the court of the Duchess of Normandy—with whom he fell in love, of course, and about whom he wrote many more songs. Upon her departure for England, Bernart reportedly entered an order of monks and died of a broken heart.

Although troubadours are best remembered for their celebrations of idealized romantic suffering, they also sang about more earthly love affairs. The *alba* was a Page interrupted by the dawn (and the return of the woman’s husband), while the *serena* concerned a lover impatiently awaiting his partner’s arrival in the evening. In a *pastorela*, a knight suggested to a peasant girl that they make love; sometimes she acceded, sometimes she did not. In sum, the repertoire makes it clear that troubadours didn’t spend *all* of their time yearning for unobtainable aristocrats.

The troubadours were active throughout the 12th century, while the Duchy of Aquitaine flourished. During this period, their tradition was primarily *oral*. They wrote songs in their heads and performed them from memory, and those songs were then carried from place to place by *minstrels* who learned them by ear.

In the early 13th century, however, an effort was made to preserve the songs of the troubadours. This is when the *vidas*...
were recorded. In addition, hundreds of poems and a smaller number of melodies were collected in richly-embellished manuscripts.

However, the need to preserve a fading tradition is not the only reason that the songs of the troubadours became the first secular music ever to be recorded.

The troubadours and their supporters were also in the unique position of having access to the wealth and education necessary to write music down. In the medieval era, books were difficult and expensive to produce and were therefore enormously valuable. The pages were usually velum (dried sheep skin), and few people had the skills necessary to read or write. Music literacy in particular was largely restricted to clerics. While the troubadour repertoire is prized, we must remember that it offers only a glimpse into the rich traditions of song and dance music that flourished in medieval oral culture.

Although the songs of the troubadours were indeed preserved, we still have only shadowy ideas about what this music sounded like. This is because only the melodies were recorded, using a primitive form of notation that did not indicate

**Image 8.10:**

Illuminations in medieval manuscripts shed light on performance practice.

**Image 8.11:** The citole, Here, we see musicians portrayed here ca. 1310, playing the rebec and was a type of lute, and cithar. therefore related to the modern guitar.

**Image 8.12:** This illumination from ca. Attribution: Unknown

Source: Picryl

modern guitar.

illumination from ca.

Attribution: Unknown

Source: Wikimedia Commons
1300 portrays a musician

License: Public Domain
Attribution: Robert De Lisle

playing the vielle.

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rhythmic values. The extant manuscripts seem
to suggest, therefore, that troubadours sang
without accompaniment, but we know from
illustrations that this was not the case. Manuscript
illuminations depict troubadours and minstrels
playing a variety of instruments, including the
lute, citole, vielle, rebec, psaltery, harp, shawm,
and bagpipes. It is clear that these instruments
were used to accompany both dancing and
singing. Today, therefore, performers use their
imaginations when they approach the troubadour
repertoire, creating appropriate accompaniments Image 8.13: The angels in based on what we know about the
instruments, this ca. 1320 illumination play nearly a full compliment
styles, and practices of the time.
of medieval instruments,

Mystery surrounds not only the songs but their including the guitar-shaped creators. Most of the troubadours are known only citole, violin-shaped vielle, psaltery, and trumpet.

by their brief vidas, which are highly unreliable. Source: Wikimedia Commons This is certainly the case of the Countess of Dia, Attribution: the “Queen Mary Master”

who authored the canso that we will examine. Her License: Public Domain vida reads as follows: “The Countess of Dia was

the wife of Lord Guillem of Peitieu, a beautiful

and good lady. And she fell in love with Lord

Raimbaut of Orange and composed many good

songs about him.” This vida certainly tells us

all that the author felt we needed to know: The Image 8.14: The musicians in Countess was beautiful and good (attributes this ca. 1310 illumination play commonly assigned to noblewomen), she loved harp, rebec, citole, psaltery, and perhaps a tambourine.

a man who was not her husband, and she wrote Source: Wikimedia Commons songs about him. Unfortunately, scholars have Attribution: Unknown been unable to identify the Countess, although License: Public Domain competing theories thrive.

“I Must Sing”

The Countess of Dia’s “I Must Sing” is the only

song by a trobairitz (the female counterpart to

a troubadour) to survive with music. However,

it is clear that trobairitz thrived in the courts of

Aquitaine, where men and women enjoyed relative

equality. Although trobairitz were highly regarded Image 8.15: This is the for their poetic skill, they were discouraged from Vida of the Countess of Dia, performing their songs in public—an activity accompanied by her image.

considered unseemly for a woman. Instead, male Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Unknown

performers would learn and share their music. License: Public Domain

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Trobaritz also had to be a bit more circumspect regarding their declarations of courtly love. While troubadours could be fairly explicit, trobairitz sang in more general terms about the suffering that unrequited love caused them to endure.

“I Must Sing” follows the standard form for a canso. It is in five complete stanzas, the first of which clearly states the lover’s complaint. A partial sixth stanza bids the listener farewell via an imagined messenger and offers a closing moral (“many people suffer for having too much pride”). In the intervening stanzas, the speaker reminds her errant lover of her many fine qualities and washes her hands of any blame for the separation:

I must sing of what I do not want,
I am so angry with the one whom I love,
Because I love him more than anything:
Mercy nor courtesy moves him,
Neither does my beauty, nor my worthiness,
nor my good sense,
For I am deceived and betrayed
As much as I should be, if I were ugly.
I take comfort because I never did anything wrong,
Friend, towards you in anything,
Rather I love you more than Seguin did Valensa,
And I am greatly pleased that I conquered you in love,
My friend, because you are the most worthy;
You are arrogant to me in words and appearance,
And yet you are so friendly towards everyone else.
I wonder at how you have become so proud,
Friend, towards me, and I have reason to lament;
It is not right that another love take you away from me
No matter what is said or granted to you.
And remember how it was at the beginning
Of our love! May Lord God never wish
That it was my fault for our separation.
The great prowess that dwells in you
And your noble worth retain me,
For I do not know of any woman, far or near,
Who, if she wants to love, would not incline to you;
But you, friend, have such understanding
That you can tell the best,
And I remind you of our sharing.

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Listening at home and at court
My worth and my nobility should help me,
My beauty and my fine heart;
Therefore, I send this song down to you
So that it would be my messenger.
I want to know, my fair and noble friend,
Why you are so cruel and savage to me;
I don’t know if it is arrogance or ill will.
But I especially want you, messenger, to tell him
That many people suffer for having too much pride.

Translated by Craig E. Bertolet. Used with permission.

As was always the case among troubadours, the Countess of Dia set her poem as a strophic song, meaning that each stanza is sung to the same melody. Although this means that there can be no direct correlation between text and music (since the music repeats), her melody is nonetheless expressive. She uses a standard troubadour form known as bar
form, which follows an A A B pattern. The A section starts in the medium range and then descends—perhaps emblematic of the singer’s sorrow. The B section ascends to the song’s highest note by means of a series of leaps, creating a climactic moment before returning to the low range. The song is in the Dorian mode, which is very similar to the minor mode; only a single pitch in “I Must Sing” does not come from the minor scale.

In order to demonstrate the variety that characterizes modern performances of troubadour songs, we will consider two recordings of “I Must Sing.” The first is very simple.6 The female singer begins without accompaniment, but she is joined by a harp in the second A phrase of the first verse. The harp continues to play for the remainder of the performance. It provides simple harmonies, alternating between two chords derived from the pitches on which the phrases of the melody end. The singer chooses her rhythms based on the meaning of the text and sound of the words, while the harp follows her phrasing. This rendition could easily be performed by a single musician accompanying her own singing—just as we know these songs were often performed in the troubadour era.

“I Must Sing”

6.

Composer: Countess of Dia


The second recording is more complex.7 First, we hear fragments of the melody played on a variety of stringed instruments, including lute, harp, and bass viol. When the singer enters, she interprets the melody with rhythmic freedom while the instruments add flourishes. In between verses, instrumental interludes feature a percussive pulse and the sounds of the ney flute and kanun zither, which perform a metered version of Dia’s melody. Both the ney and the kanun—along with several other instruments heard on this recording—will be discussed in the next section, which addresses court music of the Ottoman Empire. The music director who created this recording, Jordi Savall, is renowned for his recreations of medieval European song using the instruments and performance techniques associated with Middle Eastern music of the same era. It is likely that the two musical traditions had many common elements in the 12th century. While troubadour practices were eradicated, however, those of Middle Eastern courts have persisted into the present.

“I Must Sing”

7.

Composer: Countess of Dia

Performance: Montserrat Figueras with Hespèrion XXI, conducted by Jordi Savall (2010)
TANBURI CEMIL BEY, “SAMÂI SHAD ARABAN”

Where there are powerful rulers, there is music. We might select examples of court music from any of the great empires of history, for all have used music to advertise power, signify elite status, invest ceremonies with dignity, ornament daily life, and entertain guests. Many relevant instances are discussed elsewhere in this book: Claudio Monteverdi’s Orpheus (Chapter 4), for example, was designed for the Gonzaga court at Mantua, while the jali of West Africa (Chapter 5) were principally occupied with serving the Mandinkan aristocracy.

Here, however, in keeping with the focus of this chapter on unstaged chamber music intended for small spaces and private audiences, we will consider a tradition that developed in the courts of the Ottoman Empire. This example will also help us to understand how troubadour songs (discussed in the previous section) are interpreted by performers today, for they often incorporate the instruments, textures, and ornamentation of Middle Eastern court music. Finally, this example will provide a point of reference for evaluating Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky’s exoticized “Arabian” music in The Nutcracker (Chapter 4).

Music in the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire was founded in 1299 by the Turkish tribal leader Osman I. In 1453, the Ottomans captured the Christian city of Constantinople, which had until that point been the capital of the Byzantine Empire. Renamed Istanbul, that city became the capital of the Ottoman Empire: a centralized seat from which the sultan (Arabic for “supreme authority”) could expand his reach. The Ottoman Empire achieved the height of its power in the late 16th century, at which point it extended from Central Europe across North Africa and well into the Middle East.
tradition, in particular, can be identified as the precursor to Western marching bands, while composers like Mozart and Beethoven frequently referenced Ottoman instruments and styles in their music.

The Ottoman Empire certainly cultivated rich musical traditions. Here, we will examine the most elite of those traditions: **makam music**, which was performed for (and sometimes even created by) the sultan and members of his court. As in

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most great empires, the Ottoman rulers sought to manage cultural diversity, not eradicate it. As the Empire absorbed citizens from three continents, it simultaneously assimilated their cultural traditions. Ottoman musical practices, therefore, reflected Byzantine, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, and even European influence.

The term **makam** is itself derived from the Arabic *maqam*, which describes a system of musical **modes**. In European music, modes are scales, the most prominent of which in use today are major and minor. A **makam**, however, is more than just a scale. To begin with, there are many more **makams** than there are European modes—between 60 and 120. They are difficult to count because **makams** are always coming and going. An individual **makam** might fall out of use, or a new one might be developed.

The number of **makams** is so high because each contains a great deal of information about how music associated with it is expected to sound. A **makam** determines not only pitches but characteristic melodic motifs, ascending and descending melodic patterns, phrase endings, and the specific tuning of individual notes. This last element can be particularly striking, for the Turkish system divides each whole step into nine possible microtones (the European system divides it into only two). A note that is meant to be just slightly flat or slightly sharp, therefore, will sound out of tune to a Western ear, even though the performer has in fact placed it with perfect precision.

**Makam** music is performed using instruments that can be found across the **Image 8.17: This engraving captures Ottoman musicians of the mid-18th century.**

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Mediterranean region. These include the **oud** (a type of lute), the **kanun** (a plucked zither), the **ney** (an end-blown reed flute), and the **rebab** and **kemençe** (both bowed fiddles), although these
last instruments have been almost completely
replaced by the violin. Percussion instruments are
also important, for they mark the rhythmic cycle,
known as the usul. These instruments include the Image 8.18: The fretless oud
pair of pot-shaped kudüm drums, the bendir (a is related to the European lute circular frame drum), and the def, which is related and guitar.

Source: Wikimedia Commons
to the tambourine. In the performance of makam Attribution: User “Tdrivas”
music, only one of each instrument is typically License: CC BY-SA 4.0
present, and their unique timbres are easy to
discern in the texture.

Ottoman musicians organized their court
performances into suites of individual pieces. Such
a suite is known as a fasıl, and it might contain six or eight pieces, all in the same makam, totalling
about thirty minutes of music. A traditional
fasıl is full of variety: It contains different types of songs and several vocal and instrumental
improvisations. Although most of the pieces
feature a singer, the fasıl starts and ends with
lengthy selections for the instrumental ensemble.

The introductory peşrev is slow and stately, while the concluding saz semâisi contains passages in Image 8.19: The
kanun is a lively dance tempo.

plucked using metal finger

picks.

Samâi Shad Araban

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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We will consider a famous saz semâisi License: CC BY-SA 4.0

composed by Tanburi Cemil Bey (1843-1916).

Cemil Bey was famous for his virtuosity as a performer. Although he began his training on
the violin and kanun, he soon gained renown for
his skill on the tanbur—a long-necked lute that
developed in the Ottoman Empire—and kemençe.

Cemil Bey lived late enough that he was able to
leave behind recordings, made on 78 rpm discs.

These attest to his ability and continue to influence Image 8.20: The Turkish

kemençe is a small, pear-shaped fiddle. Like the rebab, that he developed and popularized.

it is held vertically.

In addition to revolutionizing performance techniques, Cemil Bey left behind a large number of compositions, many of which are among the most frequently performed in the

Turkish classical tradition. Although Cemil Bey did not personally serve in the court

of the sultan (the Ottoman Empire, after all, was well into its decline during his

lifetime), he worked in the forms that had been developed for court entertainment.

His “Samâi Shad Araban,” therefore, has the typical characteristics of a saz semâisi,

and by examining it we will be able to understand how this type of composition has

functioned for hundreds of years. We will also have an opportunity to hear the
typical Turkish instruments and consider how they are used in performance.

“Samâi Shad Araban”

Performance: Omar Sarmini and Hames Bitar with

the Ensemble Al-Ruzafa (2007)

Time

Form

What to listen for

The violin, ney, oud, and kanun all play unique

0'00"

A (Hane 1)

versions of the same melody

0'36"

Teslim

1'12"

B (Hane 2)

1'54"

Teslim

Near the beginning of this passage we hear a

2'30"

C (Hane 3)

“half-flat” pitch that some might perceive as out-of-tune

3'18"

Teslim

In this passage, the meter changes to triple and
To begin with, we must consider the nature of composition in the Ottoman tradition. Like medieval Europeans (consider, for example, the Countess of Dia), Ottoman performers learned, composed, and taught music without the aid of notation. Although Ottoman music was notated as early as the 17th century, the purpose of notation has always been primarily to record compositions for future reference, and it is seldom used for teaching or performance. Even today, Turkish classical musicians rely on aural and oral processes—that is, listening, imitating, and correcting—to acquire techniques and repertoire.

A typical characteristic of music in oral traditions is variation. When a performer learns a tune by ear, they are likely to introduce minor alterations by accident. However, in the Ottoman tradition, variation is not only accepted but encouraged. The composer expects individual performers to interpret the melody in a way that reflects the characteristics of their instrument, their training, and their own personal preference. As a result, while a performance of “Samâi Shad Araban” is always recognizable, no two musicians will play exactly the same notes.

Another type of variation emerges due to the norms of Ottoman performance practice. A piece of music such as Clara Schumann’s Piano Trio in G minor, discussed at the end of this chapter, is intended for a specific assortment of instruments: one piano, one violin, and one cello. Schumann also used notation to indicate exactly what each performer is supposed to do. Compositions in the Ottoman tradition, however, can be realized using any permutation of the classical ensemble. “Samâi Shad Araban,” therefore, can be performed as a solo or by an ensemble. A typical
performance will feature about six performers, with only one playing each of the instruments described above. However, a rendition by a smaller or larger ensemble is perfectly viable.

This flexibility is a characteristic of the heterophonic texture of Ottoman classical music, in which all pitched instruments play essentially the same melody.

“Samâi Shad Araban,” for example, can be transcribed (written down using staff notation) as a single melodic line. However, no two instruments play exactly the same pitches. Sometimes the variations have to do with the technical limitations of the instrument: a rebab player, for example, can slide between pitches, while a kanun player cannot. Other variations have to do with training or personal preference, as described above. The result is a complex musical texture in which the listener can easily perceive a core melody, even as the performers constantly alter that melody with diverse shadings and ornaments.

We will hear all of this in our recording of “Samâi Shad Araban.” First, however, we must consider the typical characteristics of a saz semâisi. In terms of form, a saz semâisi always features a repeated melodic refrain (known as a teslim) that follows upon a series of disparate melodic passages (each of which is termed a hane, or “house”). The form of “Samâi Shad Araban” can be summarized as A T B T C T D T, in which T (for teslim) is the refrain.

While each of the hane are melodically distinct, the D hane is markedly different from the others. To begin with, it contains a great deal of internal repetition—

each of the first three melodic phrases is repeated at least once. Most striking, however, is that it is in a different meter. While the predominant usul (meter) of a saz semâisi consists of a cycle of ten beats in a moderate tempo, the usul of the D hane has six beats and is performed at a significantly faster tempo. As a result, the penultimate passage of “Samâi Shad Araban” is more energetic and exciting than those that preceded it. This makes the saz semâisi a good piece of music with which to conclude a suite, for it always comes to a rollicking finish.

The melodic instruments in our recording are the violin, ney, oud, and kanun.

Because the timbre of each is so different, it is fairly easy to pick the various instruments out of the texture. In addition, each adds unique, improvised ornaments. The kanun player periodically contributes melodic flourishes and rhythmic elements that are not played by the other instruments, while the violin player emphasizes their ability to slide between pitches. The oud is foregrounded near the end of the performance, when it renders a solo version of the teslim before we hear it one last time from the entire ensemble.

The percussion accompaniment to “Samâi Shad Araban”—and, indeed, to any saz semâisi—is not specified by the composer. Instead, the performers use their knowledge of the usul and the melody to improvise an accompaniment that demarcates the rhythmic cycle while also reflecting the character of the melodic phrases. In this recording, we can clearly hear the jingling sounds of the def above the regular beats of the various drums.


Updated: Tue, 30 Nov 2021 01:18:28 GMT
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Finally, a word about mode. The *makam* of “Samâi Shad Araban” is indicated by its title, which tells us the type of piece that this is—a *saz semâisi*—and its mode, Shad Araban. (This is similar to the European convention of naming a piece of music something like Symphony in E Minor.) The pitches of Shad Araban are not particularly similar to those of the major or minor scale. This *makam* features two intervals of an augmented second: a large interval that is not present in any European scale. It also contains a large number of half steps, the smallest European interval. As a result, melodies in Shad Araban move by intervals that seem alternately cramped and spacious.

8.

This video demonstrates the pitches of Shad Araban.

**JOHN DOWLAND, “FLOW, MY TEARS”**

John Dowland (1563-1626) was indisputably one of the finest lute players of his day. Although he was best known for his skill as a performer, he also wrote a great deal of music, both for his own instrument and for *viol consort* (an ensemble of string instruments that predated the modern violin family). He gained a reputation for writing exceptionally sad songs that celebrated melancholy.

**Dowland’s Career**

Despite his widely-recognized skill, Dowland was repeatedly frustrated in his attempts to secure a position at the court of Queen Elizabeth I. This might have been due to the fact that he had converted to Catholicism, although Elizabeth, who was tolerant of religious diversity, employed other Catholic musicians. Whatever the case, he spent decades working on the European continent while continuing to publish his music in England. In 1594 he accepted a position at the court of the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg. Then, in 1598, he became lutenist at the court of Christian IV, King of Denmark, where he was held in high esteem and paid an astronomical sum.

Dowland returned to England in 1606, but it was not until 1612 that he was finally able to secure a position at the English court. By this time, he not only had an international reputation but had published a wealth of compositions. Writing music served Dowland’s interests in several ways. By producing new music for his own instrument, the lute, Dowland increased his value as a court employee. By publishing music for the lute and other instruments, he created an additional source of income and strengthened his reputation. Finally, by dedicating his publications to wealthy aristocrats, he won their professional and financial support.

**“Flow, My Tears”**

The lute song “Flow, My Tears” provides an excellent example of Dowland’s professional savvy. The composition began life as a *pavan* for solo lute entitled “Lachrimae ” (a Latin term meaning “tears”). A pavan is a type of slow, stately court dance that was popular in Europe at...
the time. Although Dowland’s music was not intended to accompany dancing, he was often influenced by the characters and styles of dance music. When “Lachrimae” became Dowland’s most popular work, he took the opportunity to capitalize on his success by transforming it into a song.

“Flow, My Tears”

Composer: John Dowland

9.

Performance: Elin Manahan Thomas and David Miller

(2007)

Dowland’s lute song “Flow, My Tears” was adapted from

10.

this earlier composition for solo lute, entitled “Lachrimae.”

“Flow, My Tears” was first published in Dowland’s 1600 collection The Second Booke of Songs or Ayres (an “ayre” is a solo song with lute accompaniment).

Dowland had previously developed a novel approach to typesetting his lute songs, many of which had more than one vocal part. Before Dowland, it was common practice to publish each vocal and instrumental part to a piece of music in a separate book, known as a “part book.” Each performer therefore needed to possess the Page | 285

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correct book, and could only see their own part. Dowland began printing all of the parts in a single book, which could be laid out on a table before the performers. In this way they could all read from the same page.

This tells us something important about how Dowland’s music was used: He was writing for groups of friends or family members, who would perform his music gathered around a table in the home. Although today you are more likely to hear Dowland performed by professionals in a concert setting, that was never what he had in mind. He was producing music for the domestic entertainment market—

music to fill the long evening hours when there was little else to do.

The layout of “Flow, My Tears” can help us to visualize a home performance, even if one cannot read the music. The lute and primary vocal part are paired together, since they might be performed by the same person. The lute part, as was typical of the era, is printed using tablature instead of staff notation. Lute tablature, much like guitar tab today, indicates where the fingers of the left hand go on each string of the instrument. It also includes rhythms. The extra vocal part is printed on the second page, and it faces in a different direction. This was for convenience: The additional singer would sit to the right of the lutenist, along the adjoining edge of the table.
Image 8.21: As you can see, the additional vocal part in the original edition of Dowland’s ayre faces a different direction than the lute and principal vocal parts.

This facilitates an in-home performance for which the optional extra singer sits on the adjacent edge of a table.

Source: First Edition Scanned Image

Attribution: John Dowland

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“Flow, My Tears” is a prime example of Dowland’s work in terms of affect, form, and style. To begin with, the text is characteristically gloomy: Flow, my tears, fall from your springs!

Exiled for ever, let me mourn;

Where night's black bird her sad infamy sings,

There let me live forlorn.

Down vain lights, shine you no more!

No nights are dark enough for those

That in despair their lost fortunes deplore.

Light doth but shame disclose.

Never may my woes be relieved,

Since pity is fled;

And tears and sighs and groans my weary days

Of all joys have deprived.

From the highest spire of contentment

My fortune is thrown;

And fear and grief and pain for my deserts

Are my hopes, since hope is gone.
Hark! you shadows that in darkness dwell,
Learn to condemn light
Happy, happy they that in hell
Feel not the world’s despite.

Dowland—who wrote his own words—expresses the most profound hopelessness.

The final stanza, in which he argues that even those who are in hell should be glad they are not in his position, takes this sentiment to the extreme. We do not, however, need to take this text too seriously. Melancholy was in fashion at the time. When people sang “Flow, My Tears,” they indulged in emotional role-playing that probably had a cathartic effect.

Dowland’s ayre is in three parts. The first two stanzas are sung to the same music, while the next two are sung to a new tune. The final stanza has its own music, which provides a satisfying conclusion. The resulting form, therefore, is A A B B C. Although the song can be performed by a solo singer with lute accompaniment, Dowland also provided an additional vocal part in the bass range, which would allow another performer to join in. The vocal and instrumental parts are highly independent: Each is equally difficult and has its own rhythms and melodies.

In this rendition, we hear Dowland’s song with both the primary soprano melody and the option bass melody.

The music, which is in the minor mode, is highly expressive. The opening melody descends, providing a musical portrayal of falling tears. In the B section, Dowland sets his list of sorrowful expressions (in the third stanza: “and tears, and sighs, and groans”) to a melody that ascends by leap, accompanied by echoes from the lute.

This technique communicates the passion and suffering behind these complaints.

The highest pitch of the melody arrives in the C section with the word “happy”—but Dowland’s descending melody indicates that he does not feel happiness himself.

In 1604, Dowland capitalized on the success of “Lachrimae” and “Flow, My Tears” yet again by publishing a further version of the work for viol consort. It appeared in a volume dedicated to Anne, the new Queen of England—an effort by Dowland to secure that elusive court position. This time, the composition became the first of a set of pavans entitled Lachrimae, or Seven Tears, all of which begin with the descending “tears” motif that we heard in the lute solo and song.
The first pavan in the collection, “Lachrimae Antiquae” (“Ancient Tears”), is essentially identical to “Lachrimae” and “Flow, My Tears.” The additional six pavans explore different musical possibilities that are introduced by the “tears” motif. All are profoundly mournful in character. As if feeling the need to cement his reputation for melancholy, Dowland followed the set of Lachrimae pavans with a composition entitled Semper Dowland semper Dolens: Latin for “Always Dowland always mournful.”

“Ancient Tears”

Composer: John Dowland

Performance: Hespèrion XXI, conducted by Jordi Savall (1987)

BARBARA STROZZI, MY TEARS

Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677), like Dowland, was a gifted performer who wrote music for her own use. Also like Dowland, she favored sorrowful laments that showcased her gifts, as a performer and composer, for extravagant emotional expression. Most of her vocal works concerned suffering caused by unrequited love. Strozzi’s unique social position, however, meant that her artistic motivations were quite unlike Dowland’s, while her geographic and temporal distance from him—Strozzi lived in Venice, and her career began shortly after Dowland’s death—meant that her style was significantly different.

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Strozzi’s Career

Strozzi was the adopted daughter of the renowned poet and cultural luminary Giulio Strozzi. Her mother was a servant in Giulio’s household. Although Strozzi’s birth certificate indicates that her father was unknown, it was almost certainly Giulio himself. This sort of arrangement was not unusual in 17th-century
Venice. Giulio himself was the illegitimate son of an illegitimate son, while Strozzi would in turn have four children out of wedlock. Whatever the case, Giulio took an active interest in his daughter’s career as a singer and composer, writing texts for her to sing and facilitating her private performances before Image 8.22: This portrait by Bernardo Strozzi is entitled the city’s artistic elite.

_Female Musician with Viola da Gamba_

In 1637, Giulio established a formal _Gamba, but is believed to be of academy_ dedicated to music over which _Barbara Strozzi_.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

his daughter presided. Academies were an important facet of intellectual life in Venice Attribution: Bernardo Strozzi License: Public Domain and other Italian-speaking cities of the era.

They were not formal schools but, rather, gatherings of educated citizens who came together for discussion and debate. Giulio’s named his association the _Accademia degli Unisoni_. This translates to “Academy of the Like-Minded,” but also incorporates a music-themed pun on the word “unisoni,” which can mean “unison” in the sense of multiple voices singing the same notes. At the academy meetings, Barbara Strozzi suggested topics for debate, judged the forensic skill of participants, awarded prizes, and performed as a singer (probably accompanying herself on the lute).

Although Strozzi embarked on a singing career just as opera was becoming big business in Venice, she never appeared on the opera stage. This is important.

Although opera offered roles for women, taking to the stage meant social exclusion.

A woman who performed in public was assumed to be a prostitute—and indeed, Strozzi herself faced such accusations as her fame grew. By confining her activities to the private sphere, she retained greater social capital. Her decision to perform only in domestic settings also influenced Strozzi’s work as a composer, which focused on the chamber genres of _aria_ (a strophic song) and _cantata_ (an extended semi-dramatic work for soloist with accompaniment).

While it was typical for 17th-century Italian singers to write their own music, Strozzi pursued the task with unusual resolve. In fact, she published more solo vocal music than any other Venetian composer of her era. In total, she completed and published an astonishing eight single-author volumes of vocal music. Most of this was secular music with...
Italian texts (some of which she might have written Page | 289

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Image 8.23: This view of Venice’s main plaza, named after the extravagant St. Mark’s Basilica, was painted in the 1730s.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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herself), although she also produced one collection of sacred works with Latin texts. Her volumes, which were published between 1644 and 1664, were highly regarded and widely consumed, and many of her most successful compositions were included in collections alongside the work of other great composers. While Strozzi performed before small groups of connoisseurs in a domestic setting, therefore, her music was also available for others to perform at home for their own entertainment, or for gatherings of family and friends.

My Tears

My Tears

Composer: Barbara Strozzi

Performance: Emanuela Galli with Ensemble

Galilei, conducted by Paul Beier (1998)

Time

Form

What to listen for

The melody starts high and descends via an

Refrain -

unusual, tortured scale in a representation of

0'00"

“My tears. . .”

falling tears; the singer embellishes the line with
a variety of ornaments

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Recitative -
The recitative passages are characterized

"Why do you
by frequent changes in tempo and mood;

0'39"

not let burst

there is no steady pulse; painful harmonies

forth. . . ."

communicate the speaker's suffering

Arioso -

"And you,

3'01"

The music settles into a triple meter

sorrowful

eyes. . . ."

3'30"

Refrain

Aria - Verse

1: "Alas, I

4'03"

The Aria is in quadruple meter
yearn for
Lidia...

Verse 2:

“Because

4’46”

The Aria music repeats with new text

I welcome
death...

Recitative -

5’31”

“But well I
realize...”

This interlude was not composed by Strozzi, but

Instrumental it is not inappropriate in a performance of her 5’55”

interlude
cantata, the accompaniment to which is largely

improvised

Again, the music settles into a triple meter;

6’45”

Arioso

the accompaniment centers on a four-note
descending pattern

The singer repeats the entire opening passage of

7’56”

Refrain
the cantata (Strozzi herself indicated only that

the refrain should be repeated)

*My Tears* (Italian: *Lagrime mie*) appeared in Strozzi’s seventh volume of music, which was published in 1659 and bore the title *The Pleasures of Euterpe* (in the mythology of ancient Greece, Euterpe was the Muse of Music). Pietro Dolfino’s text is a lament for a beloved—Lidia—who has been imprisoned by her disapproving father:

My tears, why do you hold back?

Why do you not let burst forth the fierce pain

that takes my breath and oppresses my heart?

Lidia, whom I so much adore,

Because she looked on me with a pitiable glance

is imprisoned by her strict father.

Between two walls

the beautiful innocent one is confined,

where the sun’s ray can’t reach her;

and what grieves me most,

and adds torment and pain to my agony,

is that my beloved
suffers on my account.

And you, sorrowful eyes, you don’t cry?

My tears, why do you hold back?

Alas, I yearn for Lidia,

my idol whom I so much adore;

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she’s captured in hard marble,

she for whom I sigh and yet do not die.

Because I welcome death,

now that I’m deprived of hope;

Ah, take away my life,

I pray to you, my bitter pain.

But well I realize that to torment me

even more

Fate denies me even death.

Since it’s true, oh God,

that vicious Destiny

thirsts only for my wailing,

My tears, why do you hold back?

Translation by Jennifer Gliere. Used with permission.

Like many secular cantata texts, this one features a refrain—"My tears, why do you hold back?"—that appears three times: once at the beginning, once in the middle, and once at the end. The melody to which the words "my tears" is sung descends from the top of the singer’s range, dripping down in a vivid impression of falling tears. It is full of tortuous intervals and sigh-like ornaments that communicate the singer’s distressed emotional state.
After the opening refrain, the singer carries on in the recitative style, allowing the rhythm and meaning of the text to determine her phrasing. Strozzi continues to employ text painting, such as with the drawn-out, descending chromatic line on the word “pain” (Italian: “dolore”) and the gasping pause in the middle of the word “breath” (Italian: “respiro”). Strozzi finally settles in to a metered rhythm with the passage on the text, “And you, sorrowful eyes, you don’t cry?” This type of music—more structured than recitative but less formal than an aria—is termed arioso.

Again, Strozzi employs text painting in the form of repeated, descending sighs.

This is followed by the refrain, which leads into the aria. This is the most formal part of the cantata and the only passage of music in which two stanzas of text are sung to the same melody. The text concerned begins with “Alas, I yearn for Lidia” and concludes with “I pray to you, my bitter pain.” The final passage of the text is set to music that continues to shift and bend in accordance to the singer’s baleful emotions. The last thing we hear is the refrain—evidence that the singer’s suffering has not lessened.

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FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN, STRING QUARTET, OP. 33,

NO. 2 “THE JOKE”

Over the course of the 18th century, the demand for domestic music continued to grow. Instrumental music, in particular, saw a rise in popularity as entertainment for the concert hall, the court, and the home. New genres of instrumental chamber music came into existence, the most important of which was the string quartet.

Chamber music differs from orchestral music in three important ways. First, it requires only a few players—usually between two and eight. Second, each of those players has their own part, while in an orchestra whole sections of string players are assigned the same part. Finally, chamber music does not require a conductor.

Chamber music, therefore, is suitable for small spaces and emphasizes communication between the individual performers.

A string quartet is a type of chamber ensemble composed of two violins, a viola, and a cello. (The term “string quartet” can refer either to a group of players Image 8.25: This 18th-century painting portrays Haydn himself (on the far right) playing viola in a string quartet. The players are intensely focused on the music making: Two of them look up while Haydn quickly turns a page. Others are listening, but their attitude is informal: Three women lean in from the right, while two additional admirers listen from beyond the door.

Source: Wikimedia Commons
or to a composition.) Although today professional string quartets give concerts and make recordings, the genre was at first oriented primarily toward amateurs, who purchased sheet music and played at home for their own entertainment.

Quartets also provided background music for dinners and social gatherings. The most important early composer of string quartets was Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), whose creative contributions to the genre set the standard for generations to follow.

Haydn’s Career

Haydn was born to working-class parents in a remote Austrian village. Neither his father (a wheelwright) nor his mother (a cook) had any musical training, but they recognized their son’s talent and arranged for him to live with a relative who could provide educational opportunities. Then, in 1739, the music director at St. Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna—Georg von Reutter—heard Haydn sing and offered him a position in the Cathedral choir. For the next nine years, Haydn lived with Reutter, during which time he studied and performed music.

When Haydn’s voice broke in 1749,
however, he was suddenly out of a job, and he

Haydn was painted by Thomas Hardy in 1791, when the composer was visiting London to put on a series of concerts.

spent several difficult years trying to scrape together a living as a freelance musician. In mid-18th century Vienna, there were few opportunities for a musical career outside of church or court employment. In 1757, Haydn finally obtained the latter when he became music director for Count Morzin. His fine work with the Count's private orchestra won him a similar position four years later with the Esterházy family, whom he served for the remainder of his life.

The position of music director for the Esterházy family was among the most desirable in the German-speaking world. (Although Haydn served informally as music director from 1761, he was not officially awarded the title until his predecessor passed away in 1766.) The Esterházy family was both wealthy and powerful, exercising great influence within the Habsburg Empire. In addition, Prince Nikolaus I, who headed the family from 1762 until 1790, was a great music lover and ardent support of Haydn. For this reason, Haydn was granted an unusual amount of creative freedom, and his work was met with appreciation. All the same, Haydn was a servant. As such, he was obliged to perform a variety of duties and occupied a low social rung.

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Haydn did not just compose music. He was responsible for all musical entertainment,
large and small, that took place in the
Esterházy household. This included the
weekly staging of an opera and two concerts,
special performances in honor of guests, and
the provision of chamber music for domestic
entertainment. Prince Nikolaus was a musician
himself: He played an unusual instrument
called the baryton, which resembled a bass
viol with extra strings that could be plucked.
Although the baryton was never popular
and soon disappeared altogether, the fact
that it was favored by the Prince meant that
Haydn had not only to compose music for
the instrument but to accompany the Prince
when he played. In total, he produced about
200 chamber works for baryton, most of
which are trios for baryton, cello, and viola
(Haydn’s instrument). The baryton part is
always prominent, but never too difficult—
as suited the Prince’s abilities and desires.

These pieces are seldom performed today, and
it is easy to look on them as a wasted effort. Image 8.27: This baryton is on They remind us, however, that Haydn often display at the Esterházy palace.

composed on command, and that his own The extra strings are not visible artistic inclinations were secondary to the
because they run down the back side of the instrument, behind
requirements of his employer.
the panel that runs alongside the fretboard.

As a servant in the Esterházy household, Haydn followed the Prince as he moved between the various Esterházy estates. Principal among these were the ancestral palace in Eisenstadt (now in Eastern Hungary) and a new summer palace, Eszterháza, built by Prince Nikolaus in 1766. Although both palaces were well-equipped for musical performances, they were far from the urban center of Vienna, and Haydn’s duties therefore meant that he was isolated from musical trends. As a result, he developed a unique approach to composition, innovating in terms of form and style. His fame slowly grew, and in 1779 he found himself in a position to renegotiate his contract with the Esterházys. Under the new terms, he was free to take outside commissions and to publish his music, which had previously been the property of his employers.

Principal among these were the ancestral palace in Eisenstadt (now in Eastern Hungary) and a new summer palace, Eszterháza, built by Prince Nikolaus in 1766. Although both palaces were well-equipped for musical performances, they were far from the urban center of Vienna, and Haydn’s duties therefore meant that he was isolated from musical trends. As a result, he developed a unique approach to composition, innovating in terms of form and style. His fame slowly grew, and in 1779 he found himself in a position to renegotiate his contract with the Esterházys. Under the new terms, he was free to take outside commissions and to publish his music, which had previously been the property of his employers.

Image 8.28: This view of the courtyard of Eszterháza Palace gives a sense of its enormous size.

String Quartet, Op. 33, No. 2 “The Joke”

Among the first of Haydn’s publications were a set of string quartets, labelled as his Opus 33 ("opus" is the Latin word for "work," and it is often used to indicate the order in which published compositions appear). The label indicates that this was Haydn’s thirty-third publication, but of course he had composed a great deal more music than that. Most of his works, however, were intended for the private use of his employer and were therefore never published. But when it came to the world of commerce, it made sense for Haydn to publish chamber works: There was a thriving market for sheet music intended for use in domestic entertainment.

Haydn’s Opus 33 string quartets were dedicated to the Grand Duke Paul of Russia, and they were first performed in the Viennese home of his wife. In the dedication, Haydn explained that these quartets were composed in a “new and special manner.” While this is exactly the sort of thing that a composer might say for the purpose of improving sales, it is true that Haydn’s Opus 33 quartets are different from those that came before. Early quartets were essentially violin solos with accompaniment; in many cases, a professional was hired to take the first violin part, while amateurs filled in the others. The first violin is still prominent in Opus 33, but all of the parts are important and interesting, and they pass motifs from one to another. The resulting texture resembles a civilized conversation between intellectual equals—a musical
representation of the rational discourse that was so valued during the Enlightenment era.

We will see all of this at work in the second quartet from Haydn’s Opus 33 collection, which bears the subtitle “The Joke.” This subtitle did not come from the composer himself, but rather from the Viennese publishing firm Artaria. Publishers Page | 297

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often gave nicknames to instrumental works in this period, which otherwise were designated only by number. A nickname drew attention to a composition and gave the consumer an idea about its characteristics. Nicknames still help listeners today, for they tell us what a piece of otherwise abstract instrumental music is “about.”

We should always, however, take them with a grain of salt.

Haydn’s Opus 33, No. 2 quartet was subtitled “The Joke” because of its fourth movement, which concludes with a bit of unmistakable musical comedy. The joke here is so obvious, in fact, that even listeners with no particular knowledge of music will get it. We should take a moment to marvel at the capacity of pure sound to be humorous. The quartet, of course, contains no words. It communicates purely through musical syntax, and the joke works by playing on our expectations regarding form, pulse, and phrasing.

Movement IV

The fourth movement is in rondo form, meaning that a refrain returns throughout. In Haydn’s time, this was a typical form for a final movement, and his listeners (and players) would have quickly recognized it. This would establish certain expectations—in particular, the expectation that the movement would end with a complete statement of the refrain.


13

Composer: Franz Joseph Haydn

Performance: Borodin Quartet (2010)

For the most part, the movement unfolds as anticipated. After a complete statement of the refrain (A), we hear a new passage (B), followed by the refrain (A), followed by another new passage (C), followed once more by the refrain (A). The refrain is lighthearted and dancelike, and the movement in general is fast-paced and jocular. At this point, however, something strange happens. There is a pause, followed by a halting passage in a slow tempo. Two loud entrances fade away into uneven rhythms. This strange interruption is followed once more by the refrain, but this time the two-bar sub-phrases are broken up by long pauses. The last thing we hear is a final statement of the opening two measures. At this point, however, the sequence of pauses has completely disrupted our ability to predict what is going to happen next, and a listener who is not looking at the music has no way of knowing that the piece is over. The comedy, then, comes from the weirdness of the final moments and the shock of realizing that the movement has in fact concluded.
In sum, our expectation regarding form is disappointed when we encounter the slow passage after the third A. Our expectation regarding pulse is disappointed by the frequent pauses near the end of the movement. And our expectation regarding phrasing is disappointed when the piece concludes one quarter of the way through the principal phrase of the refrain.

This last disappointment is particularly significant, for Enlightenment-era composers placed a high value on stable, symmetrical musical phrases. For composers such as Haydn, symmetry and balance—along with predictable harmonic progressions and clear textures—were signs of rational thinking. They also reflected the architecture of ancient Greece, which provided a model across the arts of the Classical era (1750-1815). We hear such phrases in the first movement of the quartet, which also contains humorous elements—although they are not quite so obvious to the average listener.

**Movement I**

String Quartet Op. 33 No. 2 “The Joke,”

Composer: Franz Joseph Haydn


**Time**

**Form**

**What to listen for**

**Exposition**

Primary

This theme, which is elegant and restrained, is

0'00"

**Theme**

in a balanced “a b a” form

0'28"

**Transition**
Secondary

This theme is scattered and unfocused; it

0'46"

Theme

culminates in an explosive violin solo

1'05"

Closing Theme

The opening motif returns in this theme

Repetition of

1'15"

the

Exposition

Development

Motifs in this passage are drawn from the a

2'29"

and b phrases of the Primary Theme

The first violin again bursts into an

3'25"

inexplicable frenzy, which is curtailed by a

rapid cadential progression

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The Primary Theme returns, but in a minor

3'31"
key

Recapitulation

Primary

3’41”

Theme

The transition unexpectedly interrupts the b

3’58”

Transition

phrase of the Primary Theme

Secondary

Again, this theme concludes with a wild violin

4’16”

Theme

solo

This time the Closing Theme is heard twice;

4’38”

Closing Theme

the second time, the familiar motif is turned

upside down

Repetition of

the

It was common in this era to repeat the entire

4’47”

Development

second half of a sonata-form movement
Recapitulation

The first movement of the Opus 33, No.2 quartet is in sonata form, which was described and discussed in Chapter 7. The Primary Theme is in ternary (aba) form, and each of the phrases is four measures in length. The B phrase contains call and response between the parts: The first violin plays a motif that is echoed by the second violin and viola. The first sign of disruption—and humor—comes near the end of the Exposition, when the first violin launches into an uncharacteristically virtuosic and excited passage that momentarily spoils the mood of elegance and restraint.

More humor comes in the Development. After a particularly serious passage that explores the motifs of the Primary Theme, a return of the virtuosic and excited passage leads to an abrupt and unsatisfying cadence. This is followed by what seems to be the return of the Primary Theme and, therefore, the Recapitulation within the sonata form—but the theme is in minor, not major. As if realizing its mistake, the theme peters out and relaunches in the correct key, thereby inaugurating the Recapitulation.

These minor details would only be appreciated by those steeped in the musical traditions of the era. That, however, is exactly the kind of person for whom Haydn was writing. His consumers were the amateurs who played this music for their own amusement (and who therefore were intimately familiar with its conventions) and the aristocrats who enjoyed the chamber music that was performed in their homes on command. Today, aristocrats have been replaced by avid concertgoers, but amateurs still enjoy playing string quartets for no audience but themselves. The existence of organizations like the Associated Chamber Music Players, which serves to connect amateur chamber musicians and facilitate reading sessions and workshops, attests to the continued popularity of chamber music as domestic entertainment.

CLARA SCHUMANN, PIANO TRIO IN G MINOR

Clara Schumann (1819-1896) was the leading piano virtuoso of her day. Her legacy as a solo performer still impacts pianists, who learn selections from a repertoire that she established and give recitals according to her standards (Schumann was the first pianist to regularly perform from memory). Schumann also profoundly influenced the development of
of piano technique through her work as a teacher. As a composer, Schumann primarily created music for her own use, including a piano concerto, solo piano works, chamber music, and songs with imaginative piano accompaniments. Although her compositions were well received, Schumann always harbored misgivings about her abilities in that arena. Her self-doubt reflected a societal bias against female composers that was prevalent in the 19th century.

Schumann was a young woman.

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Schumann’s Career

Schumann (born Clara Weick) was the daughter of renowned piano pedagogue Friederich Weick. From the moment of her birth, Weick planned to mold Schumann into a brilliant piano virtuoso. He provided her with daily instruction in all facets of music and required diligent practice. She was soon eliciting praise with her public performances, and was touring Europe to give concerts as a teenager.

At the age of nine, her performance in the home of one of Weick’s friends inspired a listener—Robert Schumann—to abandon the study of law and enroll as a student of Weick. Robert, who was eighteen, moved into the Weick household and set about the task of becoming a piano virtuoso himself. He never succeeded, but he and Clara developed a close relationship. When she turned eighteen, Robert proposed and Clara accepted. Weick, however, was furious, and refused to permit the union. The couple took their case to court and were finally able to wed in 1840.

Schumann’s marriage was happy, but also difficult. Over the course of the next fourteen years, she became pregnant ten times and bore eight children. She also supported the household financially by performing and teaching. Robert made a name for himself as a music critic and composer, but he suffered from an unidentified mental illness that produced bouts of depression, exaltation, and delusion. He attempted suicide in 1854 by leaping from a bridge into the
Rhine river. He survived but insisted on being committed to an asylum, where he died two years later.

Throughout this period, Schumann continued to manage the household and support her husband. She composed little, although not because Robert discouraged her. Indeed, he thought she was a particularly gifted composer and lamented the fact that she was unable to commit more time and effort to the task.

Schumann herself expressed doubts founded on her sex. In 1839, she famously wrote in her diary, “I once believed that I possessed creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not desire to compose—there has never yet been one able to do it. Should I expect to be the one?” Of course, there had been many successful female composers before Schumann, as we have seen in this chapter. She just didn’t know about them, for they were ignored by the historians and audiences of the era.

After Robert’s death, Schumann took responsibility for cementing his legacy as a composer, and it is due to her that Robert’s music is still heard today. She toured extensively, often in partnership with the leading young performers of the day, and took a teaching position at the Hoch Conservatory.

Schumann also mentored and supported the young composer Johannes Brahms, who would go on to become an influential figure himself. In addition to all of this, she raised two sets of grandchildren following the deaths Image 8.30: Here we see of a daughter and son in the 1870s. Schumann Schumann in 1857, after her continued to perform until 1891, despite husband’s death.

increasing trouble with her arm, and taught Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Franz Hanfstaengl up until her death at the age of 76.

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Piano Trio in G minor
Schumann composed her piano trio during a particularly difficult period in her life. In 1846, the Schumanns were living in Dresden. They had left Leipzig due to concerns about Robert’s physical and mental health, which was increasingly poor. Because Schumann was forced to accept fewer performance engagements while caring for Robert, she focused more of her creative energy on composition.

Nevertheless, the task was not simple: Schumann gave birth to children in 1845 and 1846, suffered a further miscarriage, and lived in cramped quarters that contributed to conflict between her and her husband’s creative endeavors. Despite challenges, Schumann’s piano trio has been considered by many commentators to be her finest work, and it subsequently influenced Robert’s first piano trio, which he composed in 1847.

Schumann performed both piano trios in public recitals throughout the remainder of her career, and her trio frequently appeared on programs given by other artists as well. However, it would have been heard most often in middle- and upper-class homes. The market for piano music, including both solo and chamber compositions, was largely driven by young women, who were expected to master the instrument as part of a respectable upbringing. A wife who could play the piano well was a considerable asset, for she could entertain family and friends within the domestic sphere. Chamber music also provided an opportunity for young couples to court. While unmarried couples were often kept under the watchful eye of a chaperone, playing music together allowed them to sit in close proximity.

In this context, we can witness Schumann’s piano trio as a testament to her personal suffering, a reflection of her musical training and interests, and an example of domestic music. Her piano trio follows the standards of the day, and each of the four movements contains the expected characteristics. At the same time, she experiments with novel stylistic approaches and expresses herself with compelling sincerity.

**Movement III**
We will examine the third movement, which is the slowest in tempo. This movement is in **ternary form** (A B A), allowing Schumann to explore contrasting emotions. The movement begins with a gracious, major-mode theme in the piano. A brief turn to minor suggests a hint of sorrow. After the theme has been introduced, it is repeated by the violin, with piano accompaniment. The cello enters with new material, further heightening the intensity of emotional expression with dynamic swells and an ascending **sequence** (a motif that is repeated at different pitch levels). The A section concludes with all three instruments cadencing together.

**Piano Trio in G minor, Movement III**

14.

**Composer:** Clara Schumann

**Performance:** Storioni Trio, 2014

This cadence, however, is immediately destabilized by a new, faster tempo and turn to the minor mode. The B section exhibits anxiety and unrest. It features uneven, halting rhythms, accents, and frequent contrasts in dynamic level, texture, and mood.

When the A material returns, it is in the cello, with an accompaniment provided by the piano and **pizzicato** violin (a technique whereby the player plucks the strings instead of bowing them). After the violin and cello repeat their joint material from before, a **coda** containing new melodic material brings the movement to a peaceful conclusion.

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Unit 4

MUSIC FOR POLITICAL EXPRESSION

National Identity

Esther M. Morgan-Ellis and Louis Hajosy

INTRODUCTION

In a sense, all music is political. No form of musical expression is detached from issues of class, race, nationality, and identity. If we argue that a Mozart string quartet is free from all political concerns, we ignore the fact that Mozart lived and worked in Vienna, the powerful, German-speaking seat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. We ignore the fact that 18th-century string quartets embodied Enlightenment-era political values regarding equality and rational discourse. And we ignore the fact that Mozart’s music is used today to represent elite cultural values.

In this chapter and the next, however, we will be exploring forms of musical expression that are explicitly political. We will examine a variety of musical works that were created to express or challenge political values. We will also encounter musical works that were not intended by their creators to contribute to political discourse, but that were coopted and repurposed by political actors.

In this chapter we will be considering the power of music to define and identify nations. The idea that music can express something important about a community has a long history. The ancient Greeks, for example, believed that the unique musical styles of each regional tribe represented the characteristics of that tribe. Moreover, they believed music to be so powerful that anyone who heard music from a particular tribe would in turn exhibit the characteristics of its members. Of course, for us to believe that music can express something about a group of people, we must first agree that all members of the group share something fundamental in Image 9.1: This image shows ancient Greeks.


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it invites the exclusion of any member Source: Wikimedia Commons Attribution: Albert Racinet

who does not conform. Any claim License: Public Domain

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NATIONAL IDENTITY

that a piece or style of music represents a nation should be met with the question, “What members of the nation does this music fail to represent?”

NATIONAL ANTHEMS

The most explicitly political genre of music is the national anthem. Almost every country has one today, but national anthems have actually not been in use for very long. The first official national anthem was “God Save the Queen,” adopted by Great Britain in 1745. European countries began adopting anthems in the mid-19th century. This is the same period during which many modern European countries first came into existence, including Germany and Italy. This was also a period of growing nationalism. Artists, philosophers, and politicians generally agreed that people who shared an ethnic and linguistic heritage were somehow bound together and should belong to the same nation. Populations that shared such a heritage—the Hungarians, for example, who were governed by German speakers, or the Poles, who were governed by Russians—began to campaign for independence. Members of all ethnic groups generally agreed that art could express the characteristics of their people, whether or not they had secured autonomous rule. An official anthem became a means of documenting national values and expressing national pride.

National anthems can play an important role in shaping an individual’s relationship with the nation. To begin with, anthems are often sung in unison by large groups of people. Recent research has revealed that singing in a community increases levels of oxytocin, a hormone that is closely associated with interpersonal bonding. Singing together, therefore, actively promotes feelings of closeness and community solidarity. Group singing also causes participants’ breathing and heart rates to synchronize. Finally, studies have revealed that singing with other people promotes altruism, raises trust levels, and improves cooperation. It even raises pain thresholds. When groups of people sing the national anthem, therefore, they are not inspired only by the words or music. The experience of singing together itself reinforces national identity.

National anthems can also play a more abstract role in binding a nation together.

The ritual of singing or hearing the anthem at sporting events and ceremonies helps us to feel connected with the nation and with one another. Whenever we sing or hear the anthem, we can imagine millions of our fellow citizens doing the same.

We will never meet or even see the vast majority of these people, but the national anthem unites us, for it is the one song that everyone in the nation knows. That fact gives it great symbolic power.

Of course, the specific words and tunes of anthems are also of significance. It is difficult, however, to make
generalizations about anthem texts and melodies, for there is a great deal of variety. To understand how the character and history of an anthem can reflect a nation’s identity, we will look at some examples.

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United States of America: “The Star-Spangled Banner”

As is the case with almost every national anthem, the words and the tune to “The Star-Spangled Banner” were created by different people at different times. The tune is several decades older than the text, but our story will begin with the famous poem by Francis Scott Key (1779–1843). During the War of 1812, Key travelled with a delegation to the British flagship HMS Tonnant to negotiate a prisoner exchange. Although Key and his compatriots were successful in their mission, they were held captive after overhearing British officers plan an attack on the city of Baltimore. Key subsequently witnessed the nighttime battle from aboard a British ship. Famously, he knew that the American forces had emerged victorious when he saw their flag flying over Fort McHenry in the morning light on September 14, 1814. Key began his poem onboard the ship and finished it shortly after his release from captivity. The text of its earliest surviving draft appears below, transcribed from his handwritten manuscript.

“The Star-Spangled Banner”

Composer: John Stafford Smith

1.

Lyricist: Francis Scott Key

Performance: Whitney Houston with The Florida Orchestra, conducted by Jahja Ling (1991)

O say can you see, by the dawn's early light,

What so proudly we hail’d at the twilight’s last gleaming, Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight O’er the ramparts we watch’d, were so gallantly streaming?

And the rocket’s red glare, the bomb[s] bursting in air,

Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there, O say does that star[-]spangled banner yet wave

O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,

Where the foe’s haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream,
‘Tis the star-spangled banner—O long may it wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!
And where is that band who so vauntingly swore,
That the havoc of war and the battle’s confusion
A home and a Country should leave us no more?

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Their blood has wash’d out their foul footstep’s pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.
O thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
Between their lov’d home and the war’s desolation!
Blest with vict’ry and peace may the heav’n rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserv’d us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto—“In God is our trust,”
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.
Originally untitled, Key’s poem was first printed in Baltimore a few days later, probably on September 17, in a **broadside** entitled “Defence of Fort M’Henry.” Broadsides—single sheets of paper printed on one side only—were commonplace in larger cities during the 18th and 19th centuries. Their texts often dealt with topics of the day, and they frequently carried news of a recent scandal, accident, crime, or execution. Such texts could be written, typeset, printed, and distributed very quickly, so broadsides were an effective means of spreading information. More specifically, “Defence of Fort M’Henry” was printed as a **broadside ballad**, so in addition to providing a ballad text (Key’s poem, in this manuscript of Key’s poem can be viewed at the Maryland Historical instance), it named the popular tune to which **Society**.

the text was to be sung. Because buyers already knew the currently popular tunes, they could

**Attribution**: Francis Scott Key
immediately sing the new lyrics. (This type of songwriting differs greatly from the approach common today, in which a single person typically creates both the lyrics and the melody—or at least works with a songwriting partner who provides the missing half. Reusing another composer’s melody would not only seem to lack creativity but would probably result in a lawsuit.)

It is not clear that Key himself had any particular melody in mind when he wrote “Defence of Fort M’Henry,” or that he ever intended for it to be sung.

However, he had written song texts before. Indeed, various lines and images included in his September 1814 poem first appeared in his 1805 song “When the Page” and therefore fit the same tune. In the “Defence of Fort M’Henry” broadside, between an introduction describing the fort’s bombardment and the poem’s text, there appears the indication “Tune—Anacreon in Heaven.” Pairing the text with this melody produces a ballad—a narrative, strophic song.

A strophic song is one in which each stanza of text is sung to the same melody.

This tune, which we recognize today as the melody of “The Star-Spangled Banner,”
was composed by John Stafford Smith (1750–

Image 9.3: “The Anacreontic

Song” is clearly identified as a
drinking song by the text across lyrics by Ralph Tomlinson (1744–78), as “The top of this sheet music, which Anacreontic Song” around 1779. The song was reads “as sung at the Crown & Anchor Tavern in the Strand.”

also widely known as “To Anacreon in Heaven,” Source: Wikimedia Commons which are the opening words.

Tomlinson’s Attribution: Poem by Ralph Tomlinson, lyrics celebrate the ancient Greek poet music by John Stafford Smith License: Public Domain

Anacreon, who wrote about love, wine, and

amusements. Smith and Tomlinson created their song for the Anacreontic Society, a London gentlemen’s club founded around 1766. Its members were amateur musicians who desired to promote the arts and enjoy one another’s company.

Their meetings included a concert, dinner, and light entertainment, and they sang “To Anacreon in Heaven,” the society’s “constitutional song,” after finishing their meal (the point at which the fun really began). Although the Anacreontic Society occasionally aspired to higher things,

it was essentially a drinking club—and a rather lively one by all reports. The Society was shut down in 1792 after a visit by the Duchess of Devonshire provoked controversy over some lewd after-dinner songs. Though the Society had lasted for only a few decades, “To Anacreon in Heaven” was a hit. It quickly became popular with the creators of broadside ballads

Image 9.4: Meetings of the

and accumulated a large number of texts.

Anacreontic Society were famously raucous, as captured
in this 1801 caricature by James Gillray.

Therefore, the tune’s indication allowed any purchaser to immediately sing the ballad.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

“The Star-Spangled Banner,” as it came to be known, joined a pantheon of patriotic 19th-century songs. It quickly gained popularity, but was generally overshadowed by “Hail, Columbia” and “America” (“My Country, ’Tis of Thee”). “The Star-Spangled Banner” faced significant criticism as a national song. The leading objection was that it was simply too difficult to sing. Indeed, its melodic range (an octave and a fifth) is unusually wide for a national anthem, and all but professional singers struggle to reach the highest notes. The melody is also characterised by disjunct motion—that is to say, the notes of the melody do not simply move up and down the scale, but instead are separated by large intervals. Others complained that its text, too specifically tied to a unique historical event, failed to reflect national values more generally. Finally, it has been criticized for its militaristic subject matter. All the same, the song slowly gained traction, first becoming popular at Independence Day celebrations. In 1899, the US Navy adopted “The Star-Spangled Banner” for official use, and in 1916 President Woodrow Wilson ordered that it be played at all military events.

By the early 1900s, many variations of the song’s tune had arisen, so in 1917, President Wilson commissioned five prominent musicians—Walter Damrosch, Will Earheart,
Arnold J. Gantvoort, Oscar Sonneck, and John Philip Sousa—to agree on and publish a standardized version. Baseball fans began singing the song at games beginning in 1918. Finally, on March 3, 1931, President Herbert Hoover signed a bill designating “The Star-Spangled Banner” as the national anthem of the United States. The legislation had been championed by Rep. John Linthicum of Baltimore, who, understandably, had taken version of “The Star-Spangled Banner” an interest in promoting a local song. He was with a harmonization by Walter Damrosch, was published successful only following extensive debate in 1918.

over the song’s merits and deficiencies and the consideration of several alternatives, including Attribution: Francis Scott Key, John Stafford Smith, Walter Damrosch

“America the Beautiful.”

License: Public Domain

Performing “The Star-Spangled Banner”

There have been countless performances of “The Star-Spangled Banner:” most indifferent, but some exceptionally good or bad. It seems that a video of another “national anthem fail” circulates about once a year. But what is it that makes a “bad” performance? Sometimes, as in the case of Christina Aguilera’s performance at the 2011 Super Bowl, it’s because the singer forgets the words. Sometimes, as in the case of Victoria Zarlenga’s rendition at in international soccer match in 2012, it’s because the singer can’t stay on key. And sometimes, as in the case of Page | 312

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Fergie’s performance at a 2018 NBA All-Star game, it’s because the singer takes an interpretive approach that is considered inappropriate (Fergie’s “sexy,” jazz-inspired version of the anthem provoked laughter and backlash).

So what makes a “good” performance”? These vary as well, but they usually share certain characteristics. First, of
course, all of the notes and words are correct.

Second, the accompaniment—if present at all—is in appropriate style; many successful renditions use military band instruments, which are conducive to patriotic expression. Third, the singing style needs to come across as dignified.

This can mean several things. Singers with various backgrounds, including R & B, pop, rock, and opera, have all given successful performances. But the singer can’t sound like they’re showing off, and they can’t sound like they are trying to entertain.

These unspoken rules can turn performing the national anthem into a nerve-wracking experience, for it is difficult to predict how audiences will interpret what they hear.

One of the most highly-praised renditions of the anthem was given by Whitney Houston at the 1991 Super Bowl. In examining her performance, we will consider how she blended her personal style with patriotic signifiers to satisfy the crowd.

Houston’s performance starts off with the sounds of the snare drum—a clear reference to marching music that simultaneously signifies the US military and captures the mood of disciplined patriotism that would attend a military review.

The sound might also spark a sense of pride in the listener, or perhaps responsibility. It might make them stand up a little bit straighter. A

**Image 9.6: Here, Whitney**

**Houston performs for a London audience in 2010.**

When she does begin to sing, she is accompanied
by a full brass ensemble, which underpins her

lyrics with the power, volume, and brilliant
timbre of a military band.

This orchestration remains consistent through the first A section of the musical form, but with the second A section ("Whose broad stripes. . ") there is a significant change in the sound of the performance. Suddenly, Houston is backed by not a military band but soaring strings, whose shimmering timbre and connected articulation contrast with what we have just heard. And that's not all: The strings also play harmonies that are significantly more adventurous and less predictable than those provided by the brass ensemble. The second A, therefore, is more meditative and introspective. It replaces an expression of military might with one of emotional complexity.

Houston emphasizes this contrast with her vocal production. She sings the first A section in a fairly straightforward manner, using the full power of her voice. In Page | 313

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the second A section, however, she both reduces her volume and increases her use of ornamentation. Melodic ornaments, in this case, are any notes that are not included in the most basic version of "The Star-Spangled Banner"—the version you might sing at a sporting event or patriotic celebration. You can also hear how Houston changes her vocal production. Her sound becomes breathy and subdued—

the result, in some cases, of using head voice instead of chest voice.

The mood changes again when we arrive at the B section ("And the rockets. .

. "). The brass and percussion rejoin the strings, while Houston abandons her airy timbre and gives us the full power of her voice. The orchestra is primarily there to accompany the singer, but every once in a while a brass fanfare emerges from the texture. The climax of the anthem is accentuated by both the singer and the orchestra. On the word “free,” Houston adds a melodic ornament that takes her to the highest note of the performance—an interval of a fourth above the top note in the official version. Then, when she arrives at “brave,” the orchestra plays an unexpected harmony that prolongs the final cadence. In other words, we have to wait a few extra seconds before it feels like the song is really over.

Germany: “The Song of the Germans”

While “The Star-Spangled Banner” traced a long path to its status as national anthem, the process was fairly straightforward. The same cannot be said of many other countries. The current national anthem of Germany is titled
“The Song of the Germans” (German: Das Lied der Deutschen). However, it was not the first national anthem, and it has not been in continuous use. Its history offers an excellent example of how transformations in the identity, contents, and use of an anthem can reflect the complex political journey of an individual nation.

Although it traces its history back for many centuries, the modern nation of Germany came into existence in 1871. By this time, it was typical for European nations to adopt national anthems, and the Germans were certainly not to be excluded from this practice. At first, they adopted the Prussian national anthem. They did so to symbolize the unification of previously-independent Prussian principalities under a single nation. The title of the anthem was “Hail to Thee in the Victor’s Crown,” Image 9.7: This map indicates and it featured the refrain “Hail to thee, the original borders of Germany, following the country’s unification in emperor!” The melody, however, was that 1871. Much of what was once Eastern to which “God Save the Queen” is currently Germany is now Poland.


License: CC BY-SA 2.5
World War I, in which Germany was defeated, prompted major political reorganization. The emperor abdicated in 1918 and was replaced by a constitutional government known as the Weimar Republic. The new government required a new anthem—but the song selected for the role was in fact very old. The words to “The Song of the Germans” were written in 1841 by August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben, a Prussian academic. The text was initially subversive. Fallersleben lived and worked in a monarchy, but his song called for the unification of the German-speaking lands under democratic rule. During his own time, this was a dangerous message, and Fallersleben was dismissed from his post for promoting it. Following the unification of

![Image 9.8: Here we see Fallersleben's original manuscript](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Music/Resonances_-_Engaging_Music_in_its_Cultural_Context_(Morgan-Ellis_Ed.)/…)

Germany, however, the call became patriotic for “The Song of the Germans.” and Fallersleben’s song was celebrated.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

Like Key, Fallersleben wrote his text to fit

Attribution: Hoffmann von Fallersleben
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a preexisting melody. Because he was making

a political plea, he selected a political tune: the

national anthem of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which carried a text entitled

“God Save Emperor Francis.” By rewriting this important anthem, Fallersleben sought to rewrite political reality. The tune, incidentally, had been composed in 1797 by one of the most important of all Austrian composers, Franz Joseph Haydn.

It would continue to serve as the national anthem of Austria, although with different texts to suit changes in government, until World War II.

World War II also brought changes
to Germany, which was divided at the

close of the war into East Germany

and West Germany. The government

of East Germany commissioned an

entirely new anthem, entitled “Risen

from the Ruins,” while West Germany

ceased to use an anthem altogether.

Although unusual, it is not difficult to
explain this development. Anthems

tend to represent patriotic feeling and

pride in one’s country—sentiments Image 9.9: Here we see the 1797

that seemed inappropriate in a post-

manuscript of Haydn’s hymn, now in the

Austrian National Library.

Holocaust Germany. Various songs—

Source: Wikimedia Commons
“Ode to Joy,” 2 now the anthem of the European Union—were used to mark state occasions in West Germany, but “The Song of the Germans” was not officially readopted until 1952.

Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” is the official anthem of the European Union. Here it has been recorded with the original 2.

German text, but it is also sung in other languages and performed as a textless instrumental.

When it did enter back into use, it was accompanied by significant conflict over the text. The first stanza in particular had become controversial. It opens with the line, “Germany, Germany above all, above all in the world.” To Fallersleben, this meant that the promise of a united German nation must be held above the petty interests of minor German monarchs. To the Nazis, however, it was a call for Germany to take over the world. The second verse, which celebrates German women, wine, and song, perhaps lacks the dignity required of an anthem. After the war, therefore, the third verse was favored:

Unity and justice and freedom

For the German fatherland!

Towards these let us all strive

Brotherly with heart and hand!

Unity and justice and freedom

Are the safeguards of fortune;

Flourish in the radiance of this fortune,

Flourish, German fatherland!

Controversy over the words, however, has come to stand in for larger political battles. In this way, “The Song of the Germans” simultaneously unites and divides the country, while embodying its difficult past.

Performing “The Song of the Germans”

To consider “The Song of the Germans” in use, we will look at a performance that is, in most respects, very similar to Houston’s rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” This performance also took place at a major sporting event—a match between two teams in the national German soccer league. The anthem was again sung by a popular performer.
Namika, who was born Hanan Hamdi to Moroccan immigrant parents, is a well-known singer and rapper who has landed several hits since 2015. Like Houston, she performs the anthem in her own individual style.

She introduces melodic ornaments but makes a conscious effort not to distract from the dignity of the text. And, finally, the orchestration of the accompaniment is remarkably similar, for Namika is also backed by the militaristic combination of brass and snare drums, and her rendition is likewise punctuated by trumpet fanfares.

“The Song of the Germans”

Composer: Franz Joseph Haydn

Lyricist: August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben

3.

Performance: Namika at Bundesliga match between FC Bayern Muenchen and Bayer 04 Leverkusen in Munich (2017)

There is, however, one very significant difference: Namika is joined by the fans, whose voices can clearly be heard throughout the performance. While Houston was admired as a soloist, Namika is leading a sing-along. Why this difference?

It is certainly not the case that Germans are more patriotic or more musical. The German anthem, however, is considerably more singable than “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Given that it outlines a range of only an octave and that the melody is largely conjunct, containing few large melodic leaps, “The Song of the Germans” can be sung by an untrained musician. It is likely that these musical differences have contributed to contrasting cultural traditions: Germans join in, while American leave anthem singing up to the professionals.

South Africa: “National Anthem of South Africa”

The story of “National Anthem of South Africa” is equally tortuous, although the narrative details—and the resulting anthem—reflect a different type of national strife. While Germany came into conflict with the world, the South African conflict was entirely internal, unfolding as a white ruling minority sought to disenfranchise the non-white majority. This conflict and its resolutions were captured in a trio of official and unofficial anthems.
“National Anthem of South Africa”

Composers: Enoch Mankayi Sontaga & Marthinus Lourens

4.
de Villiers

Lyricists: Enoch Mankayi Sontaga & C.J. Langenhoven

Performance: Ndlovu Youth Choir (2019)

The roots of modern South Africa are to be found in the 17th century, when Dutch colonists first settled on its shores. The descendants of these colonists, who both displaced and intermingled with the native Africans, speak a language known as Afrikaans that combines elements of Dutch and indigenous languages. In the early 19th century, British colonists displaced the Dutch, and South Africa became a part of the British Empire. In this way, English became an important language, since South Africa gained independence in 1931.

In total, eleven official languages are spoken in South Africa: Afrikaans, English, and nine indigenous African languages. This, of course, creates problems for the selection of a national anthem. The language of the anthem will naturally reinforce the power and the prestige of the citizens who speak that language, while symbolically excluding those who speak other languages. Language, Africa is located at the southern tip of the African continent, therefore, plays an important role in the history of South Africa’s national anthems—

The political parties that came to power upon South Africa’s independence from Great Britain represented the interests of the Afrikaner and English-speaking minorities. A decade of increasing tension between ethnic groups culminated in the 1948 election of the National Party, an Afrikaner ethnic nationalist party that instituted the policy of apartheid (the Afrikaans word for "separateness"). Apartheid was a form of white supremacist segregation whereby every South African citizen was legally classified as "white," "black," "colored," or "Indian." A citizen’s racial classification then determined where they were allowed to live and what jobs they were allowed to hold. Public spaces were segregated, with preference given to "white" South Africans, and non-whites had limited power to vote. In addition, interracial marriages and sexual relationships were prohibited.

The National Party also adopted a new national anthem. South Africa had been using "God Save the King/Queen," a legacy of its colonial status, but a political desire to distance British influence resulted in the 1957 designation of “The Call of South Africa” (Afrikaans: “Die Stem van Suid-Afrika”) as the national anthem. The text to "The Call
Image 9.11: “The Call of South Africa” was the official anthem of South Africa, a 1918 Afrikaans poem under apartheid.

by C.J. Langenhoven. The musical setting was created three years later by Marthinus Lourens de Villiers. The poem reflects an Afrikaner perspective, and it celebrates ownership of the South African land—which was taken from the native inhabitants by colonizing forces. As a result, “The Call of South Africa” was and continues to be deeply offensive to many black South Africans.

At the same time that “The Call of South Africa” was gaining popularity among Afrikaners, black South Africans were coalescing around an alternative anthem.

“Lord Bless Africa” (Xhosa: “Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika”) began life as a Methodist hymn. The tune, first verse, and chorus were composed in 1897 by Enoch Mankayi Sontaga, a teacher at a mission school. Sontaga, who was of Xhosa descent, was influenced by the British hymn tradition, and he described “Lord Bless Africa” as a combination of European four-part harmony with a repetitive, African-style melody. It quickly gained popularity among church congregations, and in 1912 was adopted by the South African Native National Congress, a political party that advocated the rights of black South Africans. In 1927, “Lord Bless Africa” was published in an expanded version that included seven additional Xhosa-language verses by Samuel Mqhayi. During apartheid, the hymn—which was banned by the National Party—became a symbol for resistance to the racist policies of the government. Many considered it to be the true national anthem.

This video captures a performance of “Lord Bless Africa”
by Paul Simon and the group Ladysmith Black Mambazo to

close Simon’s 1987 African Concert.

Apartheid officially came to an end with a

1992 referendum, and the first open elections

of the post-apartheid era, which took place

in 1994, put the previously-banned African

National Party into power. Nelson Mandela,

who had played a leading role in negotiating

the end of apartheid, became President.

Mandela had been imprisoned by the National

Party for his anti-government activities from

1964 until 1990. As President, however, he was

committed to the principles of reconciliation

and equality. For this reason, he declared that

“The Call of South Africa” and “Lord Bless

Africa” would both hold the status of national Image 9.12: After being

anthem, and for several years both songs were

imprisoned by the National Party for more than a quarter

of a century, Mandela became

Although symbolically significant, having President of South Africa.

dual anthems was logistically difficult. The Source: Wikipedia Attribution: South Africa The Good News

combined performance took about five License: CC BY 2.0

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minutes, and the question about performance order was politically charged. In addition, the two languages represented by the anthems fell significantly short of reflecting the linguistic diversity of the South African populace.

In 1997, therefore, Mandela commissioned a new anthem. He required that it combine the two existing anthems, contain verses in a variety of language, expunge controversial references to colonialism, and emphasize national unity. He also insisted that it be no longer than one minute and forty-eight seconds in length.

The resulting “National Anthem of South Africa” is in two parts, the first taken from “Lord Bless Africa” and the second from “The Call of South Africa.” It includes two verses from “Lord Bless Africa.” The first half of the first verse is in Xhosa, while the second half is in Zulu. The second verse is in Sethoso. At this point, the anthem modulates to a new key and we hear the first four lines of “The Call,” sung in Afrikaans to the original melody. The final lines of the anthem, which are in English, contain a new text calling for the people of South Africa to come together in order to “live and strive for freedom.”

Performing “National Anthem of South Africa”

Our rendition comes from the Ndlovu Youth Choir. This ensemble was founded in 2009 as an after-school program for impoverished children in the rural village of Moutse. The goal of the organizers was to provide these young people with the same quality of music education that was available to affluent youth and to thereby give them a means with which to express themselves and find a meaningful path in life. In 2019, the choir won international fame by advancing to the final round of America’s Got Talent. Many performances of “National Anthem of South Africa” feature a vocal soloist singing in a popular style and an orchestral accompaniment including brass and percussion—that is to say, they are stylistically identical to the anthem performances we have already examined in this chapter. The Ndlovu Youth Choir, however, developed a unique arrangement of “National Anthem of South Africa” that exhibits various indigenous singing styles.

“National Anthem of South Africa” is certainly unusual. It contains two unrelated melodies in different keys and verses in five languages. All the same, it reflects the diversity of the nation and speaks to a troubled past. It provides a musical representation of a nation that has been fractured and reunited.

Israel: “The Hope”

One additional national anthem will provide an opportunity to consider the connection between music and nation. This time, our analysis will reveal little about the complex history of the nation, as was the case with “Song of the Germans” and “National Anthem of South Africa.” Instead, it will shed further light on the difficulty of assigning national identity to a melody.

The national anthem of Israel, entitled “The Hope” 6 (Hebrew: “Hatikvah”), has a brief and uncomplicated history. It was immediately adopted on an unofficial
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basis when the nation of Israel was founded in 1948, and it became the official national anthem in 2004. The text was written in 1878 by the Polish poet Naphtali Herz Imber, and it expresses yearning for a return to the Jewish homeland. “The Hope” was used as an anthem by several Zionist groups, and beginning in 1897 it was sung at the Congresses of the World Zionist Organization, which advocated for the founding of an autonomous Jewish nation. As such, it came to represent Zionist sentiment throughout the Jewish diaspora.

“The Hope”

Composers: Giuseppe Cenci & Samuel Cohen

6.

Lyricist: Naphtali Herz Imber

Performance: prisoners at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp (1945)

The deep significance that “The Hope” had for Jewish people is evidenced by several stories from WWII-era concentration camps. In one recorded incident, a group of Czech Jews sang “The Hope” as they were escorted into the gas chamber at Auschwitz. The guards were enraged and beat them, but could not stop the singing. Reports from other camps indicate that the song was sung frequently by Jewish prisoners and that it brought them solace. When Bergen-Belsen was liberated, the
inmates also sang “The Hope”—a recording of which was captured and broadcast to the world.

The melody to which Imber’s text has always been sung was provided by Samuel Cohen in 1888. He did not compose it but rather adapted it from a melody he had heard sung. The tune, however, is not Romanian. In fact, it can be traced to a 16th-century Italian song entitled “La Mantovana,” which has been attributed to the singer Giuseppe Cenci and was first published around 1600. The melody quickly became popular and soon had been paired with texts in Dutch, Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian, and English.

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Bedřich Smetana, “The Moldau”

“The Moldau” from My Homeland

Composer: Bedřich Smetana

Performance: The Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Ádám Medveczky (1987)

Time

Form

What to listen for

This passage represents the emergence of the Moldau from two small springs that join together to form a powerful current; the principal melody is
shared with Israel’s national anthem, “The Hope”

This passage represents the rural landscapes through

4’06”

B

which the Moldau passes; the folk-like melody is

meant to evoke the celebration of a farmer’s wedding

This passage represents a scene described by the

5’34”

C

composer as “the round dance of the mermaids in

the night’s moonshine”

8’44”

A’

The principal melody returns

10’44”

The melody shifts into the major mode

This passage quotes from Smetana’s symphonic

poem “Vyšehrad,” which is the first in the cycle

My Homeland; it serves both to connect the works

11’12”

thematically and to represent the literal presence of

the Vyšehrad castle, which stands on the banks of the

Moldau

Most famously, the melody was used by the Czech composer Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884) as the main theme for his nationalist symphonic poem “The Moldau” (1874), which belongs to a larger cycle of works entitled My Homeland.
Here we begin to see the complexities surrounding “The Hope.” Decades before this tune came to communicate Jewish identity, and more than half a century before it would represent the nation of Israel, it was used to signify Czech identity and national sentiment.

Smetana’s “The Moldau” is an example of program music. It describes in sound the course of the famous Moldau river as it winds its way through the countryside and ultimately joins the Elbe river. “The Moldau” contains a succession of distinct sections. First, we hear the river emerge from a pair of warm and cold springs. It slowly gains strength until a mighty, expressive melody—that used for “The Hope”—bursts forth to represent the river. Next we hear the sounds of dance music as it might be played at a country wedding, followed by a nocturnal passage representing mermaids in the moonlight. Finally, the river theme returns, first in its original minor mode and then in a triumphant major.

How can an Italian melody develop and sustain both Jewish and Czech nationalistic connotations—all while continuing to be periodically mistaken for a Flemish, Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Scottish folk song?

The answer has to do both with musical

Image 9.14: This photograph captures Smetana around the time that he wrote “The Moldau.”
style and with the power of association. “La

Mantovana” is an exceptionally simple tune.

It contains two parts, one lower and one

higher (a typical characteristic in many folk traditions). Both parts have a limited range and move primarily using stepwise motion. All of these attributes allow

“La Mantovana” to be adapted in conformance with the conventions of various national styles.

However, association is more powerful than style. Listeners who first encountered this melody as representing the Moldau river and Czech identity will have a hard time hearing it in a different way. It has a similarly powerful (although quite different) meaning for Jews who grew up singing the Zionist lyrics. The multiple identities of the tune have created consternation in the Jewish community, and many have objected to its pairing with Imber’s text. All the same, efforts to find or create a new musical setting have always met with failure, and this melody continues to exercise enormous emotional power over a global population.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATION IN WESTERN ART

MUSIC

As we have already seen, anthems are only the most obvious and explicit example of national representation in music. There are many ways in which music can come to stand for a nation. Sometimes, composers or performers set out to capture national character in sound. They seek to develop an individual work or a broader style that is uniquely tied to their national identity. Other times, those in power identify and promote music that is determined to represent the nation. In such cases the music is not created with the nationalistic intent, but rather repurposed.

Finally, we might differentiate between musical representations created by the people who belong to nations or ethnic groups versus those created by outsiders.

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We are not talking here about exoticism, wherein an artist represents an ethnic group for the purpose of voyeuristic entertainment, but rather contributions to national style made from a foreign perspective.

Contesting the Representation of Hungary
We will begin by looking at two compositions for piano, each created by a Hungarian composer who sought to express his national identity in music. Both composers turned to Hungarian folk music for inspiration, but they disagreed about which Hungarian folk tradition best represented Hungarian identity. This type of disagreement has larger implications about who “counts” as a citizen and whose culture can be understood to represent the nation.

It is important to note that the political nation of Hungary did not exist when either of these pieces were composed. Instead, Hungary was ruled by German-speaking monarchs, first as a territory of the Austrian Empire and then as a subservient partner in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Modern Hungary first gained independence upon the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire following World War I. Throughout the 19th century, however, Hungarians sought greater autonomy by means of political protest and armed revolt. Efforts to represent Hungarian identity in the arts were part of a larger nationalist movement that had ties to the quest for independence.

**Franz Liszt, Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2**

*Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*

Composer: Franz Liszt

Performance: Tiffany Poon (2014)

**Time**

**Form**

**What to listen for**

This introductory passage is dramatic and

0'00''

A

mysterious

This part of the rhapsody is characterized by

**Lassan**

unexpected harmonies and flexible tempos

044''

B

The tempo stabilizes into a slow march

1'27''
C
This theme begins in the major mode
This theme imitates the sound of a cimbalom; it
1'44"

D
accelerates in tempo

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2'30"

A
3'04"

B
This theme returns in the low register of the piano
3'41"

C
4'36
A
This theme returns in the lowest register of the piano
This part of the rhapsody is characterized by stable

Friska
harmonies and fast tempos
This theme returns in the high register of the piano;
5'12"

D
as is accelerates in tempo, the harmony stabilizes

This passage includes a large number of closely related themes; all are accompanied by the same harmonic pattern, which oscillates between the I and V chords.

The tempo slows and the melody briefly turns to the minor mode.

The major mode returns, the tempo accelerates, and the volume builds, leading into an explosive final cadence.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) is an unusual candidate for “most famous Hungarian composer,” although he certainly merits the title. To begin with, he did not speak Hungarian. Although the village of Doborján in which Liszt was born was located in the Kingdom of Hungary, the inhabitants spoke German. Furthermore, Liszt lived in Hungary for only the first decade of his life. He demonstrated great musical talent as a child, so his parents took him to Vienna at the age
of 11 to cultivate his gifts. He returned only on concert tours. All the same, Liszt was proud Image 9.15: This 1839 portrait by Henri Lehmann captures Liszt as a young man. of his Hungarian heritage and expressed it frequently in his compositions for piano.

Liszt's extraordinary career set new standards for piano playing and public performance. After a successful Viennese debut in 1822, he completed his education and embarked on what might have been a typical career of teaching, composing, and performing. In 1832, however, he happened to attend a recital in Paris by the Italian violin virtuoso Niccolò Paganini. Liszt was astonished by Paganini’s extraordinary technique, and he committed to becoming Paganini’s equal at the piano. To this end, Liszt gave up concertizing and went into seclusion to refine his technique.

When Liszt returned to the stage in 1838, he was indeed heralded as the greatest living pianist. He embarked on a decade-long tour of Europe, during which he established a reputation for flamboyant and thrilling performances. It was Liszt's practice to appear on stage with two pianos, for he played with such force that he would break strings and need to change instruments. Before Liszt, solo recitals were practically unheard of. Audiences preferred variety, and it was considered foolish to imagine that anyone would attend a concert with only one performer.

Liszt, however, provided his own variety, combining piano transcriptions of symphonies with improvisations, classics by the great composers of the past, and showy new compositions by himself. Liszt also possessed a great deal of sex appeal. He was particularly popular with society ladies, who went into hysterics at Image 9.16: This 1842 engraving captures the spirit of a Liszt recital: The audience is made up almost entirely of women, who blow kisses, throw flowers, and faint in ecstasy.
his concerts and fought over his discarded items. Due to his enormous success, Liszt became the first performing artist to require a manager.

Liszt composed piano music in a variety of genres. His fantasies explored operatic themes written by other composers, while his etudes showcased specific piano techniques. He also produced nineteen Hungarian Rhapsodies, each of which was inspired by the Romani music that Liszt heard as a child. Liszt was not the first composer to write “Hungarian” music, which had been in fashion for decades.

*Image 9.17: Liszt lived a long and productive life—long enough to be photographed in 1886.*

However, his Hungarian compositions were more personal than those of German composers, who used Hungarian musical elements to flavor their works. Liszt made it clear that his music was a personal
statement that reflected his national identity.

We will examine Liszt’s *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*, which is certainly his best-known effort in the genre. In it, Liszt uses the scales, rhythms, and forms of Hungarian music as a vehicle for dazzling piano technique. A good performance of *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* is entertaining and astonishing. Before looking at Liszt’s composition, however, we need to know something about the folk tradition on which the piece is based.

Liszt was influenced by a style of dance music known as *verbunkos* that he associated with the itinerant Romani—known colloquially as Gypsies—his public touring career in 1848, musicians of his childhood home. The he continued to play piano in more intimate settings. He is pictured here with the American violinist Arma Senkrah.
excluded from mainstream society and actively persecuted. In the village where Liszt grew up, Romani musicians played verbunkos music in cafes as entertainment for the upper classes. Their traditional instruments included violin and cimbalon, a type of hammered dulcimer. Although verbunkos music is unique to Hungary, therefore, it is closely associated with the Romani people, who are not ethnic Hungarians.

Verbunkos music has a variety of distinctive characteristics. To begin with, it is divided into two sections: an opening lassan and a concluding friska. The lassan is slow and melancholic, featuring dramatic harmonic shifts. It lacks a pulse and has an improvisatory feel. The friska, on the other hand, builds in volume and tempo, becoming increasingly exciting as it approaches a conclusion. The harmonies are simple, alternating between the tonic and dominant chords.

Verbunkos music also employs different scales than European concert music.

While 19th-century composers of art music used only the major and minor scales, Romani musicians used various scales—mostly related to minor—that featured raised or lowered pitches and, as a result, contained augmented intervals (that is to say, intervals greater than a whole step, which is the largest possible distance between two notes in a major or minor scale). Such scales sounded exotic to Liszt’s audience, as they still do to many Westerners today.

Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 exhibits the influence of verbunkos dance music in a variety of ways. To begin with, it takes the two-part form of a lassan and friska. The lassan, which is exceptionally dramatic, features a march-like theme.

Image 9.19: This group of Romani musicians was photographed in 1865.
that is occasionally interrupted by unmetered flights of fancy. The music sounds as if it might be improvised, but in fact Liszt wrote out every note. In addition to these rhythmic characteristics, Liszt occasionally introduces unusual scales that echo Romani practice. The friska begins with a passage that is meant to imitate the sound of a Hungarian cimbalom. From there, Liszt finds his way to the major mode and provides a virtuosic conclusion.

Béla Bartók, Romanian Folk Dances from Hungary

By the time Béla Bartók (1881-1945) was growing up in southern Hungary, Liszt was a national hero. Hungarians were proud of his monumental success across Europe and his influence on the elite musical establishment. They had also come to accept his musical representations of Hungarian identity—such as we observed in Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2—as authentic and correct. As a music student, therefore, Bartók took Liszt as a model and sought to express his Hungarian identity using a similar musical language.

Romanian Folk Dances from Hungary

7.

Composer: Béla Bartók

Performance: Béla Bartók, Welte piano roll (1927)

In 1904, however, Bartók had an experience that changed his thinking about how Hungarian identity should be represented in art music.

While visiting a summer resort, he happened to hear a nanny sing folk songs from the region of Transylvania. It was unlike any music he had ever heard before—and was certainly far removed from the verbunkos dance music of the urban cafes. He immediately set out to discover and document as much Eastern European folk music as he could find, becoming in the process one of the earliest ethnmusicologists (a scholar who specializes in indigenous music)
Bartók found a like mind in fellow composer Image 9.20: This photograph of Zoltán Kodály, with whom he travelled the Countryside recording the music of rural singers and instrumentalists. They sometimes used a primitive recording device that captured sound by carving grooves into a wax cylinder, but they also wrote down melodies using Western staff notation and they transcribed song texts. In 1906, they Page | 329

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Image 9.21: Here we see Bartók recordings the songs of Slovak peasants in 1908.

Image 9.22: This 1905 photograph captures Bartók and Kodály shortly after their partnership was formed.

Published Hungarian Folk Songs, a collection of peasant songs with simple piano accompaniments. Their intent was to spread awareness about the existence of the music, which they valued highly.

Following his studies, Bartók began to criticize Liszt's version of Hungarian musical identity. Verbunkos dance music, he argued, was not the real Hungarian folk music. His objection was less to the ethnic identity of the Romani musicians who performed it as to the commercial context in which verbunkos music had developed and thrived. It flourished in the cities and was sponsored by the aristocracy as official Hungarian culture. True Hungarian folk music, argued Bartók, was to be found among the disenfranchised rural peasantry.
Bartók was interested both in promoting the cause of Hungarian independence and in developing his own unique voice as a composer. While he took genuine pride in the folk culture of Eastern Europe, he also saw it as grist for his own creative mill. His omnivorous appetite for folk music attracted some criticism from Hungarian nationalists. They were pleased when he promoted Hungarian folk music, but less supportive when he strayed beyond the bounds of the ethnic Hungarian population.

Again, however, we must ask, "Who counts as Hungarian?" This is not a question of literal citizenship, but a question of belonging. Which ethnic groups are to have their cultural products privileged as representing the nation? The borders of the Austro-Hungarian empire extended far beyond those of modern Hungary, encompassing a variety of ethnic groups and spoken languages. Bartók was not interested in deciding who counted as Hungarian. His mission was to collect and popularise as broad a selection of folk music as possible and to integrate that music into his own compositions.

Image 9.23: This map depicts the distribution of ethnic groups within the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1910. It reveals the significant presence of non-Hungarian ethnic groups within the borders of modern-day Hungary.

Source: Wikimedia Commons
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To see one of Bartók's compositional techniques in action, we will take a look at his Romanian Folk Dances from Hungary. It features tunes that he collected from the region of Transylvania, which was a part of Hungary for the first two decades of the 20th century. (Bartók shortened the title to Romanian Folk Dances when Romania annexed the region following World War I.) Like Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, this is a piece for solo piano based on Hungarian folk music. The similarities end there, however, for the purpose behind Bartók's composition was completely different.

Romanian Folk Dances contains six independent movements. They are entitled “Joculcu bâtă” (Stick Dance), "Brâul" (Sash Dance), “Pe loc” (In One Spot), “Buciumeana” (Dance from Bucsum), “Poarga Românească” (Romanian Polka), and “Mărun?el” (Fast Dance). The melody of each movement is taken from a Transylvanian fiddle tune. Bartók did not alter the melodies, transcribing them as he had heard them. He then supplied an original accompaniment, which is usually heard in the left hand of the piano. Bartók described this approach as similar to crafting a piece of jewelry in order to show off a beautiful gem. His musical settings were supposed to exhibit the inherent beauty and interest of the folk tunes. All the
same, his unusual harmonies are what make these pieces enjoyable and interesting for most listeners.

Because Bartók was unwilling to make changes to the borrowed folk tunes, each movement is short and simple in terms of form. Although only the second movement repeats literally in its entirety, all of the movements contain some melodic repetition. As in the Liszt example, we hear unusual scales and rhythms, which Bartók derived from the folk music he studied. Bartók, however, was not a virtuoso pianist, and he was not writing music for the purpose of popular entertainment. His emphasis was on fidelity to his source material, not show.

There are, of course, other reasons for which the music of Liszt and Bartók sounds quite different. Liszt was composing at the height of the Romantic era, when music was expected to be highly expressive while also adhering to certain rules about the use of harmony. Bartók, writing in the early 20th century, was a modernist. He sought to break new ground by replacing common-practice tonality—the typical chord progressions we are familiar with from most Western music—with a new harmonic language of his own invention. Romanian Folk Dances is an early example of his experimental work.

Contesting the Representation of the United States

Antonín Dvořák, Symphony No. 9 “From the New World"

Throughout the 19th century, Europeans considered the United States to be a cultural backwater. Americans, of course, were preoccupied not with artistic innovation but with expanding and stabilizing their nation. Those who did pursue the arts were expected to receive their training in Europe and to imitate European models. In the late 19th century, however, American composers became increasingly interested in developing a unique national voice.

None of this is to say that there was no distinctively American music in the 19th century. There certainly was—much of which is explored elsewhere in this volume.

Hymn composers in New England and the South had already developed several new strains of church music, while diverse folk traditions flourished in rural areas.

In addition, there were the rich musical traditions of Native Americans, who faced eradication on a national scale, and African Americans, whose influence was first felt in the sphere of popular and dance music. However, none of this mattered to members of the arts establishment. They valued European-style concert music and sought a way to express American identity in that context.

Surprisingly, the composer who is usually cited as launching the American school of composition was not an American at all, but a Czech. Although he did not actually break new ground, Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) tends to get credit for the bizarre reason that he was European, and therefore commanded greater respect and attention from his contemporaries than did American composers. In fact, Dvořák was brought to the United States for the express purpose of guiding the development of American music.

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Dvořák was a prime candidate for teaching Americans how to express national identity in music, for he had first made a name for himself by doing the same for the Czech musical establishment. His first successful composition was a series of orchestral pieces ostensibly based on Slavic dances. For Dvořák, however, his national identity was a source of frustration. He struggled to be accepted not as a Czech composer but as a good composer.

When Dvořák came to New York City in 1891, he was at the height of his career. He had been invited to serve as the first director of the National Conservatory of Music, Image 9.24: This photograph of which was to train American musicians in Dvořák was taken in 1882.

Dvořák was expected to contribute to the development of American concert music. Dvořák produced two monumental “American” works during his stay in the United States, both of which were premiered in 1893. One was his String Quartet No. 12, known as the “American Quartet” (a work composed, ironically, during his visit to a Czech community in the midwest). The other was his Symphony No. 9 “From the New World.” The symphony in particular exemplifies Dvořák’s ideas about what was American in music.

Dvořák was regularly asked for his views on this subject, and in 1895 he published an article entitled “Music in America” that contained his advice to American composers wishing to develop a national style. He recommended, unsurprisingly, that they draw inspiration from folk music: specifically, that of African Americans and Native Americans. Dvořák, of course, knew very little about American folk traditions—he was completely ignorant of folk music in most parts of the country, while his ideas about Native American music were more fantasy than fact. His observation that Native American and African American musics were “practically identical” betrays his shallow thinking on the subject.

The one thing Dvořák really did know something about was African American spirituals. He encountered this repertoire through Harry Burleigh, who was a student at the National Conservatory of Music during the time that Dvořák served as
director. Burleigh had learned to sing spirituals from his grandfather, who had been born a slave but had purchased his freedom in the 1830s, and he later gained international fame both for his concert arrangements of spirituals and for his original art songs. At Dvořák’s request, Burleigh frequently sang for him in his home. He reported that “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” apparently the composer’s favorite item in his repertoire, was the basis for the theme in the first movement of Symphony No. 9. The second movement, which we will consider in detail, also features a spiritual-like theme. In fact, it was such a convincing fake that it was Page | 333

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frequently mistaken for a genuine spiritual

after a student of Dvořák’s wrote a text for it,
titled “Goin’ Home,” in 1922.

Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9 also has a Native American connection, although it is romanticized and inauthentic. Dvořák, like most Europeans, was familiar with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s 1855 epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha*, in which the poet provides a largely fictionalized account of the life of an Ojibwe warrior. *Hiawatha*

had been translated into Czech in 1870, and Dvořák was familiar with it before his visit to the United States. Although Symphony No. 9 is an example of absolute music and should not be understood to communicate

Image 9.25: This photograph of a specific, coherent narrative, Dvořák told

Harry Burleigh was taken in 1936,
many years after his youthful interviewers that the two internal movements association with Dvořák.

were both influenced by Hiawatha, and that

Source: Wikimedia Commons

he intended the second movement as a sketch

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for a dramatic setting of the text (a project)

Image 9.26: This illustration was included in an 1891 edition of The Song of Hiawatha.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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that he never in fact pursued). Although Dvořák offered few specifics, it has been argued that the two themes of the second movement—one gentle and romantic, one distraught and funereal—portray the wooing and death of Hiawatha’s bride, Minnehaha.

Symphony No. 9 “From the New World,” Movement II

Composer: Antonín Dvořák

Performance: Berliner Philharmoniker, conducted by

Ferenc Fricsay (1960)

Time

Form

What to listen for


Powered by
0'00"

Intro

The brass play a sequence of sustained harmonies

The spiritual-inspired theme is heard in the English

0'53"

A horn; it has a form of aba'

2'44"

Intro

The woodwinds repeat the sequence of harmonies

Muted strings play the b section of the A theme; the

3'12"

A

English horn concludes with the a' section

4'54"

The horns play the opening motif of the A theme

This plaintive, minor-mode theme, played by the

5'20"

B

Oboe, is accompanied by tremolo strings

For this minor-mode theme, pizzicato strings

5'56"

C

Provide the steady pulse of a funeral march

6'45"
B

The B theme returns in the muted violins

This theme, also cast as a funeral march, is played by

7'52"

D

the muted violins

8'48"

B

The B theme briefly returns in the muted strings

Various instruments and sections, beginning with

9'11"

E

the oboe and flute, imitate birdsong

The cyclical theme, which returns in each movement,

9'27"

is heard in the low brass, while the A theme is heard

in the trumpets

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This theme returns in the English horn; the b section

10'08"

A

is played by muted strings; the a’ section begins in

solo strings
The opening passage is repeated in the brass; it

12'43"

Intro

resolves via an ascending string passage into a quiet,

low-range final chord

Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9 follows the standard four-movement pattern for a European symphony, two examples of which were examined in Chapter 7. We will take a look at the slow movement, which Dvořák placed second. This movement is in **ternary form**, with a brief introductory passage that also serves as the conclusion. The introduction consists of a series of seven chords, played slowly by the brass section. The harmonies, which are unexpected and dramatic, seem to lift the curtain on a magical scene.

The first section features Dvořák’s spiritual-inspired theme. It is first played by the English horn—a double reed instrument that can be thought of as a low-pitched oboe. The theme itself is also in ternary form (a b a’). The a’ section concludes with an ascent in the melody that brings it to a satisfying close. The first statement of the theme is followed by a repetition of the introductory chords in the winds, the b section of the theme in the strings, and the conclusion of the theme in the English horn. The tempo throughout is extremely slow (marked Largo by Dvořák), and the mood is peaceful.

The middle section of the movement offers a marked change in mood, as Dvořák increases the tempo and switches from the major to the minor mode. This section is primarily in **rondo form**, meaning that a principle theme alternates with secondary themes. The principle theme is agitated and mournful, featuring a repeated descending figure, while the secondary themes are accompanied by a steady bass line that could belong to a funeral march. After the final abbreviated statement of the principle theme, Dvořák inserts a major-mode passage in which the winds and strings imitate birds. Dvořák frequently included birdsong in his compositions, and his “American Quartet” also features such imitations. In this case, the birdsong can be directly related to *Hiawatha*, which includes the telling of a myth in which people are turned into birds.

Next, Dvořák includes a reference to the first-movement theme based on “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” overlaid with the spiritual-like theme from this movement.

By stating the two themes simultaneously, Dvořák draws our attention to their similarity. Both, after all, reflect the same African American influence. Dvořák is also continuing the practice of connecting the movements of a symphony, known as **cyclical technique**, that we first saw at work in Berlioz’s *Fantastical Symphony*.

The closing section contains the last statement of the spiritual theme, although this time the b passage is laced with pauses. These convey the impression that the Page | 336

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“singer” of this wordless song is overcome with emotion, needing perhaps to sob or catch their breath. Finally, the opening chords are heard once more, the last of which is repeated and sustained.

This movement—and Symphony No. 9 as a whole—can be taken as Dvořák putting his own advice to American composers into action. Those composers, however, did not necessarily appreciate his guidance. Their negative reactions were largely understandable. To begin with, the American arts establishment had already been grappling with the task of developing a unique national voice. That a foreigner would step in and tell them what to do was, to many, unpalatable. Composers also objected to Dvořák’s specific advice. The music of Native Americans and African Americans, they argued, was not the music of all Americans. It represented only a small portion of the populace and could not stand in for the country as a whole.

While certain individuals objected for racist reasons, most simply did not accept Dvořák’s argument that a national style could be derived from these narrow sources.

**Amy Beach, *Gaelic Symphony***

One of many composers who rejected Dvořák’s approach was Amy Beach (1867-1944). As we will see, Beach preferred to found an American style on the folk music of her ancestors, who hailed from the British Isles.

Before examining her response to Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9, however, we need to learn something about this extraordinary woman.

Beach counts among the many composers...