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978-0-521-76071-3 - Choral Fantasies: Music, Festivity, and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany

Ryan Minor

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Choral Fantasies

Most histories of nineteenth-century music portray “the people” merely as an audience, a passive spectator to the music performed around it. Yet, in this reappraisal of choral singing and public culture, Minor shows how a burgeoning German bourgeoisie sang of its own collective aspirations, mediated through the voice of celebrity composers. As both performer and idealized community, the chorus embodied the possibilities and limitations of a participatory, national identity. Starting with the many public festivals at which the chorus was a featured participant, Minor’s account of the music written for these occasions breaks new ground not only by taking seriously these often-neglected works, but also by showing how the contested ideals of German nationhood suffused the music itself. In situating both music and festive culture within the milieu of German bourgeois liberals, this study uncovers new connections between music and politics during a century that sought to redefine both spheres.

RYAN MINOR is Associate Professor of Music at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His research focuses primarily on the musical and political culture of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Germany, with special emphasis on opera, choral music, and music’s participation in the public sphere. He has published widely on Wagner, and serves as an associate editor of the *Opera Quarterly*.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

List of illustrations [page vi]

Acknowledgements [vii]

Introduction [1]

1 Choral fantasies from Beethoven to the *Vormärz* [8]

2 Memory and multiplicity in Felix Mendelssohn's
"Gutenberg" works [33]

3 Prophet and populace in Liszt's "Beethoven" cantatas [68]

4 Songs and states in Brahms's *Triumphlied* and Wagner's
Kaisermarsch [110]

5 Occasions and nations in Brahms's *Fest- und*
Gedenksprüche [163]

Notes to the text [199]

Bibliography [247]

Index [273]

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Ryan Minor

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

- Figure 1.1 Moritz von Schwind, *Eine Symphonie*. Reproduced with permission from the Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz [page 29]
- Figure 2.1 Cover page, Karl Preusker, *Gutenberg und Franklin*. Reproduced with permission from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München [54]
- Figure 4.1 Comparison of “Heil dir im Siegerkranz” and “Heil und Preis” melodies [122]

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