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

Ryan Minor

Frontmatter

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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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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521760713

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First published 2012

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Minor, Ryan, 1974–

Choral fantasies : music, festivity, and nationhood in nineteenth-century Germany / Ryan Minor.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-521-76071-3

1. Music – Political aspects – Germany – History – 19th century. I. Title.

ML3917.G3M56 2012

782.50943'09034–dc23

2011031558

ISBN 978-0-521-76071-3 Hardback

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Acknowledgements

This book, like many of its ilk, has had a long gestation. The list of acknowledgements that follows is correspondingly long, and horribly impersonal, but at the very least I like to think that this gesture of commemoration, as well as the communal spirit it honors, is in keeping with the chapters that follow.

Berthold Hoeckner – equal parts *Doktorvater* and all-around mensch – helped this project in countless ways and on countless occasions. Also at the University of Chicago, Philip Bohlman, Thomas Christensen, and Philip Gossett nurtured my work through its earlier stages. So, too, did a number of students: Daniel Barolsky, Gurminder Bhogal, Celia Cain, Donald Chae, Yonatan Malin, Yossi Maurey, Catherine Saucier, and Marta Tonegutti. Two members of that cohort are now close friends – Celia Cain and Donald Chae – and I also thank them in that capacity, as well as for their contributions to many epicurean gatherings. I owe similar thanks to Eliza Garrison, Wayne Heisler, Casey McKittrick, and Mark Vail.

At SUNY Stony Brook, I have had the good fortune to be surrounded by a number of distinguished colleagues: Joe Auner, Andy Eisenberg, Sally Fuller, Bonnie Gordon, Judy Lochhead, and Ben Steege. In particular, Mauro Calcagno has proven himself both an indefatigable colleague and a good friend. Dan Weymouth came to my technological rescue at the last minute, and Ilari Kaila and Phil Salathé – who presumably did not enter a doctoral program in composition so that they could spend a summer entering my musical examples into Finale – were also enormously helpful.

I thank the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, which funded a sabbatical year to work on this book (even if most of those funds were immediately funneled back into the Cambridge economy once I discovered Formaggio Kitchen); Radcliffe also provided a wonderful community of scholars and what has to be the most ideal library situation on the planet. Closer to home, I thank the FAHSS research initiative at Stony Brook, which funded multiple summer research trips. The DAAD, the American Brahms Society, and the Franke Institute for the Humanities at the University of Chicago provided crucial support as well. Perhaps most of all, I thank the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, which not only sponsored this

project – generously – in its infancy, but has repeatedly funded subsequent research trips to Germany. I'm honored to wear the Humboldt tie.

This project is also indebted to a number of libraries and archives: the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Hans-Günther Klein); the Staatsarchiv Bremen; the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn; the Staatsarchiv der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (Dagmar Bickelmann); the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg (Jürgen Neubacher); the Brahms-Institut der Musikhochschule Lübeck (Wolfgang Sandberger and Stefan Weymar); the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München; the Bodleian Library at Oxford University; the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv Weimar (Evelyn Liepsch); and the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Wien.

Portions of Chapter Three appeared in *Franz Liszt and his World*, ed. Christopher Gibbs and Dana Gooley (Princeton University Press, 2005), and a regrettably early version of Chapter Five was published in *19th-Century Music* 29/3 (2006); I thank Princeton University Press and the University of California Press for permission to reprint this material. I am especially grateful for all the help that Irene Zedlacher and Don Giller offered with the Liszt material, both in its initial form and in its reincarnation for this book. At Cambridge University Press, I thank Rebecca Taylor, as well as her patience; I am also grateful for all the work and support that Vicki Cooper has put into the book. I thank Esther Scheps, who slogged through this entire manuscript without complaint, and managed to find a distressing number of the kinds of mistakes I didn't think I made.

Several scholars deserve special recognition: Lydia Goehr, who helped me focus the book's opening; Christian Kaden, whose support of the project has been particularly gratifying; Gundula Kreuzer, my operatic partner-in-crime who also happens to know the literature surrounding this book exceedingly well; Alex Rehding, who has given me invaluable feedback for years; and Jeffrey Sposato, whose generous offer to read through the Mendelssohn chapter saved me from several embarrassing gaffes. I would also like to thank a number of other scholars who have left their mark on various parts of this book: Celia Applegate, Daniel Beller-McKenna, Marcia Citron, Richard Cohn, John Deathridge, Christopher Gibbs, Dana Gooley, Arthur Groos, Virginia Hancock, James Hepokoski, Brian Hyer, David J. Levin, Christopher Morris, Michael P. Steinberg, David Trippett, and Laura Tunbridge.

Ari Sammartino is no longer a presence in my life, but she is very much one on every page of this book. I thank her for sharing German history with me.

I dedicate the book to my parents, Lyn and Gene Minor, and am humbled by their unending supply of love, support, enthusiasm, and grace.