

## 12 Opera and national identity

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It might seem curious to the average modern music lover that opera, that most elite of genres, came to be seen as music's pre-eminent contributor to nationalism. This apparent contradiction derives, however, from two common misconceptions: on the one hand, that nationalism was essentially an expression of popular (nineteenth-century) revolt; on the other, that opera's associations with the aristocracy should debar it from relevance to more general political concerns. Such misconceptions might seem appropriate for an ideology such as nationalism, which has always covered the traces of its invention by rewriting history in its own image, but opera too is defined by its continual reinvention of itself.

Indeed, as both opera and nationalism are at heart concerned with origins and with representing themselves as originary – both defining themselves as 'always already', whether in theoretical or dramatic terms – their interaction can be symbiotic. The anxiety perpetually expressed in operatic criticism and theory about 'naturalness' (generic, vocal, aesthetic) is thus neatly complemented by nationalist ideology, the prime hegemonic strategy of which has been similarly to self-authenticate as inherent and instinctive. It is only in the latter part of the twentieth century that nationalism has been subject to stringent scrutiny as an ideology, its essentialist claims unpicked as historically contingent on (variously) incipient capitalism, industrialization, mass communication and the decline of religion. Scholars such as Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Liah Greenfield have seen nationalism as an invention of the modern period (from c.1800 onwards), and have offered trenchant critiques of the ideology's essentialist mystification. Nonetheless, with nation states remaining powerful political and cultural forces (despite the effects of globalization) and the right to national self-determination still invoked in pursuit of new political entities, the idea of the nation continues to be a significant social paradigm – and continues to be the principal way we parcel up history, whether operatic or otherwise. Ethno-cultural theories of national identity persist in the writings of Anthony D. Smith and others, though these pro-national authors generally eschew earlier organicist mysticism in favour of defining nations through shared culture.<sup>1</sup> It is not impossible, of course, to see nations and nationalism both as relatively recent inventions *and* as sustaining their

vitality through imagined traditions that stretch back to ancient times.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is this productive interaction of ideology and cultural history that is the chief breeding ground for art, including opera. Certainly, for both nationalism and opera, engagement with and shaping of a changing polity have been crucial to the definition and assertion of their cultural status – the persistence of both ‘national’ and ‘royal’ in the titles of opera houses (the changing titles of the Paris Opéra in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are almost comic in this regard) attests to the longevity of this role, albeit from ostensibly antithetical perspectives. And while they seem mutually to reinforce myths of origin, their relationship can also throw that fictional status into relief.<sup>3</sup>

With such a complex interconnection between opera and nationalism, it is right that this chapter take a broad view of the association between the two, asking what it was about the history and nature of opera as a genre that made it such fertile ground for nationalism, and what opera contributed to ideas of national identity. In so doing it will also explore the ways musicological scholarship has approached modes and instances of nationalist expression in opera. As the study of nationalism itself has become more sophisticated, so musicologists have moved beyond the easy stereotype that ‘national’ music came about as a reaction from the peripheries to the hegemony of the canon – the view, as Richard Taruskin puts it, that composers from the nineteenth century on are ‘classified into four categories: Italian, German, French and “nationalist”’.<sup>4</sup> Instead, scholars now examine the underpinnings of diverse musical expressions of ideology, even in composers, works and traditions at the heart of our supposedly universal musical language.<sup>5</sup> The recent proliferation of studies on musical nationalism (and, more broadly, music and politics) demonstrates our growing realization that the approaches and assumptions of traditional musicology were strongly conditioned by such ideologies, and that we need to understand these assumptions if we wish also to debunk them. These studies bring to bear the full range of current musicological methodology, from archivally based expositions of the interaction between politics and musical production, to critico-theoretical explorations of notions of national identity in music that benefit from the layered appreciation of identity within nationalism which has characterized recent studies of the ideology. The musicological study of nationalism has not experienced the level of dispute characterizing philosophical and sociological approaches, undoubtedly because musicology is interested in nationalism’s and nations’ cultural expression rather than in their ontological status, so sidestepping that particularly contentious area of discussion. This is not, of course, to say that musicology has nothing to contribute to those broader debates;

indeed, as opera studies in particular demonstrates the importance of cultural performance for the formation of national identity, musicology seems to offer significant commentary on the constructivist–essentialist debate.

## Origins

The controversy between ‘ancient’ (essentialist) and ‘modern’ (constructivist) theorists of the nation has most impact on musicology in assumptions about the beginnings of musical nationalism, for musicologists commonly take the modern, political idea of the nation as their standard, and so discount any nationalist expressions that are not popular in origin.<sup>6</sup> By this reading, musical nationalism only really commences with the French Revolution. But here two potentially complementary principles are useful: Smith’s ‘ethnosymbolist’ approach sees nations as having ancient, core elements around which they might wax and wane over time, while Hobsbawm points out that ‘national consciousness’ develops unevenly in any given society, with cultural nationalism preceding militant political campaigns, and mass support coming last.<sup>7</sup> It is thus both valid and useful to look for nationalist cultural expressions prior to the inception of modern nationhood, for those early definitions give a strong sense of the process by which a nation is invented. In opera this process is particularly acutely expressed, because from its inception opera was itself associated with a quest for origins. While, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, those origins were an idealized, mythical golden age, in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries opera’s conjoining of music and words prompted a quest for the origins of language. Such concerns suggest the universalizing tendency always present in analyses of the function and power of music, but opera’s linking of words with music, and its abiding association with politics, also provided a heady mix to encourage debate about relative cultural expression. In the seventeenth century, this debate was most clearly articulated in France, where the Italian infiltrations of Cardinal Mazarin and others on a political level, and of (most notably) Jean-Baptiste Lully musically, prompted an ongoing discussion of the musical principles distinguishing the genius of the two peoples.

Georgia Cowart’s *The Origins of French Musical Criticism*, though not concerned with nationalism, demonstrates the lively interaction between politics and culture that fomented national navel-gazing on the part of French critics. French military campaigns in the Italian peninsula had provoked a paradoxical anxiety about perceived Italian cultural superiority throughout the sixteenth century. But Italian musical influence was not considered grounds for controversy until the seventeenth century, perhaps

because the concept of ‘national style’ affected musical thought more slowly than it did literary understanding.<sup>8</sup> From the late sixteenth century, however, both France and Italy set up distinctive musical endeavours focused on the belief that it was possible to revive the ancient power of music by reinstating a symbiotic relationship with language: *vers* and *musiques mesurées* and opera were part of the cultures’ respective solutions.

In establishing such divergent approaches to a common truth claim, the seeds were also sown for comparison and dissent on grounds broadly ‘national’ because based on differences in language. Musical distinctions were fairly easily made – the measured, syllable-to-a-note strictness of the French style of Claude Le Jeune versus the harmonic audacity and vocal individuality of Italians such as Claudio Monteverdi, Carlo Gesualdo and Giulio Caccini – but even knowledgeable musicians who saw the advantages of each style wrote descriptions quickly shading from the technical to something less tangible. So one of Marin Mersenne’s correspondents, J. J. Bouchard, stated that

for artifice, knowledge, and forcefulness of singing, for quantity of musicians, principally castratos, Rome surpasses Paris as much as Paris surpasses Vaugirard. But for delicacy, and *una certa leggiardria* [sic] e *dilettevole naturalezza*, the French surpass the Italians by far . . .<sup>9</sup>

Inevitably, stylistic musical distinctions were also projected outwards onto the genius of the peoples: the French gamba player André Maugars (also pro-Italian) provided an assessment pithy enough to become a cliché: ‘we sin in deficiency’, he claimed, ‘the Italians in excess’.<sup>10</sup> Lully crystallized the conflict by personifying these competitive sentiments as *Musique française* and *Musique italienne* in dialogue in his *Ballet de la raillerie* (1659).

Lully’s witty juxtaposition of the different styles in his own compositions was a reflection of growing popular anti-Italianism. Opera, as the most identifiably Italian genre in Paris, was an easy target. The French rejections of Luigi Rossi’s *Orfeo* in 1647, just before the years of the Fronde (civil wars of 1648–53), and Francesco Cavalli’s *Ercole amante* in 1662 were both largely inspired by opposition to perceived Italian political influence.

These rejections of the genre were balanced by attempts at co-option: the 1671 founding of a proto-nationalist Académie d’Opéra was a prime example. Lully’s canny adaptation of his musical style to suit French tastes was another. Here, too (as scholars have more readily acknowledged), there were politico-aesthetic justifications for the genre’s French adaptation: opera, in its claim to classical origins on the one hand and exploitation of spectacle on the other, provided the perfect vehicle for conveying the mytho-historic significance and grandeur of the monarch. The development of *tragédie*

*lyrique*, as Downing Thomas and others have shown, facilitated presentation of Louis XIV as omnipresent, while at the same time (indeed, as a result of) removing his physical presence from the stage he had occupied so prominently as a dancer in the earlier *comédie-ballet*. Lully made opera a French genre where previously it had been seen as an Italian import – and rejected or embraced accordingly. But perceived cultural differences continued to be aired via discussions of opera until the 1750s' *Querelle des Bouffons*, and the later contention between supporters of C. W. Gluck and Niccolò Piccinni.

It is significant that complaint in the Franco-Italian debates was so strongly one-sided: the French (or at least French intellectuals), feeling themselves to be an identifiable cultural entity, sensed that definition of distinctions in taste and style was not only possible, but desirable. While Italian opera in this period certainly deployed classical (particularly Roman) myth-history to evoke a sense of political continuity, this was done in the service of individual city-states, rather than for an incipient nation, and critical concerns were generally similarly insular.<sup>11</sup> In this sense, and whether or not we can think of pre-revolutionary France as a 'nation' in anything other than Smith's ethnosymbolic sense, one can see at work two elements that have been identified as fundamental to the construction of national identity: on the one hand, a sense of 'imagined community' created through shared cultural institutions; on the other, a coalescence around perceived external threat, albeit primarily cultural.

The importance of international hostilities as a spur to nationalist invention was particularly drawn out by Linda Colley in her 1992 study of eighteenth-century Britons. Although cultural investigations play a peripheral role in Colley's book, she turns to English opera and that famous paean to Britishness, 'Rule, Britannia', to show that it was antipathy to foreign rivals (especially the French) that defined the British: 'Britishness was superimposed over an array of internal differences in response to contact with the Other.'<sup>12</sup> Opera might seem the least likely of genres for forging British identity, but the genre's traditional associations with power meant that in Britain, too, it was a site of contention. For music in particular, the Restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660 brought an 'invasion' of French artists and styles that had an impact comparable to that of the Italians in Paris, with relations between foreign and native musicians by turns volatile and productive. Some French musicians worked with English counterparts in the London theatres: John Dryden's collaboration with Louis Grabus on *Albion and Albanus* (1685), when Charles II asked for a French-style opera, contrasts with his later espousal of Henry Purcell for *King Arthur* (1691). The use of 'English' stories in these two works reflected as much the political allegorizing of the prince (a feature of Italian *intermedi* well before the invention of opera, and the English masque too) as it did

an engagement with apparently national themes. In the eighteenth century, however, interest in indigenous topics became more consciously populist in orientation; indeed, from the 1730s on there were often concerted attempts to create operas appealing to the populace (or at least to the idea of ‘the people’) through deployment of identifiably ‘British’ (or English) stories.

Thomas Arne provides a particular sense of continuity for eighteenth-century operatic endeavour in Britain, but might also stand as an early example of the perils of espousing the nationalist ideology for composers. Arne’s early involvement in the English opera campaign of 1732–33 initiated a lasting interest in works with ‘national’ themes, including *Alfred* (1740), *Eliza* (1754), *Britannia* (1755), *Thomas and Sally* (1760) and *The Fairy Prince* (1771), as well as pieces based on canonic or traditional literature. Perhaps the longevity of Arne’s career carried this one step further, however, for he (like Lully for France) was credited by cultural nation-builders with creating an indigenous musical style. Arne’s sometime student, Charles Burney, the famous music historian, thus praised his melodic style as forming ‘an æra in English Music; it was so easy, natural and agreeable to the whole kingdom, that it had an effect upon our national taste.’<sup>13</sup> However, such an association with a ‘natural’ national style held a danger of artistic redundancy of which later ‘nationalist’ composers (and those studying them) were to become all too aware: if the national style was deemed to be simply ‘natural’ for a composer, any venture he made into other stylistic arenas would carry with it a suspicion of insincerity, producing pastiche or plagiarism.<sup>14</sup> Thus Burney was less than kind about Arne’s most successful work, the Italianate *Artaxerxes* (1762), and when Arne presumed to write another Italian opera, *L’olimpiade* (1765), Burney felt the creative pressure had grown insupportable:

the doctor had kept bad company: that is, had written for vulgar singers and hearers too long to be able to comport himself properly at the Opera-house, in the first circle of taste and fashion . . . The common play-house and ballad passages, which occurred in almost every air in his opera, made the audience wonder how they got there.<sup>15</sup>

Even before the nineteenth-century denigration of mere ‘national’ music in favour of the universal and transcendent (a Germanocentric concept), Arne’s fate exemplified the dilemma for creators of indigenous opera who sought access to the international stage.

## **Popular nationalism in opera**

Although some composers might have begun to realize the dangers of being too closely associated with a particular national style, there was nonetheless

an increasing appetite for national music in the later eighteenth century, deriving from disparate philosophical and political impetuses. Space was already created for it aesthetically, through the debates about French and Italian styles. The apparent contradiction between music as a marker of universal human origins (set out most notably by J. J. Rousseau in his *Essai sur l'origine des langues*) and as an expression of divergent tastes began to be reconciled in theories of distinct national and ethnic 'genius'. André Batteaux, in his 1747 treatise *Les Beaux Arts réduits à un même principe*, both asserted that 'There is [one] good taste', which alone leads us to *la belle nature*, and then made allowance for *goûts en particulières*, on the basis that national divergence in taste was itself an affirmation of 'the richness of nature, and . . . the reaches of the heart and the human spirit'.<sup>16</sup> By the end of the century, with J. G. Herder, the 'particular tastes' of different nations were not the exception but Nature itself (and a product not just of language but also of geography). More significantly for the status of opera, the affirmation of these differing tastes through cultural expression validated the nation and reconciled individual and collective (state) identities by making the latter an extension of the selfhood of the former. The Herderian view of cultural nationalism also effected an important shift in operatic focus: as, for Herder, it was the common *Volk* and their culture which defined the nation, so his emphasis on national expression of folk culture encouraged its appropriation for the arts (including opera), though inevitably this tended to an idealized form of engagement.<sup>17</sup>

An interest in representation of the people within opera, which was to characterize the genre in the nineteenth century, was not only philosophical in origin. The most widely recognized nationalist 'event' was the French Revolution (1789–99), which manifested cultural ideals in radical political terms, and provided an overt imperative for broadly representative 'national' music. This imperative was particularly pronounced, as Elizabeth Bartlet has shown, under the 'Terror' (September 1793 to July 1794), when republican extremism prompted great artistic sensitivity to opera's presentation of political messages. The Paris Opéra's artistic representatives, conscious that their theatre had for so long been intimately bound to the aristocracy and royalty, strenuously asserted its populist revolutionary potential: 'It is time for the French to enjoy with enthusiasm the pleasure of admiring their own exploits and to see staged their own glory' claimed one petition to the Committee of Public Safety in February 1794.<sup>18</sup>

Opera's traditional use of myth and ancient history as a means to legitimate monarchical rule was turned to new effect for the revolutionary genre. Not only recent events, but also classical (particularly republican) history was co-opted to express patriotic sentiments, and, inevitably (in keeping

with the originary mystification of nationalism), both ancient and contemporary subjects were adapted to fit nationalist myth-making. This process of adaptation often reflected the anxieties of the Terror: so disillusionment with the early revolutionary glorification of individual heroism led to an emphasis on collective action (often at the expense of historical accuracy); within operatic narratives, individuals pointedly refused glory unless it was shared, or committed suicide for the success of the Revolution.<sup>19</sup>

The performance of national unity was particularly expressed in collective oath-taking, marking the new operas out as more than simply a passive experience for the audience, as many contemporary commentators recognized. Thus at a performance of *Toute la Grèce*:

The spectators were themselves at one and the same time witnesses and actors; and when the Greek warriors on stage swore to conquer for their country's sake, the French soldiers in the audience reacted by declaring 'What they have sworn, we shall do.'<sup>20</sup>

This sense of the performative power of opera (in J. L. Austin's sense of a 'speech-act'), its potential to participate in social transformation, was not inconsistent with the Herderian principle that language reflects and constitutes any given society, and it marked out opera's significance for nationalist developments in the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Modern awareness of the performative nature of identity (fostered particularly by Judith Butler), coupled with nationalist theorists' recent tendency to discuss nationalism in terms of identity formation, creates a particularly rich theoretical basis for the understanding of opera in this period.<sup>22</sup>

Revolutionary opera's patriotic scenes affected the musical design as well. While much in operatic language reflected pre-revolutionary idioms, the populist stance of the new works encouraged greater use of simple *hymne* and *chanson* style, along the lines of the *Marseillaise* or *Ça ira*, and marches, too, were prominent; with fewer soloists (particularly women), there were also fewer airs, and the chorus assumed an increasingly central and dynamic role in, as Bartlett puts it, the effort to find 'a musical equivalent of "fraternité"'.<sup>23</sup> In their innovative use of harmonic language and orchestration, and their designs for new choruses (particularly choral oaths), composers seemed to indicate a desire to enact the Revolution technically as well as in plot and narrative design.<sup>24</sup>

In seeing the Revolution as a pivotal moment (and in failing to note the diverse modes of nationalism aside from its party-political expression), musicological studies of nationalism have been in danger of oversimplification: as scholars have recently begun to observe, we must be careful not to make too much of the Revolution watershed.<sup>25</sup> But the Revolution's impact was nonetheless significant: a critic writing in 1794 in the *Journal de Paris*



*national* of the opera *La Réunion du dix août* (a re-envisioning of real events of 10 August 1793) may have put it accurately when he said of the ‘dance of the porters of Les Halles’ that ‘four or five years ago, it was not possible to introduce such characters on stage without debasing them. In this work, on the contrary, their usual customs and attitudes are perfectly rendered, but without exaggeration.’<sup>26</sup> An express desire for authenticity as a means to legitimating the republican nation distinguished these works – even where that ‘authentic’ self was a sanitized version of the truth (as another reviewer of this opera pointed out).<sup>27</sup>

This Herderian interest in the authenticity of popular expression extended beyond revolutionary France, even if it received particular impetus there. The comedic or peripheral use of lower-class characters, standard in *opera buffa* and other regional traditions in the eighteenth century, was gradually displaced by a more serious, Herderian emphasis on folk art as the font of national identity, which encouraged composers to rediscover not only musical but also cultural roots in a way that could find serious expression in opera. German opera composers of the mid-eighteenth century already drew judiciously on both Italian and French models (and also on the English, directly or through French sources), but were keen to create a native tradition. Both C. M. Wieland and J. G. Sulzer propounded the idea of a German national opera in the 1770s. An aspiration to populism was important in forming this tradition: the librettist C. F. Weisse favoured *opéra comique*’s ‘agreeable tales’ over the ‘cheap laughs’ of Italian comic opera, as they ‘had such catchy and singable tunes that they were quickly memorized and repeated by the public and enlivened social life’.<sup>28</sup> His *Die Jagd* (1770), an influential work set by J. A. Hiller, used just such an everyday tale, pitting the honest peasantry against dissolute aristocrats (a sententious storyline going back at least to 1730s England) – although, of course, it was unlikely to have been seen in the theatre by any peasants. As important musically, as Hiller observed, was the way in which the juxtaposition of high and low characters encouraged the use of a range of musical styles.<sup>29</sup> This vein achieved considerable popularity: Goethe subsequently observed that ‘a demon of realism had possessed the opera house’ in the 1770s.<sup>30</sup>

The incorporation of folk elements in German opera achieved its apotheosis in Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz* (1821). Weber articulated his musical influences (Italian and French as well as German folk) quite consciously, but wrote the *Volk* idiom into the opera via the contrast between good (rustic peasantry) and evil. His references to genuine folk music were few – the Bridesmaids’ chorus, ‘Wir winden dir den Jungfernkranz’, is most notable – but generation of a topical atmosphere ensured the folk idiom had a broader significance. The anonymous author of the ‘Memoir of Carl Maria von Weber’ (in *The Harmonicon*, 2 (1824), pp. 13–14) neatly summed

up the opera's balance of appeals and the sense of *Freischütz* as revelation as much as creation:

The revival and improvement of beautiful ancient melodies, by so skilful a hand as Weber's aided by powerful dramatic and scenic effect, which he understands so well, besides the attraction which so wild and extravagant a story could not fail to produce, have mainly contributed to render the *Freischütz* popular.<sup>31</sup>

The folk influences were quickly amplified and expanded by commentators, culminating with J. C. Lobe's 1855 recounting of a mythical conversation with Weber, making the composer into an originary and nationalist figure.<sup>32</sup>

Composers, librettists and their critics thus sought as much to create national myth as to harness existing folk stories. Of course, Wagner's poetic invention of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (begun in 1848) is the most famous of such enterprises, but many composers engineered traditional stories (or those that might be worthy of the name) in order to move the nationalist folk element to centre stage, rather than treating it as peripheral 'local colour'. Mikhail Glinka's idealization of Russian national character in *A Life for the Tsar* (1834–36) effected such a shift just as much as Wagner did in the *Ring* cycle or, in a different way, in *Die Meistersinger*.<sup>33</sup> As these examples also demonstrate, nineteenth-century opera participated in the Romantic fascination with and appropriation of the distant past as a means of tracing the history of nations, employing medieval myth-narratives of foreign invasion and the heroic resistance of the people in order to define national origins.<sup>34</sup>

### **The rise of the chorus**

The treatment of folk subjects and medieval history as stories in themselves had the advantage not only of presenting popular 'national' tales, but also of seemingly democratizing the performance space, facilitating the chorus's emergence from representative of monarchical authority and order or ancient Greek ideals to active participants, indeed protagonists. Again, musicologists' increasing willingness to see music as performance rather than as idealized work, and to see the performative in opera's social expression, has facilitated an increasingly sophisticated view of the chorus. While the chorus could seem to function simply, as Carl Dahlhaus put it, as 'musical extensions of the stage decor' (in Weber's *Der Freischütz*, for example), it often did far more than that. The chorus in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829), while part of that work's famous (if nebulous) 'local colour', also plays its part in both the opera's musical structure and the plot's story of the

struggle for political liberation. The chorus could take a more active role, as it had in some of the so-called ‘rescue’ operas, or it could serve a structural role, affirming the philosophy of a drama, as does the prisoners’ chorus ‘O welche Lust!’ (O what joy!) at the end of the first act of Beethoven’s *Fidelio* (1805).<sup>35</sup> James Parakilas sees even the most basic, scene-setting function as indicative of the nineteenth century’s thoroughgoing reconceptualization of opera around the role of the chorus as representatives of ‘the people’. Philip Gossett, too, finds the chorus in Italian opera, from Rossini’s mature Neapolitan operas (1815–22) onwards, moving from a state of ‘collective anonymity’ to one of ‘collective individuality’, while Arthur Groos points out the significance of Wagner’s denomination of ‘das Volk’ rather than merely ‘Volk’ in *Die Meistersinger* as indicative of ‘a collective with a consciousness of itself and a will to action’.<sup>36</sup>

The chorus’s ideological function was by no means the same in all cases, its varied representation aligning with differing political interests, whether of societies or individual creators. For example, as Parakilas explains, in French grand opera the chorus characteristically expressed the struggle between antagonistic forces, thus foregrounding political dispute within the dramatic structure.<sup>37</sup> The common division in grand opera into male and mixed choruses represented an ideological separation between the socially divisive action of male authority figures on the one hand and social cohesion on the other, or “‘nature” in its social form’.<sup>38</sup> Although the chorus’s deployment within that paradigm was remarkably diverse, one element uniting all the scene types Parakilas describes – conspiracy, procession and ceremonial, hymns – is a performative function.

In the Italian peninsula, despite the ongoing importance of the star singer, the chorus also gradually developed a significant role, as well as a more complex, equivocal relationship to revolutionary principles (in keeping with the varied political affiliations of the Italian states). Not all nationalist Italian opera of the late eighteenth century was pro-revolutionary: Robert Ketterer observes the contrast between the republican sentiments of F. S. Salfi’s *La congiura pisonia* (1797) and those of S. A. Sografi’s and Domenico Cimarosa’s *Gli Orazi e i Curiazi* (1797), written for a Venice that keenly felt the threat of the Napoleonic armies, which ends with a populace divided over Orazio’s supposedly patriotic murder of his sister.<sup>39</sup>

The role of the chorus could be seen as a marker for the political stance of an opera in Italy. Thus in Rossini’s *Guillaume Tell* (1829), a pro-revolutionary and chorus-dominated work written for Paris, modifications had to be made to pass the censors for its performance in northern Italy (still, like Tell’s Switzerland, under Austrian control). These included not only a changed title and location (Scotland evidently being deemed sufficiently remote by the censors), but also a watering down of politically

sensitive sections of the text, including the final choral apotheosis to liberty: 'Liberté, redescends des cieux!' became 'Quel contento che in me sento / Non può l'anima spiegar' (I cannot express the happiness I feel).<sup>40</sup> However, the degree to which opera in nineteenth-century Italy participated in political debate is open to question: Roger Parker has recently suggested that, while operatic choruses such as 'Va pensiero' (the lament of the Hebrew slaves) in Verdi's *Nabucco* subsequently came to represent Italian nationhood, 'Italians in the heat of battle did not want, did not need to deal in metaphor', preferring instead specially composed national choruses 'that portrayed their present situation directly and without equivocation'.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, Philip Gossett has suggested that in Risorgimento Italy (c.1815–c.1871), because the chorus was readily marked out for expression of the popular spirit through a common discourse of nationhood, political subversion could be identified even through dense musical intertextuality or the most generalized allusions to liberty and tyranny.<sup>42</sup> Verdi, Gossett suggests, was aware of the need for revolutionary directness, and eager to please in *La battaglia di Legnano* (1849).<sup>43</sup> But he could also express the complexity of nascent Italian nationhood through a representation of the chorus in *Simon Boccanegra* that was by no means unequivocally positive: the maturity and unity of the citizen-chorus is hard-won.<sup>44</sup>

That it was the unison lyricism of 'Va pensiero' that subsequently came to represent the Italian Risorgimento indicates the ideological power of this musical form, suggesting as it did (falsely in Italy's case) the unanimity of the people. Parakilas suggests that nineteenth-century opera was better able to become the drama of 'bourgeois liberalism' than the spoken theatre precisely because music could organize the crowd into a cohesive, representative body with a sustained and powerful voice. The works built around the institutional presence of a substantial chorus, which developed from the 1770s and 1780s at Paris's Comédie-Italienne, had assumed the dramatic identity and participation of this new force.<sup>45</sup> Musical language was as important to the chorus's effect as its corporate physical presence on the stage: with a generic history quite distinct from the theatrical – indeed, particularly associated with either religious observance or popular music – choral music could lend to opera an element of historicity not otherwise available, and particularly a vein of high seriousness or transcendence in its associations with religion. Handel had already discovered this in his oratorios, which exploited the diverse associations of choral music to provide dramatic differentiation between Christians and heathens, and so (for contemporaries) bolster the moral integrity of British Protestantism. And even a composer who made so little use of the chorus as Wagner realized the effectiveness of their historicizing religious overtones: his opening deployment and subsequent quotation of the Bachian chorale in

*Die Meistersinger* sacralizes the destiny of the German people through music in a manner given explicit confirmation by Hans Sachs's statement that art and the people must develop together.<sup>46</sup>

Of course, the nineteenth-century chorus's structural and musical significance harked back (as revolution-inspired works generally did) to the communal, rather than just the ideologically national (in a way again in keeping with an important strand of musical thought). But the effective practice of such communal expression, whether in daily life (1,000-strong *Messiahs* in London or the *Deutscher Sängerbund* choral societies and the Volkfest in Germany) or on the stage, necessarily involved more specific, organized constituencies, and an ideological celebration of collective identity that was increasingly nationalist, rather than merely national.<sup>47</sup> Charles Tilly reminds us that 'the phenomenon of identity is not private and individual but public and relational'.<sup>48</sup> Nineteenth-century opera's use of the chorus was thus significant for articulating the dynamic play of identity between the individual and varying types and levels of 'national' representation, as nationalism emerged as a dominant ideology. The presence of the chorus undoubtedly signalled not only an interest in popular and communitarian issues, but more particularly a sense of the opera house's situation in the city – a space rapidly expanding in population and significance (economic as well as social) throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To represent 'the people' on stage was to acknowledge not just a generalized ideal nation, but the specific impact of urban constituencies, whose sense of identity was undoubtedly rendered more acute by their proximity to a host of (unknown) others: as Richard Taruskin has observed with regard to the growth of Russian urban life, 'there could be no Russian nationalism without Russian cosmopolitanism'.<sup>49</sup>

Throughout eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, in keeping both with the emphasis on language as essential to national self-definition and with the old association of opera with prestige, indigenous language 'national theatres' appeared – in small, Eastern European capitals, as well as in major centres such as Vienna (1776), Berlin (1786) and Prague (1881).<sup>50</sup> The Prague National Theatre's dedicatory motto, 'Národ sobě' (The nation to itself), inscribed above its proscenium arch, marks the reflexivity of the enterprise and the sense (at once made possible by and facilitating that reflexivity) of the theatre's legitimacy in speaking for the nation.<sup>51</sup> Such intense reflexivity encouraged nationalist librettists and composers to saturate their works with symbols, which were all the more significant for their audience precisely because their meaning was only fully available to the initiated.<sup>52</sup> The creation of such theatres (the lengthy building process itself freighted with meaning for cities and nations coming of age)

inevitably spurred on indigenous creativity.<sup>53</sup> A variety of indigenous composers who forged a 'national' style were of significance for their country's musical development, though they were largely ignored beyond; Moniuszko (1819–72) in Poland, Erkel (1810–93) in Hungary, and the Czech, Smetana (1824–84).

### **Universality and monumentality: the case of Wagner**

The importance of the chorus to nineteenth-century opera serves as a marker for some distinctive continuities among the period's various nationalist enterprises, and reinforces the ideological symbiosis of opera and nationalist politics. It is significant that the chorus could both '[allow] nineteenth-century opera to dramatize issues of irreducible difference among social groups' (Parakilas), and act as the 'collective voice . . . [taking] us at once into the public realm' (Arblaster). The chorus's linking of the topical or ethnic with a more idealized universal spirit was pertinent to nationalist ideology, enabling it to invoke while also transcending the local or specific, often in a manner designed to prophesy national greatness. Ralph Vaughan Williams's assessment of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* confirms this productive (and, particularly for this work, ill-omened) tension:

Here is no playing with local colour, but the raising to its highest power all that is best in the national consciousness of his own country. This is universal art in truth, universal because it is so intensely national.<sup>54</sup>

What Vaughan Williams tapped into was the by-then common reification of German composition as 'absolute music' and the German spirit as inherently musical. The universalizing absolute aesthetic, long simply accepted as truth, has only recently come to be questioned (along with concomitant concepts, such as that of the autonomous musical art work); volumes such as the 2002 collection *Music and German National Identity* demonstrate (as they undermine) the diverse forms of German musical hegemony fostered through this ideal in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – and still surviving today. Universal transcendence thus became a nationalist expression in Germany, asserted through the supposed monumentality not just of Beethoven's symphonies but of weighty national scholarly editions.<sup>55</sup>

Although the mantle of universality and the musically absolute seemed to fit linguistically specific opera less readily than it did genres such as the symphony or the quartet, opera facilitated the monumental expression of nationalism better than any other genre. While an appeal to the universal might seem to trump the merely national, Vaughan Williams was right to recognize the alchemical nature of the combination in Wagner's works.

Where Weber had had his nationalist heroism bestowed on him posthumously, Wagner actively sought it out. Wagner's own political engagement, by turns decidedly practical (manning the Dresden barricades in 1849) and avowedly intellectual, dovetailed with his creation of the *Plan for the Organization of a German National Theatre for the Kingdom of Saxony* (1848) and conception of the monumental set of operas *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, first performed as a cycle in 1876.<sup>56</sup> Important to Wagner was the Romanticist (but also nationalist) idealism which married the metaphysical and philosophical to the practical and the everyday. Thus he made an easy link between victory in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 and his plans for his Festspielhaus for the *Ring* when he wrote to his ardent supporter Ludwig II of Bavaria: 'Now that we have saved the body of Germany, what we have to do next is to fortify the German soul.'<sup>57</sup>

Wagner's ideas for fortifying the 'German soul' were outlined in his proposals for the reunification of the arts through the *Gesamtkunstwerk* ('total work of art'), in the essays *Die Kunst und die Revolution* (1849), *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1849) and *Oper und Drama* (1850–51). Such apparently positive expressions of cultural nationhood had an uglier side (reminding us that nationalism achieves definition through rejecting its Others): the anti-semitic *Das Judentum in der Musik* (1850) and later *Was ist deutsch?* (1865) and *Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik* (1867) saw Wagner pit the 'German spirit' against apparent threats from both Jews and the French.

The nationalism born from such xenophobic polemic was made more palatable through art's appeal to the transcendent and monumental (something that has allowed many scholars to downplay Wagner's anti-semitism<sup>58</sup>). Wagner's mystification of the creative process was demonstrated, for instance, in his claim that the initial inspiration for the first work in the *Ring* cycle, *Das Rheingold*, came to him in a dream-like torpor while holidaying in Italy. It was expressed in more practical terms in his design of the orchestra pit for the Bayreuth Festspielhaus as a 'mystic chasm' (or 'mystic abyss'), which was 'to separate the real from the ideal', distancing the audience from the stage in order to make the singers seem 'enlarged and superhuman'.<sup>59</sup> Justifying his cultural revolution as the inevitable culmination of Germanic self-expression, Wagner aimed with the 'art work of the future' to dispense with traditional operatic forms in favour of an organicist mode of creation. In *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser* Wagner made some moves towards this aim, seemingly thematizing the distinction between conventional arias and ensembles on the one hand and more harmonically and structurally fluid sections on the other. Only with the *Ring* cycle were the organicist principles of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* put into effect



in the comprehensive integration of poetic and musical structures and the thoroughgoing use of motivic transformation.

### **State opera**

The epic scale not just of the artistic achievement of the *Ring* cycle but of Wagner's vision for its housing in a theatre – and indeed a town – devoted to its performance, to which artists and audience alike would make pilgrimage, is particularly noteworthy because it was realized.<sup>60</sup> The patronage of Ludwig II of Bavaria made possible Wagner's vision in much the way, perhaps, that Joseph II's progressive nationalist zeal had led him to insist on Vienna having a national theatre in 1776. But in 1876 Wagner's Festspielhaus was intended as an egalitarian domain, with free entry for all (something not realized for financial reasons). Although Wagner did not initially achieve national sponsorship for his venture, it did make manifest monumental opera's dependence on and expression of the state. This association was increasingly realized across Europe from the late nineteenth century onwards as nationalism's full potential was exploited, and nowhere more so than in tsarist and then totalitarian Russia and the USSR.

Studies of Russian and Soviet musical nationalism provide a very practical reminder of the mediating role of politics in scholarship: in 1984, Richard Taruskin lamented that American musicologists would 'never have the freedom of access needed to do fundamental source research on a grand scale', and complained furthermore of poor 'general understanding' of Russia's production of art music.<sup>61</sup> His own book *Defining Russia Musically* (1997) was a fine answer to that complaint, and others too have addressed this gap in the post-Cold War era. Marina Frolova-Walker has shown that Russia, the USSR and its aftermath provide a good example of the way in which different state agendas could be served by the necessary polemical malleability of operatic nationalistic expression. Russian musical nationalism was given initial impetus in the 1830s and 1840s by Mikhail Glinka's deliberate attempt to follow the period's melancholic literary nationalist spirit by deploying mournful, romanticized Russian folk song in the first all-sung Russian-language opera, *A Life for the Tsar* (1836). The overt nationalist agenda of this work, written around the semi-mythical resistance fighter and martyr Ivan Susanin, was not in doubt; Russia's 'Other' was Poland, represented in stereotypical Polish dances whilst Russia itself was romanticized (through folk and parlour song) and individualized. But even while all agreed that 'this was how Russianness should be represented', reasons for this determination differed:



for the court the opera was a glorification of autocracy and orthodoxy; for the intelligentsia it was the distinct voice of Russia, heard at last within Herder's family of diverse nations; for the general public, the opera took the familiar and intimate sounds of the Russian drawing-room romance, and elevated it to a grander plane.<sup>62</sup>

That initial diversity contributed to subsequent dispute, as intellectuals of various stripes sought to reclassify the function of *A Life* by using its former favour (particularly its tsarist associations) to criticize it. Nationalist associations then became something of a millstone for Glinka, with his next opera, the magical *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1842), variously criticized for its lack of overt 'national' content and shoehorned into the nationalist mould (with far-fetched folk origins sought for its structural design and harmonic language).

For Glinka (as we have seen for other composers), nationalist intention was as much retrospectively attributed as it was designed, the originary role of his music in forging national sensibilities repackaged as a distillation of latent cultural sensibilities. For nations and composers perceived to be on the 'margins' there was perhaps most both to gain and to lose in terms of cultural credibility from adoption of the 'nationalist' banner. Of course, once identified with a style that presented itself on ideological grounds as 'natural', a composer was not readily able to escape the label, and an entire culture became 'peripheral' (Russia is only the most widely discussed example; one might also cite Scandinavia, Spain or Britain).<sup>63</sup> Thus, despite its tsarist origins, the 'Russian' musical character in Glinka's *Life for the Tsar* was revived in the Soviet era, when the work was restructured as *Ivan Susanin*. Initial Bolshevik distaste for nationalism had been dispelled by the realities of creating Soviet cultural identities within the USSR's various subsidiary republics, and culture was put to work in enforcing the Soviet coherence to which different ethnicities (or nationalities) were assimilated.<sup>64</sup> For aspiring cultural figures within the Soviet republics, Glinka's *Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Lyudmila* represented the two accepted routes – heroic class struggle and national epic – to achieving a national opera that could be considered 'socialist in content'.<sup>65</sup> In such overdefined enterprises the exigencies of creating national opera where previously there was often little more than simple, unharmonized song led to a garish (if carefully considered) co-option of local traditions, tortuously combined with Western or identifiably 'Russian' harmonic devices and forms.

Opera's representation of the state through its expression of the 'public realm' extended well beyond the nineteenth century, although its institutionalization through national operatic ventures was often tied to the definition of new nations. A commentator for the German Democratic

Republic exclaimed in 1952, 'During the period of development of the nation, the unity of poetry, music, theatre, acting, dance and staging made this art genre like a point of crystallization of the artistic life of the nation.'<sup>66</sup> Just as in the seventeenth century the magnificence of an operatic production represented the puissance of a prince, in the nineteenth century the building of grand opera houses and construction of repertoires to fill them demonstrated the credentials of a state.

For older nations the process was more complex. In Britain in the mid-twentieth century, when the Royal Opera House was seeking national status, there was much head-scratching as to what constituted 'national' opera. When Edward Dent asked in his 1945 essay on 'The Future of British Opera', 'Why is it that London, the wealthiest capital city in the world, has never maintained a Royal or National Opera comparable to those of Paris, Vienna, Rome, Berlin, or even those of Copenhagen or Stockholm?', it quickly became clear that 'Royal or National' meant nationalistic and English-language (Dent simply discounted 'two hundred years and more [of] Italian opera' sung in London under royal patronage).<sup>67</sup> In contrast to Edwin Evans's more practical assessment in the same volume that successful operatic production in England was the result of 'the truly national method of compromise' (offered with regard to Sadler's Wells's anglicized production of *Gianni Schicchi*), Dent advocated the creation of a new national genre through commissioning of new works.<sup>68</sup>

The bullish British nationalism of the first half of the twentieth century gradually evaporated with the demise of empire, but as the robust response to Robert Stradling and Meirion Hughes's 1993 book *The English Musical Renaissance, 1860–1940: Construction and Deconstruction* demonstrated, debunking the monuments of musical nationalism still touches a nerve.<sup>69</sup> In the later twentieth century, particularly as opera houses in days of uncertain funding (or nation states in days of insecurity and shifting ideological goalposts) made conscious and concerted efforts at cultural nationalism, composers' attempts to write 'national' works themselves became increasingly self-conscious, as demystifying studies of composers such as Benjamin Britten demonstrate. Such awareness of the constructedness of national identity undermined nationalism's ideological efficacy, and sometimes also the artistic integrity of the works concerned. The most overtly nationalistic (because the most clearly celebratory) of Britten's works for the new English attempt at national opera was *Gloriana* (1953), written for Elizabeth II's coronation gala. Ernest Newman described the work as 'pastiche' (much as, we recall, Burney had labelled Thomas Arne's Italianate *Artaxerxes*).<sup>70</sup> Whatever neoclassicism might have meant for the change in value of such a term, *Gloriana* hardly presented a Stravinskian sophistication in its reworking of earlier musics: Britten's use of archaic forms

and titles in his courtly dances, as Paul Kildea notes, not only recalled older music, but also emphasized a more conventional, popular operatic structure than Britten had employed since *Peter Grimes*.<sup>71</sup> *Gloriana*'s poor public and critical reception reflects the compromise inevitably entailed in writing a work that was intensely occasional in its 'national' aspirations.<sup>72</sup> As *Gloriana* might suggest, exploitation and over-definition of the 'national' inevitably undermined its ideologically 'natural' credentials, perhaps in itself reflecting a growing (though unarticulated) discomfort about this ideology, as established nations came to question their identities.

The harnessing of the musico-dramatic to the political often did violence to the perception of a work's artistic integrity. The numerous examples of censorship or self-censorship to avoid political application provide one type of such violence: in alterations of *Guillaume Tell* for Austrian censors, the music often jars with or undercuts the newer, anodyne text – part of the point, perhaps, at least for those alert to such subversive possibilities. But more interesting in some ways is the violence composers themselves promoted: Verdi's hope that a patriotic chorus (not operatic, this time) might 'soon be sung, along with the music of the cannon, in the Lombard plains' suggests a political function for vocal music so strong as to virtually undo the role of the composer and the fabric of the composition itself.<sup>73</sup> The theatricalization of politics in opera, then, preserved a tentative balance between the comforts of aestheticization and closure provided by fictional narrative on the one hand, and the explosive pragmatism of the political stage on the other; however, that balance might easily be upset, and tip a work into self-destructive fragmentation via political application. Whether the work was rendered more 'vital' in so doing, or merely became an occasional piece – unrepeatably outside its historical context (as with Verdi's *La battaglia di Legnano* of 1849) – would depend as much on its ongoing ideological malleability as much as on its qualities as art.

## Notes

1 Key texts proposing some form of (ethno-)cultural nationalism are: Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991); Chaim Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000). A more extreme view of ethnic nationalism might be found in Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and*

*Nationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

2 See Miller, *Citizenship*.

3 Thus, as the centrist, 'establishment' orientation of opera might suggest, it is now recognised as a (typically nationalist) misrepresentation to see musical nationalism as a naïve, 'folk' product of geographically peripheral regions of Europe, as recent scholarship has shown convincingly. Harry

White and Michael Murphy (eds.), *Musical Construction of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture, 1800–1945* (Cork University Press, 2001).

4 Richard Taruskin cites Willi Apel's 1969 definition in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* as exemplifying the Germanocentric view in his essay 'Nationalism' in *Grove MusicOnline*. *Oxford Music Online*. [www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50846](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50846).

5 See, for example, Nicholas Mathew, 'History Under Erasure: Wellingtons Sieg, the Congress of Vienna, and the Ruination of Beethoven's Heroic Style', *Musical Quarterly*, 89 (2006), pp. 17–61; Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity* (Chicago University Press, 2002).

6 See, for instance, Richard Taruskin's comments on sixteenth-century vernacular song in France in 'Nationalism'.

7 Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2009); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 12. Hobsbawm's chronological profile might help explain the oft-cited (though hazily defined) distinction between nationalism and patriotism.

8 Georgia Cowart, *The Origins of Modern Musical Criticism: French and Italian Music, 1600–1750* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), pp. 4–5.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

11 Robert Ketterer points out how popular Roman myths (of the 'liberal prince' on the one hand and the republic on the other) were for opera from Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* onwards in *Ancient Rome in Early Opera* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

12 Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 11, 6.

13 Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, ed. F. Mercer, 2 vols. (London: G. T. Foulis, 1935), Vol. II, p. 1004.

14 Richard Taruskin notes the pervasiveness of this critical view regarding 'Russian' music: if 'everything that happened in Russian music has a direction relationship, positive or negative, to the national question. . . an overtly quotational national character is taken as a mark of value or authenticity, and its absence, conversely, as a mark of valuelessness'; 'Some Thoughts on the History and Historiography

of Russian Music', *Journal of Musicology*, 3 (1984), pp. 323–4.

15 Burney, *History*, Vol. II, pp. 1015, 868–9.

16 Cowart, *Origins*, pp. 104–5. This is not to say that there was a clear-cut acceptance that national musics were simply 'different':

Batteaux saw the variation in national aesthetics as analogous to the variety of perspectives from which an artist would depict his model. Truth to that model – which was, of course, Nature herself – was still key.

17 See Jim Samson, 'Nations and Nationalism', in Jim Samon (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 568–600; 570.

18 Petition of 7 ventôse an II / 25 February 1794; Paris, Archives Nationales, AJ<sup>13</sup> 44 [III];

cited in M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, 'The New Repertory at the Opéra during the Reign of Terror: Revolutionary Rhetoric and Operatic Consequences', in Malcolm Boyd (ed.), *Music and the French Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 107–56; 109.

19 Bartlet, 'New Repertory', pp. 111, 124–8.

20 *Affiches, annonces et avis divers*, 23 nivôse an II/12 January 1794, p. 5671; cited in Barlet, 'New Repertory', p. 148.

21 J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

22 Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London: Routledge, 1998).

On the modern focus on national identity as nationalist theorists' 'master metaphor', see Nenad Miscevic, 'Nationalism', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/nationalism>.

23 Bartlet, 'New Repertory', p. 137.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 139–54; David Charlton, 'Introduction: Exploring the Revolution', in Boyd (ed.), *Music and the French Revolution*, pp. 1–11; 7.

25 On the ongoing conservatism of the Paris Opéra's post-revolutionary repertory on the one hand and pre-revolutionary innovations designed to cater for more diverse audiences, see David Charlton, 'On Redefinitions of "Rescue Opera"', in Boyd (ed.), *Music and the French Revolution*, pp. 169–88; 170–1. On 'rescue' opera's emphasis on collective action, see James Parakilas, 'Political Representation and the Chorus in Nineteenth-Century Opera', *19th-Century Music*, 16 (1992), pp. 181–202; 188.

26 *Journal de Paris national*, 21 germinal an II/ 10 April 1794, p. 1880; cited in Bartlet, 'New Repertory', p. 129.

- 27 *Journal des théâtres et des fêtes nationales*, 5 vendémiaire an III/26 September 1794, pp. 321–2; cited in Bartlett, ‘New Repertory’, p. 129.
- 28 John Warrack, *German Opera: From the Beginnings to Wagner* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 88.
- 29 J. A. Hiller, *Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Musikgelehrten und Tonkünstler neuerer Zeit* (Leipzig, 1784); cited in Warrack, *German Opera*, p. 90.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 Quoted in Ludwig Finscher, ‘Weber’s “Freischütz”: Conceptions and Misconceptions’, *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 110 (1983–84), pp. 79–90; 83.
- 32 *Ibid.*, pp. 88–90.
- 33 Arthur Groos, ‘Constructing Nuremberg: Typological and Proleptic Communities in *Die Meistersinger*’, *19th-Century Music*, 16 (1992), pp. 18–34; 26–7.
- 34 Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2002); Ian Wood, ‘The Use and Abuse of the Early Middle Ages, 1750–2000’, in Marios Costambeys, Andrew Hamer and Martin Heale (eds.), *The Making of the Middle Ages* (Liverpool University Press, 2007), pp. 36–53.
- 35 The Theater an der Wien had insisted the work be called *Fidelio* at its premiere in 1805, to avoid confusion with other *Leonore* operas, but Beethoven preferred the latter title.
- 36 Parakilas, ‘Political Representation’, pp. 186, 184; Phillip Gossett, ‘Becoming a Citizen: The Chorus in *Risorgimento* Opera’, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 2 (1990), pp. 41–64; Groos, ‘Constructing Nuremberg’, p. 27.
- 37 Parakilas, ‘Political Representation’, p. 188.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 182.
- 39 Robert Ketterer, ‘Roman Republicanism and Operatic Heroines in Napoleonic Italy: Tarchi’s *La congiura pisoniana* and Cimarosa’s *Gli Orzi e i Curiazi*’, in Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Downing A. Thomas (eds.), *Operatic Migrations: Transforming Works and Crossing Boundaries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 99–124; 106, 116–17.
- 40 Gossett, ‘Becoming a Citizen’, p. 51.
- 41 Roger Parker, ‘*Arpa d’or der fatidici vati*’: *The Verdian Patriotic Chorus in the 1840s* (Parma: Istituto nazionale di studi verdiani, 1997), p. 99.
- 42 Two revolutionaries were reputedly executed while singing a chorus from an opera by Saverio Mercadente; Gossett, ‘Becoming a Citizen’, p. 53; see also Phillip Gossett, “‘Edizioni distrutte” and the significance of Operatic Choruses during the Risorgimento’, in Victoria Johnson, Jane F. Fulcher and Thomas Erntman (eds.), *Opera and Society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 181–242; 194–7.
- 43 Gossett, ‘Edizioni distrutte’, pp. 185–9.
- 44 Gossett, ‘Becoming a Citizen’.
- 45 Parakilas, ‘Political Representation’, pp. 184, 186.
- 46 Groos, ‘Constructing Nuremberg’, p. 30.
- 47 These choral associations could, of course, take on a variety of politico-cultural permutations: John Deathridge notes that, under governmental interference, there was a transformation of Germany’s choral movement from liberal to reactionary during the course of the nineteenth century; Deathridge, ‘Germany: the “Special Path”’, in Jim Samson (ed.), *The Late Romantic Era* (London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 50–73; 9.
- 48 Charles Tilly (ed.), *Citizenship, Identity and Social History*, International Review of Social History Supplement 3 (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 7.
- 49 Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically* (Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 4.
- 50 Jim Samson notes a succession of such openings: Warsaw (1765), Pest (1837), Bucharest (1852), Belgrade (1869), Zagreb (1870), Prague (1881), Brno (1884), Pozsony (1886); Samson, ‘Nations and Nationalism’, p. 580. The redesignation of theatres in Vienna and Berlin as ‘national’ was determined by rulers (respectively, Joseph II and Friedrich Wilhelm II) on their accession, as part of an earlier, top-down form of nationalism.
- 51 John Tyrrell, *Czech Opera* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 5. Such self-definition was made still more important by the fact that Czech lands were under the rule of Habsburg Austria at the time.
- 52 John Tyrrell notes that Smetana’s *Libuše*, which opened Prague’s National Theatre, achieved its ‘intensely patriotic effect’ through the inclusion of such symbols, ‘inserted to trigger off a nationalist response’; *Czech Opera*, pp. 3–4.
- 53 Samson, ‘Nations and Nationalism’, p. 583.
- 54 Ralph Vaughan Williams, *National Music and Other Essays* (Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 72–3.
- 55 Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, ‘Germans as the “People of Music”’: Genealogy of an Identity’, in Applegate and Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity*, p. 14.

- Breitkopf & Härtel's publication of the complete works of Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Mozart and others (1851–85) is best known; see Deathridge, 'Germany', p. 60.
- 56 Deathridge, 'Germany', pp. 50–2.
- 57 *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 65.
- 58 See the detailed critique by Marc A. Weiner in *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 14–21.
- 59 Geoffrey Skelton, 'Bayreuth.' In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40950.
- 60 Wagner's theatrical vision appeared in his preface to the full text of the Ring in 1863.
- 61 Richard Taruskin, 'Some Thoughts on the History and the Historiography of Russian Music', *Journal of Musicology*, 3 (1984), pp. 321–9; 321, 322.
- 62 Marina Frolova-Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 41, 59.
- 63 See Richard Taruskin, 'Some Thoughts', pp. 321–39.
- 64 Marina Frolova-Walker, "'National in Form, Socialist in Content": Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 51 (1998), pp. 331–71; 333.
- 65 *Ibid.*, p. 339.
- 66 Anon., 'The Tasks of the German State Opera', *Neues Deutschland* (19 December 1952); cited in Joy Haslam Calico, "'Für eine neue deutsche Nationaloper": Opera in the Discourses of Unification and Legitimation in the German Democratic Republic', in Applegate and Potter (eds.), *Music and German National Identity*, pp. 190–204; 201.
- 67 Edward J. Dent, 'The Future of British Opera', in *Opera in English*, Sadler's Wells Opera Books no. 1 (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1945), pp. 26, 27.
- 68 Edwin Evans, 'Sadler's Wells Opera', in *Opera in English*, p. 16.
- 69 Robert Stradling and Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1860–1940: Construction and Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 1993). Stradling and Hughes discuss the response to the book in the 'Postlude' to their second edition, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840–1940: Constructing a National Music* (Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 290–7.
- 70 Paul Kildea, *Selling Britten: Music and the Market Place* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 134.
- 71 *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- 72 However, Robert Hewison suggests that 'the darkness at the close of *Gloriana* [the dying queen's meditation on her reign], even the failure of the first night, shows that Britten was more in touch with his time than the pomp and circumstance of a Royal gala might lead us to suppose'; see *ibid.*, p. 139.
- 73 This letter of 18 October 1848 accompanied the patriotic chorus, sent to Giuseppe Mazzini; see Gossett, 'Edizioni distrette', p. 190; Mazzini, in seeking out an 'Italian Marseillaise' had invoked Verdi in suggesting it should be a 'hymn that . . . will make the people forget both the poet and the composer' (p. 189).