

## Preface

It is March 2020 and both editors sit isolated in their respective spaces, self-quarantined along with the rest of civilization, as we all await the Coronavirus pandemic sweeping the globe to do its worst and pass on. It is a profoundly Wagnerian moment. Humanity has been stripped, reduced to the barest of essentials: fate, family, love, and death. It is the world best imagined in the dramas of Sophocles, yet at the same time, as Wagner, perhaps before anyone else, understood it, profoundly modern.

Paralyzed and dazed though most of us feel, press on we must, because this, as Wagner shows us, is also what humans do. Nevertheless, both editors find themselves separated from their reference materials, not to mention that all libraries have been closed. One consequence is that some final tiny bibliographic and reference details could not be checked. We beg our readers' forgiveness.

We also owe thanks to many people. Perhaps first of all to Vicky Cooper, who is no longer at Cambridge University Press as this book nears completion. But she was the commissioning editor and the inspiration for this volume, as she was for so many others. In many ways, Cambridge University Press's outstanding contributions to music history and culture in recent decades are a result of her vision and leadership. Thank you for all of this, Vicky!

Thanks also to our contributors, one and all. They showed consummate professionalism and extraordinary patience as this volume lumbered on. Both editors were simultaneously involved in other demanding administrative, teaching, and research commitments; and so, for some stretches, this volume necessarily took a back seat. Our apologies.

Special thanks go to Alex Ross, who very kindly read a draft of the Introduction and offered helpful feedback. Alex has been such a vital bridge between academic musicology and the educated public. Given his prominence and work schedule, his generosity of spirit and time is inspiring.

Thank you also to Christopher Kimbell for his exemplary work in compiling the index. We could not have asked for a more comprehending and hard-working collaborator. And thanks also to the College of Arts & Sciences, University of South Carolina, for providing the funding to cover indexing costs.

Lastly, our thanks go to the production team, starting with Kilmeny McBride, who has shown good humor and extreme patience with two vagrant editors who have not always been able to respond as quickly as we are sure she would have wanted or deserved.

On a personal note, one of the editors would like to thank his brother, sister-in-law, and nephew for the roof over his head on his hurried return to England, lockdown impending; his partner for keeping him saner and more loved, albeit in a state of enforced separation, than would otherwise have been the case; and his many other friends, family, and colleagues for support and solidarity. The other editor thanks his mother. This volume coincided with a particularly sad and difficult period in his life and, as ever, his mother was there. He also thanks his children who have helped him understand what Wagner – childless himself for so long – had intuitively understood about that indescribable bond between parents and their offspring.

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