

Chapter Four

Romantic music under siege in 1848

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Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the identification of art music with Romanticism has been such that their features tend to blur into one another, making it difficult to determine how the former is embodied in the latter. Although musicology has invested a great deal of energy in analyzing this relationship, the results have been far from conclusive. For instance, at the outset of his book *Romantic Music* (1987), Arnold Whittall claims:

Musical Romanticism is probably still best defined indirectly, through description and interpretation of particular compositions. There is a rich variety of masterpieces to serve the purpose, and to confirm that, whatever it is that makes Romantic music Romantic, the Romantic era was a time with a greatness all its own.¹

Rather than tautologically affirming the relationship, John Daverio's recent *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology* (1993) more skeptically asks, "Given the nebulous position of Romanticism as a historiographical term, is it even worth posing (or posing again) the question of its involvement with music?"² Daverio boldly reduces the nebulousness by restricting his definition of Romanticism to Friedrich Schlegel's aesthetic theory, which he then applies to works by Schumann, Weber, Wagner, Brahms, and Strauss. Using Schlegel's concepts of *Witz*, the *Arabesque*, and the fragment, among others, he analyzes musical works to show how they are "critical through and through" of their own compositional premises. But because he never indicates what Schlegel or subsequent composers were critical about – that is, what motivated such a critical attitude – his description of what he calls the "ur-theory" of the nineteenth century tends to equate "the German romantic ideology" with a set of compositional techniques.

¹ Arnold Whittall, *Romantic Music: A Concise History from Schubert to Sibelius* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987), p. 15.

² John Daverio, *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1993), p. 3.

Rather than describing the Romantic traits of musical works, I wish to address the relationship from a different angle. My investigation will focus on a period of musical anti-Romanticism, a time when music's Romantic affiliation was not affirmed but disparaged, doubted, and ultimately denied. Musical anti-Romanticism tends to be overlooked; this is partly because the anti-Romantic tradition does not focus on a set of formal features or compositional procedures, but rather defines Romanticism as a basic attitude or stance with significant political and philosophical implications.

The German literary critic Karl Heinz Bohrer has recently documented in his book *The Critique of Romanticism* how the history of German anti-Romanticism, beginning with Hegel and Heine, focused on the irrational theories and later reactionary political tendencies of Friedrich Schlegel and other Jena Romantics.³ Bohrer traces this viewpoint into the present, showing how after World War II, works such as Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus* and Georg Lukács's *The Destruction of Reason* implicated German Romanticism as a progenitor of fascism. Finally, Bohrer shows how the current modern–postmodern debate can be understood as the latest chapter in the history of anti-Romanticism, with contemporary philosophers such as Habermas, who defend modernity, persisting in their quarrel with radical thinkers such as Derrida or even Bohrer himself. Taking the postmodern position, Bohrer disputes the tradition of regarding Romanticism as dangerously escapist and over-aestheticizing, and argues for a recognition of an aesthetic “moment” in Romantic art that resists philosophical and political assimilation.⁴ Showing how the Romantics embraced fantasy and irony not to escape the real world, but rather to confront more effectively the instrumental rationality of modern society, Bohrer makes a plea for Romanticism as an incisive type of cultural criticism that continues to have relevance today. Nevertheless, because he omits discussing the enormous and enduring influence of nineteenth-century art music, the role of music in the debate over Romanticism remains an open question. Why does Romantic music seem to have so little to do with the Romantic critique of society? The beginning of the answer, I believe, lies in uncovering the history of musical anti-Romanticism. This essay will focus on a short period around the 1848 revolutions – a time when music critics, for the first time, clearly articulated musical Romanticism as a philosophical and political issue.

HEGEL'S ANTI-ROMANTIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS MUSIC

The central problem for German music aesthetics in the first half of the nineteenth century concerned the equivocal status of music within Hegel's historical-systematic

³ Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Die Kritik der Romantik: Der Verdacht der Philosophie gegen die literarische Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989).

⁴ See Bohrer's *Suddenness: On the Moment of Aesthetic Appearance*, trans. Ruth Crowley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

outline of art. In his lectures on aesthetics, Hegel depicted how art had become increasingly inward as it passed through its three main eras of the Symbolic, the Classical, and the Romantic, to the point where "at the Romantic stage of art the spirit knows that its truth does not consist in its immersion in corporeality; on the contrary, it becomes sure of its truth only by withdrawing from the external into its own intimacy with itself."⁵ For Hegel, this determined that "the true content of Romantic art is absolute inwardness, and its corresponding form is spiritual subjectivity with its grasp of its independence and freedom."⁶ In contrast to Classical art, in which content and form were completely adequate to each other, the spiritual content of Romantic art transcended its external form. This imbalance bore witness to the inadequacy of continuing to manifest the progress of spirit through representation of the real world.

Because Hegel argued that "amongst all the arts music has the maximum possibility of freeing itself from any actual text as well as from the expression of any specific content," he considered music the most Romantic of all the arts.⁷ In a section dealing with "the Romantic manner of presentation in relation to its content," he used uncharacteristically poetic imagery to describe the "musicality" of Romanticism's retreat from the external world:

In this relation [between inner and outer worlds], the inner, so pushed to the extreme, is an expression without any externality at all; it is invisible and is as it were a perception of itself alone, or a musical sound as such without objectivity and shape, or a hovering over the waters, or a ringing tone over a world which in and on its heterogeneous phenomena can only accept and re-mirror a reflection of this inwardness of soul.

Therefore if we sum up in *one* word this relation of content and form in Romantic art wherever this relation is preserved in its own special character, we may say that, precisely because the ever expanded universality and restlessly active depths of the heart are the principle here, the keynote of romantic art is *musical* and, if we make the content of this idea determinate, *lyrical*.⁸

⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), vol. 1, p. 518 ("Auf der Stufe der romantischen Kunst weiß der Geist, daß seine Wahrheit nicht darin besteht, sich in die Leiblichkeit zu versenken; im Gegenteil, er wird sich seiner Wahrheit nur dadurch gewiß, daß er sich aus dem Äußeren in seine Innigkeit mit sich zurückführt." Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970], vol. 2, pp. 128–29). Knox's translation, welcome as it is, needs to be read alongside the original. For example, he translates *Inhalt*, *Gehalt*, and *Gegenstand* variously as "content" or "subject matter" without indicating the original term. Hegel himself distinguished among these terms in obscure, problematic ways (see below), and Knox's inconsistent rendering only adds to the confusion.

⁶ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 519 ("Der wahre Inhalt des Romantischen ist die absolute Innerlichkeit, die entsprechende Form die geistige Subjektivität, als Erfassen ihrer Selbständigkeit und Freiheit." *Ästhetik*, vol. 2, p. 129).

⁷ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 2, p. 901 (trans. modified: "Daß die Musik unter allen Künsten die meiste Möglichkeit in sich schließe, sich nicht nur von jedem wirklichen Text, sondern auch von dem Ausdruck irgendeines bestimmten Inhalts zu befreien." *Ästhetik*, vol. 3, p. 148).

⁸ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, pp. 527–28:

Das Innere in diesem Verhältnis, so auf die Spitze hinausgetrieben, ist die äußerlichkeitslose Äußerung, unsichtbar gleichsam nur sich selber vernehmend, ein Tönen als solches, ohne Gegenständlichkeit und Gestalt, ein Schweben über den Wassern, ein Klingen über einer Welt, welche in ihren und an ihren heterogenen Erscheinungen nur einen Gegensein dieses Insichseins der Seele aufnehmen und widerspiegeln kann.

At times, however, Hegel seemed to distrust this emancipation from external reference, which could also imply a lack of spiritual content (*Inhalt* or *Gehalt*). This led him to view this aspect of music's subjective inwardness in a negative light. Music was "concerned only with the completely indeterminate movement of the inner spirit and with sounds as if they were feeling without thought," he stated, and it therefore needed "to have little or no spiritual material present in consciousness."⁹ Hegel went so far as to say that because music was free from subject matter, it "remains empty and meaningless, and because the one chief thing in all art, namely spiritual content and expression, is missing from it, it is not yet strictly to be called art."¹⁰ There was an uncertainty in the *Aesthetics*, therefore, in that Hegel portrayed Romantic subjective inwardness in art as a higher manifestation of spirit, but condemned this same inwardness in music as indicating the absence of spirit.

It has long been recognized that Hegel's treatment of music is the most problematic of his discussions of the different arts. Konrad Schüttauf has recently pointed out that Hegel's discussion of musical form and technique is cursory, especially compared to the corresponding section on poetry. Nor does he give a real historical account of music, mentioning only individual composers without putting them in historical context; furthermore, his understanding of the most significant music of his time seems to have been deficient, in that he places little value on instrumental music and neglects even to mention Beethoven.¹¹ But the fundamental problem with Hegel's view of music lay in his ambivalence concerning Romantic art in general. As is well known, he viewed his own era as a decadent phase of Romanticism signaling the end of art. He polemicized against Romanticism as empty subjectivity, as a lack of spirit, because he believed the spirit had moved on to religion and philosophy. "The conditions of our present time are not favourable to art ... considered in its highest vocation, [art] is and remains for us

Fassen wir daher dies Verhältnis des Inhalts und der Form im Romantischen, wo es sich in seiner Eigentümlichkeit erhält, zu einem Worte zusammen, so können wir sagen, der Grundton der Romantischen, weil eben die immer vergrößerte Allgemeinheit und rastlos arbeitende Tiefe des Gemüts das Prinzip ausmacht, sei *musikalisch* und, mit bestimmten Inhalte der Vorstellung, *lyrisch*. (*Ästhetik*, vol. 2, pp. 140–41.)

The elusiveness of the term "keynote" (*Grundton*) invites interpretation. It may be equivalent to Hegel's designation of music as the center or *Mittelpunkt* of the Romantic arts in that in his system, music marks the transition from the sensuousness of painting to the spirituality of poetry. See Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 88 (*Ästhetik*, vol. 1, p. 122).

⁹ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, p. 28 ("Die Musik z. B., welche es sich nur mit der ganz unbestimmten Bewegung des geistigen Innern, mit dem Tönen gleichsam der gedankenlosen Empfindung zu tun macht, hat wenigen oder keinen geistigen Stoff im Bewußtsein vonnöten." *Ästhetik*, vol. 1, p. 47).

¹⁰ Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 2, p. 902 ("Dann bleibt aber die Musik leer, bedeutungslos und ist, da ihr die eine Hauptseite aller Kunst, der geistige Inhalt und Ausdruck abgeht, noch nicht eigentlich zur Kunst zu rechnen." *Ästhetik*, vol. 3, pp. 148–49).

¹¹ Konrad Schüttauf, "Melos und Drama: Hegels Begriff der Oper," *Welt und Wirkung von Hegels Ästhetik*, Hegel-Studien: Beihefte, vol. 27, ed. Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1986), pp. 183–84.

a thing of the past."¹² Therefore, music as quintessentially Romantic evidenced all the signs that art had lost its function as bearer of spirit.

PRO-ROMANTIC REVISIONS OF HEGEL: WEISSE AND KRÜGER

Even during Hegel's lifetime, his aesthetic outline was reinterpreted with a more positive outlook for music and art in general. Christian Hermann Weisse, for example, published his own system of aesthetics in Leipzig in 1830.¹³ In contrast to Hegel's Symbolic-Classical-Romantic division of art history, Weisse distinguished ancient, Romantic and modern ideals, portraying the modern period as the culmination not only of art but also of the world spirit *in* art itself, rather than in philosophy, as in Hegel's system.¹⁴ Weisse also parted ways with Hegel regarding the status of music. While the two agreed that music was the most free of specific subject matter, for Weisse this was no flaw; indeed, it made music, specifically instrumental music, the purest embodiment of the modern ideal.¹⁵ Carl Dahlhaus has called Weisse's valorization of instrumental music a philosophical version of E. T. A. Hoffmann's and Wackenroder's literary tributes.¹⁶

It may seem odd that subsequent writers on music aesthetics did not adopt Weisse's framework instead of Hegel's. The simple reason for this is that Hegel commanded too much authority to allow for any alternatives. This was true even for aesthetics – a topic on which Hegel published nothing until a compilation of his notes and his students' transcripts of the lectures appeared posthumously in 1835 and in revised form in 1842. That year Eduard Krüger's important article, "Hegel's Philosophy of Music," appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (hereafter abbreviated as *NZfM*), marking the first comprehensive discussion in a music journal of Hegel's views on music.¹⁷

Born in 1807, Krüger studied at the universities at Berlin and Göttingen, and may have heard Hegel lecture on aesthetics.¹⁸ He began contributing to the *NZfM*

¹² Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, pp. 10–11 ("Deshalb ist unsere Gegenwart ihrem allgemeinen Zustande nach der Kunst nicht günstig ... In allen diesen Beziehungen ist und bleibt die Kunst nach der Seite ihrer höchsten Bestimmung für uns ein Vergangenes." *Ästhetik*, vol. 1, p. 25).

¹³ C. H. Weisse, *System der Ästhetik als Wissenschaft von der Idee der Schönheit* (Leipzig, 1830; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966).

¹⁴ See Hermann Lotze, *Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland* (Munich: J. G. Cotta, 1868), pp. 412–13.

¹⁵ See Weisse, "Die Instrumentalmusik," in *System der Aesthetik* (Leipzig: J. G. Findel, 1872), vol. 2, pp. 49–62.

¹⁶ Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 99–102.

¹⁷ Eduard Krüger, "Hegel's Philosophie der Musik," *NZfM* 17 (1842), pp. 25–28, 29–32, 35–37, 39–40, 43–45, 47–51, 53–56, 57–59, 63–64, 65–69. Part of this article is translated in *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Peter le Huray and James Day (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 530–36.

¹⁸ Hegel lectured on the topic at Berlin in the winter of 1820–21, the summers of 1823 and 1825, and the winter of 1828–29. See the biographical article on Krüger by Wolfgang Boetticher in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Friedrich Blume, vol. 7 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1958), cols. 1828–30. For an assessment of Krüger's contribution to music aesthetics, see Lotze, *Geschichte der Aesthetik in Deutschland*,

in 1839; three years later the journal's editor Robert Schumann prefaced the article on Hegel by referring to him as the journal's "most respected contributor." The next year Schumann recommended him for the editorship of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.¹⁹ Franz Brendel, who took over the *NZfM* in 1845, considered Krüger's article a "masterpiece."²⁰ The essay displays not only Krüger's expertise in Hegel's aesthetics but also his familiarity with the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* and other works by Hegel.

Krüger opened his essay by describing it as a "critique" (*Kritik*) of Hegel's philosophy of music. Such a critique at this time was not considered a refutation or rejection so much as a clarification and extension of what was considered the true spirit of his thought. Disagreements concerning the nature of this spirit, however, had led to a split in Hegel's followers. The left Hegelians – or "Young" Hegelians – employed the concept of *Kritik* to transform Hegel's conservative positions on religion and politics into radical ones. David Friedrich Strauss inaugurated this approach with his historical critique of the life of Jesus in 1835. It was carried to an extreme with Bruno Bauer, who preached atheism and revolution by quoting Hegel's writings in *The Trumpet of the Last Judgment over Hegel*. The right Hegelians – "Old" Hegelians – such as H. F. W. Hinrichs, also considered *Kritik* a fundamental mode of Hegelian thought, but never tried to reach such radical conclusions.²¹ But regardless of whether Krüger allied himself with the left or the right (and he seems to have had a definite leaning to the right), it was out of the question that his critique of the argument against music in the *Aesthetics* would openly reject Hegel's pronouncements; instead, he tried to negotiate them.

Within the framework of remaining a true Hegelian, then, Krüger ventured to discuss a cluster of related problems: how within Hegel's system, the aspect of art that affected the feelings had been devalued in favor of the transcendental Idea that spoke to the intellect; how within the *Aesthetics*, Hegel's concept of the "content" of art was confusing (the terms *Inhalt*, *Gehalt*, and *Gegenstand* being used in inconsistent ways); and, most importantly, how Hegel's claim that music had no content had not done justice to his own philosophy.

In order to make a stronger case for music, Krüger had to overcome the accusation that because it expressed feelings (*Empfindungen*) rather than thoughts (*Gedanken*), music embodied a lower form of spirit. According to Hegel,

The spiritual inner life proceeds from pure concentration of mind to views and ideas and to forms for these developed by imagination; but music remains capable rather of

pp. 495–96; and Walter Serauky, *Die musikalische Nachahmungsästhetik im Zeitraum von 1700 bis 1850* (Westfallen: Verlag Lechte Emsdetten, 1929), pp. 348–50.

¹⁹ See Schumann's letter to Krüger of October 20, 1843, in *Robert Schumann's Briefe: Neue Folge*, ed. F. Gustav Jansen (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1886), pp. 196–97.

²⁰ See Brendel's editorial footnote to Julius Schäffer, "Ueber musikalische Recensionen," *NZfM* 26 (1847), p. 74.

²¹ For the different Hegelian concepts of criticism, see Kurt Röttgers, *Kritik und Praxis: Zur Geschichte des Kritikbegriffs von Kant bis Marx* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), pp. 165–251.

expressing only the element of feeling, and it accompanies explicitly enunciated spiritual ideas with the melodious sounds expressive of feeling.²²

Krüger countered this by defending feelings as an important aspect of spirit; moreover, he denied that music was void of thought. In arguing the latter point, he attacked what could be called quite literally a “logocentric” attitude, that is, one that equated words with thought. Although Krüger did not dispute the Hegelian assumption that the highest form of thought was manifested in words, he insisted that words could still not adequately capture the Idea, that there was always a “surplus” of the “unsayable” that music was able to express.²³ Krüger variously referred to the aspect of art that could not be captured by words as the “natural element,” “the mystical,” the “beautiful,” and “*das Ewig-Weibliche*.” “What lies before and after the word is not the worst part of our spirit,” he declared.²⁴

Krüger also tackled the complex problem of Hegel’s inconsistent terminology in order to demonstrate how Hegel sometimes used *Inhalt* to refer to the spiritual element, the universal Idea present in music, but that at other times he used *Inhalt* to mean external subject matter (which would have been properly designated *Gegenstand*) or even verbal text. Krüger argued that the *Inhalt* of music could not be reduced to a verbal text because,

the text of a Handel chorus, for example, can be altered, translated, ultimately even dispensed with, and the pure music will remain the same. All of instrumental music, the most real and splendid daughter of modern Romanticism, dispenses with text; – should therefore Beethoven be called empty of content, meaning without spirit?²⁵

Using the example of Beethoven, he defended instrumental music as the pre-eminent form of music and held out for the possibility that its wordlessness manifested a higher form of truth.

In contesting Hegel’s tendency to regard feeling as incompatible with thought, Krüger also used another type of argument, one that relied on what he considered to be irrefutable evidence: the German national identity and its affinity for music.

It is a psychological fact that the most profound thinkers are also the richest and most infinite in the life of the heart; and the German people, who are principally allotted the work of thought, have always surpassed all others in feeling and longing for the next world. And music is endemic to them precisely for that reason; nowhere is the true profundity of this ineffable art so enjoyed to the full as among the German people.²⁶

²² Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 2, pp. 893–94 (“Denn das geistige Innere geht aus der bloßen Konzentration des Gemüts zu Anschauungen und Vorstellungen und deren durch die Phantasie ausgebildeten Formen fort, während die Musik mehr nur das Element der Empfindung auszudrücken befähigt bleibt und nun die für sich ausgesprochenen Vorstellungen des Geistes mit den melodischen Klängen der Empfindung umzieht.” *Ästhetik*, vol. 3, p. 138).

²³ Krüger, “Hegel’s Philosophie,” p. 30.

²⁴ “Was vor und nach dem Worte liegt, ist nicht das schlechteste Theil unseres Geistes.” *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁵ “Das Text z. B. eines Händel’schen Chores kann geändert, übersetzt, endlich auch weggelassen werden, und die reine Musik bleibt dieselbe. Die ganze Instrumentalmusik, die echtste und herrlichste Tochter der modernen Romantik, entbehrt des Textes; sollte deshalb Beethoven inhaltsleer, d. h. geistlos geheißen werden?” *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁶ “Es ist eine psychologische Thatsache, daß die tief sinnigsten Denker auch im Gemüthsleben die

Krüger reiterated his position in his review of August Kahlert's book on Hegelian aesthetics in 1846 and in his own book published the next year.²⁷ In sum, Krüger addressed Hegel's most pressing objection to music, that as quintessentially Romantic it manifested art's loss of content and spirit, by trying to show that spirit, Idea, and *Inhalt* could not be equated with words; he argued that the feeling dimension of subjectivity did give access to spirit. Krüger further claimed that Hegel himself had never wanted to suggest that abstract thinking could systematically account for the ineffable qualities of art. One problem that Krüger did not address, however, was Hegel's view that spirit had taken leave of Romantic art. Although he accepted the idea that music was quintessentially Romantic, Krüger did not, at this point, take a position on Romanticism and the end of art *vis-à-vis* Hegel.

As the political landscape began to change in the 1840s, the attitude towards Romantic art became more hostile. Liberal intellectuals who now focused on how to seize governmental power blamed Germany's political and economic backwardness on the people's fascination with Romanticism. Subjective inwardness was equated with passive, ineffective, and escapist behavior. Music did not escape the increasing tendency to treat Romanticism with suspicion.

REVOLUTIONARY ANTI-ROMANTICISM

The first philosopher to develop the political implications of Romanticism was Arnold Ruge. Ruge was the publicist of the Young Hegelians: he edited journals that from 1838 to 1843 served as the most important sources of the writings of Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, Max Stirner, and others who championed Hegel's absolute spirit as the spirit of humanism rather than of Christianity. More than his colleagues, Ruge brought an acute sense of political urgency to Hegelian thought. His journalistic mission set out to push philosophical idealism into the concrete realm of action, to transform philosophy into an enlightened activism. It was the role of poets and scholars, he insisted, to further the progress of the spirit by galvanizing people to act politically in order to attain the freedom proclaimed by philosophy. In 1846 Ruge published *Our Classicists and Romanticists since Lessing*, a polemical literary history.²⁸ This book contained his famous satirical "Romantic Catechism," in which he ridiculed the beliefs of a "true Romantic." These

reichsten, unendlichsten sind; und das deutsche Volk, welchem vorzugsweise die Arbeit des Gedankens beschieden ist, hat von jeher in schwärmerischer Empfindung und jenseitigem Sehnen alle anderen übertroffen. Und eben darum ist bei ihm die Musik einheimisch und nirgend die wahre Tiefe dieser unsäglichen Kunst so auskostet, wie bei dem deutschen Volke." *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁷ Krüger, "Die Aesthetik der Tonkunst nach Kahlert," *NZfM* 25 (1846), pp. 171-74, 175-76, 179-80, 187-88, 191-93; and Krüger, *Beiträge für Leben und Wissenschaft der Tonkunst* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1847).

²⁸ Arnold Ruge, *Unsre Classiker und Romantiker seit Lessing: Geschichte der neuesten Poesie und Philosophie. Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1 (Mannheim: J. P. Grohe, 1846). The book is mainly a reprint of "Der Protestantismus und die Romantik" that appeared in installments in Ruge's and Echtermeyer's *Hallische Jahrbücher für deutsche Wissenschaft und Kunst* in 1839-40.

included: enthusiasm for the Middle Ages, medieval art, Catholicism, and wandering alone in the forest; a preference for folk songs and poetry over high art; a longing for Italy, and a hatred of the French and the Enlightenment.²⁹ Ruge went on to argue that these beliefs were more than "harmless absurdities": this "aesthetic catholicism of the genial aristocracy" was deeply reactionary and continued to be a dangerous political enemy of the quest for spiritual freedom. His two main examples were Friedrich Schlegel and Friedrich von Gentz, who were condemned for their overarching aestheticizing egotism and irresponsible ironic attitude, which had led to such artistic atrocities as Schlegel's novel *Lucinde* and political transgressions such as serving in Metternich's reactionary government.³⁰

Ruge focused most of his energy on combatting political Romanticism and speculating on what art could do to help transform the coming new age. He had little to say, however, about Romanticism from the standpoint of aesthetics. He and other left-Hegelian critics were not so much interested in evaluating the works themselves as their political message; therefore they tended to neglect aesthetic issues and fall back on standards of form and genre that relied implicitly on the works of Weimar Classicism and, in particular, of a classicized Goethe.³¹ This lack of a developed Young Hegelian aesthetic theory would further muddy the already murky waters of the musical Romanticism debate.

Ruge's anti-Romanticism resonated deeply with the new tendencies of the *NZfM* in the late 1840s. Under the editorship of Franz Brendel beginning in 1845, the journal embraced Young Hegelian views on criticism, philosophy, and art. Brendel belonged to the Young Hegelians both by generation and by outlook: born in 1811, he had studied Hegelian philosophy and aesthetics in Leipzig with Weisse, but had then put aesthetics aside to spend four semesters at the University of Berlin. The progressive, left-Hegelian slant of the *NZfM* under Brendel became most apparent when compared to the objectives of its rival journal in Leipzig, the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (hereafter *AmZ*). When Robert Schumann had founded the *NZfM* in 1834 in opposition to the *AmZ*, the two papers had had different musical tastes but basically the same format and readership. Both of these journals had aimed to provide information about publications and performances while entertaining all kinds of music enthusiasts. When Brendel took over, however, his long, theoretical articles and historical overviews transformed the journal into something more philosophical and scholarly. In 1847 the *NZfM* adopted another distinguishing feature in the form of reports on the proceedings of the *Tonkünstler-Versammlung*, a national music conference which Brendel had

²⁹ Ruge, "Romantischer Katechismus," *Unsre Classiker und Romantiker*, pp. 430–31.

³⁰ Ruge, "Friedrich von Gentz und die politische Consequenz der Romantik," *Unsre Classiker und Romantiker*, pp. 432–50.

³¹ See Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Literary Criticism in the Epoch of Liberalism, 1820–70," *A History of German Literary Criticism, 1730–1980*, ed. Hohendahl (Lincoln, Nebr., and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 179–276.

founded. In publishing these, Brendel conveyed a sense that musicians were organized and actively working to solve their common problems. The political symbolism of this association was evident to all and was hotly debated.

By 1848 the *AmZ* fought almost continuously with the *NZfM* over the politicization of musical matters. The *AmZ* usually initiated the quarrels, but would then retreat when the *NZfM* responded with long rebuttals. In one of the controversies that occurred in the midst of the 1848 revolutions, Brendel explicitly politicized their differences and identified the *AmZ* as the music paper of the conservative party and the *NZfM* as the organ of the reform movement.³² The *AmZ*, however, was not the only source of opposition to the insurgents of the *NZfM*; there was also perceptible tension within the *NZfM* itself. Brendel maintained the progressive tone of the journal with his own extensive contributions, and he could also count on a few others to support his views. But Brendel's most distinguished contributor, Krüger, remained aloof. Carl Kossmaly was another veteran contributor who refused to join in. Moreover, both Krüger and Kossmaly occasionally contributed to the *AmZ*, which further distanced them from Brendel's views.

Krüger's and Brendel's disagreements concerned the function and judgment of art. While Krüger struggled to legitimate music from within Hegel's aesthetic theory, Brendel, like other Young Hegelians, mainly ignored the difficulties in music aesthetics by focusing on Hegel's historical method. The central principle of Brendel's criticism was no longer to judge merely whether something was beautiful or not, but rather to establish how a particular work reflected the spirit of the age; this was to determine its value and whether it belonged to the future. Brendel printed Krüger's essays without adding any dissenting comments (as he sometimes did) until the revolution actually broke out. At the height of enthusiasm for the revolution in June of 1848, Krüger wrote a provocative article for the *AmZ*, "Relationships between Art and Politics," which declared that music, as an occasion for contemplation of the beautiful, could have nothing to do with political revolution.³³ Brendel found this attitude unacceptable, and finally accused his contributor of not giving music credit for its importance and influence on world events. Krüger "is happiest withdrawn in contemplation, less happy with what concerns external, practical matters," he remarked indignantly.³⁴ In Brendel's view, it was essential to recognize that times had changed and that the age of "that quiet coziness, that harmless pleasure in art" was over.³⁵

³² Brendel, "Fragen der Zeit: III. Die Forderungen der Gegenwart und die Berechtigung der Vorzeit," *NZfM* 29 (1848), pp. 101-02.

³³ Krüger, "Beziehungen zwischen Kunst und Politik," *AmZ* 50 (1848), cols. 401-05, 481-88, 842-43. Columns 401-04 and 481-84 of this article are translated in le Huray and Day, *Music and Aesthetics*, pp. 566-69.

³⁴ "Ist er in der abgezogenen Betrachtung am glücklichsten, minder glücklich dagegen was äußere, praktische Dinge betrifft." Brendel, review of Krüger, *Beiträge für Leben und Wissenschaft der Tonkunst*, *NZfM* 29 (1848), p. 131.

³⁵ "Jene stille Gemüthlichkeit, jene harmlose Freude an der Kunst." *Ibid.*, p. 131.

There was one glaring problem for Young Hegelian music critics such as Brendel: in adapting Ruge's political argument to music, they had to confront the fact that Ruge himself understood music as Romantic through and through, with all its negative implications. Ruge's case against music was far less complicated than Hegel's in that he reduced it merely to an occasion for regressive behavior. Almost primordial in its expression of inarticulate feelings, music as characterized by Ruge hindered rather than helped the rational spirit's struggle for freedom. Music could never be more than the expression of an indeterminate mood (*Stimmung*), he argued, elaborating:

As long as it does not clearly accompany word and action, [music] certainly stands too far away from thought to bring it to definite validity. Music throws all its energy into moods – these stimulate it; the dark, Romantic basis of life, fermentation as such, in the most varied gradations and tendencies, from dissolving in melancholy to gathering up the soul in boldest self-confidence and feelings of victory – that it knows how to express.³⁶

In a chapter devoted to ravaging the poetry of Ludwig Tieck, Ruge singled out the first four lines of the poem "Liebe" as an example of the Romantics' attraction to the nebulousness of music:

Love must think in music sweetly,
for all thought is too remote.
Only music can denote
all that love desires completely.³⁷

For Ruge, Tieck's wish to "think in music" was nonsense, nothing more than willful mystification. Obviously, music critics who wished to purge musical Romanticism had to modify Ruge's stance in order to salvage their own legitimacy and a repertoire with which they could positively engage. As a result, various strategies for eradicating Romanticism without destroying music emerged. These included: (1) relegating Romanticism to the past as a finished period of music history; (2) dividing Romanticism into the "true" or good type and the epigonic "caricature"; (3) envisioning a non-Romantic, "democratic" music of the future; and (4) maneuvering within aesthetic theory in an attempt to renegotiate Hegel's verdict on music. The subsequent debates in the *NZfM* exemplified all these tactics.

C. Kretschmann's polemic "Romanticism in Music," which appeared in July of 1848, was the first article to embrace fully the new anti-Romantic attitude towards

³⁶ "So lange sie nicht ausdrücklich Wort und Handlung begleitet, die Gedanken ihr allerdings zu ferne stehn, um sie zum bestimmten Stichhalten zu bringen. Die Musik wirft alle Energie in die *Stimmung*, diese regt sie an; den dunklen, romantischen Gemüthsgrund, die Gährung als solche, in den verschiedensten Abstufungen und Richtungen vom Zerfließen in Schwermuth bis zur Zusammennahme der Seele ins tapferste Selbst- und Siegsgefühl, das weiß sie auszudrücken." Ruge, *Unsre Classiker und Romantiker*, p. 370.

³⁷ "Liebe denkt in süßen Tönen, / Denn Gedanken stehn zu fern, / Nur in Tönen mag sie gern / Alles, was sie will, verschönen." Ludwig Tieck, "Liebe," quoted by Ruge, *Unsre Classiker und Romantiker*, p. 368, trans. Herman Salinger in *German Poetry from 1750 to 1900*, ed. Robert M. Browning (New York: Continuum, 1984), p. 133.

music.³⁸ An obscure correspondent for the paper from Magdeburg, Kretschmann outlined a history of musical Romanticism that relied heavily – even to the point of plagiarism – on Ruge's literary history. Kretschmann adopted Ruge's characterization of music as Romantic in both a general and a historical sense. "In general, the subject matter [*Gegenstand*] of music is mood [*die Stimmung*]," he declared, echoing Ruge. "It brings expression to this most inward process of personality that is not yet concept, not yet determination, the heart in its immediacy."³⁹ In his historical sketch, Kretschmann charged that all music after Beethoven was more or less Romantic, which he described as "the feeling of being unfortunate in love and life"; "eternal longing without end or result"; and an enthusiasm for nature, religious absorption in the mysticism of faith, and fascination with "the wondrous and the mysterious."⁴⁰

Kretschmann's article brought to light another dimension of the attack on Romanticism. While Ruge posed Classic and Romantic categories as a political issue, Kretschmann's musical discussion presented the problem in terms of gender. Although for Ruge, Romanticism had been a reaction to the Enlightenment, Kretschmann based his theory on what was then known as "Anthropologie."⁴¹ He speculated that, in creating an artwork, the movement of the heart (*Gemüth*) took place between two poles: between the manly side, to which "character" and history belonged, and the feminine side, sentimental and nature-loving. An imbalance, an over-reliance on the feminine in artistic production had resulted in Romantic music. "We call Romanticism the art of womanly pathos," he pronounced.⁴²

The only pre-Romantic composers that Kretschmann discussed were Haydn, whom he characterized as a "child," not yet sexually differentiated, and Beethoven, whose manly reserve stood in stark contrast to the feminine expressivity of his successors. Within musical Romanticism itself, Kretschmann distinguished a Romantic lyricism, which he identified in the Lieder of Schubert, Loewe, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Robert Franz; a Romantic humor, found in piano works by Chopin and Schumann; and Romantic drama, musically realized in the operas of Weber and Meyerbeer. But the Romantic era was now over, Kretschmann insisted, and he criticized such diverse composers as Niels Gade, Félicien David,

³⁸ "Romantik in der Musik," *NZfM* 29 (1848), pp. 1–6, 9–11. Although the article itself is signed only "Magdeburg, Mai 1848. □" the author is listed as C. Kretschmann in the index to that volume of the *NZfM*. The signature "Magdeburg. □." appears beneath a review of the first two parts of Vischer's *Ästhetik* for the *NZfM* in the next year (*NZfM* 30 [1849], pp. 157–59, 165–68).

³⁹ "Der Gegenstand der Musik überhaupt ist die *Stimmung*, sie bringt diesen innerlichsten Proceß der Persönlichkeit, der noch nicht Begriff, noch nicht Entschluß ist, das Gemüth in seiner Unmittelbarkeit zum Ausdruck." Kretschmann, "Romantik," p. 1.

⁴⁰ "Unglücksgefühl in Liebe und Leben"; "ein ewiges Sehnen ohne End und ohne Resultat"; "das Wunderbare und Geheimnißvolle." *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴¹ Hegel, for instance, documented the physiological and psychological factors involved in the progress of the soul (*Seele*) in the "Anthropologie" section of his *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*. See M. J. Petry's introduction to *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, trans. Petry (Dordrecht, Holland, and Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1978), vol. 1, pp. lxvii–lxvi.

⁴² "Wir sie [Romantik] die Kunst des weiblichen Pathos nannten." Kretschmann, "Romantik," p. 4.

Hector Berlioz, Meyerbeer, and Wagner for perpetuating a Romantic attitude that had led to enervation, weakness, and disease. In order to regain its masculinity, music must now become democratic, he declared, comparing the spirit of revolution to a thunderstorm whose cool breezes would banish the sultry air of the past.

Kretschmann's article is remarkable in its damning feminization of all art music after Beethoven. Far from rescuing any specific music from the anti-Romanticism movement, he seemed virtually at the point of renouncing art music altogether. Although he did try to portray musical Romanticism as a closed historical period, he could give no concrete details about what he expected or desired for the non-Romantic, democratic future of music. In fact, Kretschmann's requirements for the new music seemed loose enough to accept the idea that democratic music could be practically synonymous with Classicism. Directly after his call for music to become democratic, he declared, "Henceforth we do not *want* Romanticism, we are *sick* of it; we uplift and edify ourselves for the dawn of the new day of our Classicists; how much we need them for the purification of the world!"⁴³ Kretschmann had mentioned Classicism only briefly, in a passage in which he had described the Romantic humor of Schumann's piano works as occasionally breaking through to the "path to the peak of Classicism."⁴⁴

Other critics, though, viewed Classicism just as negatively as they did Romanticism. In his article "On the Concept of Classical and Romantic Music," published in the *AmZ* in May 1848, August Kahlert depicted a musical crisis in which both the "sheer madness" of Romanticism and the "lifeless routine" of Classicism were deemed equally unacceptable.⁴⁵ Kahlert concluded rather half-heartedly that perhaps the recent political upheavals would eradicate the soul-sapping Romanticism and the dead procedures of Classicism and foster a healthier situation for the people, which could then result in a more vital and balanced creative force in music.

To the more extreme musical revolutionaries, the idea of an activist, democratic music seemed a brilliant circumvention of the unappealing alternatives of Classic and Romantic. In the summer of 1848, a musician named Bierwirth invoked Kretschmann's anti-Romantic argument in a speech at Brendel's *Tonkünstler-Versammlung*, calling for a "radical reform of our artistic life" that would enable the era to grasp its new democratic content (*Inhalt*).⁴⁶ Bierwirth steered clear of condemning all music of the past by distinguishing between "true" Romanticism and its caricature, which, he claimed, had an "exclusive, aristocratic

⁴³ "Wir wollen fürder keine Romantik, wir sind ihrer müde; erheben und erbauen wir uns bis zum Anbrechen des neuen Tages an unseren Klassikern; wie sehr bedürfen wir doch ihrer noch zur Reinigung der Welt!" *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁴⁴ "Den Pfad zum Gipfel der Classicität." *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁵ Karl August Kahlert, "Ueber den Begriff der klassischen und romantischen Musik," *AmZ* 50 (1848), cols. 289-95, trans. in le Huray and Day, *Music and Aesthetics*, pp. 559-65.

⁴⁶ "Was wollen wir? - Eine radicale Reform unseres Kunstlebens." Bierwirth, quoted in Brendel, "Die Tonkünstler-Versammlung zu Leipzig," *NZfM* 29 (1848), p. 111.

character" and a "sick sentimentality." Like Kretschmann, however, Bierwirth and others became vague when they expounded the new democratic music, never going beyond calling for a change in what they referred to as "content" or "sensibility" (*Inhalt* or *Gesinnung*). Brendel, for instance, insisted that any composer worthy of the age would renounce the old, aristocratic frame of mind for the new democratic sensibility.⁴⁷ This concerned only the content of the art work, he reiterated. The particulars of the craft, such as form, were a totally different matter.

As for composers who represented a democratic content in their work, the *NZfM* claimed there were many. But they cited only one: Beethoven. In the words of one enthusiastic critic, "Beethoven was a democrat not only in his life but also in his art; he was filled with the spiritual forces [*geistigen Mächte*] of his age and attested to this in his works."⁴⁸ While Wagner was not yet considered a viable contender to succeed Beethoven in this role, there was a short-lived attempt in the *NZfM* to put forth Schumann. Schumann, though, was a problematic candidate for several reasons, not the least of which was that he was simultaneously being portrayed as the Romantic composer *par excellence*. Kretschmann's confusing depiction of Schumann was typical of how the composer was viewed at the time: after describing Schumann's music as breaking out of Romanticism into Classicism, he went on to call for a democratic music and announce that he expected great things from Schumann. Several other critics in the *NZfM* also upheld Schumann as a democratic composer at this time. When the journal was taken over by Wagner's supporters, however, this notion quickly disappeared.⁴⁹

POST-REVOLUTIONARY ANTI-ROMANTICISM

The first signs that there were problems with the anti-Romantic impetuosity of Kretschmann's essay appeared in the summer of 1849, when it was clear that revolutionary opportunities had been squandered. The collapse of the revolution immediately extended to a sense of failure in musical circles. There was a strong sense that music had lost its chance for a transformed future. Hegel's pronouncement on the end of art no longer held out the promise for something better than

⁴⁷ Brendel, "Fragen der Zeit: III.," p. 104.

⁴⁸ "Beethoven war Demokrat nicht nur im Leben, auch in seiner Kunst, er war erfüllt von den geistigen Mächten seiner Zeit und beglaubigte dies in seinen Werken." Ernst Gottschald, "Ein Prophet des Stillstands und zwei Artikel der Allg. musik. Zeitung: Herrn J. Schucht, dem Verf. derselben," *NZfM* 29 (1848), p. 299.

⁴⁹ I examine how Alfred Dörffel, Ernst Gottschald, and Emmanuel Klitzsch promoted Schumann as a democratic composer in the *NZfM* in my dissertation, "Enlightened and Romantic German Music Criticism, 1800–1850" (University of Pennsylvania, 1995). Schumann himself seems to have been amenable to the role; see Schumann's letters to Brendel of July 3, 1848, which comments favorably on Kretschmann's article (*Robert Schumann's Briefe*, pp. 245–46), and of June 17, 1849 (*Robert Schumann's Briefe*, pp. 261–62). See also Reinhard Kapp, "Schumann nach der Revolution: Vorüberlegungen, Statements, Hinweise, Materialien, Fragen," in *Schumann in Düsseldorf*, Schumann Forschungen, vol. 3, ed. Bernhard R. Appel (Mainz: Schott, 1993), pp. 315–415.

art, such as a democratic music; and now – out of the ruins of the failed revolution – all the negative implications of the death of a vital tradition began to emerge with full force. As early as July 1849, Krüger deplored the events of the previous year and pronounced: "True artistic life is over."⁵⁰

A detailed, three-part response to Kretschmann's essay in the *NZfM* by Julius Schäffer took the new, post-revolutionary approach to the problem of musical Romanticism.⁵¹ Schäffer's argument opened by recalling how the Romantic movement had begun by attacking what he called "those fossilized outgrowths of classicism":

The Romantic heroes bravely struck into them; one saw the old gnarled trunks fall all around under their powerful strokes. Many strange flowers with gleaming colors and narcotic fragrance sprouted out of the cleansed field, thriving all the more quickly at such a fertile time, maturing rapidly. They have already faded and their offshoots have maintained nothing of the splendor and freshness of the first blossoming. Already a new warning forcefully pervades the world: to forget not in the garden of perfumed flowers the statue of Apollo!⁵²

Schäffer's garden of music presented in more metaphorical terms the same two gendered musical stances that had appeared in Kretschmann's article, with Classicism portrayed as more enduring and unchanging than the quickly fading flowers of Romanticism. But now that there was no immediate hope for a democratic future, Schäffer appealed to composers to do an about-face and retreat to the Classicism represented by Apollo.

The novelty of Schäffer's anti-Romantic strategy lay in his attempt to reconceptualize music at the most basic level of perception in order to disavow a Romantic affiliation. Arguing that Hegel had admitted that he knew nothing about music, and that Ruge (with all due respect) was musically naïve, he tried to show that their assumptions about music were not consistent with their theories

⁵⁰ "Das eigentliche künstlerische Leben ist dahin," Krüger, "Hochschule der Tonkunst," *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* 3 (1849), p. 217.

⁵¹ Julius Schäffer, "Romantik in der Musik," *NZfM* 31 (1849), pp. 77–80, 85–88; "II. Das historische Auftreten der Musik," *NZfM* 32 (1850), pp. 189–91; "III. Die musikalische Kritik," 201–02. Schäffer first contributed to the *NZfM* in 1847 when as a twenty-four-year-old philosophy and theology student from Halle, he initiated a drawn-out debate on the purpose of reviewing music: "Ueber musikalische Rezensionen," *NZfM* 26 (1847), pp. 73–75, 77–79, 83–85, 91–92, 95–96. Schäffer wrote insightful essays on both Schumann and Wagner for the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* in the early 1850s.

⁵² "Jenen verknöcherten Auswuchs der Classicität, mit Stumpf und Stiel auszurotten. Die romantischen Helden haben tapfer drein geschlagen; – rings umher sah man unter ihren kräftigen Streichen die alten knorrigen Stämme fallen, viele fremdartige Blumen mit strahlenden Farben und narkotischem Dufte auf dem gesäuberten Felde hervorsprossen und in der rastlos fortschreitenden, jetzt zumal so fruchtbaren Zeit zur schnellen Reife gedeihen. Schon sind sie welk geworden, und ihre Nachseker haben Nichts von dem Glanze und der Frische der ersten Sprößlinge bewahrt. Schon durchzieht mit Macht die Welt eine neue Mahnung: in dem Garten voll dustender Blumen die Apollo-Statue nicht zu vergessen!" Schäffer, "Romantik in der Musik," p. 77. Schäffer was drawing upon a tradition of describing Romanticism as a flower: in another article on the same topic around this time, Otto Lange described Romanticism as "overripe fruit" and "hot house flowers." Otto Lange, "Die Grenzen des Klassischen und Romantischen in der Musik," *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* 4 (1850), p. 113.

of the other arts. Schäffer's main objection to Kretschmann was that music was not just vague emotion, but that it involved a thinking process from its inception. He took issue with Kretschmann's first premise, that music was primarily concerned with *Stimmung*. Moods as such cannot be the subject matter (*Gegenstand*) of music as art, Schäffer declared, and then tried to counteract Kretschmann's linking of music with the feminine by asking rhetorically, "Why else is it that precisely music, more than any other art, is the provenance of man, for whom thought predominates, and not rather of woman, where feeling is much more directly at work?"⁵³ Schäffer then succinctly declared that the dispute lay in the fact that Kretschmann put moods before thought, while he considered musical moods as the product of thought.⁵⁴ This formulation of the problem, the primacy of thought versus feeling in music, became the main issue within the musical Romanticism debate. Schäffer's strategy of insisting on the "thinking" qualities of art music distanced it from the irrational and emotional world of Romanticism. Krüger's pre-revolutionary argument that music, although it did have thoughts, began and ended with the beautiful, eternally feminine aspect that eluded thought, was no longer considered a sufficient legitimization of music.

ANTI-ROMANTICISM AND NEO-ROMANTICISM

Pushing ahead briefly into the second half of the nineteenth century shows how the musical solutions to Hegel's critique of Romantic music seem in part to spring from the two main approaches put forward by Kretschmann and Schäffer. Kretschmann's view of Romantic music as feminine was taken to figurative extremes by Richard Wagner, who in his important theoretical work of 1851, *Opera and Drama*, went so far as to pronounce that "music is a woman."⁵⁵ Wagner accepted the Romantic view that music was indeed essentially feminine, being natural, passive, and emotional, but proposed remedying this problem by providing it with a "man," that is, with poetry, to complement it with the qualities it lacked.

Schäffer's approach, on the other hand, laid the groundwork for Eduard Hanslick's influential *On the Musically Beautiful* of 1854. While Hanslick parted with Schäffer in renouncing the central Hegelian metaphysical premise of the Idea in favor of "purely musical" meaning, he was, however, indebted to Schäffer for the idea that listening to music was above all a thinking process, that "without

⁵³ "Warum ist gerade die Musik mehr als jede andere Kunst Eigenthum des Mannes, in welchem der Gedanke vorherrscht, und nicht vielmehr des Weibes, wo doch das Gefühl viel unmittelbarer waltet?" Schäffer, "Romantik in der Musik," p. 86.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁵⁵ Richard Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, ed. Felix Groß (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, n.d.), p. 94. For a recent discussion of this aspect of Wagner's theoretical writings, see Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Wagner Androgyne: A Study in Interpretation*, trans. Stewart Spencer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), especially chap. 1, "The Theoretical Essays of 1849 to 1851," pp. 12-42; and chap. 6, "Musica Triumphans (1851-1873)," pp. 128-62.

mental activity, there can be no aesthetical pleasure whatever."⁵⁶ For Hanslick, this insight effectively refuted what he called "the oldest accusation against music ...: that it enervates us, makes us flabby, causes us to languish."⁵⁷

Despite all this philosophical maneuvering, the revolt in music criticism against Romanticism proved to be as ineffective as the political revolutions it accompanied. In 1850 the Berlin music critic Otto Lange characterized the renewed sentimental clinging to Romantic music as follows: "The love for Romanticism is the mother's love for a dying child, the last hope of an art-craving heart that thinks with painful melancholy on the beautiful past."⁵⁸ Hegel's argument that music could not serve as a bearer of spirit, but only as an occasion for regressive subjectivity, seemed to be accepted, even embraced, in the second half of the century. Dahlhaus has called this the phenomenon of musical "neo-romanticism":

In spite of all the questions it begs, "neo-romantic" is appropriate if it is interpreted as acknowledging the fact that the music of the second half of the nineteenth century was still Romantic, while the current of the age as expressed in literature and painting had moved on to realism and impressionism.⁵⁹

I would modify this assertion only slightly. It was not so much that "music was still Romantic" as that music was *perceived* as having an unchangeable Romantic nature – and that this is why it was presumed to be unable to keep up with the other arts and the spirit of the times in general.

Even though we have (or think we have) discarded the Hegelian view of aesthetic issues, art music continues to bear the burden of its seemingly indissoluble link to Romanticism. Because they overlook the history of anti-Romanticism, recent books such as Daverio's *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology* perpetuate the misleading notion that nineteenth-century music can be unified as one continuous Romantic era. As manifested in literature, Romanticism has been studied as a discontinuous, historically contingent philosophical attitude and political stance. But this approach has fallen short of music because of the uncertainty concerning whether music is quintessentially Romantic or only historically so.

The years around the 1848 revolutions marked the first groundswell of anti-Romantic sentiment in music criticism. The confusion and contradictions within

⁵⁶ Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1986), p. 64 ("Ohne geistige Thätigkeit giebt es überhaupt keinen ästhetischen Genuß." *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, 9th edn [Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1896], p. 169).

⁵⁷ Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, p. 61 ("Dies ist der Punkt, in welchen die ältesten Anklagen gegen die Tonkunst ihre Wurzel haben; daß sie entnerve, verweichliche, erschlafe." *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, p. 160).

⁵⁸ "Die Liebe zur Romantik ist die Liebe der Mutter zum sterbenden Kinde, die letzte Hoffnung eines kunstbedürftigen Gemüths, das mit schmerzlicher Wehmuth der schönen Vergangenheit gedenkt." Lange, "Die Grenzen des Klassischen und Romantischen," p. 113.

⁵⁹ Carl Dahlhaus, "Neo-romanticism," in *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1980), p. 5.

this critique reveal how Hegel's fundamental ambivalence about music and art in general developed into an anxiety over music's purportedly Romantic and feminine nature. Further investigation of the history of musical anti-Romanticism can help to position this music historically as part of the cultural, philosophical, and political discourses that make Romanticism a vital issue today.