Musical Assimilation and "the German Element" at the Cincinnati Sängerfest, 1879

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In June 1879, Cincinnati, Ohio, heard its first performance of the five-year-old Verdi Requiem. Held in the pride of the city, the new Music Hall, the concert featured professional soloists and orchestra and a mixed chorus of almost four hundred singers. The concert's structure and ambiance was modeled after that of the city's newly established and successful May Festival. But the producing organization was not the elite-run May Musical Festival Association, and the conductor was not its music director, Theodore Thomas. Rather, the performance highlighted a festival of the German *Nordamerikanische Sängerbund*, and the conductor was a local leader of German male choirs, Carl Barus.

The Sängerbund was a Midwest federation of male choruses founded in Cincinnati in 1849, which organized a biennial Sängerfest (singers' festival), gathering choruses to a host city every other June. During each event, local organizers vied to outdo their predecessors in hospitality to visiting singers, performance quality, decorations, and entertainment throughout the week. Although music professionals were essential to the festival's success, large committees drawn from the member choruses in the host city provided the leadership, organization, decision-making, and hard work all equally necessary to pulling it off.

By choosing Cincinnati, the Sängerbund competed with the May Festival, which was founded in 1873 and held again in 1875 and 1878.[1] Local German singers had sung in the May Festival's concerts, and its structure of seven formal programs was well known in the city. Nevertheless, in presenting the 1879 Sängerfest, Cincinnati's largest immigrant group wanted to put on an explicitly *German* musical event, even while inviting English-speakers to participate and attend. Thus the Sängerfest would expose tensions and necessitate compromises on a wide range of questions between the "American" community, whose

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leaders ran the May Festival, and Cincinnati's prominent German population—its "German element." The Germans' activities and statements on important social and musical issues helped them hold the May Festival's influence in check, define the word "festival" on their own terms, and set themselves apart from their Anglo neighbors.

This essay uses the 1879 Sängerfest to uncover, at least in part, the complex nature of European influence on American musical life in the post-Civil War era. By asking why a male choral organization seeking to promote German culture in the United States would present a large *mixed* chorus work by an *Italian* composer, the essay explores questions of repertoire choice for large, high-profile artistic events. More broadly, an examination of the features of the Sängerfest shows how language, religion, beliefs about the purpose of public culture, and assertions of ownership of cultural tradition each played a part in debates over the character and acceptability of the Bund's huge effort.

These debates offer an opportunity to rethink important aspects of Western art music in the nineteenth-century United States. In his influential book *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, historian Lawrence Levine has posited a process he has called "sacralization of culture" as an ideology of idealism and reverent social ambiance for high culture in the United States, which he linked with the formation of a socioeconomic upper class. In related work, sociologist Paul DiMaggio located institutional and financial support of formal artistic efforts to motivations of exclusiveness.[2] In fact, art music in the United States today is by many routinely referred to as *elite*.[3] These scholars did not discuss ethnicity, and it was probably self-evident to them that the elites they discussed were Anglo-American. Certainly, most of the Cincinnati May Festival leadership was of English heritage, and the best-known narratives of Cincinnati's cultural development are centered on institutions that they established. Nonetheless, ethnicity played a part in the social process of establishing Cincinnati as a musical city: with so many German-American musicians—both professional and nonprofessional—active in the nineteenth-century United States, the Cincinnati experience helps create a space for "ethnicity" in the understanding of European music's place in American life.

And so I would like to consider the 1879 Sängerfest as the Germans themselves did (that is, as a representation of a national or ethnic group—an approach I see as historically appropriate). The study of "German influence" in cities such as Cincinnati calls attention not only to composers with German last names, or even well-known German-American musical leaders such as conductor Theodore Thomas, but to ordinary Germans and German-Americans as well. Historian Kathleen Conzen argues that this "ethnic" designation, which

is rarely applied today to Americans of northern and western European heritage, served them well. In particular, she shows how festive culture—"parades, mass assemblies, and ritual performances that were so central a part of the German-American definition of celebration"—helped create the idea of the ethnic group in a nascent pluralistic society. Through musical events such as the Sängerfest, the Cincinnati Germans could attract attention and proclaim cultural uniqueness and parity with the Anglo population. The choices they made putting the festival together musically and socially helped them mark boundaries between what Conzen calls their "core" ethnic identity and commonalities with the surrounding population.[4]

Drawing on the work of Conzen and others, Russell Kazal explores the erosion of German ethnicity from the 1890s (as he notes, well before the anti-German backlash of World War I) in favor of a generic white identity divided between "old stock" and "ethnic" groups. As he demonstrates, German-Americans were members of both groups, distinguished from each other by religion and class.[5] Works by authors such as Conzen and Kazal emphasize the clear identity that this immigrant population and its descendents aimed to present to American society. Their studies also temper the idea of assimilation (to an Anglo-based "American" norm) as an inevitable product of generation change. Instead of assuming the inevitability of cultural shifts, these authors present change as a dynamic process whose pace depends equally on outside influence and actions of the immigrant group itself. Festivals such as the 1879 Sängerfest show the complexities of that process at work.

As Cincinnati's largest immigrant community, the Germans had the clout to resist Anglo expectations and put their assessment of American society into action. Widespread beliefs about Germans as "the people of music" gave them a label they were astute enough to exploit. Thus their story contributes to an understanding of what is often called "cultural capital." Not the stereotypical "tired and poor" struggling to survive, Cincinnati's German-American citizens of the 1870s included energetic workers and thinkers with a strong sense of their ability to serve their new country. Their understanding of culture included artistic expression but was not limited to it. Distinguishing themselves from English-speaking community leaders who aspired to a sacralized concert life, they used music to shape, assert, defend, and celebrate cultural difference on their own terms.

The work behind the Sängerfest, contributed by German bakers, bankers, blacksmiths, brewers, construction workers, homemakers, journalists, merchants, musicians, religious leaders, shoemakers, tanners,

teachers, woodworkers, and others, reminds us that no repertoire is sustained without effort.[6] Hence, Cincinnati's Germans expand our thinking about who counts as a historical agent. Endeavors such as this one show the performing arts as widely practiced, culturally embedded, and sometimes central to a society's understanding of itself. The historical agency of both the German- and English-speaking communities, in the form of disputes on the meaning of the European musical legacy and its appropriate social setting, helps us reassess the musical and social underpinnings of the European tradition in the United States.

And finally, with this study I want to consider the music listed in the festival's programs irrespective of its contribution (or lack thereof) to canon formation in American musical life. Understanding the growth of German-centered art music in the United States has been tied to symphony orchestras and their music. As tables 2 and 3 in this essay show, however, the Cincinnati Germans had a broader agenda: to perpetuate a range of music, much of it new, to be highlighted, understood, respected, and enjoyed on a variety of terms. Through the festival repertoire, one can start to understand the scope, nature, and limits of "German influence" on American musical life.

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From the late eighteenth century, cultural nationalism had been growing among the educated—the *Bildungsbürger*—throughout German-speaking Europe. One of its best-known spokesmen, philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), based his notion of culture on a language-oriented concept of *das Volk*, the people; as Herder himself wrote, "Unless we have a *Volk*, we lack also a public, a nation, a language, and a literature."[7] From the mid-eighteenth century, however, German literary culture began to incorporate an understanding of the musician's role in shaping a German nation.[8] But as Celia Applegate argues, it remained for the nineteenth century to win for music "a secure place among those who championed Germany's cultural integrity," a landmark reached with Felix Mendelssohn's 1829 performance of Bach's *Matthew Passion*.[9] Over the course of the century, musical amateurs (in Applegate's example, Berlin choral singers), along with journalists and other writers, fostered the notion that being German could be recognized through music—indeed, that "the Nation could in fact be performed."[10] German immigration and colonization spread this argument worldwide; by the unification of 1871, Germans were seen internationally as the "people of music," a label due only in part to their famous composers. Efforts of concert organizers, musicians, critics, historians, and educators, among others, promoted German music in private and public settings and

linked the idea of high musical quality with German depth of character, history, and aesthetic value.[11]

A German national culture via music making and canon formation could not be realized in the United States. Simply put, Herder's idea of in-the-soil national identity could not work in polyglot American society. Nevertheless, by the mid-nineteenth century some pieces of this ideology were crossing the Atlantic, brought by immigrant musicians, amateur and professional alike. Moreover, regular communication and home ties between Germans in the United States and those in the Fatherland helped create "islands of Germanness" on foreign soil, and the German government continued to regard emigrants as its citizens.[12] With such a degree of old-country cultural maintenance, Germans in cities such as Cincinnati were likely to understand music on their own national terms. At a time of political contention in Germany itself, musical contributions could help German emigrants negotiate between their heritage and American society.

The German musical tradition was obviously more accessible and attractive as a marker of German identity than language or literature. In this way, music could help create an American culture at large that incorporated important aspects of German heritage. By the 1850s, music also helped Germans foster a sense of superiority that included social as well as cultural elements that they could use as "civilizers" of their new homeland. As a German-American writer argued in 1873, "German music takes soul and feeling; the American has neither. The American is too 'fast' to experience music as anything other than a harmless pastime."[13]

The possibility of such German domination was quite real in some areas, for Germans settled in large numbers in the East and Midwest.[14] With almost 30 percent of its population German-born, by 1860 Cincinnati had become known, along with Milwaukee and St. Louis, as a third point of the "German triangle." The city's next largest immigrant group, the Irish, was half its size at about 14 percent. As the century progressed and Cincinnati grew, the percentage of foreign-born declined. The "German element," however, remained the largest percentage through the end of the century—by 1890, 57.4 percent of Cincinnatians were of German birth or descent.[15]

The Germans brought their language, social traditions, old-country local differences and disputes, music, and beer. In doing so, they changed the face of Cincinnati's economy, society, and culture.[16] German was a strong second language throughout the nineteenth century, taught in the public schools (including elementary schools) until 1918.[17] Performance programs were sometimes bilingual; the press provided overnight translations of public speeches; crossover vocabulary dotted the newspapers,

especially in advertising, and an occasional article even appeared in the opposite language press. Belief in a culture's embeddedness in language was strong in some circles, and groups like Heinrich Rattermann's influential German literary club and journal, *Der deutsche Pionier*, promoted German-American writing as a source of an ongoing German contribution to American (presented as increasingly Germanified) cultural life.[18] Cincinnati even had its own diplomat, Carl Adae, consul for several German states, international banker, and board member of the Cincinnati May Festival. As historian Corinna Hörst puts it, "While Cincinnati was never a *German* city, it certainly included multiple German elements which occasionally remained separate from the city's native-born or Anglo-Saxon constituency and at other times were woven into or even identified as part of the city's mainstream."[19]

This separate-but-linked character of Cincinnati's German-American history can be seen in the city's developing musical life. Central to that life was the male chorus, a pillar of pre-1848 musical nationalism that had spawned regional organizations and festivals throughout German-speaking Europe. The German male chorus tradition was known for its social customs, often centered in halls built for rehearsals, concerts, dances, communal meals, sports and games, reading, conversation, and, of course, drink. Nonsinging "passive" members—male and female both—could take advantage of the social opportunities. And in fact, the line between a singing society and a nonmusical group could be thin; the gymnastic societies (*Turnvereine*) in particular often had choruses, and in 1868, the Cincinnati Männerchor absorbed a "reading and cultivation society" (*Lese- und Bildungsverein*), acquiring its membership, library, and debts.[20] Nonsinging members formed the audience for in-house concerts and were an important source of revenue for the groups' programs. The choruses sponsored social events such as the five balls advertised for the night before Ash Wednesday in 1875.[21] And finally, they were not always male. Because some of its members took an interest in amateur opera performances, the Cincinnati Männerchor accepted women in 1860 and, in 1873, absorbed the mixed chorus Cäcilien Verein, acquiring with its singers a piano and a music library.[22]

As in Germany, male chorus repertoire traditionally consisted of a cappella strophic songs by composers from German-speaking Europe, including the prolific Franz Abt, Johann Herbeck, Karl Zöllner, and Robert Schumann (for examples, see table 2). Concerts, however, often also included solo vocal and instrumental performances ranging from sonatas and operatic arias to popular songs of the time. Finally, festival performances featured visiting choruses individually (sometimes in

competition) and also presented pieces for the assembled singers together.

Long viewed as pillars of German life and community, these groups offered members a social-musical link far beyond anything American choruses needed or aspired to supply. They allowed immigrants to bond as Germans in their new country, irrespective of barriers such as religion, regional origin, social status, education, or occupation. (And in fact, evidence exists that male choral culture in Germany itself helped overcome otherwise intractable religious differences.[23]) In the United States, the choral groups and their musical displays in public allowed singers and their associates to present a carefully shaped German identity, both for the outside population and for their own enjoyment.[24]

With the German unification completed in 1871, however, immigrants such as these singers began to modify their notions of "Germanness" in American society. Although they overwhelmingly welcomed the Franco-Prussian War, which united the country politically, the Prussian-based, authoritarian leadership of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was less popular, especially as it unfolded its policies. Friedrich Hecker (1811–81), a prominent veteran of the 1848 revolution and the American Civil War, noted in a victory speech that the new constitution had no bill of rights and no salary provision for legislators, thereby limiting seats in parliament to the wealthy. Other commentators decried the extent of police power, the lack of a free press, conscription, anti-socialist laws, and Jew-baiting in Bismarck's empire.[25]

Thus German-Americans increasingly distinguished between political loyalty and cultural tradition, and many a German male chorus member was also an American patriot. In Pittsburgh, a chorus required applicants for membership to hold immigration papers; and full members who were not on their way to becoming U.S. citizens would be cut from the group.[26] In Cincinnati, Sängerfest leaders invited Ohio governor Rutherford B. Hayes to speak at the opening ceremony in 1870. He accepted the invitation. The conflict between the embrace of American political principles and the belief in German superiority in important areas of social and cultural life affected debates on the value of assimilation to American norms, which had long been topics in the burgeoning German-American press.

The German singers maintained that their musical contribution to the United States incorporated its supporting social framework and insisted that a performance was not just about "the music itself." In an opening ceremony speech at the 1870 Cincinnati Sängerfest, rabbi Max Lilienthal (who shared the stage with Governor Hayes) asserted that "union and fraternity—twin children of music" could overcome "narrow-

hearted nationalism" to create festivals in service of social, artistic, and political goals. He considered the goals—and the Germans' gift—part of a fair trade: "For liberty, which you gave us, we give you art; for equality, which honors us alike, we return sociability, by which we know and love one another." By connecting social and musical aspects of the festival, he asserted, Germans could offer their "priceless boon" of music, so that "the old fatherland may also contribute its share to the greatness of Columbia."[27]

These social and musical connections informed the 1879 festival's structure, activities, and presentation in the local German press. By surpassing the quality of the previous festivals, this one would "bring not only the local Deutschtum but the entire Deutschtum of the United States to high honor, raising the level of respect they receive in the eyes of the native-born to a not inconsiderable degree." In doing so, it would increase the love of music and singing, foster sociability, undermine prejudice, spark German versus American choral competition, promote festivals as important disseminators of a love of music, and make Sängerfests regular events—"monuments to the Grand and True, which our Deutschtum has transplanted from the old Fatherland to its new home."[28]

Such ideas refer not only to the idea of German musical superiority but also to quite specific beliefs about their social contribution to American life. Sunday social activities and beer consumption, integrated into the lives of most Germans, helped a society balance work and leisure in ways many of them thought Anglo-Americans did not. German immigrant men sometimes asserted that overly pious American women denied their husbands the pleasures of drinking and smoking.[29] And despite the six-day workweek standard at the time, English-speakers often objected to Germans taking their pleasure on Sunday at the expense of rest and Christian observance. "The principle that Christianity is part of the common law is fast disappearing wherever they [the Germans] settle," wrote a commentator in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Equally contentious was the German reputation for overconsumption of alcoholic beverages, especially beer.[30] In the antebellum period, Cincinnati had become the center of the area's drink trade and, conversely, of its temperance movement. But with the German population dominating political wards in the "Over-the-Rhine" district by 1850 and brewing becoming one of the city's major industries, legal questions surrounding the sale and consumption of beer affected local political life.[31]

These social and religious issues influenced Cincinnati's musical culture and repertoire in the 1870s and had an effect on the German festival in particular. In short, traditional practices began to change. In Germany, a Sängerfest had been a large gathering of male choruses

who sang secular music, often a cappella, and sometimes politically oriented music in a show of unity across political and cultural boundaries. It rarely featured music from the art repertoire, and nothing was meant to illustrate German musical superiority.[32] But in the United States, the German population had no need for such politically oriented events, and festivals originally designed to gather singers from a wide geographical area began to assert purely musical values, offering formal concerts of mixed chorus music along with its traditional songs. In places ranging from New York City to towns in Texas, programs after 1865 began to include overtures, music for soloists and orchestra, or large works such as oratorios. The orchestras ranged from amateur "pickup" groups to professional ensembles and some of the most famous singers performed.[33] In all cases, however, male choral music appeared on Sängerfest programs, and a Sängerbund managed the festival. In this way, the German male choruses kept organizational and social structures intact, even as they offered activities and music aimed at the English-speaking population and created performance opportunities for female singers.

The Nordamerikanische Sängerbund was one of several American manifestations of the German male chorus phenomenon. As the festival movement in Germany reached its climax in 1848, the first Cincinnati male chorus festival was held in 1849. Featuring three local groups and choruses from Louisville, Kentucky, and Madison, Indiana, it inspired the founding of the Sängerbund.[34] Subsequent Sängerbund festivals were held in Cincinnati in 1851, 1853, 1856, and 1870. The 1870 Sängerfest was particularly large and successful. It attracted an English- as well as German-speaking audience, thousands of visitors, and national press attention. It was identified as the inspiration behind the May Festival, which was first held in 1873 (table 1). Equally important, it inspired the building of a large performance space, the *Sängerhalle*, subsequently used for industrial expositions and the first two May Festivals.[35]

Led by the Cincinnati Musical Festival Association (CMFA), a self-appointed committee of socially well-placed and civic-minded Cincinnatians, the May Festival departed significantly from the Sängerfest model. Essentially a concentrated week of concerts, it aimed to "elevate the standard of Choral and Instrumental Music, and to bring about harmony of action between the Music Societies of this country and especially of the West."[36] To that end, early May Festival programs featured works by well-known composers both living and dead, such as Handel, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Liszt, along with local premieres of music by composers such as Bach and Gluck and opera excerpts by Mozart and—especially—Wagner. The festival association acquired as music director the formidable German-American conductor Theodore

Table 1. A Decade of Festivals, 1870–80

Date	Name	Number in its own festival sequence	City
1870	Sängerfest of the Nordamerikanische Sängerbund	17	Cincinnati
1872	Sängerfest	18	St. Louis
1873	May Festival	1	Cincinnati
1874	Sängerfest	19	Cleveland
1875	May Festival	2	Cincinnati
1877	Sängerfest	20	Louisville
1878	May Festival	3	Cincinnati
1879	Sängerfest	21	Cincinnati
1880	May Festival	4	Cincinnati

Thomas, who had been touring nationally with his professional orchestra, introducing small towns and cities to the idea of "great music," the respect to which it was entitled, and the power of the orchestra itself.[37] German though he was, Thomas was no friend of the Sängerfest. Rather, as a self-proclaimed canonizer, he helped establish many of the nuances of taste that distinguished degrees of worthiness among individual pieces and styles. As he explained to the May Festival leadership, "I wish the evening pieces to be pure and clean without being heavy [and] principally made up from standard works of our great masters. Those for the matinees as light as good taste will allow."[38] Thus, for example, the first May Festival offered excerpts from Gluck's *Orfeo* in the evening and Meyerbeer's *Étoile du nord* and *Dinorah* in the afternoon. No music by Verdi was heard on any evening concert before 1879.

Although under Anglo-American leadership, the first three May Festivals made use of German singers, both local and out-of-town, who performed together with English-speakers. A well-regarded German-born conductor, Otto Singer, prepared the chorus for Thomas. The Thomas Orchestra, which performed instrumental works and accompanied the chorus, was supplemented with local players. A few local soloists, both English and German, shared the stage with distinguished outsiders such as Annie Louise Cary. The festival week ended with an informal concert on Saturday afternoon; unlike the German festivals, the May Festival offered no Sunday events. Nor was alcohol sold at the concert hall, as had been done at the 1870 Sängerfest.

The May Festival offered musically aware Germans a local model they would be hard pressed to ignore, and the Sängerbund began to

rethink its own practice. With 1,600 singers, its 1874 Sängerfest in Cleveland was reported an artistic failure. In its wake, the Bund decided to exclude choruses of fewer than twelve members, require certification of competence from participating choruses, and add works for mixed voices to its programs. By 1877, the Bund commented that its Louisville festival was "really the first musical festival the 'Saengerbund' ever had."[39] Similarly, the German press asserted in 1879 that the Fest would equal or exceed the musical achievements of the city's three May Festivals.[40] Under Cincinnati's Carl Barus, who had conducted some of the Louisville programs, the 1879 event was poised to meet raised expectations on the path the May Festival had already established.[41]

The changes attracted the attention of the English-language press. Recognizing that a Sängerfest would have its social aspects, writers nevertheless emphasized a shift in the balance between musical and social expectations. On the ambitious program, an editorial writer remarked, "[The 1870 Sängerfest] was an assembly of friends who sang. Now it is an assembly of singers who are friends."[42] The Germans worked hard on both sides of the equation, mixing new and difficult music with important elements of the German idea of a festival. In doing so, they achieved a major goal—to attract the attention of the city's population as a whole and direct that attention onto the character and capacities of German America—indeed, to claim the city's Germans as worthy participants in Cincinnati's march toward musical distinction. Much of the English commentary at the outset suggests that Anglo Cincinnati marched with them.[43]

As in 1870, the festival week began with a Wednesday afternoon procession and ended with a Sunday picnic. The opening parade offers an idea of the scope of the festival and the excitement it generated. It wound through streets of homes and business and public buildings lavishly decorated voluntarily (or at the expense of the Sängerbund or the public) and ended under an arch leading to the concert site, Music Hall, itself festooned with a nineteen-by-twenty-four-foot American flag. The parade was enormous: one report assessed it as three miles long.[44] Spectators saw choruses, the police and national guard, the fire department with its trucks, regiments of Civil War veterans, and veterans of the German military, each group behind its colorful banner. There were bands, some costumed and one on horseback; workers', social, and benevolent societies; a brewery wagon offering free beer; horse-drawn wagon floats, one of which showed characters from Wagner's operas; clubs and lodges from out of town; occupational groups; German aid societies; diplomats; local dignitaries; festival conductors and committee members; "a van of Teutons in *Tracht* [traditional costume]"; "the good

ship Reuben Springer" (a fifty-foot ornamental ship named for Music Hall's chief donor); at least one costumed dog; and a line of advertising wagons at the end.[45] Two women on wagons depicted Germania and America, while other women were seen in carriages. But only men marched, "of course."[46] The public schools, county government, and (on the mayor's recommendation) most businesses were closed. A newspaper claimed the next day that a half million people had been present.[47] The descriptions of the event suggest that the claim may have been reasonable.

The Sunday picnic was preceded by a smaller morning parade to the picnic grounds. Like Wednesday's advertising wagons, the picnic—actually a carnival with music, speeches, games, dancing, illumination of the grounds, and fireworks—added to the festival's bottom line. Individual vendors bid at an auction for the privilege of setting up attractions such as shooting galleries, a wheel of fortune, and concession stands offering wurst, pretzels, cigars, peanuts, and ice cream, among other enterprises. Fees ranged from five dollars for a balloon stand to six hundred dollars for the most expensive (and presumably the largest) of the picnic's fourteen bars.[48]

Central to the German tradition was an invitation to visiting singers and the hosting of guests: the festival comprised forty-six choruses from fourteen towns and cities, including twenty-one local groups. St. Louis, for example, sent five choruses and a band. All of the visiting performers were male except the lead soprano soloist and the female members of mixed choruses from Indianapolis and Louisville. Hospitality was paramount: the singers were welcomed, housed, fed, and entertained as guests of their Cincinnati hosts. They received free tickets to the Sunday picnic and free admission to rehearsals and concerts.[49] The German press listed each chorus's *Lokal*, a restaurant, bar, or beer garden where its members could be found by friends and *Sängerbrüder*.[50] The visiting Germans were invited to "Kommers," parties given usually by local choral groups but occasionally by out-of-town choruses as well. These events featured tableaux vivants, comic speeches, concerts, *Tafelmusik*, musical jokes, toasts, dancing, and of course, food and drink.[51] Women were provided for: the mixed chorus of the Cincinnati Männerchor invited the mixed Louisville and Indianapolis groups to a Kommers, while the mixed Cincinnati Orpheus hosted them on a boat trip.[52] Three local Swiss societies gave a celebration in honor of Swiss visitors. The city offered demonstrations of its new fire trucks and rescue equipment. Tourist excursions, boat tours, and free late-afternoon and evening concerts and serenades (some by visiting choruses and bands) were also given.[53] Cincinnati was jammed.

Although such activities helped create a festival as such, however, the Sängerfest was presented first and most prominently as a musical event. Relative to its population, Cincinnati's musical resources were ample, and many of them came from the German community. These resources allowed organizers to set out a hefty program with a reasonable expectation of pulling it off. Among the festival's organizers were conductors and their choruses. Festival music director Carl Barus, a former conductor of the English-speaking Harmonic Society and the Cincinnati Männerchor, was in 1879 conductor of both the all-male and the mixed Orpheus choruses, and the all-male Druiden Sängerchor. Otto Singer was choral director for the May Festival and conducted the Harmonic Society and the all-male and mixed Cincinnati Männerchor choirs. The German choruses were members of a new organization, the Cincinnati Sängerbund, founded after the Louisville festival to study the mixed chorus music for the current event, thus creating a local base of 378 singers.[54] Another local conductor, Wilhelm Ekert, visited Louisville and Indianapolis to assess the preparation of the visiting choruses from these cities.[55] And in an important change, all four evening concerts included music for both male and mixed choruses.

With this strategy, the city's German choruses could reasonably hope to succeed with large and challenging works, exactly the way the May Festival had begun to do. This goal was a change even from the 1877 Sängerfest, which included no full-program compositions.[56] Further, the smaller visiting male choruses' skills were not overtaxed, for most of them sang only in the Thursday and Saturday concerts. The choruses were provided copies of the repertoire, published locally by John Church and bound in festival program order. They were also required to send reports to assure the festival leadership that the singers were making adequate progress learning the joint compositions. The reports were published in the German press.[57] The social welcome, appropriate musical challenges, and prefestival preparation promoted success on both social and musical terms.

The German community's orchestral resources were likewise ample. An orchestra performed all seven festival concerts, four of which included one or more pieces for orchestra alone. Festival music director Barus had conducted the professional Cincinnati Philharmonic, which ceased operations in 1872 when a new group, under an American-born cellist, Michael Brand (1843–1906), formed under the name Cincinnati Grand Orchestra.[58] This group had performed the children's concert at the 1873 May Festival, other concerts and festivals, and informal entertainment events. It formed the nucleus of the Sängerfest orchestra (and eventually the Cincinnati Symphony). But it had been largely rejected

by the May Festival in favor of Theodore Thomas and his traveling orchestra, at Thomas's request.[59]

Soloists were also among the key festival performers and were chosen with audience appeal in mind. The lead soprano was Dresden opera singer Melita Otto-Alvsleben (1842–93), who came from Europe for the festival. However, four other female singers, all Cincinnati-born, professionally trained, and well known to local audiences, performed solos of their own and solo parts in the choral pieces. The press saw all of them as sources of local pride. The four male soloists—two tenors, a baritone, and a bass—were all visitors. All four had performed at the May Festival; thus, like the local women, they were well known in the city. While specific reasons for the repertoire choices are not known, a look at the two repertoire tables (tables 2 and 3) suggests links between this large number of soloists and the large number of pieces with solo parts. The repertoire also suggests an interest in hearing contemporary singing styles, especially dramatic parts for women in the works by Verdi, Wagner, and Gade.

The Fest took on the May Festival's seven-event pattern—four evening concerts and three matinees running from Wednesday to Saturday evening. Unlike at the May Festival, however, the matinees featured soloists and orchestra only—no chorus. This plan allowed for more choral rehearsal time if needed, while also permitting singers to enjoy their usual Sängerfest activities or go to a daytime concert. The first program was the traditional ceremonial reception concert with speeches and the passing of the Bund banner from the Louisville president to his Cincinnati successor. The chorus, however, consisted not of the usual local male choruses performing together, but of a "body of gray bearded men," the Pioneer Singers of Cincinnati.[60] Made up of men who had sung in festivals for at least twenty-five years, the chorus was organized "for the especial purpose to recall into memory the old festivals of the Sängerbund."[61] It sang small works by Abt (or Otto) and Zöllner (table 2).

New since 1870 was the second part of the evening: a complete performance, in German, of Mendelssohn's oratorio *St. Paul*—the first large, mixed choral work given at a Sängerfest. The Germans did not sing alone, however. In what was probably also a Sängerfest first, sixty-three members of the largely Anglo Harmonic Society (whose president, George Ward Nichols, was also the May Festival chairman) sang the oratorio with the festival chorus.[62]

St. Paul was the Sängerbund's link with what many Germans considered "their" oratorio tradition. Exemplified in the United States by works of Handel and Mendelssohn, among others, the oratorio genre

Table 2. Male Chorus Music Sung at the Cincinnati Sängerfest, 1879

Composer	Title	Additional performing forces
Franz Abt (1819–85)	"Fahnenlied"* [possibly by Julius Otto]	None
Ferdinand Hiller (1811–85)	*Oster Morgen*	Soprano solo, orchestra
F. Joetze or Hermann Goetz (1840–76)[a]	"Flieg aus, mein Lied"	None
Ferdinand Möhring (1816–87)	*Deutscher Krieger Schwur und Gebet*	TTBB solos (baritone principal), orchestra
Robert Schumann (1810–56)	*Das Glück von Edenhall* (1853)	Tenor and bass solos, orchestra
Friedrich Wilhelm Tschirch (1818–92)[b]	"Gott, Vaterland, Liebe" (1858)	TTBB solos
Karl Zöllner (1800–60)	"Sängergruss"*	None

These works were sung at the reception concert and the three other evening performances. Pieces sung by individual choruses at the closing concert on Saturday are not listed. Works marked with an asterisk were sung by the Pioneer Singers of Cincinnati, the others by the assembled male singers. All pieces include TTBB choral parts.

[a]Goetz's biography is given in the *Abend-Post*, 9 June 1879, 4. He published at least one set of male choruses. See Matthias Wiegandt, "Goetz, Hermann [Gustav]," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Personenteil* vol. 7, (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2002), cols. 1214–17. All other Cincinnati sources write "Joetze," a name not otherwise found.

[b]Tschirch was a guest at male choral festivals in the United States and wrote a book, *Meine Reise nach Amerika* (Magdeburg, 1870).

Table 3. Other Choral Music Sung at the Cincinnati Sängerfest, 1879

Title	Composer	Additional performing forces	Performance language
Die Kreuzfahrer [Danish: *Korsfarerne*] (1865–66)	Niels Gade (1817–90)	Mezzo-soprano, tenor	German
Die Königin von Saba (1871), grand march[a]	Karl Goldmark (1830–1915)	[orchestra only]	German
St. Paul (1836)	Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)	SATB soloists	German
"Einer Entschlafenen" (1873)	Joachim Raff (1822–82)	Soprano	German
Das verlorene Paradies (1855–56), part II (of 3)	Anton Rubinstein (1829–94)	Soprano, tenor, bass soloists	German
Requiem (1874)	Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)	SATB soloists	Latin
Der fliegende Holländer (1841), Spinning Song	Richard Wagner (1813–83)	Mezzo-soprano, chorus of women only	German

These works were sung at the four evening festival concerts: the reception concert, and the three formal performances. All include mixed chorus and orchestra unless otherwise noted.

[a]The first full performance took place in 1875, and the work was published in 1876.

was perhaps the most obvious musical "gift" the Germans could offer English-speaking Americans. The latter had, however, been performing from this repertoire for decades.[63] Including *St. Paul* in what had been a speech-dominated ceremony punctuated with short musical interludes gave the festival a chance to demonstrate its respect for "serious" music. In doing so, the Sängerbund made an important statement about its changing priorities and offered a performance English-speakers could see as appropriate and perhaps even appealing.

With the first main concert, however, the Bund brought the Fatherland to the fore. In contrast to the mellow, reflective Mendelssohn work, Thursday's concert offered patriotic texts set to stirring music by composers who some of the Germans and most of the English-speakers in the audience would not have known. As a German reviewer remarked, the program was a big change from a well-known work such as *St. Paul*, but it offered enough variety to suit all tastes.[64] The a cappella pieces were in the traditional male chorus style—largely homorhythmic in texture, tonal with chromatic inflection, and emotionally clear. The Goetz, Möhring, and Tschirch works celebrated the German warrior, flag, language, religious feeling, and music in a nationalistic style. The rest of the Thursday program featured religious themes: Easter and the Creation (Hiller and Rubinstein, respectively; tables 2 and 3).

It is easy to critique the festival music of the lesser-known composers and make assumptions about the pieces individual choruses sang at the Saturday concert. Although their most expected fault—exaggerated chromatic inflection—occurs occasionally, failures of taste are, in fact, relatively rare.[65] More common faults by today's standards are structural: excesses of cadential formula relative to the size of a piece, especially at section endings that can come across as unnecessarily long and bombastic. And indeed, some works seem to attempt to extend simple material (in the manner of Beethoven perhaps) beyond its capacity to create genuine development rather than mere spinning out. Nevertheless, except for three a cappella strophic songs, all of the works are through-composed concert pieces, emotionally and rhetorically appropriate and stylistically au courant for German music at a time of transition.[66]

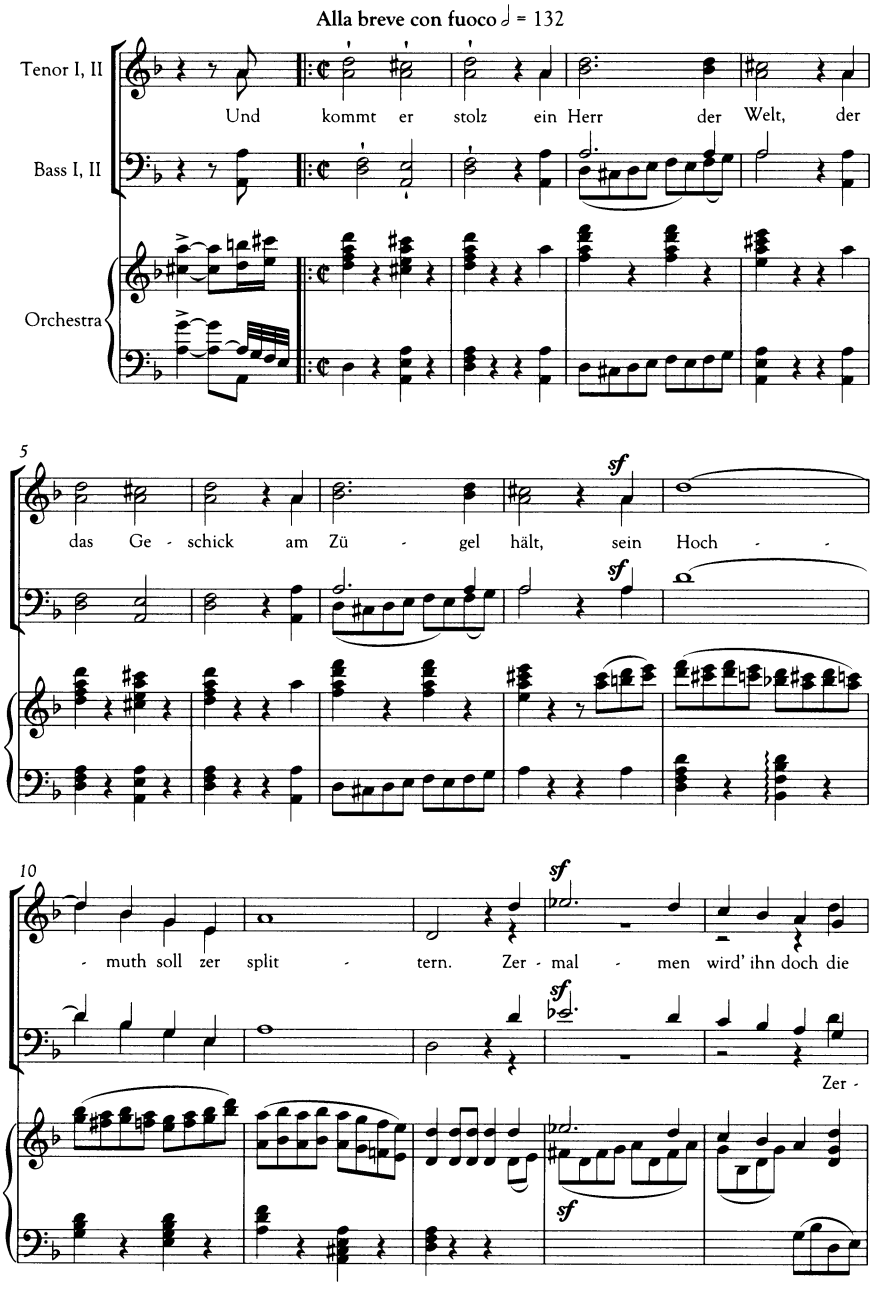
A good example of this repertoire is Ferdinand Möhring's *Deutscher Krieger Schwur und Gebet* (German Warriors' Oath and Prayer). One of many works of art created around the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the piece, which was performed twice at the 1879 Sängerfest, impressed audiences with its dramatic use of the current idiom.[67] Identified in the festival program as a "*characteristische Tongemälde*" (characteristic tone painting) and essentially a dramatic cantata, it probably ran about twelve minutes in performance. The work is in two main sections—the oath and

the prayer—each subdivided into smaller units alternating between the soldiers (the chorus) and their officer (the baritone soloist).[68] One can well imagine it opening a staged opera on the Franco-Prussian War from the German perspective: the soldiers (around a campfire) raise their glasses to the enemy's defeat, the officer drinks to the enemy's death, the soldiers swear their oath, the officer calls them to prayer, and they pray. The solo parts include lyric melody and recitative, and the prayer is in chorale style, either a cappella or with a patterned orchestral accompaniment in the manner of Mendelssohn. The three-verse oath stands at the center of the scene (ex. 1). Each verse is in two parts: an expansive *alla breve con fuoco* in minor, which depicts the wrath of the Germans against the French (mm. 1–28), and the oath itself (mm. 29–45), in the parallel major, grandioso. In the latter, military motives (dotted rhythms in march tempo and a trumpet figure in triplets) lead to and incorporate the repeated central text, "*Wir haben geschworen*" (We have sworn).

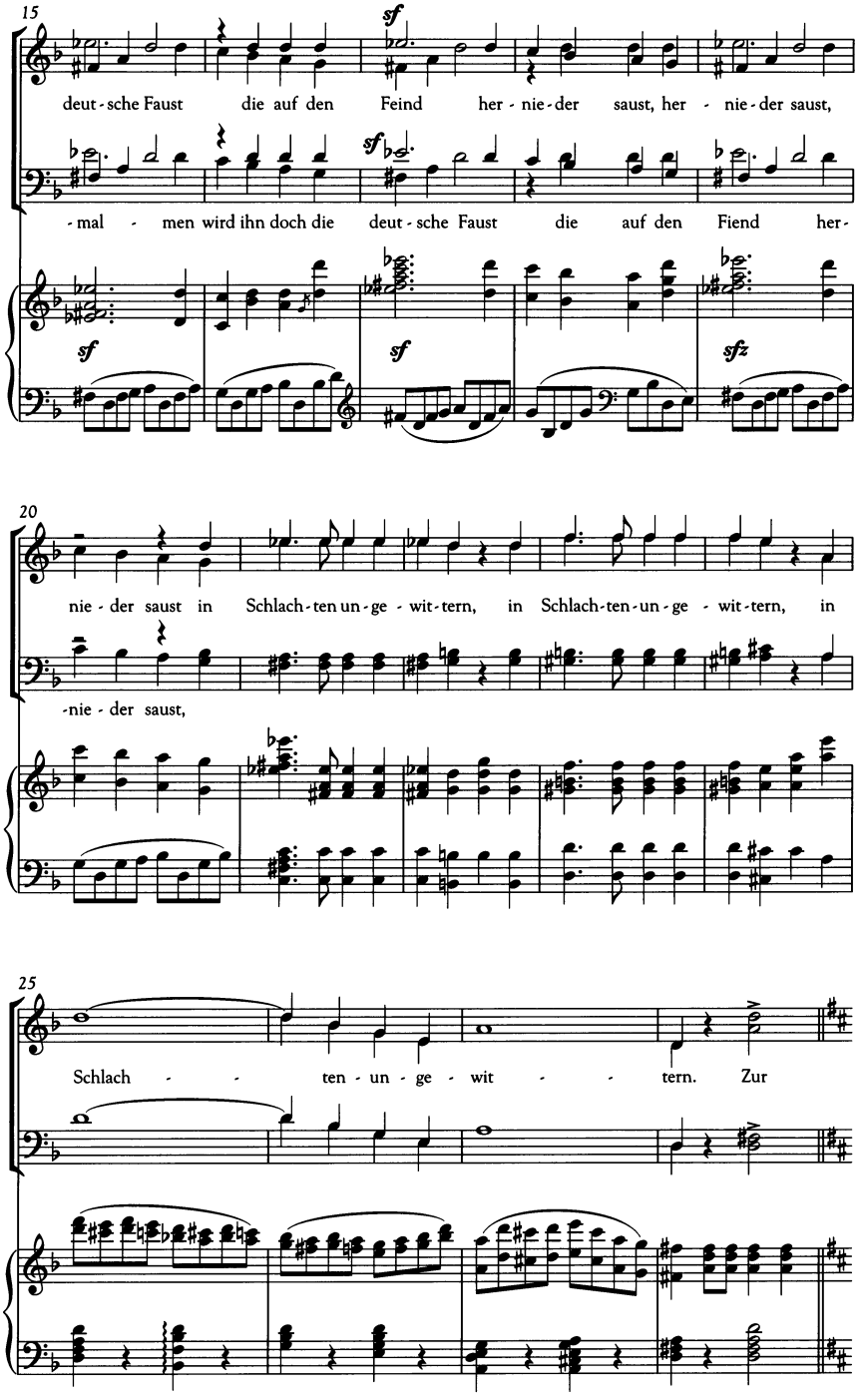
By 1879 the Franco-Prussian War was long over. However, German-speakers in the festival audience (and the singers who had learned the music) would understand and appreciate the piece's militarism and political appeal. Irrespective of politics, it also had the capacity to thrill anyone who heard it. As the first festival piece sung by the full male chorus, it thrilled the audience, inspiring comments even in the English press on "the solid body of tone which rolled forth from the chorus" that "seemed to shake the very walls. . . . It was a grand thing to hear."[69]

In its dramatic content, the *Warriors' Oath* was typical of the Sängerfest. Whether for male, mixed, or female chorus, all of the through-composed pieces offered a balance between artistic complexity and popular appeal. Like Möhring's piece, Robert Schumann's choral ballade *Das Glück von Edenhall* features syllabic text declamation with motives drawn from the rhythms of individual words, chordal texture, and an extensive, energetic opening and closing. The excerpt from Gade's oratorio *Die Kreuzfahrer* (The Crusaders) included a scena and aria for dramatic mezzo-soprano, a duet of failed seduction, and choruses of sirens and soldiers. The spinning song from Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*, which gave the female choral singers a small compensation for the mass of music for men, followed the tradition of opera excerpts performed at the May Festivals.

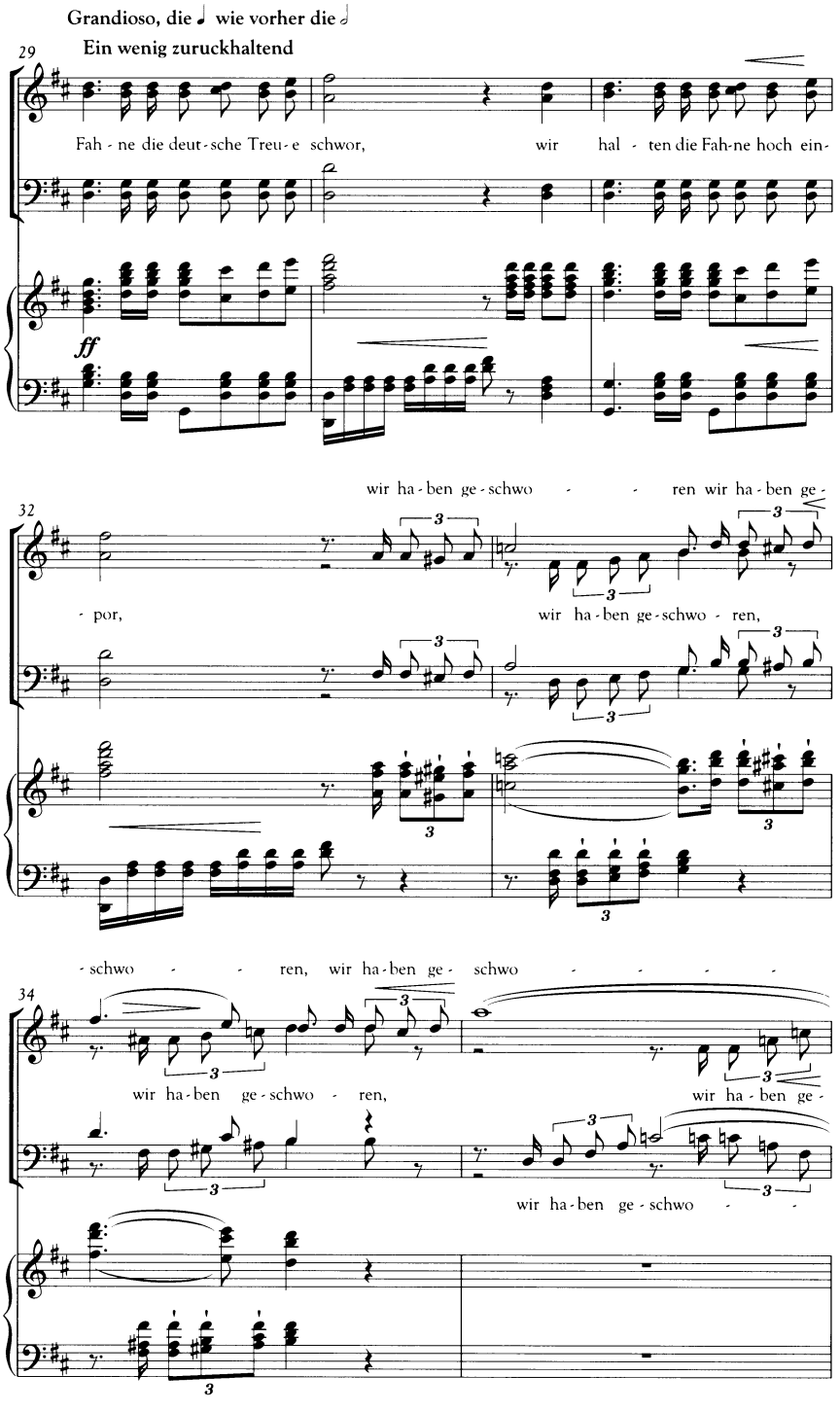
In this programming context, one may begin to understand the choice of the Verdi Requiem. Today it fills a concert; in 1879 it shared the Friday bill with both the Schumann choral ballade and a repetition of Möhring's *Warriors' Oath*. And finally, Saturday evening brought a return to the German male festival tradition with seven pieces for a



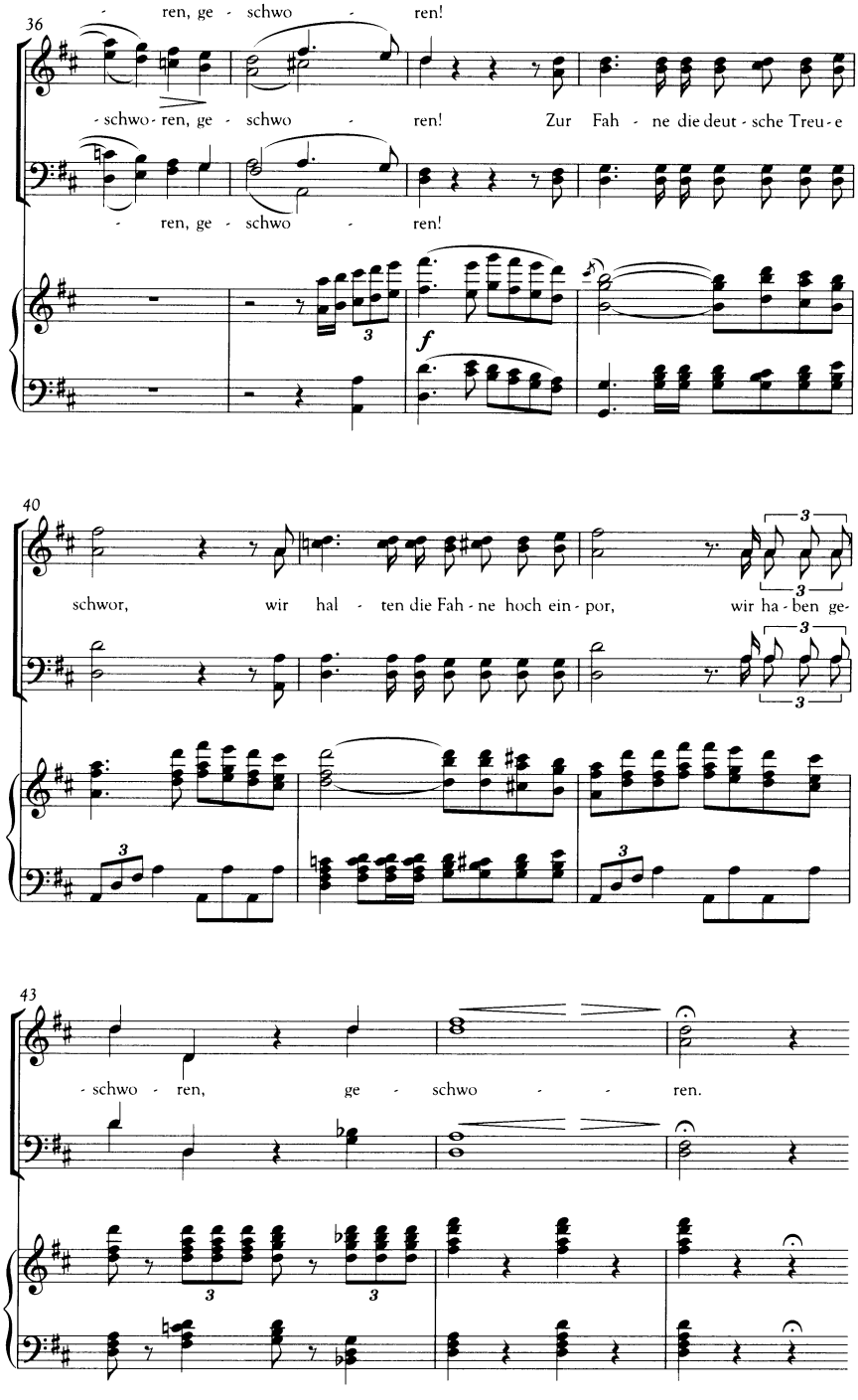
Example 1. Ferdinand Möhring, *Deutscher Krieger Schwur und Gebet* (German Warriors' Oath and Prayer), three-verse oath.



Example 1. (Continued).



Example 1. (Continued).



Example 1. (Continued).

cappella male chorus sung by individual visiting groups. The small pieces were interspersed with music for chorus and orchestra, including a mixed chorus miniature by Joachim Raff, Gade's cantata, two opera excerpts (table 3), and three vocal solos.

In a world of German choral music, the Verdi Requiem stood out as the most anomalous composition of the week. Seen today as a pillar of choral literature that excites and moves audiences, in its first decade (from 1874), the Requiem was famous in large measure for the controversies that surrounded it. In Germany and Great Britain, it had been anticipated as a wild-card work from Italy—a Latin mass by the long-popular but often critically maligned composer of tuneful operas such as *Il Trovatore*. A Cologne newspaper writer hearing about the piece undoubtedly spoke for many when he called it "hardly to be expected."[70] Not surprisingly, then, an initial round of performances, some conducted by Verdi himself, could not alone establish it on either side of the Atlantic.[71]

Although the composer's operas had been well known and widely performed in American cities since the 1840s, the arrival of Verdi's Requiem in the United States was similarly less than auspicious.[72] The operas themselves were controversial: early in their career, they were charged with failure to offer the moral lessons expected as part of theatrical reform. Subsequently they were accused of neither offering uplift nor meeting the aesthetic standards being fostered at the May Festival.[73] On these terms, the Requiem's style and the composer's reputation were out of sync with the purported cultural position of a large concert work on a religious text. That fact, along with the relative difficulty of access to performance materials, would have kept it out of consideration for the May Festivals of 1875 and 1878. A big choral work such as the Requiem needed a musical community willing to sustain it through locally based productions. This was a tall order, and the path of this unlikely composition in its first decade was a twisted one.

The Requiem was "hardly to be expected" from the Sängerbund either. The German male choruses tended to perform smaller works, and most groups would have lacked the resources for such an undertaking even in a festival setting. However, while no direct evidence of the rationale for its choice has been found, it is possible to imagine the purposes the Requiem may have served. It filled a program slot patterned after the last two May Festivals: a well-known oratorio early in the week, paired later on with a large novelty. In 1875 Mendelssohn's *Elijah* had been paired with Liszt's *Prometheus*, in 1878 Handel's *Messiah* with both Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* and the Liszt *Missa solemnis*. The idea of pairing the established (the Sängerfest's *St. Paul*) with the unheard may

have encouraged the German organizations to take a chance on a local premiere.[74]

By performing the Requiem, neither German nor English-speakers sang in their native language, a choice that both denoted inclusiveness rather than Germano-centrism and offered a concession from the advocates of German-language maintenance in the new country. Indeed, a journalist for the English-language *Gazette* (probably Henry Edward Krehbiel) called the festival as a whole "an opportunity of widening the scope of [the Germans'] mission, so that they will not alone promote a love for the German art among the Germans, but for the universal musical art among all our population."[75] While this statement may in fact promote the idea of German art as universal, the Sängerfest's investment in the Verdi work suggests instead curiosity about something new and a tempering of German musical chauvinism.

The choice may also be linked with the Requiem's position in Germany itself. During the government-led anti-Catholic campaign, the *Kulturkampf*, the piece had been performed under Verdi's direction in Cologne, a center of Catholic resurgence. Even Cincinnati's English press named this performance (not the Boston Handel and Haydn Society performances of 1878) as the cue for the current programming.[76] With this history known, the Sängerfest could be seen both as supporting Catholicism in Germany and inviting comparison with the musical prowess of the Fatherland.

Finally, with the Requiem the Sängerbund could make its own aesthetic statement. The May Festival had set up clear distinctions between music deemed appropriate for daytime versus evening concerts, relegating Verdi's works to matinee programs only. At the Sängerfest, the Requiem's color and excitement could be seen as positive attributes, both on their own account and as an emblem of the Bund's willingness to embrace music of a composer widely understood as enjoyable but noticeably "other." From this perspective, the work could be compared not to the uplifting oratorios of Handel and Mendelssohn or to music for a church service, but to Verdi's own operas. Thus, for example, the Requiem soprano soloist's foray over the chorus to high C in the final fugue, followed by her weak utterance of "libera me" (deliver me) at the close, could be well understood by any listener familiar with the soprano death scenes in *Traviata* or *Rigoletto*. Cincinnati reviewers in fact grasped and accepted the blend of religious expression and operatic style. For one, the end of the piece "[leaves] behind a solemn and sublime memory in the hearts of the listeners."[77] For another, "The solemnity of sacred music is relieved by touches almost operatic, making a production of life, beauty, harmony and impressive grandeur."[78]

As these press comments attest, the Requiem's impact was immediate. It brought down the house and led to a shower of praise for conductor Barus, including the undecorus (by May Festival standards) throwing of floral wreaths after individual movements.[79] The Requiem also took in the largest amount of any Sängerfest concert, about $4,800.[80] It was repeated for Barus's benefit in November of 1880 with Thomas conducting.[81]

Most of the German press pronounced the Fest a hit musically and socially—a triumph for *Deutschtum* in America.[82] Nevertheless, despite ample press encouragement and the Verdi performance's success, it failed to break even and had to ask its guarantors for some of their volunteered underwriting funds.[83] The financial failure was not for lack of effort. Attendance by English-speaking Americans had been encouraged: the best families were going, it was reported, and it would be embarrassing if the festival were left to the Germans alone.[84] Equally important was the editorial downplaying of conviviality, drink, and overt German nationalism to make the festival seem characteristic, yet respectable.[85] However, at least one newspaper speculated that German claims of the festival's respectability had not entirely been believed, keeping many English-speakers away.[86]

The balance between the Sängerfest's social and musical character was a sensitive issue in both communities and led to conflicting assessments of its success. The Germans, whose willingness to alter festival customs to appease the Anglos was not absolute, nevertheless emphasized the peaceful enjoyment of the Sunday picnic, the week's event most likely to exceed Anglo expectations for proper behavior. A German paper called the picnic's 20,000 participants "a single great family" and claimed that the police asserted they had never seen such a peaceful gathering.[87] The other side's idea of "peaceful," however, was something else. Resolved to evaluate the festival as a whole, the English-language papers commented as fully on the social circumstances as on the music itself. As an editorial writer summarized:

> While the programmes of the Saengerfest show from year to year a steady advance in musical taste and culture, and an increasing capacity to attack and effectively render the most difficult compositions, the Saengerfest has lost none of its eminently social features. . . . It is not a feast of music alone; it is a time for public rejoicing, congratulation and hilarity. . . . In estimating the success of the Saengerfest, therefore, it is not sufficient to consider its musical features exclusively, though these are primary; but all the social and spectacular incidents must be taken account of.[88]

The writer went on to label the "social and spectacular" aspects as specifically German in origin without referring to the music except in terms of taste.

Not surprisingly, the nonmusical elements were the most often criticized, with the picnic vigorously protested on behalf of churches near the picnic grounds. A Methodist preacher, Rev. Pearson, condemned not only the picnic, but the seeming indifference of local officials even as "this city [was] degraded before the eyes of the nation." He continued, "The public law . . . was framed to give to Christian people the right to meet undisturbedly in their various places of worship on the Sabbath, and to secure an orderly and moral observance of the day by a cessation from all common labor and public amusements." Nor was he satisfied with the opening procession, claiming that "our streets [were] turned into a vast beer garden, and by those [the guest choruses] whom we delighted to honor— . . . a beer fest with a song bait." Finally, he criticized the city's Germans, who, "by their public silence, permit the honored name of their nation to become but a stench in the nostrils of the community because of the boisterous clamor and indecent self-assertion of the lowest class."[89]

Other papers weighed in on the issue. The *Gazette* supported Rev. Pearson's position implicitly by publishing detailed reports of drunkenness and arrests. A sectarian weekly paper, the German-language Methodist *Christliche Apologete*, applauded the festival but sadly decried the prominence of alcohol as a marker of the German character [*Wesen*].[90] Its English equivalent, the *Western Christian Advocate*, went farther, claiming that at the Wednesday procession, "mothers upon the sidewalks gave beer to the infants in their arms" and calling on "the better class of German citizens to say that they do not approve of these disgraceful proceedings."[91] Other English-language dailies were more sanguine, acknowledging drunkenness but agreeing with the German press that given the large number of participants, the picnic was orderly.[92] An English paper even asserted that most of the picnic offenders against decency were Americans and argued that restricting Sunday activities would not eliminate decadence in the city.[93] Similarly, an instance of alleged drunkenness during a festival performance by tenor soloist Alexander Bischoff (who published a letter claiming he was ill) allowed English papers to compliment the Germans for promptly removing him from the stage.[94]

Although the English sectarian weeklies pronounced the Fest "a failure as a whole," they sometimes brought its apparent cross-purposes to the fore on cultural rather than moral grounds.[95] If a Sängerfest is to be a reunion of the German-born in the new country and a celebration of *Gemütlichkeit*, asserted the *American Israelite*, so be it. If it is to be a set of serious concerts, that would be welcome. But if it is so "Teutonic-German that other people made themselves scarce," the Americans

cannot be faulted for failure to attend. And it cannot purport to "teach" them about great music while offering male chorus repertoire performed by amateurs.[96] The *Catholic Telegraph* derided "the patronizing tone in which certain German papers here and elsewhere spoke of the festival as a means of 'educating the Americans,'" calling the claim "not only offensive, but untrue." The *Israelite* also tried to turn German chauvinism on its head by questioning the music itself: "Years ago, when there was no music in America, it was very acceptable to hear of a *Maennerchor* the pleasant German songs. But now when churches and opera-houses produce the very best music . . . that kind of music will not take. That which was intended for amusement and fun becomes unpopular when it assumes the air of gravity, importance and solemnity."[97]

Given the scope and ambition of the festival music, not all of this criticism was entirely fair. In particular, the *Israelite* asserted that the Germans presented too much of a high-culture tone when the strongest other complaints maintained that the festival had not been high-culture enough. Such a mixture of criticism exposed what might be called a no-win situation for the Sängerfest organizers: presenting a hybrid event in a city where social standards were beginning to follow new, "higher" musical attitudes. The Sängerfest leadership's lack of control over participants at nonconcert events meant that the festival's message to the city was of necessity a mixed one. As much as the Germans might try, there was simply no way the Anglo press or population were prepared to accept their effort as representing Cincinnati's culture at large or as worthy of their highest respect. The Sängerbund board noticed: incensed at the *Israelite*'s disapproval, it issued a resolution expressing deepest contempt (*tiefster Verrathung*) for the criticism's unnamed author and censuring the paper's editor, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, for publishing it.[98]

The Bund may have anticipated kinder treatment from the *Israelite*, whose point of view could be expected to differ from that of a conservative Protestant publication. But a German journalist from Chicago (where the next festival had already been scheduled) also questioned the Sängerfest's ambiance: congratulations and cheers for the Sängerfest notwithstanding, the German "song and beer festival" was soon likely to be restructured as "an Anglo-American music festival with the inevitable 'stars' and related trappings."[99]

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Many English-speakers in Cincinnati were poised to applaud this prediction. Although they could well imagine the 1879 event as a Sängerfest as had been celebrated in Germany, in the American environment it

could not be successful as such. Its obviously "German" characteristics—the processions, decorations, hospitality to large numbers of visitors, and even the picnic—could, if efforts were made to produce them with adequate attention to decorum, be seen as harmless, or even welcome traditions. Nevertheless, despite widespread enthusiasm for events such as the opening parade, Anglo criticism and disappointing concert attendance suggest that a vision of a common, American, German-influenced, musical high culture could not accommodate these markers of German identity. Even the careers of two prominent conductors, Thomas and Barus, illustrate the problem for Germans in American musical life—the former wanting to separate the music from a social setting he saw as inappropriate, and the latter working with groups who saw the German milieu as central to their purpose in musical performance.

From the American vantage point, the musical and social elements of the Sängerfest needed to go their separate ways. The conviviality remained associated with the ethnic group. As many Americans today enjoy being Irish on 17 March, many nineteenth-century Cincinnatians could enjoy being German for a week every few years in June. On the other hand, respectful performances of large pieces of music were products of Anglo views of "good" music as "classical," but not necessarily "German" art.

As a large-scale public event with a relaxed atmosphere, the Sängerfest could not also be an example of sacralized culture. As such, it was less suited to the "almost severely classical" music the May Festivals had performed (for example, works by Bach and Gluck).[100] Hence a new and controversial work like Verdi's Requiem found a place at the Sängerfest sooner than works whose canonic claims were higher. The Requiem's subsequent history in Cincinnati supports this assertion: despite hundreds of local singers who had prepared the work in 1879, it waited through five more May Festivals—until 1890—before Thomas chose to put it on the program. Ironically perhaps, even though Germans had composed many of the Sängerfest's best-received compositions, the Bund organizers had no interest in a museum environment. And in fact, much of its repertoire—including music by respected living composers such as Gade, Hiller, Raff, and Rubinstein—never crossed from the German organizations into the developing international art repertoire.

The Bund bet on a balance between art-based programming and its own social message. It lost the bet—the Sängerfest's social events helped the Germans sustain their links with the Fatherland and across various social, regional, and religious boundaries. These events also

reminded Cincinnati's "American" population of a cultural power the Germans would insist on expressing on their own terms; but the protests against German chauvinism and the tepid response to the festival among the Anglo population undermined their expectation of entitlement to the music's ownership. As outsiders saw it, the Germans failed to honor the music as it deserved. One wonders whether an understanding of that failure discouraged Cincinnati's Germans from hosting another Sängerfest for twenty years.

In the wake of the festival, the Cincinnati Germans' uniqueness was still obvious to the community at large. But their failed assertion of social and cultural power furthered their adaptation to an Anglo-based model of "serious" musical life. The local "people of music" lost some of their hold on the art as a cultural marker and sign of superiority, weakening ties between a German-centered repertoire and the "German element" itself.

Notes

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1. On the first three festivals, see Henry E. Krehbiel, "Historical," in *An Account of the Fourth Musical Festival* (Cincinnati, OH: Aldine, 1880), 7–18; Theodore Thomas, *Theodore Thomas: A Musical Autobiography*, ed. George P. Upton (1905; New York: Da Capo, 1964), 78–82; Robert C. Vitz, "'Im wunderschönen Monat Mai': Organizing the Great Cincinnati May Festival of 1878," *American Music* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1986): 309–27; Vitz, *The Queen and the Arts: Cultural Life in Nineteenth-Century Cincinnati* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1989), 86–100; Ezra Schabas, *Theodore Thomas: America's Conductor and Builder of Orchestras, 1835–1905* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 48–49, 54–58, 63–66, and 85–88; and Thomas Cahall, "Jewels in the Queen's Crown: The Fine and Performing Arts in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1865–1919" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1991), 223–55.

2. Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Paul DiMaggio, "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America," *Media, Culture and Society* 4 (1982): 33–50.

3. For attempts to fill out the discussion of elitism, see, for example, my essay "Mrs. Potiphar at the Opera: Satire, Idealism, and Cultural Authority in Post-Civil War New York," in *Music and Culture in America, 1861–1918*, ed. Michael Saffle (New York: Garland, 1998), 29–51; Michael Broyles, *"Music of the Highest Class": Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Ralph P. Locke, "Music Lovers, Patrons, and the 'Sacralization' of Culture in America," *19th-Century Music* 17 (Fall 1993): 149–73. Sacralization has been an ongoing theme in the work of Joseph Horowitz. For recent examples (with reference to Levine and DiMaggio), see his *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall* (New York: Norton, 2005), 88–91, 250–53, and passim.

4. Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade," in *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 44–76, here 45; on core identity, see Conzen, "German-Americans and the Invention of Ethnicity," in *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, ed. Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 1:133.

5. Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

6. On working-class occupations, see Steven J. Ross, *Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure, and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati, 1788–1890* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 136.

7. Quoted in James J. Sheehan, *German History 1770–1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 165.

8. Celia Applegate, *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn's Revival of the St. Matthew Passion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 6, 51.

9. Applegate, *Bach in Berlin*, 54.

10. Applegate, *Bach in Berlin*, 82, 92–93, 99; quotation, 237.

11. Bernd Sponheuer, "Reconstructing Ideal Types of the 'German' in Music," in *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 40–41; Applegate and Potter, "Germans as the 'People of Music': Genealogy of an Identity," in the same volume, 1–35, here 32; Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, "Trumpeting Down the Walls of Jericho: The Politics of Art, Music, and Emotion in German-American Relations, 1870–1920," *Journal of Social History* 36 (March 2003): 588–91, 606.

12. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin, eds., introduction to *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 11–12; Howard Sargent, "Diasporic Citizens: Germans Abroad in the Framing of German Citizenship Law," in *The Heimat Abroad*, 17, 20, 26.

13. Julian O. Schulz, "Die deutsche Musik und ihre Zukunft in Amerika," *Der deutsche Pionier* 5 (1873): 187. The word "fast" is in English in the original text. See also Conzen, "German-Americans," 136; Thomas Lekan, "German Landscape: Local Promotion of the Heimat Abroad," in *The Heimat Abroad*, 144–45.

14. Corinna Hörst notes that while 30 percent of Germans in the United States lived in cities in 1850, in Germany itself only 8 percent did so. "'More than Ordinary': The Female Migration Experience and German Immigrant Women in Nineteenth-Century Cincinnati" (PhD diss., Miami University [of Ohio], 1998), 47.

15. Hörst, "'More than Ordinary,'" 49, and chart drawn on Census Office Statistics, United States Department of the Interior, 48.

16. On local and regional religious disputes from Germany in Ohio, see Anne Höndgen, "Community Versus Separation: A Northwest German Emigrant Region in Nineteenth-Century Ohio," in *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Wolfgang Helbich and Walter D. Kamphoefner (Madison, WI: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, 2004), 18–43. On German beer, see William L. Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry: A Social and Economic History* ([Athens?]: Ohio University Press, 1973). See also note 31.

17. German–English bilingual education was widely offered in cities with substantial populations of German heritage and was usually available to most white students. See Paul Fessler, "The Political and Pedagogical in Bilingual Education: Yesterday and Today," in *German-American Immigration*, 273–91.

18. Donna-Christine Sell, "Heinrich A. Rattermann," in *Guide to the Heinrich A. Rattermann Collection of German-American Manuscripts* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1979), 8–9.

19. Hörst, "More than Ordinary," 65 (emphasis original).

20. Heinrich Siebel, "Kurze historische Skizze des Cincinnati Maennerchor" (Cincinnati: Heinrich Siebel, 1882), 6.

21. Cited from the *Freie Presse* in the Joseph Holliday papers, Box 6, Folder 11, CHS.

22. Siebel, "Kurze historische Skizzen," 6, 10.

23. Friedhelm Brusniak, "Männerchorwesen und Konfession von 1800 bis in den Vormärz," in *"Heil deutschem Wort und Sang!": Nationalidentität und Gesangskultur in der deutschen Geschichte. Tagungsbericht Feuchtwangen 1994* (Augsburg: Dr. Bernd Wissner, 1995), 123–40.

24. Suzanne Snyder, "The Männerchor Tradition in the United States: A Historical Analysis of Its Contribution to American Musical Culture" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1991), 24–25; Heike Bungert, "Singen und ethnische Identität: Die Sängerfeste der Deutschamerikaner als Medium der Ethnizitätsbildung, 1848–1914," conference paper, Gesellschaft für Musikforschung, 2004.

25. Hans L. Trefousse, "The German-American Immigrants and the Newly Founded Reich," in *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, 1:164–66.

26. Snyder, "Männerchor Tradition," 27.

27. Quoted (in translation) in the *Daily Gazette*, 16 June 1870, 1. Bavarian-born Lilienthal was rabbi of Cincinnati's congregation Bene Yeshurun. Jonathan D. Sarna and Nancy H. Klein, *The Jews of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1989), 50.

28. *Volksblatt*, 11 June 1879, 4. See also the *Volksfreund*, 12 June 1879, 4.

29. Hörst, "'More than Ordinary,'" 171–72, 189.

30. J. J. Lalor, "The Germans in the West," *Atlantic Monthly* 32 (1873): 469.

31. Cincinnati had a canal, dubbed "the Rhine," beyond which many Germans settled. Filled in, in 1919, its path is Central Parkway today. On alcohol, see Jed Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder: Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washingtonian Revival to the WCTU* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Downard, *Cincinnati Brewing Industry*, chapters 2, 3, and 5. For brewing's rise in rank among Cincinnati's industries, see Ross, *Workers on the Edge*, 77.

32. On the German male chorus movement contrasted with mixed choral organizations and festivals, see Karen Ahlquist, "Men and Women of the Chorus: Music, Governance, and Opportunity in 19th-Century German-Speaking Europe," in *Chorus and Community*, ed. Karen Ahlquist (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 265–92; Friedhelm Brusniak, "Chor und Chormusik," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Sachteil, vol. 2 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1995), cols. 100–2; Dieter Düding, *Organisierter gesellschaftlicher Nationalismus in Deutschland (1808–1847): Bedeutung und Funktion der Turner- und Sängervereine für die deutsche Nationalbewegung* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1984); Düding, "The Nineteenth-Century German Nationalist Movement as a Movement of Societies," in *Nation-Building in Central Europe*, ed. Hagen Schulze (Leamington Spa, UK: Berg, 1987), 19–49; Snyder, "Männerchor Tradition," 77–81.

33. For example, the Louisville Sängerfest of 1877 included the finale from Wagner's opera *Rienzi* and Mendelssohn's Psalm 42 (program, Rattermann Collection, University of Illinois Library). See also Snyder, "Männerchor Tradition," 239–55.

34. William Osborne, *Music in Ohio* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2004), 344–45. NASB chorus membership ran from Buffalo to Nebraska. The name *Nordamerikanische* was possible because no other areas had yet organized their choruses into federations.

35. *Times*, 13 June 1879, 2.

36. Cincinnati Musical Festival [first May Festival] program, 1873, 3.

37. Even while serving as founding conductor of the Chicago Symphony (1891), Thomas remained May Festival musical director until his death in January 1905. His role in establishing the symphony orchestra as a goal for a cultured American city has been widely acknowledged: Philip Hart calls the first chapter of his history of the American symphony orchestra "Before Thomas." See Hart, *Orpheus in the New World: The Symphony Orchestra as an American Cultural Institution. Its Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Norton, 1973), chapter 2; Thomas, *Theodore Thomas*; Rose Fay Thomas, *Memoirs of Theodore Thomas* (1911; Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971); Charles Edward Russell, *The American Orchestra and Theodore Thomas* (1920; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971); Schabas, *Theodore Thomas*; Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 32–37, 163–71, and passim. Horowitz calls Thomas a "national force" (34).

38. Letter to CMFA agent C. C. Miller, 7 February 1873; CMFA papers, Box 1, Folder 14, CHS.

39. "Historical Sketch of the German Saengerbund of North America," in *Deutscher Saengerbund of North America. 21st Saengerfest, Cincinnati, Ohio, 11–18 June 1879* (Cincinnati, OH: Mecklenborg and Rosenthal, 1879), 11; Eugene Leuning, "The Art of Singing and Music in America. Historical Sketch," in *The City of Milwaukee Guide to the "Cream City" for Visitors and Citizens ... Souvenir of the 24th Saengerfest of the North-American Saengerbund at Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Caspar and Zahn, 1886), 20.

40. *Abend-Post*, 7 June 1879, 4; *Volksfreund*, 7 June 1879, 5.

41. *Deutscher Sängerbund von Nordamerika, ... 21. Gesangfest, Cincinnati, Ohio, 11–15. Juni 1879* [program], 13; *Volksfreund*, 5 June 1879, 4; *Freie Presse*, 9 June 1879, 1; *Volksblatt*, 11 June 1879, 4; 14 June 1879, 2; *Abend-Presse*, 5 June 1879, 1; 9 June 1879, 1; *Abend-Post*, 11 June 1879, 4; *Louisville Anzeiger*, given in the *Freie Presse*, 14 June 1879, 1.

42. *Times*, 3 June 1879, 2.

43. *Star*, 2 June 1879, 4; *Gazette*, 5 June 1879, 10; *Commercial*, 7 June 1879, 10; *Enquirer*, 11 June 1879, 4.

44. "Fest Zeitung," *Volksblatt*, 12 June 1879, 1. The "Fest Zeitung" was a set of supplementary issues published daily during the festival week.

45. *Commercial*, 12 June 1879, 2. For other reports, see the *Volksfreund*, 7 June 1879, 5; 10 June 1879, 4; 12 June 1879, 4–5; *Gazette*, 12 June 1879, 1; *Abend-Presse*, 11 June 1879, 2; "Fest Zeitung," *Volksblatt*, 11 June 1879, 1.

46. *Commercial*, 12 June 1879, 2.

47. *Volksfreund*, 7 June 1879, 5; 12 June 1879, 5; *Commercial*, 12 June 1879, 1. For other reports on the procession, see 11 June 1879, 1, 6; *Star*, 9 June 1879, 1; 10 June 1879, 1; 11 June 1879, 1; 12 June 1879, 3; *Freie Presse*, 12 June 1879, 5; *Cleveland Anzeiger*, given in the *Freie Presse*, 14 June 1879, 1.

48. *Enquirer*, 15 June 1879, 8; *Volksfreund*, 7 June 1879, 5; *Gazette*, 7 June 1879, 10; 16 June 1879, 8; *Volksblatt*, 14 June 1879, 2; 16 June 1879, 5; *Freie Presse*, 16 June 1879, 5.

49. *Abend-Post*, 7 June 1879, 1; *Commercial*, 10 June 1879, 8; 11 June 1879, 1; *Gazette*, 11 June 1879, 8.

50. *Volksfreund*, 11 June 1879, 1.

51. *Volksfreund*, 10 June 1879, 4; 13 June 1879, 5; 14 June 1879, 4; *Abend-Post, Beilage*, 13 June 1879, 1; 14 June 1879, 14; *Abend-Presse*, 11 June 1879, 2; 13 June 1879, 2; "Fest Zeitung," *Volksfreund*, 13 June 1879, 1.

52. "Fest Zeitung," *Volksblatt*, 14 June 1879, 1.

53. *Volksfreund*, 7 June 1879, 5; 14 June 1879, 4; *Abend-Post*, 12 June 1879, 4; *Volksblatt*, 13 June 1879, 2; "Fest Zeitung," *Volksblatt*, 14 June 1879, 1.

54. Sängerfest program, 84–88.

55. Sängerfest program, 11–15; chorus lists, 67–88; *Gazette*, 6 June 1879, 8.

56. *North-American Saengerbund. Louisville Festival* [program]. Heinrich A. Rattermann Collection, Illinois Historical Survey, University of Illinois Library.

57. *Abend-Presse*, 5 June 1879, 4.

58. *Church's Musical Visitor*, November 1872; *Deutscher Sängerbund von Nordamerika* (program), 15. On the Cincinnati Grand Orchestra, see Karen Ahlquist, "Playing for the Big Time: Musicians, Concerts, and Reputation-Building in Cincinnati, 1872–82," *Journal of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era* 9, no. 2 (April 2010), 145–65.

59. In 1879, Thomas resided in Cincinnati, having taken a short-lived music directorship of the Cincinnati College of Music. He spent the Sängerfest week in Chicago with his orchestra but was back for a series of outdoor concerts by the following Tuesday. *Enquirer*, 13 June 1879, 8; *Star*, 16 June 1879, 4.

60. *Gazette*, 12 June 1879, 2.

61. *German Saengerbund of North America. Twenty-first Saengerfest* (program), 23. The Pionier Verein had been founded by Heinrich Rattermann in 1869 to recall the achievements of German immigrants from before the 1848 revolutions.

62. *German Saengerbund of North America. Twenty-first Saengerfest* (program), 67–88.

63. *St. Paul* had been performed in Cincinnati as early as 1857 by the Cäcilienverein. *Abend-Post*, 7 June 1879, 4; *Gazette*, 7 June 1879, 10; *Volksfreund*, 7 June 1879, 5. The conductor in 1857 was Alsatian immigrant Frederic Louis Ritter, the author of *Music in America* (New York: Scribner, 1883).

64. *Abend-Post*, 13 June 1879, 4.

65. On criticism of sentimental a cappella "Liedertafelei," see Brusniak, "Chor und Chormusik," cols. 796, 803. On performance style, see Snyder, "Männerchor Tradition," 64.

66. The strophic a cappella works are Goetz's "Flieg aus, mein Lied," Zöllner's "Sängergruss," and presumably Abt's "Fahnenlied." I have yet to locate the Abt piece.

67. On the piece as an example of German patriotism, see the *Abend-Post*, June 13, 1879: 4; *Volksfreund*, 18 June 1879, 4.

68. *Festgesänge für das 21st* [sic] *Gesangsfest des ersten Deutschen Sängerbundes von Nord America*, piano vocal score (Cincinnati: John Church, 1878). Music Library, University of Illinois.

69. *Commercial*, 13 June 1879, 5.

70. *Kölnische Zeitung* (August Guckeisen), 12 December 1875, 3.

71. Gundula Kreuzer, "'Oper im Kirchengewande'? Verdi's Requiem and the Anxieties of the Young German Empire," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 399–449; Karen Ahlquist, "'Hardly to be Expected': The Verdi Requiem in the United States, 1874–80," conference paper, International Musicological Society, 2002.

72. George Martin, *Verdi at the Golden Gate: Opera and San Francisco in the Gold Rush Years* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Katherine K. Preston, *Opera on the Road: Traveling Opera Troupes in the United States, 1825–1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

73. Karen Ahlquist, *Democracy at the Opera: Music, Theater, and Culture in New York City, 1815–60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), especially chapters 2 (theatrical reform), 6 (Verdi reception), and 7 (uplift and canon formation).

74. The Cincinnati Männerchor had performed extracts of *St. Paul* in the 1870s. Männerchor scrapbook, CHS.

75. *Gazette*, 5 June 1879, 10. After leaving Cincinnati, Krehbiel (1854–1923) became an influential critic at the *New York Tribune*.

76. *Gazette*, 10 June 1879, 4. The article incorrectly names two 1874 New York productions as the only American predecessors to the Sängerbund effort. In fact, there had also been five performances in Chicago (Beethoven Society), a Boston partial performance (Church of the Immaculate Conception), and two Boston Handel and Haydn Society performances. See W. S. B. Mathews, review for the *Chicago Times*, reprinted in the *Gazette*, 12 June 1879, 2; Ahlquist, "'Hardly to be Expected.'"

77. *Abend-Post*, 14 June 1879, 4.

78. *Star*, 14 June 1879, 2.

79. *Commercial*, 14 June 1879, 6, 4 [sic]; *Gazette*, 14 June 1879, 4; *Volksfreund*, 14 June 1879), 4; *Star*, 14 June 1879, 2; "Fest-Zeitung," *Freie Presse*, 14 June 1879, 1; "Fest Zeitung," *Volksblatt*, 14 June 1879, 1; *Abend-Post*, 14 June 1879, 4.

80. *Volksfreund*, 14 June 1879, 4.

81. *Enquirer*, 30 November 1880, 4; Snyder, "Männerchor Tradition," 73–76.

82. *Volksblatt*, 12 June 1879, 4; 16 June 1879, 5; *Volksfreund*, 12 June 1879, 4; *Abend-Presse*, 16 June 1879, 4; *Freie Presse*, 16 June 1879, 4.

83. *Commercial*, 29 June 1879, 10. As of Friday, the *Enquirer* estimated an average of eight hundred empty seats per concert (13 June 1879, 8). German accounts put the deficit at $9,000 on an outlay of $34,000 (*Freie Presse*, 17 June 1879, 4).

84. *Commercial*, 7 June 1879, 10; 10 June 1879, 8.

85. *Gazette*, 7 June 1879, 4; *Commercial*, 7 June 1879, 10; *Enquirer*, Friday, 13 June 1879, 8; *Star*, 14 June 1879, 2.

86. *Enquirer*, 13 June 1879, 8; 15 June 1879, 8.

87. *Freie Presse*, 16 June 1879, 5. For similar assessments, see the *Abend-Post*, 16 June 1879, 4; *Abend-Presse*, 16 June 1879, 3; *Volksblatt*, 16 June 1879, 5.

88. *Commercial*, 14 June 1879, 6.

89. *Gazette*, 16 June 1879, 8.

90. *Der christliche Apologete*, 16 June 1879, 188.

91. *Western Christian Advocate*, 18 June 1879, 196. For similar comments, see the *Christian Herald and Presbyter*, 25 June 1879, 4.

92. *Gazette*, 16 June 1879, 8; *Enquirer*, 16 June 1879, 4; *Commercial*, 16 June 1879, 5.

93. *Times*, 17 June 1879, 2.

94. *Enquirer*, 14 June 1879, 4; *Commercial*, 15 June 1879, 7. For German accounts, see the "Fest Zeitung," *Volksblatt*, 14 June 1879, 1; *Volksblatt*, 14 June 1879, 2; *Abend-Post*, 14 June 1879, 4. Bischoff's letter is in the *Freie Presse*, 17 June 1879, 4.

95. *Catholic Telegraph*, 19 June 1879, 4.

96. *American Israelite*, 20 June 1879, 4.

97. *Catholic Telegraph*, 19 June 1879, 4; *American Israelite*, 20 June 1879, 4.

98. Given in the *Volksfreund*, 27 June 1879, 4; *Volksblatt*, 26 June 1879, 5; translated in the *Commercial*, 28 June 1879, 10; *Abend-Post*, 30 June 1879, 4.

99. Chicago *Neue Freie Presse*, given in the *Abend-Post*, 18 June 1879, 2.

100. *Commercial*, 8 May 1873, 1.