border between the claims of this history and a different local reality. In this moment the way one interprets the world (“cultural semiosis”) can change. The result, Mignolo argues, is a kind of decolonizing move, one that reveals “that the system of knowledge, beliefs, expectations, dreams, and fantasies upon which the modern/colonial world was built is showing, and will continue to show, its unviability.” This is a near corollary of what Conrad calls “the emergence of the world as a social category,” a process in which “historians express their views on connections and exchange, and their visions of the totality … of which they feel a part.” The result could be “plural” historical worlds, in which “each version reflects the position from which it was conceived.” In some of these worlds Germany might be constituted in the absence of any Germans at all. It might also be constituted outside of the real. Indeed, one of Mignolo’s most insightful (and, for some perhaps, troubling) claims is that “Western civilization” itself “may be a dream: the dream of actors and institutions that managed and built the modern/colonial world in the name of the universality of Western values.” In this sense the much heralded “special” history of German music, with all of its similar claims of universal value, might be just another dream of Germany.

Transcending conceptual Germanocentrism in music(al) history also means overcoming, once and for all, the dead weight of received narrative structures. Thinking of the history of German musical cultures as a kaleidoscopic array of overlapping “made” worlds might empower us to resist the attraction of teleological metanarratives. Historians of German music tend toward two of these. The first is the Romantic story of progress, often expressed in Hegelian terms of overcoming contradictions. In these a (German) musical genius such as Beethoven, Wagner, or Schoenberg arrives just in time at the end of Act Three to save the day and propel the story of German music history forward. In others, the narrative is tragic, but a narrative all the same. In this story all the glories of German musical art are not enough to save German civilization from German barbarity. The Sonderweg idea—which in music-historical terms can lead, for instance, to reductive accounts of musical life under National Socialism in which totalitarian ideology is always the determining factor—is as seductive in its way as the story of German musical heroism. It preserves a notion of German difference that resonates unmistakably throughout the manifold discourses of German music history. But it is a dead end as a historical method, because it robs historical actors of their agency and removes that agency from the contexts in which it was deployed, depriving it in the process of much of whatever meaning it may have had.

Embracing border thinking and world-making as models alongside reception and transfer, and rejecting the seductions of Special Paths, can turn histories of German music into histories of German musicking and return agency to those who really made this history in all of its complexity and contradictions. The essays in this book attempt to do justice to these actors. But they are only a beginning. Approaches like the one we attempt here depend on the linkage of microhistories—of audience behavior, repertoire choice, historical imagination, memorial practices, and club-going—with larger processes such as the emergence of mass media, rapid changes in travel and communication, mass migration, and, of course, war and destruction. There are many microhistories left to write. The writing of these will continue to change as our understanding of the larger processes in which they are embedded does.

The project of stripping the ingrained Eurocentric conceits from our conceptions of what constitutes German music history needs to be pursued not only by identifying such ideologies and holding them to account in texts such as those in this volume, but also in the sites where we, as scholars, have voice and agency to change the world. In the winter of 2015–16, both musicology and history were shaken by separate but related controversies connected to debates around the decolonization of our disciplines. While historians at Cape Town, Missouri, Yale, Harvard, and Oxford debated the issues raised by the legacies of slavery and colonialism, musicologists, further from the public eye, found themselves no less bitterly divided over claims made in a scholar’s blog.
post about the allegedly improving capacities of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* when played to inmates in an American prison. The implicit, but uninterrogated, Eurocentrism of the blog post unleashed a storm of protest, but also vigorous defenses of the underlying act of public engagement. The protests centered on, among other things, the ideology behind the author’s assumption of the universal values the opera supposedly embodied—ones that we would identify as contingently German—and their ability to improve the minds and lives of prisoners who, given the demography of the US prison population, may have preferred to celebrate any number of alternative cultural heritages. As the debate continued it became clear that some of its interlocutors, many of whom identified themselves as belonging to or sympathizing with minorities of age, gender, race, disability, or sexual orientation underrepresented in professional musicology, felt compelled for fear of career reprisal to make their contributions under the cover of anonymity.

Such disputes are not isolated cases. Rather, they reflect and help to shape a wider contemporary unease about the implication of university humanities curricula—and the conceits of Western humanities in general—in cultures of power that exclude, coerce, and oppress, both in the polities in which they are at work and in relation to global others. Reforms to the music curriculum at Harvard University and deliberations on the decolonization of the *American Historical Review* are more recent examples of how such concerns have gradually gained traction in sections of our own disciplines; pressure to reform the English curriculum at the University of Cambridge in a similar spirit shows something of the reach of such arguments in cognate intellectual communities. Yet just as striking is the entrenched “common sense” opposition that such critiques continue to provoke. To us this underscores the urgency of the critique we attempt here. We share Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori’s call for a more “pluralized” historiography in line with such a critique. With them, in light of recent events in our academic environments, we would like to stress the importance of taking this plurality further, “to the level of the profession itself, in which the inequitable distribution of institutional power and authority stands as the biggest obstacle to overcoming Eurocentrism.” We hope that the voices represented in this book can contribute constructively to a necessary critique, and dismantling, of such inequalities.

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Notes

6. See the survey in Philip V. Bohlman, Music, Nationalism and the Making of a New Europe (London, 2004), which makes clear that many of the processes of musical “nationalization” sustain the argument that German music history is similar to, rather than fundamentally different from, its European counterparts. For comparative arguments that undermine the sense of German singularity in the sphere of art music, see Sven Oliver Müller, Das Publikum macht die Musik: Musikleben in Berlin, London und Wien im 19. Jahrhundert (Göttingen, 2014); on popular theater and music hall, see the excellent Tobias Becker, Inszenierte Moderne: Populäres Theater in Berlin und London, 1880–1930 (London, 2014); and Tobias Becker, Len Platt, and David Linton, eds., Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin, 1890–1939 (Cambridge, 2014).

9. Emblematic of this move is Celia Applegate, A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat (Berkeley, 1990); more recently, Martina Steber, Ethnische Gewissheiten: Die Ordnung des Regionalen im bayerischen Schwaben vom Kaiserreich bis zum NS-Regime (Göttingen, 2010); the formation of national identities in civic musical life is explored in Rüdiger Ritter, Wem gehört Musik? Warschau und Wilna im Widerstreit nationaler und städtischer Musikkulturen vor 1939 (Stuttgart, 2004); for an exploration of such civic cultures across the longue durée of German history, see Christian Thorau, Andreas Odenkirchen, and Peter Ackermann, eds., Musik—Bürger—Stadt: Konzertleben und musikalisches Hören im historischen Wandel (Regensburg, 2011).


Introduction


33. The locus classicus of the Sonderweg Thesis is Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871–1918* (Göttingen, 1973); the classic critique is David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics*


40. More generally, see Elaine Kelly, Composing the Canon in the German Democratic Republic: Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Music (Oxford, 2014); for comparison, see the similar argument of Pauline Fairclough, Classics for the Masses: Shaping Soviet Musical Identity under Lenin and Stalin (New Haven, 2016).


42. Ibid., 162–84.


45. See Kuan-Hsing Chen, Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization (Durham, NC, 2010).


53. Mignolo, Local Histories/Global Designs, x.


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