

Mendelssohn Studies

Edited by

R. LARRY TODD



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1 A winter of discontent: Mendelssohn and the *Berliner Domchor*

DAVID BRODBECK

In his monograph *The Music of the Nineteenth Century and its Culture* (1855), the critic and theorist Adolph Bernhard Marx lamented the current state of church music in Protestant Germany:

In the Protestant places of worship, grand orchestral and choral performances become every day more rare. As regards, in particular, the liturgy of the united Evangelical church of Prussia, it is impossible, if considered from a musical point of view, to look upon it otherwise than as a most meagre and, in fact, unartistic and artistically inefficient substitute for that which the music of the Lutheran church once was. The only new institution of any importance in this sphere of art is the Berlin cathedral choir, [which] has been instrumental in the production of a series of compositions written specially for it, as well as in the revival of works of a more ancient date, particularly those of the middle ages, by Palestrina and others. On the whole, it must therefore be acknowledged that church music – as a matter of course – is both less in extent and intrinsic power than it was in the preceding period.¹

Coming in the midst of a mostly gloomy report, Marx's positive remarks about the Berlin cathedral choir are all the more worthy of note. This ensemble had in effect been created especially for Felix Mendelssohn, in connection with his appointment in 1842 as *Generalmusikdirektor* to the court of King Frederick William IV. In the monarch's own words, the choir was to be an "instrument" upon which Mendelssohn was to make music.² We shall

The research for this essay was made possible through generous grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Philosophical Society, and both the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and Central Research Development Fund, University of Pittsburgh.

1 Adolph Bernhard Marx, *The Music of the Nineteenth Century and its Culture*, trans. August Heinrich Wehrhan and C. Natalia Macfarren (London, 1855), p. 55 (*Die Musik des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts und ihre Pflege* [Leipzig, 1855]).

2 See Mendelssohn's letter of 23 November 1842 to Karl Klingemann, in *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy from 1833 to 1847* [hereafter cited as *Letters from 1833 to 1847*], ed. Paul and Carl Mendelssohn Bartholdy, trans. Lady Wallace (London, 1863), p. 277.

examine the compositions that Mendelssohn made for this group in due course; first, we must consider the liturgical and aesthetic constraints under which he worked.

I

One of Frederick William's first decisions after his coronation in June 1840 was to draw to his court all the leading figures in German arts and letters. For advice in these matters, he relied on his friend Christian Karl Josias von Bunsen, a noted diplomat and scholar, who in October proposed an ambitious musical plan:

It is a matter of reintroducing the most beautiful and noble music into life – not only into the general life of the people, but also into the social life of the higher and highest classes of the most musical people in the world. It seems to me that this can come about if three aims that are now entirely unfulfilled can be realized:

1. An outstanding educational institution for all music . . .
2. Performance of really appropriate music for the Divine Service . . .
3. Performance of great old and new oratorios . . .

Is that not enough for one man and master? I rather think it would be too much for anyone but Felix Mendelssohn.³

The king soon acted on Bunsen's advice. In November 1840 the Under Secretary for the Royal Household, Ludwig von Massow, invited Mendelssohn to assume the directorship of the musical class at the Academy of Arts, which was to be developed into a genuine conservatory, and to lead each year several concerts of oratorios and symphonies. Doubting the court's will to form a conservatory, Mendelssohn hesitated to accept the offer. In May 1841 Massow proposed a compromise calling for the composer merely to agree to a one-year trial residency in Berlin while plans for the founding of the school were laid. Still, negotiations dragged on over the particulars of the appointment, and in August it was an exasperated composer who came at last to Berlin, having as yet received no salary and still without announcement of title or duties but presumably wishing to commence his one-year term as soon as possible – that is, to get it behind him. Only in September was Mendelssohn made a Kapellmeister and charged with presenting several concerts in the forthcoming season.⁴

3 Letter of 30 October 1840 from Bunsen to Frederick William IV, in *Bunsen aus seinen Briefen*, vol. II, pp. 142–3; quoted in Eric Werner, *Mendelssohn: a New Image of the Composer and His Age*, trans. Dika Newlin (London, 1963), p. 371. See also Bunsen's letter of 31 October 1840 to Alexander von Humboldt, *Briefen*, vol. II, pp. 143–4, partially trans. in Werner, p. 371.

4 Cabinet order of 8 September 1841 to the Minister for Religious Affairs, Health, and Education J. A. F. Eichhorn: "Nach den Anträgen in Ihrem Bericht vom 27. d. M. will Ich 1.

As Mendelssohn had suspected, little progress was made during the ensuing months toward the founding of a conservatory. Indeed, by June 1842 Frederick William had placed his plans for a comprehensive music school in abeyance and instead taken up Bunsen's call to employ Mendelssohn in the task of providing "really appropriate music" for the church. "My intention," the king declared in a cabinet order to his Minister for Religious Affairs, Health, and Education, J. A. F. Eichhorn:

is directed primarily at the revival and advancement of singing in the Evangelical Church, and here would be offered the broad and adequate field of activity that Mendelssohn desires, as I intend to place him in charge of all Evangelical Church music in the monarchy. It will be a question of rescuing the past, to some extent, the traditional, from oblivion, and making it suitable for the needs of the present. . . . I therefore want first of all to begin only with the founding in Berlin of a school of singing, which is to be placed under the chief leadership of Mendelssohn. From this school then is to be formed a choir, which would be used for singing in the cathedral. . . . The main thing is to interest Kapellmeister Mendelssohn in this idea and to solicit his suggestions concerning the means suitable to its realization.⁵

In the event, Mendelssohn had no interest in such a position. It was not merely because he had little desire, as he put it to Massow, to supervise the work of "all the present organists, choristers, schoolmasters, etc.," or because he doubted whether appropriate regulations could be enacted and adequate resources found to ensure a proper training of the various cathedral choirs.⁶ No, Mendelssohn must have resisted also because he considered himself

den Komponisten Dr. Felix Mendelssohn zum Kapellmeister ernennen und die Zahlung des ihm bewilligten Gehaltes vom 1. Mai d.J. ab genehmigen. Der beabsichtigten Veranstaltung akademischer Konzerte schenke ich Beifall und gestatte 2. dass dazu ein Königlicher Konzertsaal benutzt, 3. in demselben eine Orgel zum Gebrauch bei den Konzerten aufgestellt und 4. Meine Kapelle und die Solisten des Theater-Gesang-Personals zur Mitwirkung herangezogen werden" (quoted in Wilhelm Altmann, "Zur Geschichte der Königlichen Preussischen Hofkapelle," *Die Musik* 3/21 [1903/4], 212–13).

5 "Meine Intention ist hauptsächlich auf Belebung und Förderung des evangelischen Kirchengesanges gerichtet, und hier dürfte sich für die von dem Mendelssohn gewünschte Wirksamkeit ein weites und hinreichendes Feld eröffnen lassen, indem Ich ihn an die Spitze aller evangelischen Kirchen-Musik der Monarchie zu stellen beabsichtige. Es wird darauf ankommen, das Alte, zum Theil Traditionelle der Vergessenheit zu entreißen und es dem gegenwärtigen Bedürfniß anzupassen; . . . Von diesen Ansichten ausgehend will Ich daher zunächst nur mit der Errichtung einer Gesangschule in Berlin beginnen, und solche unter der Ober-Leitung Mendelssohns gestellt wissen. Aus dieser Gesangschule wird dann ein Chor zu bilden sein, welcher bei dem Kirchengesang im Dom . . . Es kommt nun darauf an, den Kapellmeister Mendelssohn für diese Idee zu interessieren und seine Vorschläge über die geeigneten Mittel zu deren Verwirklichung zu vernehmen." Quoted in Georg Schünemann, "Zur Geschichte des Berliner Domchors: Ein vergessenes Jubiläum," *Die Musikpflege* 6 (1935/6), 382.

6 Letter of 23 October 1842, in *Letters from 1833 to 1847*, p. 271.

ill-suited to the task. Whereas the king, like his friend Bunsen, believed he knew what constituted “appropriate” music for the church – above all, choral works in the style of Palestrina and other *altklassische* Italian composers – Mendelssohn was less certain, troubled by the conflicting demands of functionality and artistic expression. As he had put it some years earlier in a letter to Albert Bauer, a Lutheran pastor in Belzig:

Real church music, that is, for the evangelical Divine Service, which could have its place within the ecclesiastical ceremony, seems to me impossible, not merely because I am not at all able to see where music is to be introduced during the service, but because I am unable to conceive of this place. . . . As yet – even forgetting the Prussian liturgy, which cuts off everything of the kind and will probably not be permanent or far-reaching – I have been unable to understand how for us music may be made to become an integrated part of the service and not merely a concert which, to a more or less degree, stimulates piety.⁷

Thus, far from welcoming the offer to be placed at the head of Evangelical music, Mendelssohn determined to meet with the king and to take leave of his duties in Berlin altogether.⁸

The desired interview took place on 26 October 1842 but did not have the intended consequences. “The King must have been in an especially good humor,” the composer wrote to his friend Karl Klingemann:

for, instead of finding him angry with me, I had never seen him so amiable and really confidential. To my farewell speech he replied: he could not, to be sure, compel me to remain but that he wanted to tell me that it would cause him heartfelt regret if I left him; that, by doing so, all the plans which he had formed from my presence in Berlin would be frustrated, and that I should make a tear which he could never again mend.⁹

The king then spelled out his intention to establish at the cathedral, under Mendelssohn’s leadership, a select choir and small orchestra. Against his better judgment, the composer accepted this position, provided that he be permitted

7 “Eine wirkliche Kirchenmusik, d.h. für den evangelischen Gottesdienst, die während der kirchlichen Feier ihren Platz fände, scheint mir unmöglich, und zwar nicht blos, weil ich durchaus nicht sehe, an welcher Stelle des Gottesdienstes die Musik eingreifen sollte, sondern weil ich mir überhaupt diese Stelle gar nicht denken kann. . . . Bis jetzt weiß ich nicht – auch wenn ich von der Preussischen Liturgie absehe, die alles Derartige abschneidet, und wohl nicht bleibend, oder gar weitergehend sein wird – wie es zu machen sein sollte, daß bei uns die Musik ein integrierender Theil des Gottesdienstes, und nicht blos ein Concert werde, das mehr oder weniger zur Andacht anrege” (letter of 12 January 1835; translation after *Letters from 1833 to 1847*, p. 62).

8 Mendelssohn requested Massow’s aid in obtaining the meeting in a letter of 23 October 1842 (*Letters from 1833 to 1847*, pp. 271–3).

9 Letter of 23 November 1842; translation after *Letters from 1833 to 1847*, p. 276.

to remain in Leipzig until the Music Institute of the Court and Cathedral Church, as the establishment was to be named, had been founded.¹⁰

Three weeks after this extraordinary interview, Frederick William named Mendelssohn *Generalmusikdirektor* for church music and instructed his advisors Massow and Count Wilhelm von Redern, the Intendant-General of Court Music, to proceed with the formation of the Institute.¹¹ The instrumental ensemble was to consist simply of twenty-four to thirty musicians selected from the court orchestra. The choir, by contrast, had to be established. In the ensuing months, under the leadership of Major J. D. C. Einbeck, a noted developer of military vocal ensembles who was assigned to assist Mendelssohn, Massow, and Redern, a choir of eighteen boy sopranos (plus five reserves), eighteen boy altos (plus another five reserves), nine tenors, and fifteen basses was formed and placed under the direction of August Neithardt (conductor of the existing cathedral choir) and Eduard Grell (cathedral organist and conductor of the choir of the Royal Chapel).¹²

This flurry of activity generated considerable excitement in the court, and led to Massow's announcement to Mendelssohn in March 1843 that the choir would be ready by the following winter.¹³ The composer received this report with skepticism and expressed his reservations about giving up a productive musical life in Leipzig for a potentially unproductive one in Berlin. Einbeck had in fact told him that the choir might need a full year to attain maturity. Furthermore – what was probably more disturbing – nothing had yet been settled about the participation of the instrumentalists from the court orchestra.¹⁴ Accordingly, though the Institute officially came into its existence on 1

10 Mendelssohn's lengthy account of the interview is described in *ibid.*, pp. 275–9; see also his letter of 28 October 1842 to the king (*Letters from 1833 to 1847*, pp. 273–5).

11 Cabinet order of 22 November 1842; Mendelssohn's copy is preserved as item 127 in volume XVI of the so-called Green Books (GB), in which Mendelssohn collected his correspondence; all twenty-seven volumes are preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, as a part of the M. Deneke Mendelssohn collection of Mendelssohniana. The author wishes to thank Dr. Hans-Joachim Schulze (Leipzig) and Dr. Peter Ward Jones (Oxford) for their kind assistance in transcribing a number of documents from this collection. The king also wrote directly to the composer of his nomination; this letter is preserved in GB XVI, item 126, and quoted in Mendelssohn's letter of 5 December 1842 to his brother Paul (*Letters from 1833 to 1847*, p. 283).

12 On the establishment of the choir, see especially A. Richard Scheumann, "Major Einbeck: Der Organisator der Militär-Kirchenchöre unter Friedrich Wilhelm III. und des Königlichen Hof- und Domchores zu Berlin," *Die Musik* 7 (1907/8), 323–34; and Max Thomas, "Heinrich August Neithardt" (diss., Berlin, 1959), pp. 75–8.

13 Unpublished letter of 27 March 1843 (GB XVII, item 161).

14 Letter to Massow of 31 March 1843, quoted in Richard Scheumann, "Briefe berühmter Komponisten aus dem Archiv des Königlichen Hof- und Domchores zu Berlin," *Die Musik* 8 (1908/9), 259; a copy is preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 18, item 5).

May, and the choir was able to perform the choral liturgy for the first time the following Sunday,¹⁵ much remained to be settled.

Mendelssohn must have suffered an unpleasant experience of *déjà vu*. Just as negotiations for his original position at the court had dragged on for months into the summer of 1841, so now did negotiations concerning his relationship to the royal orchestra continue through the summer of 1843. Mendelssohn's encounters with the orchestra in the preceding two seasons had been strained, and the composer did not, as he put it to Massow in June, relish the idea of having to deal with "reluctantly obeying and contradicting subordinates."¹⁶ At the same time, the composer was apprehensive about his prospective relationship with the Kapellmeisters Carl Henning and Wilhelm Taubert, who had only recently initiated a series of subscription concerts and now would have to give way.¹⁷ At a parley held on 10 July it was agreed that Mendelssohn would each year lead the court orchestra in several "Symphonic Soirées" and in performances of two oratorios, and that on high holidays thirty-six members of the group would be assigned to accompany the congregational singing at the cathedral. The bureaucracy dragged its feet, however, and not until 2 September did the king confirm these arrangements in a cabinet order.¹⁸

It was necessary to establish not only the Institute but also the role of music within the liturgy. As we have seen, the king's intention was to "revive" and "advance" the singing in the church by reclaiming the musical practices of the past and making them "suitable for the needs of the present." This program required, first of all, liturgical revisions that would allow a richer musical treatment than was possible under the rubrics of the so-called Prussian Agende of 1829, which limited congregational participation to the singing of a few chorales and permitted only a *cappella* choral settings of the prescribed texts

15 According to a report by Redern to the Cathedral Ministerium on 1 May 1843; quoted from the Berliner Dom-Akten, D 5, 185, 2, in Thomas, "Neithardt," p. 79.

16 Letter of 23 June 1843; quoted from the Brandenburg-preußisches Haus-Archiv 509 in Thomas, "Neithardt," p. 80. The letter continues: "Ich möchte mich nicht an die Spitze von Leuten gestellt sehen, die mich nicht an ihrer Spitze wünschen."

17 See Altmann, "Geschichte der Hofkapelle," pp. 223-4.

18 This "zehntausendjährige affair," as Mendelssohn described it, in an ironic reference to the celebration in August of the 1000-year anniversary of the founding of the German Reich (at which he had been requested to make his *début* with the Domchor as conductor and composer), may be followed in Massow's letters of 1, 16, and 24 July (GB XVIII, items 1, 22, and 34) and in Mendelssohn's reports of 21 and 26 July to his brother Paul (*Letters from 1833 to 1847*, pp. 304, 306-7). Mendelssohn's copy of the cabinet order is preserved in GB XVIII, item 88; it was sent by Massow in his letter of 7 September 1843 (GB XVIII, item 97).

(see Table 1.1). To understand the nature of the king's reforms, a short digression to review the musical practices in the *Agende* may be helpful.¹⁹

During the Enlightenment, the rich worship patterns of "high" Orthodox Lutheranism – whose classic expression may be seen in the liturgical practices of J. S. Bach's Leipzig – gave way to informal services comprising little more than unembellished hymns, moralistic prayers, and preaching. Stirrings of reform could be felt among musicians in the first years of the nineteenth century, when, for example, Carl Friedrich Zelter, director of the Berlin Singakademie, called for an enriched style of music and liturgy for the Holy Communion. A dissatisfaction with current circumstances was shared by no less a figure than Frederick William III, who, having been impressed by the ritual and music of the Russian Orthodox Church, established two commissions to consider liturgical reforms. At first work was hampered by the demands of the Napoleonic Wars; but shortly after the Congress of Vienna the king undertook two major religious initiatives: in 1816 he drafted a formal liturgy for the use in the *Hof- und Domkirche* in Berlin and the garrison churches of Berlin and Potsdam, and in the following year, during the tercentenary of Luther's posting of the Ninety-Five Theses, he called for a unification of the Lutheran and Reformed (or Calvinist) congregations within his realm into a single Evangelical Church of the Union.

Frederick William revised his liturgy a number of times during the ensuing years. The texts and rather modest musical demands of the first versions showed the influence of Reformed practices, which is not surprising since the Hohenzollern dynasty had traditionally professed Calvinism. A dramatic change in the king's perspective is evidenced by a new order of worship introduced at the Berlin garrison church in October 1821. This liturgy was the first to be ordered according to historical Lutheran practices, and it formed the basis of both the *Kirchenagende für die Königlich-Preussische Armee* (published in December 1821) and the closely related *Kirchenagende für die Hof- und Domkirche in Berlin* (which appeared in print a few months later). The *Musik-Anhang* that was issued with these liturgies consisted of a hodgepodge of simple four-part *a cappella* arrangements, by a variety of Berlin musicians, of psalm tones, a Kyrie adapted from Luther's German Mass of 1526, a Swedish Agnus Dei, several Russian melodies, and even a Gregorian Offertory. The king was especially fond of Russian liturgical music and in 1824 requested a setting of the liturgy from Dmitri Bortniansky, Director of the Imperial

¹⁹ The best introduction to the music of the *Agende* is Ulrich Leupold, *Die liturgischen Gesänge der evangelischen Kirche im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Romantik* (Kassel, 1933), pp. 110–55.

Table 1.1. *The Prussian Agende*

	1829 Edition	1843 Revision
		Psalm (Introit) Lesser Doxology (Gloria patri)
	Chorale	Chorale
Geistliche ^a :	Opening Prayers and Confession of Sins	Opening Prayers and Confession of Sins
Chor ^b :	<i>Amen</i>	Kyrie
Geistliche:	Absolution	Absolution
Chor:	Lesser Doxology (Gloria patri)	<i>Amen</i>
Geistliche:	<i>Herr, sey uns gnädig.</i>	<i>Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe.</i>
Chor:	Kyrie	<i>Und Friede auf Erden, und den Menschen ein Wohlgefallen. Amen, Amen, Amen.</i>
Geistliche:	<i>Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe.</i>	[On festivals: Great Doxology]
Chor:	<i>Und Friede auf Erden und den Menschen ein Wohlgefallen. Amen, Amen, Amen.</i>	“Allein Gott in der Höh’”
		<i>Der Herr sei mit euch.</i>
Geistliche:	[On festivals: Great Doxology]	<i>Und mit deinem Geiste.</i>
Chor:	<i>Der Herr sei mit euch!</i>	Prayer before the Epistle (Collect)
Geistliche:	<i>Und mit deinem Geiste.</i>	<i>Amen</i>
Chor:	Prayer before the Epistle (Collect)	Epistle
Geistliche:	<i>Amen</i>	Verse (Gradual)
Geistliche:	Epistle	Alleluia
Chor:	Verse (Gradual)	Gospel
Geistliche:	Alleluia	<i>Ehre sei Dir, Herr.</i>
Chor:	Gospel	Creed
Geistliche:	<i>Ehre sei Dir, Herr.</i>	
Geistliche:	Creed	

Table 1.1. (Cont.)

1829 Edition

1843 Revision

Chor:	<i>Amen, Amen, Amen.</i> Chorale Sermon Chorale	Gemeinde und Chor:	<i>Amen, Amen, Amen.</i> Chorale Sermon Chorale
Geistliche:	Verse (Offertory)	Geistliche:	Verse (Offertory)
Geistliche:	<i>Erhebet eure Herzen.</i>		<i>Erhebet eure Herzen.</i>
Chor:	<i>Wir erheben sie zum Herrn.</i>	Gemeinde und Chor:	<i>Wir erheben sie zum Herrn.</i>
Geistliche:	<i>Lasset uns danken dem Herrn unserm Gotte.</i>	Geistliche:	<i>Lasset uns danken dem Herrn, unserm Gotte.</i>
Chor:	<i>Recht und würdig ist es.</i>	Gemeinde und Chor:	<i>Recht und würdig ist es.</i>
Geistliche:	Preface	Geistliche:	Preface
Chor:	Heilig (Sanctus)	Gemeinde und Chor:	Heilig (Sanctus)
Geistliche:	General Prayer	Geistliche:	General Prayer
Chor:	<i>Amen.</i>	Gemeinde und Chor:	<i>Amen.</i>
Geistliche:	Our Father	Geistliche:	Our Father
		Gemeinde und Chor:	<i>Amen, Amen, Amen.</i>
Geistliche:	Blessing	Geistliche:	[On festivals: "Herr Gott, dich loben wir"] Blessing
Chor:	<i>Amen, Amen, Amen.</i> Chorale	Gemeinde und Chor:	<i>Amen, Amen, Amen.</i>

^a Minister

^b Choir

^c Congregation

Chapel in St. Petersburg, who, before his death in 1825, supplied some but not all of the pieces. For the *Agende für die evangelische Kirche in den Königlich-Preussischen Landen*, which, after much acrimony, was gradually introduced throughout the state church beginning in 1829, Zelter was commissioned to produce a new musical supplement. The composer, who later described the *Agende* as “liturgical bungs” (*liturgische Pfschereien*), borrowed several responses from the *Musik-Anhang* of 1821–2, included Bortniansky’s setting of the so-called Great Doxology, and throughout adopted the popular and devotional chordal style favored by the king. The same style was maintained in the revision of the *Anhang* for men’s choir made in 1830 by Zelter’s assistant Eduard Grell, which included some additional Russian melodies but otherwise broke no new ground. Thus the disparaging remarks about the Prussian liturgy quoted earlier from Marx’s commentary on nineteenth-century Protestant church music and Mendelssohn’s letter to Pastor Bauer.

In January 1843, the Cathedral Ministerium met to deliberate on the matter of a new liturgy and by the summer had drafted their revision.²⁰ The first change affecting the choir consisted in the introduction of an Introit Psalm at the beginning of the service; another, in the singing of the Verse before the Alleluia. At the same time, the congregation gained in importance; whereas the old *Agende* had reserved all the responses for the choir, these might now be shared with the congregation, which, on certain high festivals, was even called upon to sing the German *Te deum* (Luther’s chorale paraphrase “Herr Gott, dich loben wir”).

The king especially encouraged the congregation’s role in the new liturgy. For example, in a meeting held in July with Eichhorn and the cathedral clerics Ehrenberg and Strauss, he proposed congregational participation in the singing of the Introit and determined that, for this purpose, Mendelssohn ought to resuscitate the *cantus firmi* of the old Reformed metrical psalters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In his report of this meeting, Massow

20 See Thomas, “Neithardt,” p. 79, and Massow’s letter to Mendelssohn (GB XVII, item 32). Massow enclosed his copy of the draft of the liturgy in his letter to Mendelssohn of 1 July 1843; it is preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 49, item 14). These changes betray the influence of the king and his advisor Bunsen. In a long and extraordinary letter of March 1840 that drew inspiration from the so-called Anglo-Catholic movement emanating from Oxford, Frederick William had revealed to Bunsen what he described as a “Midsummer Night’s Dream” of a Prussian “high church” (see Leopold von Ranke, *Aus dem Briefwechsel Friedrich Wilhelms IV. mit Bunsen* [Leipzig, 1873], pp. 46–75). Although Bunsen could not agree with all the particulars of the monarch’s plans (*ibid.*, pp. 75–6), he must have been excited by the prospect that the Prussian *Agende* might now, as he had long advocated, be reformed along the lines of the Book of Common Prayer. Indeed the revised order evinces an English influence, above all in its inclusion of both a complete psalm and the *Te deum*, which are characteristic neither of the Lutheran nor Roman Masses, the natural ancestors of the *Agende*, but of the Anglican service of Morning Prayer, with its origins in the Roman Office of Matins.

sent Mendelssohn an exemplar of the revised liturgy, whose annotations in the king's hand make vivid the royal preference for an antiphonal performance of the psalm divided between choir and congregation (see Plate 1.1).²¹ Frederick William likewise sought to ensure the foundation of an "ecclesiastically proper" instrumental accompaniment for the congregational singing. Again, the exemplar of the liturgy is telling; the annotations respecting the Lied "Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'" and the "Gesang der Gemeinde" hint at what the king later made explicit: "In order to avoid misunderstanding," he declared in his cabinet order of 2 September, "I determine that in the church music no wind instruments (except trombones etc.) are to be used."²²

Mendelssohn spent the autumn of 1843 commuting between Berlin, preparing for the first performances of the incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Leipzig, where he was now winding down his work at the Gewandhaus. In October he obtained from Ehrenberg a list of the psalms for the period from the First Sunday of Advent through Palm Sunday, but in his busy schedule could find little time to devote to his forthcoming work with the Domchor. Thus when Mendelssohn finally moved to Berlin, on 24 November, his portfolio of liturgical works contained nothing more than harmonizations, made in accordance with the king's directive of the previous summer, of seven French melodies that he had copied from a late seventeenth-century monophonic edition of the psalter and which could be used during the first seasons of the church year.²³

The revised liturgy was celebrated for the first time at the cathedral on 10 December. One witness to this event wrote mockingly in his diary: "Not only without authority, but without rhyme or reason, it is begun. . . . The Protestant Church will become utterly depraved! . . . Music and singing, divided between the clergy and the laity, many 'Kirie eleisons' and 'Amens.'

21 Letter of 12 July 1843 from Massow to Mendelssohn (GB XVIII, item 293); the exemplar is preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 21, item 76).

22 "Um Mißverständnißen vorzubeugen, bestimme Ich ferner wiederholt, daß bei der unter 1. gedachten Kirchen-Musik keine Blasinstrumente (außer Posaunen etc.) verwendet werden" (GB XVIII, item 88).

23 Ehrenberg enclosed the catalogue in his letter of 17 October 1843 (GB XVIII, item 146). The list itself, with checks next to the psalms for the First Sunday of Advent (no. 24), the First Day of Christmas (no. 2), the Sunday after Christmas (no. 93), New Year's Day (no. 98), the First Sunday after Epiphany (no. 100), Quinquagesima Sunday (no. 31), and Invocavit Sunday (no. 91), is preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (M. Deneke Mendelssohn c. 49, item 14). Mendelssohn's unpublished autograph of the harmonizations, which is dated "Leipzig, d. 13 Nov. 1843" and contained in volume 38² of his *Nachlass* autographs (formerly housed in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, now found in the Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Kraków [pp. 181–3], comprises settings of each of the checked psalms in Lobwasser's translation of the French psalter (*Die Psalmen Davids, nach Frantzösischer Melodey in Teutsche Reymen gebracht durch D. Ambrosium Lobwasser* [Amsterdam, 1696]).

Ordnung des Haupt-Gottesdienstes

bei der

Dom-Gemeinde an den Sonn- und Fest-Tagen.

Abwechslung Chor-Gemeinde

Chor. Ein Psalm mit dem Schlusse: Ehre sei dem Vater u. m. Chor
Anfangs-Gesang der Gemeinde. *Jesus unser König?*

Geistliche. Eingangs-Gebete.

Gemeinde und Chor. Amen. *Gemeinde Chor mit voller Orgel*

Geistliche. Das Sünden-Bekennniß.

Chor. Kyrie eleison u. s. w.

Geistliche. Die Absolution.

Gemeinde und Chor. Amen. *G. Ch. mit voller Orgel*

Geistliche. Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe.

Chor. Und Friede auf Erden u. s. w. *G. Ch. mit voller Orgel*

Gemeinde. Das Lied: Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr,
an gewöhnlichen Sonntagen B. 1; an Festtagen B. 1

bis 4 Chor der Chors die große Doxologie, u. s. w. mit Orgel

Geistliche. Der Herr sei mit euch. *Psalmischen Trostgebete*

Gemeinde und Chor. Und mit deinem Geiste. *G. Ch. u. Orgel*

Geistliche. Gebet vor der Epistel.

Gemeinde und Chor. Amen. *G. Ch. u. Orgel*

Geistliche. Die Epistel.

Chor. Ein Spruch. — Hallelujah. *? G. Ch. u. volle Orgel*

auszufüllen
Geistliche. Das Evangelium. — *Belobt* seiest du, o Christ!
Gemeinde und Chor. *Amen. G. G. v. Orgel*
Geistliche. Der Glaube.
Gemeinde und Chor. *Amen. Amen. Amen. G. Ch. v. Orgel*
Gefang der Gemeinde. *in festem mit voll*
Instrumentalbegleitung *Flöten Trompeten Posaunen*
Die Predigt.
Schluß-Gefang der Gemeinde.
Geistliche. Ein Spruch. — Erhebet eure Herzen!
Gemeinde und Chor. *Wir erheben sie zum Herrn. G. Ch. v.*
Geistliche. Lasset uns danken dem Herrn unserm Gott!
Gemeinde und Chor. *Recht und würdig ist es. G. Ch. v.*
Geistliche. Recht ist es und wahrhaft würdig u. s. w.
Gemeinde und Chor. Heilig, heilig, heilig ist der Herr
Zebaoth! Alle Lande sind seiner Ehre voll. — Hosanna
in der H^{öh}! Gelobt sei der da kommt im Namen des
Herrn! Hosanna in der H^{öh}! *wann u. t. geht er oben*
Geistliche. Das allgemeine Gebet.
Gemeinde und Chor. *Amen.*
Geistliche. Unser Vater u. s. w.
Gemeinde und Chor. *Amen. Amen. Amen.*
Geistliche. Der Segen.
Gemeinde und Chor. *Amen. Amen. Amen.*
G. Ch. volle Orgel

1.1. Exemplar of the Prussian *Agende*, revised for Berlin Cathedral, 1843; Oxford, Bodleian Library, M. Deneke Mendelssohn, c. 21, item 76.



1.2. Harmonization of Psalm 24 (melody copied from *Die Psalmen Davids, nach Frantzösischer Melodey in Teutsche Reymen gebracht durch D. Ambrosium Lobwasser* [Amsterdam, 1696]). From vol. 38² of the *Mendelssohn Nachlass* autographs in Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska.

The people were completely dumbstruck.”²⁴ The only music that Mendelssohn had yet composed that might have been used during this service was his harmonization of the Advent Introit, Psalm 24 (see Plate 1.2).²⁵ The composer soon took up his pen in earnest, however, and on 19 December reported to his friend Ferdinand David:

Next Sunday for the first time we shall have grand church music, which, however, will consist of small things, namely an eight-voice Psalm without orchestra by me (composed expressly for this occasion), a chorus from Handel’s

24 See *Tagebücher von K. A. Varnhagen von Ense* (Leipzig, 1861; rpt. Berne, 1972), vol. II, p. 238 (entry for 12 December 1843).

25 The congregational responses and the Verse before the Alleluia probably were Grell’s, and in all likelihood the German Gloria was sung in the popular setting by Bortniansky found in the *Musik-Anhang* to the old Agende. The autograph of Grell’s setting of the Advent Verse “Lasset uns frohlocken” is dated 28 November 1843; the organist’s manuscript of his setting of the congregational responses is inscribed “Gilt in der Dom Gemeinde zu Berlin seit dem 28sten April 1844.” Both sources are preserved in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Berlin (Mus. ms. E. Grell 397 and 71, respectively). The responses were published in the *Liturgische Andachten der Königlichen Hof- und Dom-Kirche für die Feste des Kirchenjahres*, ed. Friedrich Adolph Strauss, 3rd. edn. (Berlin, 1857), where we find evidence that they might date from 1843: “Die nachfolgenden Responsorien für die Gemeinde (mit Ausnahme des Heilig &c.), componirt vom Organisten der Hof- und Domkirche, Musikdirektor E. Grell, sind, sowie die gesammte beifolgende Ordnung des Haupt-Gottesdienstes bei der Domgemeinde seit 1843 . . . eingeführt” (p. 156). Bortniansky’s Gloria was taken into the Domchor’s repertoire and published in *Sammlung religiöser Gesänge älterer und neuester Zeit zum bestimmten Gebrauch für den Königl. Berliner Domchor*, Musica sacra, V, ed. August Neithardt (Berlin, [1853]).