

JUDAISM IN MUSIC

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# JUDAISM IN MUSIC

ML

(DAS JUDENTHUM IN DER MUSIK)

410

•WI

Being The Original Essay together  
with the later Supplement

A22

1910

BY

RICHARD WAGNER

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN  
AND FURNISHED WITH EXPLANA-  
TORY NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

BY

EDWIN EVANS, SENIOR, F.R.C.O.

*Author of "The Relation of Tchaïkovsky to Art-Questions of the Day"; "Handbook  
to the Works of Brahms"; "How to Compose within the Lyric Form," etc.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

IT may be fairly presumed that none will deem the re-issue in English dress of Wagner's "Das Judenthum in der Musik" to imply any desire to revive the matters of controversy therein contained. The lapse of nearly sixty years since publication of the original essay and of forty since Wagner's account to Madame Muchanoff (and hence to the world) of the consequences attracted to himself by the publication should alone suffice to point unmistakably to the unlikelihood of any such proposition.

It is, on the contrary, because, on one side as on the other, the bitterness of feeling evoked may now be counted upon to have entirely subsided that it at last becomes possible calmly to seek to draw from the essay those valuable lessons relating to Art-culture which are contained, not in that aspect of the main subject by which Wagner was most excited, or his adversaries most offended, but in those subsidiary references and explanations by means of

which he then thought merely to support his case, but to which time has given a greater value than to the case itself.

Just as it was natural to so great a mind to be occasionally beset by the infirmities which afflict us all, such as that of attributing our misfortunes to imaginary causes, so it was also natural to him to engage in service of his argument a strength of reasoning and depth of feeling which, in a condition of such strenuous exercise, were sure to produce a dissertation far too rich in subjects for reflection to be allowed to remain associated in our minds with a mere quarrel.

The present issue, therefore, differs materially from those which have preceded it; and primarily in the fact that, in the annotations, the principal stress is laid upon such themes as are merely incidental to the main argument and which, by their neutral character, promise to confer more benefit upon the reader in elucidation than would be likely to accrue from any enlargement upon the more personal subject. So far as any comment upon the merits of the case has been permitted at all, it has been rather in the direction of pointing to some weaknesses in Wagner's contentions; but this has been merely in the desire to render the whole matter intelligible to the ordinary reader and not in the faintest spirit of fault-finding either with the reasoning or display of feeling of one to whom the whole world of music owes so great a debt.

Fortunately the circumstances of the quarrel are described in such detail by the pamphlet itself that little remained necessary in the way of either criticism or explanation of it; and it is due to this fact that occasion has been taken to refer, as before stated, to such propositions as are enunciated by the way. As these comments also speak for themselves we have only to bestow a word upon the method pursued in the translation.

The philosophic prose of Wagner is so peculiarly German that, when quite literally reproduced in our language, it is liable to appear vague, and therefore to produce an effect differing from that upon the German mind, which is more accustomed to this particular literary style. The German student, accustomed to lengthy and complicated sentences with an unbroken flow of text, is thus in the enjoyment of a double advantage as compared with an English reader; for he has not only the original in hand, but also in the very form which a life-long habit has rendered most suitable to him.

In view of these facts the object has been to translate (as far as this has been possible without undue divergence from the original) into flowing English; and at the same time, to divide the matter according to its intention, prefixing to the divisions and subdivisions an indication of their contents whereby the English reader may, so to speak, be made to feel at home, and to some extent forget that it is a translation in the perusal of which he is engaged. Not

altogether for his mere pleasure has this been done, but principally that he may be induced by an attractive aspect to give the subject a sustained attention; that, in other words, Wagner's own writing may not here suffer in the same way as did, according to his own account, the article on "Music" written by Hanslick for Vischer's system of *Æsthetics*, and which, as he tells us, though loudly praised in the press, was never read by anyone, in consequence of its unamusing character.\*

The hope is indulged that, as now presented, the subject will prove as entertaining as it undoubtedly is instructive. It may further be hoped that the comments ventured upon with every impartiality of intention may be fortunate enough to appear grateful to the reader, whatever may be his particular groove of thought.

EDWIN EVANS, SENR.

LONDON, *January, 1910.*

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\* "Lethargy of the New *Æsthetes*": Chap. X.

TO MADAME MARIE MUCHANOFF

(née Countess Nesselrode).

Honoured Madam,

A short time since I received the report of an enquiry made by you with some astonishment during a discussion in which you took part as to the origin of the hostility met with by all my artistic productions, especially from the press of the day; and that not only of Germany, but also of France and even England; a hostility inconceivable to you, though obviously designed for the purpose of disparagement.

It has also happened to me, occasionally, to encounter the like expression of astonishment, even in the press itself; though this usually occurs only in the report of some inexperienced new-comer. An idea has seemed somehow to be extant that my art-theories must necessarily contain some quality provocative of dispute; for otherwise it would appear

impossible to explain why I should be so invariably selected to be, under every circumstance, unscrupulously classified as a trifler or an incompetent; and afterwards to be treated accordingly.

Not only will a ray of light be shed upon this question by the communication I am about to make, and with which I venture to reply to your enquiry, but it will also be explained why I am, myself, obliged personally to engage in its settlement.

The fact of your not being alone in your surprise causes me to give the necessary answer publicly; as, in doing so, I am enabled to reply to many others at the same time. This is a duty which I could not safely depute to any of my friends; for I know of none who are in a position so independent and protected that I should dare to draw upon them the enmity to which I am myself exposed; and one against which my power of defence is so slight that all I can do is to explain clearly its origin to my friends.

Such an undertaking is attended, even in my own case, with some misgiving; but this does not proceed at all from fear of my enemies, seeing that, from that quarter, as I have nothing to hope for, so I have also nothing to be afraid of. It proceeds rather from anxious solicitude for those generous and truly sympathetic friends with whom Fate has endowed me, and who by race are connected with the national-religious element of European society in question; and the irreconcilable hatred of which I

have attracted to myself by discussion of characteristics both hard to root out and disadvantageous to our culture.

Against this, however, I must set the encouragement which I derive from observing that these rare friends are in the same—or even in a worse position than myself; seeing that they are called upon to suffer even more poignantly from the same oppression which has fallen to my lot. I could therefore scarcely hope to make my exposition entirely clear without elucidating also this oppression, by means of which the ruling Jewish society impedes the really human development of its own race.

This being so, I will commence with an article written and published by me some eighteen years ago.

## NOTE.

THE rendering of the Title here employed is that sanctioned by common usage; but one of absolute correctness would involve the use of some term of kindred value to "Christendom" as applied to Christianity. The term Judaism would indicate rather the Jewish *religion*, which is not here in question; and the precise idea of "Judenthum" would be better conveyed to an English reader, say, by the term "Jew-dom"—were it permissible to use the expression.



# JUDAISM IN MUSIC.

## PART I.

### The Original Essay of 1850.\*

#### CHAPTER I.

##### INTRODUCTORY.

IN the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik" the subject of "Hebraic Taste in Art" was recently discussed, the question being one which could not fail to call forth both attack and defence.† It seems to me of some importance to state more particularly the real sub-

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\* There are two versions of this section, one being that of its first appearance in the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik" and the other that prepared by Wagner for publication with the 1869 Supplement. The difference between them is, however, too slight to form a matter of concern for the English reader.

† The Editor of the "Neue Zeitschrift" seems to have comprehended the same thing in this case, for he was careful to give an explanation of his reasons for printing the article. The apologetic tone of his remarks probably added to his crime in the estimation of the Jews, as showing that he clearly foresaw that the writing would give offence.

ject, which is one, until now, either strictly concealed by the writers or alluded to only in the glow of enthusiasm.

In respect of this there is no intention to say anything new, but merely to explain the latent feeling which people in general evince towards the Jewish character, and which amounts to an inward dislike. By thus dealing with a reality we shall avoid all desire of artificially, or by mere force of imagination, attempting to vivify anything unpractical. Criticism having any other end than this in view, whether it be for the purpose of attack or defence, stands in opposition to the qualities by which it should be governed.

This popular dislike\* of the Jewish character is here desirable to be explained only in reference to **Limitation** the Arts generally, and that of Music in **to Art-** particular, for which reason its present-  
**matters.** ment in the respective fields of religion and politics will be completely disregarded. In that of religion, indeed, the Jews have long ceased to be regarded as deserving of any hatred—thanks to those who, within the Christian religion itself, have so much attracted the feeling of hatred to them—

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\* The reader must decide for himself what significance may lie in the fact of Wagner opening with references to an intuitive dislike of the Jews, as the main object of the whole exposition (that of defending the development of the phase of musical art represented by Beethoven's third period) would seem to an impartial observer somewhat remote from the question of any such dislike.

selves! \*—whilst in pure politics we have never had occasion to drift into conflict with them. The establishment of a new Jewish kingdom was even granted to them, and our only regret in that connection was that Rothschild was too generous to allow himself to become “The King of the Jews”; preferring on the contrary, and as we well know, to remain as he is—“The Jew of the Kings.”

Matters are altogether different when politics take the form of a social question, for this aspect of the peculiar situation occupied by the Jews **Liberal tendency of Modern thought.** has simultaneously served as an invitation to the exercise of human justice, having awakened to a greater degree of consciousness the impetus to social freedom which dwells within us. Whilst we struggled to befree the Jews we were, however, more properly to be regarded as combatants for an abstract principle than for a

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\* Whilst it is undeniable that Tartuffes and others within the Christian fold have done much to justify this allusion, the scant generosity of making such a public taunt lends colour to the supposition of Wagner himself having been of Jewish origin. Both Nietzsche and Pundit have made statements to this effect, the former supporting the contention somewhat offensively by references to Wagner’s birthplace; and (whether in the spirit of repartee or no it is difficult to say) he accuses Wagner of the very characteristic which the latter so specially attributes to the Jews—that of being bereft of purely national trait and of having merely learned to imitate! It is also believed possible to trace the imagination of the Oriental in the glitter and glow of his music; wherein no doubt the reader will trace an incidental result of playing with edged tools.

concrete case. All our Liberalism was likewise but a mere play of the mind, and that not of a very clear-seeing description. Just as we engaged for popular freedom without special knowledge of the people on whose behalf we strove—nay, more, with actually a disinclination for any immediate contact with them—so our zeal for emancipation of the Jews resulted more from a general upheaval of thought than from any real sympathy. Thus, in spite of all speech-making and written manifestations on their behalf, we continue to be repelled by any prospect of actual and practical contact with them.\*

This brings us more clearly within sight of the fulfilment of our project; for we must explain to ourselves why the involuntary repulsion exists which the person and character of the Jew is thus found to awaken. What we most distinctly know of it is—that it is stronger and more weighty than the zeal which we are prepared to enlist for its effacement.

In continuing to classify as bad manners all frank reference to our natural antipathy to the Jewish character we deliberately deceive ourselves. It is quite a new thing to have perceived that it is more reasonable to free ourselves from the thralldom of such self-deception and thus acquire the power to regard quite soberly the object of our sympathy—to bring

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\* The intention of these remarks is perhaps not quite as clear as might be desired; as it is not necessary to like a person in order to have the desire to do justice to him.

to a state of complete intelligibility our ill-will towards him, which continues to exist in spite of all our liberal representations.

To our astonishment we now perceive that, throughout this liberal warfare, we have been indulging an aerial flight and directing our **Its Effects.** hostilities to the clouds; whereas, meantime, the fine site of absolute reality found an appropriator, who, however amused at our lofty antics, has too low an estimate of our intelligence to take the initiative in indemnifying us for the ground he has usurped.

Thus, quite unobserved, the "Creditor of Kings" has become the "King of the Faithful";\* and we can only regard this prayer for emancipation of the Jews from us as a singularly childish petition, seeing that our own condition is much rather one justifying an appeal to be delivered from them. In the present state of things the Jew is more than free, for he dominates; and, as long as money continues the power before which all our doings and strivings are as naught, he will continue to do so. Nor can it be necessary in this place to go over the historical ground, and to show that it was the period of misery of the Jews and the plundering savagery of Christian-German despots which ultimately led this power into the hands of the sons of Israel.

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\* The play of words in the original (Der "Gläubiger der Könige" ist zum "König der Gläubigen" geworden) is unavoidably lost in translation.

We have now to examine more closely the reasons why the particular stage at which its development **The Jew's** has now arrived, and the fact of its **Introduction** present basis being inconsistent with any **to Art.** further advance of that which is natural, necessary and truly beautiful has brought the public Art-taste of our time within the Jew's busy fingers.\*

That which the lords of the Roman and mediæval world extracted from their bondmen in torment and suffering—that, nowadays, the Jew converts from day to day into gold. Who is there to recognise the strips of paper of innocent appearance as having the blood of numberless generations sticking to them? That which the heroes of Art, during two thousand unblest years, and with untold efforts, as exhaustive to life as destructive of human joy, succeeded in wringing from the demon Art-foe—that, nowadays, the Jew converts into a mere article of exchange. And who is there to perceive, from the manner in which these things are presented, that they are really cemented by the holy sweat of Genius for these two thousand years?

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\* The conditions alluded to may, by the light of later explanations, be perceived to work out, as far as music is concerned, in the form of a continued exploitation of material already accumulated. In the Wagnerian argument it would appear to be denied that any further possibilities lie open to absolute music; which is also a point to be accepted or not by the reader according to his own pre-conceptions.

It is unnecessary to add anything in confirmation of this "Jewification" of modern Art, for it is

**The** patent to the eye and proves itself to our **Oppressions** senses quite unaided. We should have, **of Judaism.** moreover, to extend this enquiry a great deal too far were we to desire to undertake to extract the reasons for this manifestation from the various features of our Art-history. That which is to be esteemed as of supreme importance is to test our powers in this struggle for freedom, should emancipation from the oppressions of Judaism\* present itself to our minds as indispensable. No abstract definition of the manifestation itself will enable us to acquire this force, but an accurate acquaintance with the nature of that involuntary

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\* The oppressions in question would seem not to be entirely of Judaism seeing that, later on, Wagner comprises within the Jew-category all who do not agree with him.

"Wer sich von dieser Erforschung abwendet, den eben begreifen wir jetzt mit unter der Kategorie der Judenschaft in der Musik." Also, in the following:

"Ich bezeichnete alle diejenigen Musiker welche, etc. . . . . als in dem von mir geschilderten Musikjudenthum mitinbegriffen."

It would seem from this that, in some instances, Wagner's choice of terms may have contributed to the offence given, and that in reality his views were more reasonable than they appeared. Thus he alludes to the whole mass of opposition as proceeding from "Eine seltsam verzweigte und aus der unterschiedlichsten Elementen zusammengefügte Partei" which certainly did not consist entirely of Jews, though naturally we have to allow for the contention that the outlying elements were brought in by Jewish influence.

feeling which, asserting itself within us takes the form of an invariable dislike of the Jew. If we quite frankly avow that feeling its study may be counted upon to reveal what it is that, in the Jew, we so dislike. We can then show a better front of opposition to what we know for certain, and even its mere discovery will be sure to assist in driving this demon from the field. Only under the protection of a misty twilight is he at present able to stay there at all; and it is we, benevolent humanitarians forsooth, who have, ourselves, cast that twilight round about him, though only to render his ordinary aspect less distasteful.



## CHAPTER II.

### CHARACTERISTICS.

THE Jew who, as we all know, claims to have a God all to himself, arrests our attention in **The Jew's** ordinary life firstly by his exterior **Character-** appearance. It matters not to which **istics gener-** particular European nationality he may **ally.** belong, the Jew's appearance strikes us as something so unpleasantly incongruous that, involuntarily, we wish to have nothing in common with him. Formerly no doubt this redounded to his misfortune, but nowadays we cannot fail to recognise it as a misfortune which quite permits of his still feeling very well;\* so much so, that, considering the measure of his success, his dissimilarity from us is even liable to be esteemed by himself as a distinction. We are not concerned with the moral side of this disagreeable play of Nature but merely with the consideration of its relation to Art; and, in this con-

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\* "Er bei diesem Unglücke sich ganz wohl fühlt." The humorous touches in Wagner's writings are too rare for them to be allowed to pass without quotation of the original.

nection, must be mentioned the inconceivability of the Jew's exterior as a representative medium.

Thus, when plastic Art wishes to represent the Jew, it generally draws its model from imagination;

**His** either discreetly ennobling or leaving out **exterior.** altogether those traits which characterise his presence in ordinary life.\* Never in his wanderings does he stray upon the theatrical stage; exceptions to this being so rare, both in point of number and in respect of the circumstances attending them, that they may be said to confirm the rule.

No character, whether antique or modern, hero or lover, can be even thought of as represented by a Jew without an instant consciousness on our part of the ludicrous inappropriateness of such a proceeding.† This is extremely important; for, if we hold

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\* The point of view has much to do with these judgments. Thus, in literature, such characters as that of Shylock were at one time deemed worthy of unqualified execration, but we have now a far more correct appreciation of the human features they present.

† (Original Note). On this subject much more might be said, based upon experience of the activity of Jewish actors since the above was written. During that time they have more than successfully invaded the theatrical stage, for they have juggled the poet's dramatic creations. A certain Jewish "character-player," for example now disdains the poetical forms of Shakespeare, Schiller and so forth; substituting for these, the wonderful emanations of his own fancy, and producing an effect something equivalent to that of a picture of the Crucifixion from which the figure of the Saviour had been cut out and its place occupied by that of a democratic Jew. The falsification of our art upon the stage has nowadays gone to

a man to be exteriorly disqualified by race for any artistic presentment whatever—that is to say, not merely for any one in particular but for all without exception—it follows that we should also regard him as unfit for any artistic pronouncement.\*

The speech of the Jew is however of even greater importance; considered, that is, in relation to its effect upon us—an effect which constitutes **His speech.** the essential feature to dwell upon in referring to Jewish influence upon Music. The Jew converses in the tongue of the people amongst whom he dwells from age to age, but he does this invariably after the manner of a foreigner.† As it is foreign to our purpose to account for this fact we may for that reason claim not only to omit all accusation against Christian civilisation for having forcibly kept the Jew secluded, but also to acquit the latter of

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such a degree that Shakespeare and his contemporaries are now condescendingly discussed with regard to the conditional suitability of their works for presentation.

\* Here again the reader must decide whether it follows that, in the event of a man's exterior being incompatible with his representing in Art, as Wagner puts it, "any character whatever" he is *ipso facto* debarred from all Art-expression.

† The standpoint of Wagner being thoroughly German it behoves us to remember that the features he here alludes to may reasonably be supposed to be more pronounced in his country than in our own, besides being everywhere applicable to the individual Jew only in inverse ratio to the latter's standard of education.

responsibility for consequences of the separation; at the same time that we permit ourselves to treat of such results.

On the other hand the duty of elucidating the æsthetic character of these circumstances is one

**His** which devolves upon us in full force. **artistic in-** Immediately, the general circumstance **capacities.** that a Jew speaks his modern European language only as if acquired and not as if he were native to it shuts him out from all capability of full, independent and characteristic expression of his ideas. A language is not the work of one man, but its mode of expression and its development are the joint emanation of an ancient community; and only he whose life has been fostered within that community can expect to take part in its creations.\* But alone with his Jehovah stood the Jew outside all such, his race divided and bereft of native land, with all development denied to it; even its peculiar tongue—the Hebrew—being only sustained to it as a dead language.

Even the greatest genius has hitherto found it impossible to write genuine poetry in a foreign

\* One of the golden sayings with which Wagner's writing is bestrewn and which amply atone for any undue vehemence of expression. The original runs thus:

“Nur wer unbewusst in dieser Gemeinsamkeit aufgewachsen ist, nimmt auch an ihren Schöpfungen theil.”

tongue.\* But in the position of a foreign tongue to the Jew has our entire European civilisation remained. As in the formation of the one so in the development of the other he has borne no part, but, at the most, merely looked on, with feelings cold and even hostile, as is natural to a homeless unfortunate. In such language or in such art the Jew can naturally but echo and imitate, and is perforce debarred from fluent expression and pure creative work.

But the mere audible twang of the Jew's speech is also particularly offensive. Two thousand years of

**His** intercourse with European nations have **mannerisms**. in his case not sufficed to eradicate peculiarities of the Semitic mode of expression, which has defeated all culture through the strange obstinacy of the Jewish nature. The hissing, shrill-sounding buzzing and grunting mannerisms of Jewish speech fall at once upon our ear as something strange and disagreeable in kind. These mannerisms also take the form of an application of the words entirely inappropriate to our national speech; of an arbitrary prolongation of them; and of a phrase-construction producing the total effect of a confused babble; in listening to which our attention is monopolised by the manner of utterance and cor-

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\* Another saying worthy of remembrance, and of which the original text is as follows:

“In einer fremden Sprache wahrhaft zu dichten, ist nun bisher selbst den grössten Genies noch unmöglich gewesen.”

respondingly diverted from the sense of what is being said.\*

The exceptional importance of this circumstance as explaining the impression produced upon us particularly by the music works of modern Jews must first of all be recognised. Hear a Jew speak; every shortcoming in point of human expression has its sting, and the cold indifference of his peculiar "Gelabber"† never rises to any warmth—not even in presence of the stimulation to higher or heated passion. On the other hand, should it happen that we become impelled to such ardour when speaking to a Jew, his incapability of effective response will invariably cause him to give way. Never does the Jew become aroused in merely sentimental expression with us. If ever he becomes excited at all it is

\* The analogy between this description and that applied to the musical language of Bach (see Chap. X) is worthy of attention as elucidative of Wagner's entire argument. It is even more evident in the original, for which reason the two passages, in abridged form, are here given side by side:

The Jew's Speech.

"Eine Verwendung und Verdrehung der Worte giebt diesem Lautausdruck den Character eines Geplappers bei dessen Anhörung unsere Aufmerksamkeit unwillkürlich mehr bei diesem widerlichen WIE als bei dem darin enthaltenen WAS verweilt."

The language of Bach.

"Der reinmenschliche Ausdruck noch nicht das so bestimmt Vorherrschende ist, dass in ihr bereits unbedingt nur das WAS ausgesagt werden könnte oder müsste, da sie eben noch in der Gestaltung des WIE begriffen ist."

† A mocking (supposed Hebrew) pronunciation of "Geplapper"; meaning babble.

on behalf of some special and selfish interest. Either it is his material profit which is in question, or his personal vanity; and, as his excitement has usually a distorting effect upon his speech, it also assumes a ridiculous character not in the least calculated to arouse sympathy for the speaker.

No doubt it is conceivable that in connection with their mutual affairs, and particularly in family concerns where the purely human feeling finds its most natural scope for exercise, the Jews may nevertheless be capable of an adequate expression of feeling, at all events in the sense of appearing sufficient to one another.\* That, however, scarcely falls within our purview, as we are expressly engaged in contemplation of the Jew so far as, in life and art-intercourse, he affects ourselves.

But, if the defects of speech to which reference has been made practically withhold from the Jew **His vocal** the capacity for all artistic delivery of **attempts.** feeling through the medium of spoken words, it follows that, through the medium of song,

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\* Surely this is a strange admission, for, if the argument were perfect, there should not be this power of expression at all. The question of whether such emotional expression is also intelligible to us is not touched upon, though it was highly necessary to the completeness of Wagner's thesis, considering that elsewhere (Chap. IV.) he alludes to the Jew's incapacity to draw inspiration from our folk-song expressly on the ground that it is unintelligible to him. ("Verständlich ist ihm nur Dasjenige was durch irgend eine Annäherung jener jüdisch-musikalischen Eigenthümlichkeit ähnelt.")

such expression must be far more distinctly impossible. Song, for example, is but speech intensified or raised to the level of passion. If the Jew, in allowing himself a greater intensity of expression through the medium of speech, may make himself ridiculous, but cannot excite our sympathy in the least degree, he will, should he proceed to the height of song, become entirely unsupportable. In the latter, everything which had previously moved us unfavourably, whether relating to his speech or to his outward appearance, becomes intensified; and we are either driven from the scene or else chained to the spot by the utter absurdity of such a manifestation. In Song the peculiarity of the Jewish nature which affects us so disagreeably is very naturally at its height, considering that song is the most vivid and unquestionably the truest expression of personal feeling; so that, to whatever branch of Art we may feel inclined to admit the Jews as capable, that of song, at all events, must to him, by a natural admission, be eternally denied.



## CHAPTER III.

### ART-RELATIONS.

THE physical perceptions of the Jews have never resulted in sending forth from their ranks any **Plastic Art.** plastic artists; their vision having been always too steadily fixed upon things far more practical than beauty and the spiritual contents of a world of imagination. Thus, as far as my knowledge extends, we have no record of any Jewish architect or sculptor in our time; though, as to painters, I must leave the professional critic to decide whether those of Jewish extraction have really contributed anything of value to their art. It will be fairly safe, however, to assume that the relations of the latter to plastic art are very much the same as those of the Jewish composer to music; and to the consideration of the latter we will now turn.

Though in himself incapable, alike by exterior appearance, by speech and especially by song, of making any artistic experience, the Jew has nevertheless attained in Music, the most widely promulgated

of modern arts, to the position of governing the public taste.\* In order to explain this appearance we must first of all enquire how it was that the Jew was enabled to educate himself musically at all.

The turn taken by our social development has resulted in money becoming more and more frankly

**The en-** exalted to the level of nobility. In con-  
**noblement** sequence of this the Jew, whose money  
**of money.** has not been acquired by personal labour but merely by his one and only trade of usury, is no longer excluded from the enjoyment of title. Not only is he no longer excluded, but the money he possesses has become almost equivalent to his admission—the latter being more or less a matter of course.

Modern education in the same way has sunk to the level of a mere article of luxury, its benefits being the more open to the Jew as they are principally accessible to the well-to-do. At this point Society is naturally subjected to a new appearance—that of the educated Jew; whose case has a special interest for us in consequence of the contrast between him and his uneducated brother.

Now the educated Jew has spared no pains—has,

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\* By what follows it will become clear that this governing power is ultimately ascribed to money; but there is no reference to any share in it on the part of other classes who might also possess the qualification of riches.

in fact, given himself an infinity of trouble to eradicate the more salient signs by which his **Origin** **disdained**. humble *confrère* is distinguished. His zeal in this direction has in many cases gone the length of inducing him to submit to Christian baptism, so anxious has he become to obliterate the traces of his origin.

Yet, in spite of all this firmness of purpose, we do not find that the educated Jew has succeeded in reaping the desired harvest. All that he has effected by its means has been his complete isolation; besides which, having transformed himself into a most heartless specimen of mankind, he has lost the sympathy which we formerly felt for the tragic fate of his race. His position is now, therefore, that of having disdainfully cancelled all connection with his former companions in misfortune, but without having succeeded in obtaining a genuine footing in the new Society to which he aspired.

As to the latter the only members of that Society with whom the educated Jew stands in any connection are those who want his money. But never has money yet proved effective as a means of lasting union between man and man. Without friends or sympathy the Jew stands alone in the midst of a Society which he does not understand, with the strivings and inclinations of which he has no part, and to the history and development of which he is completely indifferent.

Such is the state of things from which we see the Jewish thinker emerge; but he is a thinker answering

**The** the description of a poet who looks only  
**true poet** at the past, in contradistinction to the true poet who fulfils a prophet-like vocation and whose utterances relate rather to what is to come.\* Nothing but deep and entire sympathy with the common strivings of a great community can form a sufficient qualification for the exercise of this high office, for it is by this sympathy that the poet is enabled to give unconscious expression to such aspirations.

But from such community of sentiment the superior Jew is, by the very nature of his position, completely shut out. He has separated himself from all connection with his own race, the education he has acquired and paid for is to him a mere luxury—and one, moreover, for which he is somewhat at a loss to find a suitable employment.

A portion of this education had been applied to Art; the preference of selection having been accorded

**The** to the art which seemed most easy of  
**Jewish** acquirement. This was Music; which, in  
**musician.** the condition of being separated from its sister arts had, by the force and power of genius,

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\* “Der Denker ist der rückwärtsschauende Dichter; der wahre Dichter ist aber der vorverkündende Prophet.” Wagner’s greatness is clearly shown in such definitions as this, which abound with instruction to those whom they most concern, and show such a clear insight of the true nature of musical creation that they should be ever in the minds of all who aspire to excel in composition.

been raised to the utmost level of capacity for expression.\* From this height it was able, by means of the newer combination with the sister arts, to become the medium of sublime expression, or also, in continued separation from them to become, at will, that for communication of the trivial and indifferent.†

Assuming the Jew to feel a desire to express himself in Art the substance of what he had to say could only be of this latter indifferent and trivial kind; and that for the reason that his entire incentive in

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\* The contention that in absolute music the utmost capacity had been already reached lies at the root not only of Wagner's argument but of all the various opinions put forth in favour of programme music. Notwithstanding the question having been so belaboured it is still an open one; and therefore, even in the case of Wagner the assumption can only be accepted hypothetically. Unfortunately for progress in this matter the terms employed in argument are often confusing; for, notwithstanding that such theories virtually amount to the denial of music as a language, their advocates frequently apply to the art that special term. This points to the probability that music is both scenic and logical; for otherwise advocates of the one view would not so unconsciously borrow terms more properly belonging to the other.

† This seems to be as much as to say that when un-allied with other arts music is only capable of expressing the trivial and indifferent. If this be so, the view is not so important for its own sake as it is in the light of an illustration of Wagner's militant style; such a side thrust not being in the least necessary to his argument, and showing, therefore, a mere exuberance of vigour. No one denies that the Arts are mutually helpful and that, in combination, one derives assistance from the other.

an art-direction originated unnecessarily, and merely in the pursuit of luxury. He had thus only to consult his inclination, or possibly some interest lying altogether outside the domain of art in order to settle whether he should speak in this way or that. As to delivering himself of anything positive, actual or necessary—to such he was never impelled. Having no desire really to say anything, though sorely wanting to speak the

“What to say”

did not trouble him at all, but the

“How to speak”

was, on the other hand, a grand object of solicitude.\*

This art of talking without saying anything is **Absolute Music and its Jewish imitation** one for the cultivation of which music offers exceptional opportunity; for the reason that the great masters have already said in it all that it is capable of expressing† as a separate art. This once done, all that followed could be but after-babble, the very correctness of which, so painful and deceptive, reminded one of the way in which parrots are taught to imitate human speech; for it was naturally as

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\* The reader will scarcely need to be told that in the original we have here to do with our old friends “Wie” and “Was.” It was undoubtedly a stroke of genius on Wagner’s part in these two monosyllables to have chrystallised the whole difference between the pedantic capellmeister style of composition and that proceeding from a true inspiration.

† See note p. 21.

bereft of all true expression as the familiar performances of those stupid birds. Yet even in this apish tongue there is a specially Jewish style of utterance, and our Jewish music makers have in it a dialect as special to their race as the one already described.\*

The mannerisms peculiar to the Jew in both speech and song are most glaringly manifest in the case of the ordinary Jew who has remained true to his race. But, although their obliteration is a matter to which the educated Jew devotes the utmost pains, their ungrateful obstinacy is such that he is never free. To whatever degree this misfortune is capable of being explained physiologically, a consideration of the position of the educated Jew must necessarily throw some light upon the reason for it.

To whatever height of fancy our art-luxury may  
**The** aspire it can never entirely lose connec-  
**Folk-spirit.** tion with the Folk-spirit. By this it is so truly held fast that the inspired poet—irrespective of the particular art in which he may be engaged—draws his impetus from the loving contemplation of that instinctive life to be found among

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\* It may be questioned whether Wagner does not herein attempt to prove too much. At all events granting to the Jews a special style of utterance in music (especially when in that style works of the level of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" may be conceived) comes perilously near to granting their creations a full right of existence.

the community within which he dwells.\* But where is the Jew, however cultivated he may be, to find such a people? Can he hope to do so within the domain of a Society in which he plays the part of a mere actor? If he has any connection with this Society at all, it can only be with an off-shoot of it, and one hopelessly detached from the original healthy stem. Even this connection, moreover, is bound to be an entirely loveless one; and this unloveliness will become more and more apparent to him as he endeavours to approach this Society for the purpose of finding food for his artistic cravings. Not only everything in it will become even more foreign and incomprehensible, but the general dislike in which he is held will now meet him frankly and hurtfully on all sides—hurtfully to him because, unlike the richer class generally, his nature has never been either softened or disciplined by any considerations for the common interest.

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\* The composer among Wagner's contemporaries in whom this feature was most pronounced was Brahms, whom we might therefore have expected to see regarded by him with greater favour than was actually the case. But the principle thus enunciated by Wagner is none the less to be remembered. The original text is—"Der wahre Dichter gewinnt seine Anregung aus der Auschanung des Lebens das sich ihm im Volke zur Erscheinung bringt."



## CHAPTER IV.

### MUSICAL CREATION.

REPULSED therefore in a manner most hurtful to his feelings by a Society of which he is No unable to seize the spirit, the educated Jewish Art. Jew is driven back to his own race, where at all events everything is immeasurably clearer. Whether he will or no this is the source from which he needs must draw what he requires, but here again he is confronted by the dearth of material for

“What to say”;

as assistance in the direction of

“How to speak”

is all that it is capable of offering him.\* The fact is that the Jews have never had an Art of their own—never a life replete with art-possibilities. Features of universal human application are not to be found

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\* In other words he can find the “Wie” but not the “Was.” This is elucidated later on in the paragraph where the Jew is described as listening to our music only superficially, and thereby failing to catch its spirit, though he is able to imitate its audible style of expression.

amongst them, the sum of their resource being the peculiar mode of expression indicated above.

One source and one only may be said to offer itself to the Jewish composer, and that lies in the **Only source** solemn musical service dedicated to his **of** Jehovah; for after all it is to the syna-**inspiration.** gogue that he must look if he hopes to obtain motives alike comprehensible and of true folk-character.

Now, however much we may feel inclined to regard this musical divine-service as noble and inspired in its condition of original purity, we cannot fail to observe that the condition in which it has descended to us is one of the greatest corruption; for, also in this domain, have thousands of years passed by without any development or movement of inner life; and, like everything else in Judah, it has stood stark still both as to form and contents.

But a form which is never enlivened by renewal of its contents becomes ever disintegrated at last, **Music in** just as words which no longer represent **the** a living feeling are liable to become dis-**Synagogue** torted and obsolete in the same way.\* Who, for example, has not had occasion to become convinced that what goes on at the present day in an ordinary synagogue is the merest caricature of

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\* "Eine Form welche nie durch Erneuerung des Gehaltes belebt wird, zerfällt aber; ein Ausdruck, dessen Inhalt längst nicht mehr lebendiges Gefühl ist, wird sinnlos und verzerrt sich."

Church-song? Who has not been shocked and held to the spot, partly by horror and partly by a sense of their absurdity, at hearing those gurgling, jodeling and babbling sounds confusive of all trace of sense and spirit, and which no intentional caricature could depict so horribly as all appears in fact, and may easily be witnessed going on with the most perfect *naïveté* and earnestness.\*

It may be admitted that a spirit of reform has recently shown itself and has taken the legitimate direction of trying to restore the primitive purity of this Divine Song. From the point of view of the higher and more reflective Jewish intelligence the result is, however, mere fruitless labour. It is merely that of an effort on the part of culture to improve the people; but the improvement of the latter can obviously never be such that the higher Jew, seeking the satisfaction of his art-needs at their proper source in the instinctive life of his people, can find amongst them anything more than the reflection of his own efforts. But it is the Instinctive and not the Reflected that he longs to find; for the latter is simply his own creation. Yet, all of the former which he can hope to meet is the same distorted expression as before.

If, like artists in general, the educated Jew has been led back to the folk source, not premeditatedly,

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\* Wagner's familiarity with what goes on in the synagogue appertains to the subject of the note p. 3.

but instinctively, and from the very nature of the necessities which press upon him, the impression produced may, and with completeness of survey from his point of view, be applied to the art-productions of his race.

Those melismi and rhythms of the synagogue captivate the musical fancy of the Jewish composer quite in the same way as an instinctive familiarity with the melodies and rhythms of our own folk-song and dance constitutes a nucleus of power for the creators of our musical works of art; whether vocal or instrumental.

Out of our copious range of folk-song only such material is open to the musical faculty of perception

**Our** of the educated Jew as may happen to **Folk song** strike his fancy as intelligible;\* but only **unavailable**. that can be intelligible to him, in the sense of being able to be applied artistically, which is found to present some feature of approach to Jewish musical peculiarities.

Were the Jew, by listening either to our simple, or to our professedly artistic music, to endeavour to trace the heart and soul of its inner life, he would be inevitably driven to the conclusion that these present nothing in common with his own musical nature. The total strangeness of such a manifesta-

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\* See notes pp. 15 and 25

tion might be counted upon so to dissuade him that it would probably be in future impossible for him to sustain sufficient courage to pursue the endeavour to compete with us in our art-creation.

The Jew, however, is never induced by his position in general amongst us to indulge in any such **The inner** deep meditations. Whether it is with **life of our** design, as happens when he recognises **Music** his real position or whether instinctively, as happens when he lacks the capacity to understand it—in either case he listens to our art-productions and their life-giving inner organism in a merely superficial manner. But such an unsympathetic hearing can necessarily convey to him no more than exterior resemblances with what may be either intelligible in his view or consonant with his nature.

Thus it happens that he mistakes the exterior of the manifestations in our musical life and art-domain for the real substance of them. Thus it is that his conceptions of them when he ventures upon a reproduction strike us as strange, odd, indifferent, unnatural and distorted; to such a degree that Jewish musical works often produce upon us an impression similar to that which we might expect from a poem of Goethe, if recited before us in the Jewish gibberish.

- In the same way as a confused heap is made of

words and phrases in this jargon does the Jewish **The** composer make a confused heap of the **Jewish** forms and styles of all ages and masters. **composer.** Cheek-by-jowl we meet them in the most lovely chaos—formal peculiarities of the various schools all huddled together. The intention in these productions having merely been to speak, and to do this at all hazards, and therefore to the exclusion of all consideration of any object sufficiently worthy to confer upon the speech some value, the only means of rendering such babble at all exciting to the ear is continually to change the means and mode of expression.\*

Heartfelt excitement and true passion find their own appropriate tongue when, striving to make themselves intelligible, they formulate an utterance.† The Jew, however, as already described in this connection, has no real passion—or, in any case, no passion of a nature to impel him to art-creation.

But without such passion there can also be no

\* Without necessarily endorsing this as judgment in a particular case, we cannot fail to recognise it as a masterly description of the impression produced upon a real artist by a pretentious though uninspired work, and to feel that such valuable instruction would have been more suitably conveyed to us in the direct form of admonition.

† “Die wahre Leidenschaft findet ihre eigenthümliche Sprache in dem Augenblicke, wo sie, nach Verständniss ringend, zur Mittheilung sich anlässt.” This adds another to the collection of dicta which the student should hold in remembrance.

repose, for a genuine and noble stillness is naught else than passion which has subsided and become appeased in resignation. Where there has been no previous passion we recognise no calm—but only dullness; the usual contrast to which, in Jewish work, is that pungent unrest which is so noticeable from end to end of it; only ceasing in fact to make way for the aforesaid dullness, which is one as devoid of spirit as of feeling.

All that the Jew's ambition to engage in Art has really yielded must therefore necessarily possess the properties of coldness and indifference, if not even those of triviality and nonsense; so that the period of Judaism in modern music can only be described historically as one of complete unfruitfulness and of a stability fast perishing.

## CHAPTER V.

### MENDELSSOHN.\*

**W**HERE is the manifestation by which all the preceding could be rendered clearer—where is one to be found more calculated instantly to convince us—than that presented to us in the works of a composer of Jewish extraction who was endowed by Nature with specific musical gifts to a degree hitherto equalled by few?

**Endowments.** Everything which in the course of our enquiry into the antipathy we feel towards the Jewish character gave ground for reflection—whether the contradictions of this character within itself and

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\* The general terms in which Mendelssohn is described entirely prevent the supposition that he was regarded by Wagner otherwise than with a gentle and respectful feeling. All vehemence becomes suddenly absent upon the mention of Mendelssohn's name, and Wagner's sincerity may easily be traced in the fact of the kindly tone being so well sustained. The latter forms not only a grateful feature but it also adds to the clearness of the elucidations; any disagreement with the drift of which will not diminish the value of the instruction they contain.



towards us, or its incapacity, whilst outside our domain, to deal with us on that ground—or, its want of the power even to formulate so much as an earnest desire to further develop the productions which have sprung from us—all these accumulated considerations rise up with the importance of a tragic conflict as we find them exhibited in the nature, life and art-career of the composer who was taken from our midst at such an early age—Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

By him we have been shown that a Jew may be gifted with the ripest specific talent, he may have acquired the finest and most varied education, he may possess the highest and most finely-tempered sense of honour—and yet, notwithstanding all these advantages, he may remain unable, even in so much as one solitary instance, to bring forth that deep effect upon our hearts and souls which we expect from Art because we know its capability in that direction—because we have experienced it many a time and oft—in fact, whenever a hero of our craft has designed, as it were, to open his mouth to speak to us.\*

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\* The boldness of this statement may make many readers curious to know whether the challenge it contains was ever taken up. The replies to the original article were so numerous that it would be impossible without a laborious investigation to say whether or no this was the case. Moreover, the information might satisfy our curiosity but could scarcely

To the critics by profession, who must necessarily have arrived at a similar view, the duty falls **Character.** of confirming this unquestionable fact **istics of his** by references to individual instances **Music.** among the Mendelssohnian productions. The general statement, however, will here be made sufficiently clear if we recall that, in hearing a piece by this composer, our attention is only fixed whilst graceful, smooth and artificial figures are in progress. These are brought forward ordered and combined more or less for the entertainment of our fancy; their changes being akin to those of the kaleidoscope. But never do we feel moved at those situations where the figures are intended to express any deep or pithy heart-sensation.\* At that point even formal productive capacity for Mendelssohn entirely ceased; for which reason wherever, as in oratorio, he approached the Drama, he was obliged to appropriate without scruple any individual feature which he could gather from this or that

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increase our knowledge. The kind of effect to which Wagner alludes is nowadays so largely a question of colour that the public are often susceptible in cases which fail to command the musician's esteem. So great a master of instrumentation may be well pardoned for regarding these matters in a special light: in other words he sets up his own standard of excellence, arriving naturally by that means at conclusions peculiar to himself and to those who think with him.

\* (Original Note). Of the New-Jewish system designed upon the basis of this particular quality of Mendelssohn we speak later.

predecessor, according to whom he had taken for his model for the time being. In doing so it is to be well observed that, in his expressionless modern speech, he had a marked preference for our old master, Bach, as model. Bach's musical language grew up at that period of our musical history when the universal musical tongue was still struggling for the power of individual and exact expression. The purely formal and pedantic had still so strong a hold upon it that, even in the case of Bach, it was only through the stupendous power of his genius that purely human expression was enabled to break through such an obstacle.\*

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\* The danger of being dubbed reactionary may well be faced in order to express the regret that, in modern music, that which Wagner calls and which it is the fashion to esteem as a "purely formal and pedantic hold" has been so greatly relaxed. The modern course of musical matters is perfectly clear to those who strive to preserve impartiality in spite of the multitude of rival contentions. Some concession was admittedly necessary. The time had arrived for a reform of—even a revolt against the old stringency. Then, in the delight of feeling free, composers went to such extremes as to abandon the advantages which that stringency embraced. As to the disadvantages we have Wagner's own admission that they could not prevent a really-great master from attaining to a purely human expression. History repeats itself; and, just as the beauty of the ancient scales and the delights of free rhythm were thrown away after Palestrina, so those of a mastery of counterpoint and adherence to symmetrical form are now wantonly sacrificed. All our present-day declamation will not affect the revenges that Time has in store; and whatever of the old ground was really within the domain of artistic truth will be revived in spite of it.

The language of Bach stands to the language of Mozart, and finally to that of Beethoven, in the

**The** same relation as did the Egyptian **language of** Sphinx to Grecian sculpture; and, in the

**Bach** same way as the Sphinx with human face seems to strive to quit its animal body, so does the noble human figure of Bach seem to strive to quit its ancient periwig.

The luxurious musical taste of our time is subject to an inconceivable and thoughtless confusion; which lies in the fact that we complacently listen, at one and the same time, to discussion of Bach and Beethoven's mode of expression. We actually make ourselves believe that the difference between them was merely an individual and formal one; losing sight of the fact that it really stands for an important landmark in the history of our culture.

The reason of this is, however, obvious enough; for the speech of Beethoven was the musical lan-

**The** guage of a complete, finished, warm-**language of** feeling man, and could necessarily pro-**Beethoven.** ceed from no other. It was the speech of a music-man so perfect that, of irresistible impulse, he had pressed forward beyond the domain of absolute music, the limits of which he had measured and extended to their utmost; and, in doing so, had shown us the way to the fruition of all arts through music as their only successful extension.

The speech of Bach, on the other hand, can be suitably imitated by any well-equipped musician; even though it be not in the same sense that Bach employed it.\* In it the formal element predominates; the purely human element being not so completely the governing feature that the

“What to say”

is able to assert itself quite unconditionally, and this for the reason that it is still too much engaged in the throes of

“How to speak.”

The flimsiness and waywardness of our musical style has been, in consequence of Mendelssohn's endeavour to deliver unclear and worthless material

\* The student should have no difficulty in reading between the lines at this passage: “Die Sprache Bachs kann von einem fertigen Musiker, wenn auch nicht im Sinne Bachs, nachgesprochen werden.” In other words, anyone may write Bach, but not as Bach himself did. It reminds one of the old pleasantry that anyone can write like Shakespeare, *who has a mind to!* The features of Shakespeare's language might also nowadays be successfully imitated by a scholar; but there could be no question of any man of our time doing as Shakespeare did in any other sense. The latter's vocabulary and diction were both different from ours; but we do not on that account accuse them of having impeded him, and say that only his greatness enabled him to break through the obstacle they presented. Again, as in the case of Bach, his language not only served him for a full expression, but for an expression superior to our own. If, therefore, we are unable to do the same, we should not blame the language; but ourselves.

in the most agreeable manner possible, if not actually introduced, at all events, pushed to its utmost limits. For, whilst Beethoven, the last in the chain of our genuine music-heroes, with intensest longing and miraculous powers, strove ever for the clearest and most accurate expression of that which was otherwise unspeakable, by the sharply-cut plastic form of his tone-pictures, Mendelssohn dwindles these trophies in his productions; thus reducing his effects to the level of dissolving views and of fantastic shadow-pictures. By such uncertain tints our capricious imaginative powers may be excited, but our pure and manly longing for clearer artistic insight is scarcely so much as moved to any hope of fulfilment.

Only when the irksome consciousness of this limitation of power appears to influence the composer's mood, compelling him to the expression of a soft and melancholy resignation, does Mendelssohn present himself to us characteristically;\* and he does so then in the subjective sense of a refined character which, confronted by the impossible, makes confession of its own impotence.

This, as has been said, constitutes the tragic

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\* "Nur da wo das drückende Gefühl von dieser Unfähigkeit ihn zu dem Ausdrücke weicher und schwermüthiger Resignation hindrängt vermag sich Mendelssohn charakteristisch darzustellen." The only admission of any form of originality in composition on the part of the Jew to be found throughout the essay.

feature in Mendelssohn's life; and, should we desire to extend our sympathy to any personality within the domain of art, we could not refuse it in a strong measure to him, notwithstanding that its force is likely to be diminished when we reflect that, in his case, the tragic was rather a passive resultant feeling than one leading to active, suffering and enlightening conviction.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MEYERBEER.\*

**N**O other Jewish composer has, however, been able to awaken a like sympathy in us. A **General** celebrated Jewish music-setter of our day **view.** has, in his productions, had a portion of our public in view whose entire confusion of musical taste was less a matter for him to accommodate than to exploit. The present opera-going public has now for a long time been gradually more and more and, at last, totally drawn away from a sense of the requirements which are to be stipulated for—not only in dramatic art-work, but in all work of good taste. The seats at these places of amusement are generally occupied by that portion of our middle-class society with whom *ennui* is the only reason for preferring

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\* This composer, though obviously in question, is not expressly named in the original.



one occupation to another. The infirmity of *ennui*, however, is one not to be cured by art-enjoyments, and any deliberate attempt to disperse it merely results in the deception of reproducing it in another form. The cultivation of this deception has formed the artistic life-study of the renowned opera-composer alluded to.

It could serve no useful purpose to describe in detail the array of artistic means which he has employed for the attainment of the object of his ambition.\* His success sufficiently shows that he thoroughly understood this form of deceit; and this was principally attained by serving up to his jaded audience in the jargon which has already been described, and as if they were modern sayings of a

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\* It is to be regretted that Wagner did not dwell upon this "array of artistic means." But the omission is partly supplied by a passage in his "Memories of Spontini." The following quotation is from Ellis' translation of the same.

"Meyerbeer, starting from the Rossinian line, made the public's ready-found taste his artistic law-giver: nevertheless confronted with a certain measure of art-intelligence, he tried to give his art-procedure the appearance of something characteristic and on principle: he added the Spontinian to the Rossinian line, and thereby necessarily twisted and distorted each. Indescribable is the repugnance felt both by Spontini and Rossini against the despoiler and commingler of art-tendencies belonging severally to themselves; just as to the genially sans-gêne Rossini he appeared a hypocrite, so Spontini considered him a trafficker in the most inalienable mysteries of creative art."

piquant description, all the trivialities which in their original inanity had been represented before them over and over again.\* It need not cause anyone the least surprise that this composer should be also bent upon utilising the effect of catastrophes and involved emotional situations. Anyone who knows how necessary such features are deemed by those who are bored will feel no astonishment at the success of his intention, which, if they consider well the circumstances, they will regard as a foregone conclusion. This deceiver amongst composers succeeds, in fact, so well that he deceives himself,\* and does so perhaps with an intention as deliberate as that which he applies to the deceit of his audience.

In reality we believe that he would like to produce art-works, knowing at the same time **Summary of his case.** that he cannot do it; so, in order to escape from this painful conflict between what he would like, and what he is able to do, he writes, for

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\* (Original Note). Whoever has noticed the impudent nonchalance and indifference of a Jewish congregation during the musical divine service in the synagogue, will easily perceive why a Jewish composer of opera scarcely feels hurt at symptoms of like indifference on the part of his audience at the theatre, and why he is enabled to work on undisturbed; the fact being that such behaviour naturally seems to him even less ill-mannered than when occurring in the house of God.

\* Compare this with the passage relating to Heine at conclusion of Part I.

Paris, operas which he can then easily get played in other parts of the world. This, nowadays, is the surest means of making for oneself an art-celebrity—without the necessity of becoming an artist beforehand. Under the stress of this self-deception (which is not so devoid of trouble as might be supposed) he appears to us, moreover, in a tragic light, though the effect is rendered tragi-comic by injured personal interest; just as it is the would-be-emotional and the really laughable which are the features by which we recognise the Judaism of this renowned composer in his music.

A more precise examination of the various instances brought forward—instances which we can **Its relation to our present Art-life.** now appreciate in detail, having by this time ascertained the basis of and justification for our invincible dislike of the Jewish nature—will result in showing us in the first place the

Incapacity of our musical Art-epoch.

For, if our music had really been advanced to a higher degree of bloom by the two Jewish composers alluded to, we should be constrained to admit that our remaining behind them indicated some organic incapacity on our part. That, however, is not the case, for, on the contrary, the individual and purely musical capacity which we possess, as compared with that of past art-epochs, must be pro-

nounced to represent an increase of power rather than its diminution.

The incapacity lies in the very spirit of our art, longing as it does for a life quite different from the artificial one which, with such toil, is at present upheld. The shortcomings of our art-style are already sufficiently evident to us in the works of Mendelssohn—that specially and remarkably gifted musician. But the successes of the renowned Jewish composer we have mentioned make the worthlessness of our public taste with its absolutely inartistic existence and requirements abundantly clear. Such are the weighty points which everyone who feels sincerely towards Art must take upon himself personally. Upon these we have to enquire and to question ourselves until we come to a right understanding.\* Whoever declines this trouble—whoever

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\* (Original Note). The position taken up by other Jewish musicians and by the educated class of their race generally towards their two principal composers is highly characteristic. Mendelssohn's adherents find the other famous composer a bugbear, for they have a keen sense of the fact that he compromises Judaism in the estimation of the educated musician, and their judgment of him is merciless accordingly. His own adherents are, however, much more circumspect in passing a verdict upon Mendelssohn; contemplating his good fortune in the more serious music world more with envy than in the spirit of opposition. A third party is that of the Jews whose only care is to be always writing something. To them it is of great importance to avoid all scandal amongst themselves, the result of which they foresee to be exposure. Their desire being to proceed comfortably with their music production

turns away from this enquiry—either because no direct necessity forces him to it or because he dreads the increased knowledge of himself which might accrue to drive him from the lazy ruts of an old custom devoid of thought or feeling—that person we comprise in the one category of the “Jews” in regard to Music.\*

The Jews were utterly unable to secure a footing in this art until the time arrived when it was **Reasons for the Jewish appearance in the field of music.** demonstratively incapable of an inner life; as they have so amply shown. During the whole period that Music as a separate art possessed a really organised necessity for existence, right down to the time of Mozart and Beethoven, we find no trace of any Jewish composer; for it was impossible that an element so foreign to that life should form part of its living organism. It is only when the inner death of a body becomes apparent that ex-

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without any painful disturbance, they find the continuous and decided success of their opera composer worthy of respect; deeming that there must be some good cause for it—even if not much of the music can be called absolutely good or given out as “solid.” The fact is that the Jews are far too clever not to know how the matter really stands.

\* This passage clearly shows that it was not alone with the Jews that Wagner found fault; for, the whole question taking in his mind the form of a result of Jewish influence, everyone who came under the sway of that influence became, to him, a Jew.

terior elements have the power to seize upon it; though only to destroy it. Then it is, that, maybe, the flesh of this body is transformed into a mass of swarming worm-life; but, at sight of that, who would dare assert that the body still lives? The spirit which was the life has taken refuge with its kindred. Only in active life shall we ever be able to meet that spirit again; and never by the side of the worm-eaten corpse.

## EPILOGUE.

### THE POET HEINE AND BÖRSE THE AUTHOR.

**H**AVING stated above that the Jews had produced no genuine poet, it becomes necessary

**Heinrich** to say something of Heinrich Heine.

**Heine.** At the time of Goethe and Schiller's poetical creations, at all events, no one had heard of any poetical Jew. But, when poetising with us became a lie, there was no limit to what might spring from the unpoetical life-standard we had adopted; save the one exception that, from it, no true poet could arise. Then it was that a highly-gifted poetical Jew undertook to cover with scathing irony the counterfeit moderation and Jesuitical hypocrisy of Verse, still fondly regarded as poetical.\* He also scourged unmercifully the cele-

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\* As Heine had joined Christianity in 1825 there may have been in this some admixture of the zeal of the neophyte. The reference is probably to Heine's "Reisebilder," in which he lashed the colourless sentimentality in literature, the prevail-

brated musical members of his own race for indulging the idea that they were artists. No deception could stand against him, for it seemed as though he were restlessly urged on by some merciless demon to seek out whatever might seem worthy of denial. Through all the illusions of modern life he went, until at last he lied himself into being a poet,\* and was duly rewarded by having his poetical lies set to music by our own composers. He was the conscience of Judaism, in the same way as Judaism itself is the evil conscience of our modern civilization.

Another Jew remains to be mentioned; one who appeared amongst us as an author.  
**Börne.** He came forth from his isolation as a Jew seeming to seek deliverance amongst us,† but found it not; and had to convince himself, perforce, that only

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ing German narrow-mindedness and other failings of the period. His wit, irony and satire called forth much enthusiasm; but this was partly due to the fact that the condition of literary matters upon which he dwelt had long attracted public attention, and that, in consequence, his writings enjoyed the good fortune of falling upon prepared ground.

\* Compare this with a similar passage relating to Meyerbeer, Chapter VI.

† This refers to Börne's action in 1817 when he joined the Evangelical Church and changed his name from Lion Baruch to Ludwig Börne. Embracing Christianity was not his only trait in common with Heine; yet the personal relations of the two were unfriendly—as may be gathered from Heine's special work upon the subject.



with our own deliverance as true men could he ever find it. But, to a Jew, the idea of becoming a man in common with us is pretty nearly the same thing as that of ceasing to be a Jew.\* Börne fulfilled this. But his case precisely shows us that deliverance cannot be attained in comfort or in cool, indifferent ease; but costs—as it also does to us—toil, want, anxiety and fulness of suffering and pain. Participate frankly in this work of deliverance; which, beginning in self-effacement, continues by being again productive—and we remain one and undivided!

But, remember that there is only one real form of deliverance† from the curse which be-

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\* We have elsewhere seen that in Wagner's estimation his opponents became "Jews" by the very fact of their opposition "no matter to what nationality they might belong" (*möchten sie einer Nationalität angehören welcher sie wollten*). It follows that he should have regarded Heine and Börne as "Christians"—seeing that both had been received into the Christian Church.

† If this relates to Ahasuerus, the hero of the legend of the "Wandering Jew," the prospect held out to the Hebrew aspirant is not of the most cheerful description.

As this legend may not be familiar to every reader it may be mentioned that, according to it, Ahasuerus was a shoemaker of Jerusalem who drove Christ away from before his house, when, on the road to Golgotha, the Saviour there sought a momentary rest. As punishment of his sin he cannot die; but is condemned eternally to wander over the face of the earth, seeking rest but finding none, till Christ shall pronounce his doom upon the Judgment Day. The legend exists in several forms and has been from time to time the basis of

sets you—that of Ahasuerus—the “Untergang”!\*

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many literary works, one of the most familiar of the latter being Eugene Sue's “*Juif Errant*.” The text upon which it rests is St. John, Chap. xxi., v. 22: “If I will that he tarry till I come”; and the story can be traced back as far as the thirteenth century having been then related by Matthew Paris.

\* This term, employed in the original, has not been translated as it will serve the English reader for an euphemistic indication of what is probably intended, viz. consignment to the inferno.

## PART II.

### The Supplement of 1869;

Being an account of events subsequent to the original publication.

#### CHAPTER VII.

##### THE OPENING PHASE OF HOSTILITIES.

**T**HE foregoing essay appeared, as I have said, and in a form essentially the same as here presented, in the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik"; now slightly more than eighteen years ago.

It still remains almost inconceivable to me that my friend, Franz Brendel, the editor of that journal, and now recently deceased, should have ever pre-  
**Tribute to** vailed upon himself to risk its publica-  
**Franz** tion. In any case, this earnest-minded  
**Brendel.** man, actuated as he was by the most honourable intentions, and habited to regard every question straight in the face, had no other object in view than merely to accord the necessary space for consideration of a subject having reference to the history of music, and well worthy of attention. But

the consequences soon proved to him with whom he had to deal.

Brendel held at that time an appointment as professor at the conservatoire of Leipzig; where, as a consequence of prolonged activity there, the name of Mendelssohn was deservedly\* held in the greatest honour and esteem. Leipzig may be described as having in a sense received Jewish baptism; and, as a writer once complained, fair-haired musicians† in that place were ever becoming a greater rarity.

This city, which occupied so important a place in all German life, both by virtue of its university and its important book-trade, had, in respect of music, forsworn the most natural sympathies of local patriotism so dear to every other German town, and become exclusively a Jewish musical metropolis. The story which now arose against Brendel extended even to the threatening of his civic existence; and, with all his firmness and calm in the statement of his convictions, it was with considerable trouble that he retained his position at the conservatoire.‡

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\* Mit Recht und nach Verdienst.

† The term "blond" is used by Wagner to signify "not a Jew." Compare the mention of Vischer, Chapter X.

‡ All doubt upon this point is removed by Glasenapp, who gives us the names of the professors who signed a petition to the directors to give Brendel notice to quit his appointment at once. These were: Becker, Böhme, David, Hauptmann, Joachim, Klengel, Moscheles, Plaidy, Rietz and Wenzel,

After the first ill-considered explosion of anger from the offended party, what helped Brendel to return to a condition of apparent repose was a very characteristic phase which the matter assumed.

I had never had the least intention of denying myself as author of the pamphlet—**The pseudonym of K. Freigedank.** should the question arise. All that I desired was to prevent any purely personal element from being immediately imported into the matter; which, as I had spoken earnestly and objectively, would, in my opinion, have at once accrued had my name—that of “a composer jealous in any case of the reputation of others”—been cast into the arena straight away. For that reason I signed with the pseudonym K. Freigedank; (Freethought), thus purposely choosing one which should be recognisable in that light. I communicated my view in this respect to Brendel; and, although he might at once have befriended himself from the effects of the storm by deviating its force in my direction, he was courageous enough to bear the brunt of it entirely himself.

Soon there appeared not only signs but clear indications that I had been recognised as the author; and such imputations have never been met by me with a denial. This discovery sufficed to bring about an entire change in the tactics hitherto pursued. Until now, only the coarsest weapons of Judaism had been brought into the fray, no symp-

tom appearing of any desire to reply to my article in any intellectual or even commonly decorous manner. With the exception of absurd distortions and mis-statements of what the article contained, coarse attacks and insulting rebuffs were exclusively what the author was called upon to suffer for what was deemed in him a mediæval, Jew-hating tendency—such as to bring disgrace upon our enlightened age.

Now, however, things were different; for it was evident that superior Judaism was about to appear upon the scene. What was annoying to it was that

**The enemy's forces arrayed.** so much attention should have been aroused; especially as, when once my name had been mentioned, there was a fear lest, by drawing it back again, attention should be increased. But the means of avoiding all this had been already placed in their hand by my having substituted a pseudonym for my own name.\*

It seemed now the most desirable course to ignore me henceforth as the author of the essay, simul-

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\* The pseudonym was already known to Brendel and the similarity between the literary style of the article and known writings of Wagner had already awakened a wide suspicion of his being the author. The similarities in question were indeed far too pronounced to have any chance of escaping general attention. Whether therefore Wagner's adversaries had really such a ready means of avoiding scandal is distinctly open to question. As to the author's intention, with that, however sincere, the enemy had obviously not so much concern as with the effects his action had produced.

taneously letting all talk about it quietly subside; and, on the other hand, to consider my vulnerability on different points, for I had published art-writings and had composed operas—the latter of which I was certain in any case to wish to see produced. The best chance for effecting the chastisement which it was desired to inflict upon me seemed to be offered by systematic libel and persecution in this domain; coupled with a total suppression of the obnoxious Jewish question.

It would certainly be presumptuous on my part, considering that at the time I was living in retire-

**The** ment at Zürich, if I were to attempt a  
**tactics** closer description of the inner tactics  
**employed.** adopted in pursuit of this inverted Jewish persecution, which, in ever-increasing scope, now set in against me. I will therefore confine myself to such experiences as lie open to everyone.\*

After the production of "Lohengrin" at Weimar in the summer of 1850, there came forward somewhat ominously in the press, for the special purpose of drawing the attention of the German public upon me and my work, certain men of important literary

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\* Wagner's favour of the "full expression of a purely human feeling" would seem to have been confined to Art, and not to have extended to the affairs of ordinary life. Those less gifted however, must regard some retaliation for the awful vilification which the Jew had received as proceeding from a feeling quite as purely human as that which forms the theme of Wagner's eloquence.

and artistic reputation, such as Adolf Stahr and Robert Franz. Even musical journals of doubtful tendency became all of a sudden seriously interested about me. This happened, however, so far as individual authors were concerned, only on one single occasion; immediately after which each was silent again, conducting himself as things went on, and according to circumstances, with more or less hostility towards me.

As against that, the next thing was that a certain **Develop-  
ments in  
the Press.** Professor Bischoff, a friend and admirer of Ferdinand Hiller, started off in the "Kölnische Zeitung" with the system of slander against me which has since then been steadily pursued. He dwelt specially upon my art-writings, distorting my idea about "art-work of the future" into a ridiculous notion about "music of the future," or, if you will, a sort of music which, though it sounds badly now, will improve in time.\* Not a single word about Judaism escaped him; on the contrary, he took delight in posing as a Christian, and as descending from a superintendent. On the other hand, I had described Mozart and even Beethoven as a bungler; I wanted to abolish melody completely and to allow nothing but psalmodising in future.

Even to this date, honoured madam, whenever

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\* The prevalence of this joke will be within the memory of many readers.



“music of the future” is under discussion you will hear these sayings repeated. Reflect, **Nicknames.** then, what must have been the mighty stubbornness with which this absurd libel was originally established and promulgated, considering that, side by side with the actual and popular spread of my operas, as soon as ever my name was mentioned and in nearly the entire European press, it continually cropped up in such youthful vigour as to give it the air of a proposition both undeniable and undenied.

As such senseless theories were ascribed to me it followed that the musical works which had sprung from them must be of disgusting character; so, whatever might be their success, the press maintained that my music must be as horrible as my theories. That was the point selected upon which to lay the stress. It was necessary to win over the specially cultured intelligence to this view.

This plan was carried out by a jurist of Vienna **Dr.** who was a great musical amateur and a **Hanslick's** student of Hengel's *Dialectics*; independently of which his gracefully **“Beautiful in Music.”** hidden Jewish descent\* rendered him appropriate for the purpose. He was, moreover, one of those who at first had evinced an almost enthusiastic inclination towards me, so that I became

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\* This refers to the detailed explanation given by Dr. Hanslick in assurance that he was not a Jew.

quite startled at his apostacy, happening, as it did, so suddenly and pronouncedly.

This gentleman now wrote a lampoon upon the "Beautiful in Music," in course of which the general object which Judaism had in view was displayed by him with remarkable talent. Firstly, his most elegant dialectic form, by appearing to be in accordance with the finest philosophic spirit, deceived the entire intellect of Vienna into the belief that at last a prophet had arisen among them—which was precisely the effect intended. For what he actually decked out with such elegant dialectic colours consisted of the most trivial commonplaces, such as could be seriously propounded only in a field like that of music, in which the attempt to æstheticise has always resulted in talking nonsense.

There was certainly nothing specially clever in advancing the "Beautiful" as the chief postulate for music; but the author so worked matters that everybody marvelled at such genial wisdom. Now, however, he succeeded also in a task far more difficult—that of holding up modern Jewish music as the really "beautiful." The tacit recognition of this dogma was attained quite imperceptibly by taking the series—Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven—and not only tacking on to it Mendelssohn in the most natural possible manner, but, if we understand his theory of the Beautiful aright, he ascribed to Mendelssohn the peculiarly benevolent office of re-

arranging the web of Beauty, which had been left somewhat in confusion by his immediate predecessor.\*

With Mendelssohn so enthroned, which was effected with a special grace by means of placing him in company with Christian notabilities such as Robert Schumann, many further traits in the region of modern music could be rendered believable. But the principal thing was that the grand object of the whole æsthetic undertaking had now been attained. By means of his ingenious lampooning the author had placed himself in general respect and created for himself a personal position of some importance. When, therefore, as a widely-admired æsthete, he assumed the office of critic to the political journal most in circulation and immediately proceeded to pronounce both me and all my doings to be simply null and void, the fact of his not being misled by the applause which the public gave to my works could only add to the dimensions of his nimbus.† And in all this he succeeded so well (or

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\* From the musical stand-point of fifty years ago this did not appear so absurd as at present—a circumstance which has to be taken into account in rendering justice to Dr. Hanslick. The wit of Wagner's allusion corresponds in character with that of his allusion to the dimensions of Hanslick's nimbus in the next paragraph.

† “Dass ihn hierin der grosse Beifall, den meine Werke beim Publicum fanden, gar nicht beirrte, musste ihm nur einen um so grösseren Nimbus geben.”

rather they succeeded so well through him) that far and wide—at least wherever newspapers are read in the world—this specially hostile attitude to me which, honoured Madam, you have been so astonished at meeting, has everywhere become the fashion.

The talk was ever now of my contempt for the great masters, my hostility to melody, my horrible composition—in short, of “Music of the Future.” But of “Judaism in Music” there was never again the slightest sign. The latter, however, worked all the more effectively in secret, as may be observed in all such sudden works of conversion. It was the head of Medusa\* promptly held up to anyone in whom an inconsiderate movement in my favour might be observed.

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\* This allusion to the Gorgones in illustration of Wagner's idea is masterly in the literary sense and goes far to obliterate the conception of him as suffering persecution. A heavy undertaking, indeed, to really victimise one so capable of turning the tale upon his enemies. The above passage recalls that in Dante's *Inferno* (Canto IX.), which runs:

Venga Medusa, sì il farem di smalto :

Gridavan tutte riguardando in giuso.

“Let Medusa come that we may change him into stone”—they all cried, looking downwards.)

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LISZT PHASE.

IT would certainly not be uninteresting, as bearing upon the culture-history of our time, were the singular works of conversion alluded to followed up more closely; because they have resulted in the formation of a peculiar party within the musical domain—that territory hitherto held by the Germans with such considerable renown. But the party in question—which is strangely divided, having been got together out of the most various elements—now seems to have gone the straight way to assure itself an entire lack of both productiveness and power.

The next thing, honoured Madam, which will probably occur to you is—how it should be that the indubitable success which came to my share and the friends which my works quite openly gained for me could not be applied to rebut these hostile machinations?

This is not altogether easy to reply to in short. Note, however, in the first place, how it fared with my greatest friend and most enthusiastic champion, Franz Liszt. It was specially due to the large-hearted confidence which he ever displayed that he supplied the enemy (who was always on the alert to draw profit from the slightest circumstance) with just the weapons he wanted. The isolation of the distasteful Jewish question, which the enemy so urgently desired, happened to be also agreeable to Liszt; though, of course, for quite an opposite reason. His desire was to remove all embittering personalities from an honourable art-dispute; whereas all that the enemy had in view was to cancel the motive of a dishonourable quarrel and prevent the real explanation of the slanders which had been uttered to our detriment from ever coming to light. That will explain why, on our side also, silence was preserved regarding the mainspring of the whole commotion.

On the other hand, it was a playful idea of Liszt's **Zukunfts-** to accept the nickname of "Zukunfts-**musiker.**" musiker" which had been applied to us very much in the same way as that of "gueux"\*

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\* Liszt's idea was even more clever than playful; and Wagner's comparison of it with the historical action of the Netherlanders is so exact and so powerful in argument that, even at the cost of a slight digression, it is desirable to remind the reader of the parallel between the two cases.

was once adopted by the Netherlanders. My friend's good-natured traits of this description were extremely welcome to the enemy, who was thus relieved of the trouble of all further slander in this respect; for, with the title of "Zukunftsmusiker" thus fastened upon him, it was now so much easier to be up-sides with this zealous and untiring artist.

The agitation against him started with the defection of a hitherto warmly-devoted friend, a great violin virtuoso, upon whom the Medusa head may

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The memorable sarcasm of Berlaymont, addressed to the Duches Margaret in 1566 and relating to the Confederate Netherlanders ran :

"Comment votre Altesse a-t-elle crainte de ces gueux?" (How can your highness have any fear of such beggars?)

Now Brederode one of the confederate leaders was (precisely as Liszt in this instance) keenly alive to the value of a popular and original name; possessing the instinct by which adroit partisans in every age have been accustomed to convert the reproachful epithets of their opponents into watchwords of honour. He therefore recounted to his companions how the term had been applied to them; saying:

"They call us beggars—we will accept the name!"

Forthwith he had brought to him the leathern wallet worn by professional mendicants of that day, and hanging it around his neck he cried:

"Vivent les gueux!" (Hurrah for the beggars!)

However ingenious, therefore, the tactics of Wagner's opponents, the balance of resource lay upon the side of the "Zukunftsmusiker, who thus adroitly engrafted the wisdom gained by political aspirants of three hundred years before; for, in comparison with the gain of an effective war cry the frustration of Liszt's merely local efforts in Weimar was as nothing.

be presumed to have worked at last. Liszt proved to be in every respect courageously unconcerned; but in the end, he had, nevertheless, to suffer a sad awakening to the disappointment of seeing all his splendid efforts for the improvement of music in Weimar frustrated.

And now, honoured Madam, may I ask if you are less astonished at the hostilities to which our great friend was separately exposed than at those which fell to my lot? You might perhaps be misled by the fact that Liszt had certainly, by the brilliancy of his exterior artistic career, excited the envy of his stick-in-the-mud German colleagues. The fact of giving up his place in the race for virtuosity having been attended only by mere preliminaries for an appearance as composer might also cause a doubt as to his vocation in that line—and this feeling, being one so easy for envy to encourage, had already been excited in a fairly conceivable degree.

I believe, however, that the explanations to follow **Secrecy of the enemy's tactics.** will prove that in the background this doubt, no less than the art-theories in my own case, constituted a mere pretext for the war of persecution. A closer examination of either case, an estimation of our doings made by the light of correct impressions of them would have been enough to place the question upon quite a different footing. Then it would have been pos-



sible to judge, to discuss, to urge for and against—in short, really to do something.

That, however, was just what was not wanted. On the contrary, this closer examination of the new productions was not to be allowed at any price; but, with a meanness of expression and insinuation such as has never before been exhibited in a similar field, the whole press proclaimed that the case admitted of no discussion worthy of intelligent men.

I may therefore confidently assure you that what Liszt suffered originated also with that article about "Judaism in Music."

Even we, however, did not find all this out so very quickly. There are always so many interests in natural opposition to any new manifestation, and which easily proceed to fix the taint of heresy upon whatever it may contain, that even we thought we were only encountering the effects of having disturbed the comfort and lethargy of the ordinary business in Art. As hostility came principally from the press, and particularly from the most influential political journals, those of our friends who were deeply interested in the forthcoming appearance of Liszt as an instrumental composer were of opinion that it was necessary for them to adopt some contrary action:

With the exception of a few cases, happening by Liszt's oversight, it soon became apparent that **persecution** even the best-reasoned criticism of a **in the Press**. Liszt-composition could find no inser-

tion in the greater journals. Their space, on the contrary, was all occupied and sequestered beforehand, in the hostile sense.

Now, who can seriously entertain the notion that in this attitude of the great newspapers there was any genuine concern about a possible injury to the good art-taste of Germany which the new art-direction might inflict? I know what it is to experience the impossibility in these papers of alluding even to Offenbach in a suitable way: will any one dare, after that, profess to think that there was any care about art-taste? Matters had, in fact, proceeded so far that the door of the German greater Press was completely shut against us.\*

But to whom does this Press belong? Our Liberals and Progressists are called upon to expiate

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\* Though it would be encroaching upon polemical ground to make direct allusion to *coteries* amongst ourselves the fact of our not being free from such influences may be fairly alluded to, in a general sense. There would be no difficulty in exposing the detrimental effect upon our progress of all such influences, but this would not affect the dead weight of public opinion, which is bound to take guidance from constituted authority—whether right or wrong (not *always* wrong, by the way, as some aspirants seem to think) and which also has a tendency to go with the stream—to say nothing of a human preference for the winning side. The work of every great innovator must pass through three inevitable stages. At first he can do no right; after which he can do no wrong; and the second is the stage, with regard to Wagner's work, at which we have at present arrived. The third stage is that in which his merits and position are correctly assessed; to do which, with regard to Wagner, belongs to those who come after us.

bitterly their having left the old Conservative opposition party by being thrown into one pot along with Judaism and its specific interests. And, if the Roman "Ultras" seek to know—how a Press entirely directed by Jews can be justified in joining in the discussion over Christian matters, the enquiry bears an ominous meaning, as showing an accurate perception of how these great newspapers are conducted.

The curious thing in all this is—that these disclosures lie open to everyone; for who has not made some experience of them? It is not for me to say how far this factitious relation applies to the treatment of matters of great political importance; although the Bourse is a fairly open index of this. But, within the domain of music, abandoned as it is to the most dishonourable prattle, no sensible person can entertain a doubt of the existence of this highly energetic organisation and control to which everything is subject, and the action of which extends to the remotest circles, operating amongst them with uniform exactitude.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE THEATRES.

**I**N Paris, to my astonishment, I found that no secret whatever was made of this control.

**Experiences** Everyone there was possessed of some in France, wonderful account of its doings; par-

**England** ticularly in respect of the stringent care and Russia. of detail which is exercised to prevent

the secret (known as it is to so many persons and therefore in the greater danger of being found out)

from being, at all events, publicly disclosed. The slightest crevice by which it might creep into a jour-

nal is accordingly stopped up, even though it might be only by means of a visiting card thrust through

the key-hole of a sky-chamber door.\* Thus, everybody here acted with the same obedience as reigns

in the best disciplined army during a battle. You are aware of the peloton-fire directed against me

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\* "Sei dies selbst durch eine Visitenkarte im Schlüsselloche eines Dachkämmerchens." This seems to relate to some special experience; but, if so, Wagner has not treated us to the anecdote.

by the Paris journals and which this solicitude for good taste in Art exacted from them.

In London I was met at the time with great openness upon this point. The musical critic of the "Times" (and I beg you to reflect of what a colossal world-newspaper I am now speaking!) attacked me with a shower of insults as soon as I arrived; and, in the course of his outpourings, Mr. Davison considered himself justified in holding me up to popular execration as the calumniator of the greatest composers on account of their judaism.\* As far as his own position with the English public was concerned he had, in any case, far more to gain than to lose; firstly, on account of the great honour in which Mendelssohn is there held, and, secondly, because of the peculiar character of the English religion which, to those who know it, seems to be based more upon the Old than upon the New Testament.

Only in St. Petersburg and Moscow did I find that Jewish influences had neglected to exploit the musical Press. I there experienced the miracle of receiving as warm a welcome from the Press as from

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\* It has sometimes been doubted whether Wagner quite understood what was really said, as he depended principally upon its being translated to him. There may be some ground for this doubt, as referring to the drift of detailed expressions. But the likelihood of his narrative favours the view that in material respects the judgment he formed of his reception was not far out.

the public. But the Jews had never been able to prevent my good reception by the latter: save only in one place, my native town of Leipzig, where people simply kept away.

The ludicrous features of the matter having thus led me, in describing it, to adopt an almost playful tone, this, honoured Madam, I must now forsake **Difficulties** if I may permit myself in conclusion to **created for** draw your attention to its more serious **the later** side. This probably you will esteem to **Operas.** commence at the point where, disregarding my hunted person, we proceed to contemplate the effect of this remarkable persecution, so far as it exercises an influence upon the very spirit of our Art.

In taking up this road my personal interest must necessarily be touched upon once more, as I happened to say just now that the persecution brought against me on the part of the Jews had not hitherto succeeded in estranging from me the cordial public favour which everywhere awaited me.

That is correct. But it is necessary to add, nevertheless, that such persecution is obviously calculated to bar my *way* to the public; or, so to render that access difficult that I can never be assured that their spiteful activities, even in this respect, may not ultimately succeed. Already you cannot fail to note that, even though my earlier operas had carved out for themselves a road to the German stage, where a uniform success had attended their representation,

the very same theatres exhibit a cold and even unfriendly demeanour towards my recent works. The reason for this is simply that my earlier works were introduced to the stage *before* commencement of the Jew agitation; and their established favour with the public does not augur well for the success of any attack.

The attempt, however, was to make out that my new works had been written after my formulation of the "senseless" theories aforesaid; that, by this means, I had fallen away from my original innocence, and that henceforward it was every man's duty to shun my music.

As it is always by utilising the weakness and incompleteness of our social conditions that Judaism in general succeeds in undermining us, so, here, a ground was easily found upon which—to our shame—everything stood as if specially prepared to ensure its purpose.

Whose are the hands which direct our theatres?—and what is the real tendency followed by them?

**Specialities** Often and copiously have I expressed  
**in** myself upon this subject; and again,  
**hostility.** quite recently, I have expounded in detail, in my larger treatise on German Art and Politics, the various reasons which exist for the decadence of our theatrical art. Do you think that I have by such measures endeared myself to the parties concerned? They have proved that it is only with great disinclination that theatrical ad-

ministrations now proceed to the representation of any new work of mine;\* but, as they might be otherwise compelled to grant it, as a consequence of the universally favourable attitude of the public in regard to my operas, how welcome must the pretence be to them which they can so easily base upon the fact that my newer works are so questioned—not only in the Press generally, but even in the most influential section of it? Do you not already hear the question proceed from Paris why they should be expected to further the acclimatisation of my operas in France—an undertaking sufficiently speculative in itself—when my artistic value is not even recognised at home?

Relations with me have now become even more difficult; as, at present, I do not offer my new works to any theatre, but, on the contrary, am obliged to reserve to myself the right to couple my consent to

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\* (Original Note). It may not be uninteresting, and will in any case show how we stand in matters of art if I describe to you more fully the treatment which, to my great astonishment, I lately had to experience from the two great theatres of Berlin and Vienna with regard to my "Meistersinger." It took me some time in my dealings with the leaders of these two Court Theatres before I perceived, from the tricks which they brought to bear, that they were concerned not only to avoid giving my works themselves but also to prevent other theatres from doing so. You cannot fail to draw the obvious conclusion that a positive influence was at work; and it was evident that the appearance of a new work of mine was regarded with consternation. It may possibly amuse you, one of these days, to have some further details, taken from the store of my experiences of this kind.



the representation with conditions which never before have been considered necessary, and which turn upon the fulfilment of requirements destined to secure for me an absolutely correct performance.\*

But I am now about to touch upon the more serious aspect of the pernicious consequences which arise through admitting an admixture of Jewish affairs to take place in connection with art-matters.

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\* (Original Note). It was only by setting these conditions aside for the moment, out of necessary regard for my publisher, that the Dresden Court Theatre was recently induced to undertake the representation of my "Meistersinger."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE NEW ÆSTHETES.

**I**N the older essay with which I began, I wound up by showing that it was the weakness and **Feebleness of the present Art-spirit.** incapacity which marked the period of German musical production since Beethoven which allowed of the Jew putting in an appearance at all, I indicated all those of our musicians who found in the obliteration of the great plastic style of Beethoven the ingredients for the constitution of the newer manner, with its lack of form and depth and with its feeble semblance of solidity produced by an over-plastering. This was the style in which, without either life or strife, they now, with drowsy comfort went on composing; and all such writers were comprised by me in my definition of musical-Jewdom, no matter to what particular nationality they might happen to belong.\* Combined, they form that peculiar community which seems nowadays to comprise every-

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\* Compare note †, p. 49.

one who either composes music—or, unfortunately, directs it.

I quite believe that many of these have been thoroughly confused and startled by my writings. It was, in fact, their honest embarrassment which the Jews, in anger over my said article, first laid hold of in order immediately to stifle all proper discussion of my theoretical advances on other subjects; notable signs being at hand of a likelihood of such being brought about by certain honourable German musicians. With the pair of catchwords which has been mentioned every fruitful, explanatory, enlightening or formal utterance—as also every chance of mutual understanding upon the whole subject was destroyed.

The same enfeebled spirit continued to be displayed as a consequence of the havoc wrought in the German mind (already so prone to abstract meditation) by the Hegel philosophy, both in this and in the neighbouring domain of æsthetics; after Kant's great idea which Schiller\* had so cleverly utilised for the founding of æsthetic views of the Beautiful had been obliged to make way for a confused wilderness of dialectic nothings.

Even in this quarter I met at first with an inclination to approach the views laid down in my

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\* The reference is to Schiller's essay "Ueber das Erhabene" (Upon the Sublime) and to Kant's "Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen" (Observations on the Beautiful and Sublime).

art-writings with a certain amount of good-will. But, as the lampoon upon the "Beautiful in Music," written by Dr. Hanslick of Vienna, and which has already been mentioned, was written with a deliberate object in view, it had also been rushed into a high degree of celebrity; so much so that we cannot think any ill of Herr Vischer—a thorough blond\* German æstheticist—who, in carrying out a great system, entrusted the writing of the special article—"Music"—to this much-praised æsthete of Vienna, thinking thereby to secure some comfort for himself as well as security for his great work—the subject itself being one which he confessed he knew nothing about.†

Thus it was that musical Jew-beauty became recorded right in the heart of a full-blown German **Lethargy of** system of æsthetics, and therefore contributed so much the more to the glory **the new** of its creator, being now praised very **Æsthetes** loudly in the papers; even though, in consequence of its unamusing character, no one ever troubled very much to read it. The increase of protection afforded by this not only new, but also Christian-German, celebrity promoted musical Jew-beauty to the level of a complete dogma; the most peculiarly difficult questions relating to musical æsthetics—

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\* Compare note \*, p. 52.

† (Original Note). Professor Vischer himself once told me this at Zürich; but in what degree the collaboration of Hanslick was a personal and directly-attracted one I never knew

questions upon which the greatest philosophers, whenever they wished to say anything of serious import, always expressed themselves in measured terms of uncertainty—being taken in hand by Jews and humbugged Christians with the greatest confidence.

This went on to such a degree that, if anyone had desired to think the matter out, and, in particular, to explain to himself the overpowering effect of Beethoven's music upon his feelings, he would have inevitably been made to feel as if he were bartering for the Saviour's garments at the foot of the Cross—a subject upon which, presumably, the celebrated Biblical critic, David Strauss, would be just about as well able to express himself instructively as upon the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven.

Now all this was bound at last to have the still further result that when, in contradistinction to these sterile though exciting proceedings, an at-

**Their** attempt to strengthen the art-spirit, always  
**negative** too inclined to relapse into a dormant  
**zeal.** condition, was made, we not only encountered the natural obstacles which at all times interpose themselves, but also a completely organised opposition, each separate element of which was quite well able to operate actively on its own behalf. If we appeared dumbfounded and resigned, nothing went on in the opposite camp which could be regarded as indicative of a Will—or an Attempt—or an Accomplishment. It might rather be said

that they allowed anything whatever to happen on the part of the connoisseurs of Jew-music-beauty; and each new calamity\* “à la Offenbach” broke over the heads of the German Art-body without producing the least stir amongst them—a fact which in any case will be found “selbstverständlich”†—a matter of course.

If, on the other hand, anyone like myself, being encouraged thereto by a favourable combination of circumstances, took artistic powers in hand in order to lead them into energetic action, have you not yourself seen, honoured Madam, what an outcry this called forth on all sides? Then it was that fire and force were displayed within the community of modern Israel! The principal feature of it all was the deprecatory and extremely contemptuous tone which I believe to have been prompted not merely by blind passion but by a shrewd calculation of its inevitable effect upon the minds of the patrons of my undertakings; for, who can fail to become ultimately affected if he always hears the one in whom before all the world he places high trust and true respect‡ spoken of in this disdainful manner?

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\* Compare Wagner's complaint of not being allowed to criticise Offenbach “suitably” (see Chap. VIII). The expression *calamity* enables us to see in what vigorous terms such criticism would have been given.

† Original expression incorporated above as there is evidently some special allusion intended.

‡ The King of Bavaria, probably.

Everywhere and in all the circumstances necessarily attendant upon complicated under-  
**The** position of takings the natural elements, both of the  
**the German** disfavour of non-participants and of  
**Composer.** those who find themselves participating  
 too much, are duly in evidence. How easy, then,  
 by depreciative comments in the press, to give to  
 the undertaking itself a doubtful appearance in the  
 eyes of both these classes?

Can anything of that kind happen in France, in  
 the case of a Frenchman honoured by the public?  
 Or, in Italy, to an applauded Italian composer?  
 This form of opposition being only possible in the  
 case of a German composer in Germany\* was so  
 new that we have to begin by enquiring into the  
 causes which brought it about.

You, honoured Madam, were astonished at all  
 this. But those who in this battle, ostensibly waged  
 about Art-interests, though otherwise disinterested,  
 have nevertheless their own good reasons for hinder-  
 ing undertakings such as those which emanate from  
 me, are not astonished at all—but find everything  
 quite natural. †

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\* The condition of things described by Wagner has already  
 been alluded to as somewhat peculiar to Germany (see note \*,  
 p. 11).

† (Original Note). If you will give yourself the trouble to  
 read through the Feuilleton of the present New Year's number  
 of the "Süddeutsche Presse" (South German Press) which  
 has just been sent to me from Munich you will be able to  
 form a thoroughly satisfactory notion of the above and of the

The outcome of the preceding is therefore this: more and more resolutely sustained opposition of every undertaking which might by any chance tend to gain either for my works or for my action an influence upon the condition of theatrical or musical Art.

What does all this amount to? A great deal, in my view; which I believe I am justified in offering as devoid of all pretension.

That I may venture to impute a real value to my action I also perceive by the earnest avoidance of all comment upon those of my publications in which from time to time I have treated of this subject.

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way in which the latter class named by me utilise the tone in which I am described for the purpose of stifling every sympathy calculated to assist my undertakings.

There Julius Fröbel quite seriously denounces me to the Bavarian government as the founder of a sect having for its object the abolition of the state and of religion. This is all to be replaced by an opera theatre, which is to be the seat of government—besides which the sect has a scheme for the satisfaction of “hypocritical sensuality” in view.

The late Hebbel in conversation with me once described the peculiar vulgarity of the Viennese comic, Nestroy, by saying that a rose would stink if he had smelt it. The fate of the idea of Love as foundation of Society as formulated in the brain of a man like Fröbel must be something similar.

But do you realise how well calculated is the effect produced, when even he who suffers by the slander is too disgusted to punish the author of it?



## CHAPTER XI.

### SCHUMANN AND BRENDEL.

I HAVE related how, at the beginning—that is to say before commencement of this strange and **First** covertly-designed persecution of me by **impulses.** the Jews—there had been signs of a movement in favour of a treatment and estimation of the views laid down in my art-writings, both honourable in intention and conducted in a truly German spirit.

Let us assume that this agitation had not arisen; or that, having arisen, it had reasonably confined itself to its first cause. We should then have had to ask ourselves, after the analogy of similar previous occurrences in tranquil German culture-life, how the matter would have taken form. I am not of the optimistic view that in that case very much would have resulted. Something, however, might fairly have been expected, and, in any case, something different from what did happen.

If we understand the matter aright a period de-

voted to the collection of the works bequeathed to us by the incomparable great masters had set in. Both in music and in poetical literature it was felt to be a duty that the value of the works of these great men, who, following one another in quick succession, had brought the German Art-renaissance to the height of representing a national treasure, should be brought home to all the world.

In what sense this value was to be established—that was the question. For music, in particular, this question was of the most urgent description, due to the fact that, with the last period of Beethoven's life-work, a perfectly new phase of development of the art had set in completely eclipsing all the views and prospects which had previously been entertained, music had become, under the influence of the Italian vocal style, an art of

*mere agreeableness.*

Its capacity to bear a signification equal to the art of Dante, or of Michael Angelo was denied by that very fact; and it was accordingly relegated in a general sense to a lower rank among the Arts.

A totally new acknowledgment of the nature of Music was therefore to be gained, based upon our great Beethoven's achievements. It was urgent to follow up with intelligence through Bach to Palestina the root from which the art had been enabled

to spring to its present height and meaning.\* Upon this a totally different system for its æsthetic judgment was to be founded—a system which should have nothing in common with one which recognised a description of musical development entirely removed from that represented by these masters.

The right feeling respecting this was vividly and instinctively planted in the German masters of this **Robert Schumann** period; as the most sensible and highly gifted of whom I name to you—Robert Schumann. From the course of his development as a composer we may unmistakably prove the effect which the admixture of Jewish influences to which I have alluded has exercised upon our art. Compare the Robert Schumann of the first and of the second half of his life-work. In the first there is an aiming at plastic form—in the last a gradual degeneration into bombastic superficiality and shallowness.

It accords entirely with this view that during his second period Schumann should have looked with disfavour, discontent and general ill-will upon those

\* After Palestrina the break in the chain of musical development was such that the excellencies of his school have never been engrafted upon the modern, and remain to this day as so much human achievement in abeyance, waiting only the time and the man for its revival. Wagner's reasoning is, on the other hand, that musical progress has been one straight and uninterrupted course; not even broken by the Jew divergency; and that he himself appeared to continue the work of Beethoven's third period.

to whom, in his first period, and as editor of the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik," he had extended his hand with such truly German amiability. By the attitude of his journal, in which with instinctive correctness he also occupied himself as writer for the furtherance of this all-absorbing topic, you can likewise perceive with what sort of spirit I should have had to take counsel had it only been a question of coming to a personal understanding with him upon the problem which so excited me. In his writings we meet with a language far removed from that of the dialectic Jewish jargon with which the new æsthetical doctrines have been introduced; and I insist upon it that the adoption of this language would have led to an understanding indicative of some progress.

But what was it that imparted such power to the **His** Jewish influence? Unfortunately, one **Conversion.** of the German's principal virtues forms also the source of his weakness.

The peaceful, trusty self-confidence which causes him to disregard all evil forebodings and leads his even and undisturbed nature to many a deed of inward truth may, if but slightly wanting the necessary fire, easily transform itself into that surprising idleness wherein the most—aye, nearly all those spirits we now see plunged who, during the continued neglect of all higher aspirations of the German spirit on the part of political authorities, had remained true to the German character.

The genius of Robert Schumann sank also into this idleness, as it wearied him to hold his own against the busy, restless Jewish spirit. He found it too much trouble to be obliged to explain to himself, by the thousand features which came closely under his observation, what was really happening. So he was unconsciously bereft of his noble freedom, and his old friends—disowned by him at last—are also now called upon to suffer seeing him carried off in triumph by the music-Jews as one of their own!\*

Now, honoured friend, methinks that this does really count for something. The introduction of this instance renders it unnecessary to bring for-

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\* It may enable the reader better to appreciate Wagner's description of Schumann if we recall the latter's words to C. van Bruyck in a letter dated May 8, 1853; as it enables us to see how completely he was unswayed by the adverse judgment of him then passed. The following quotation is from May Herbert's translation:

“What you tell me about Wagner has interested me very much. To put in as few words as possible, he is not a good musician; he lacks feeling for form and harmony. But you must not judge him from the pianoforte scores. If you were to hear his operas on the stage I am sure you could not but feel emotion in a great many instances. And, though it may not be the bright sunlight radiating from a genius, yet there is often a mysterious charm in his music which captivates the senses. But, as I said before, the music apart from the whole performance is poor—often downright amateurish, meaningless and repulsive; and unfortunately it is a proof of depraved artistic taste, when in the face of the many dramatic masterpieces Germany has produced, people try to depreciate them by comparing them to Wagner.

ward subordinate cases of subjugation, because, in consequence of this most important one, they become so much easier to obtain.

The success in personal cases, however, finds its natural completion in those of Associations and Societies. In this field also the German spirit, according to its bent, showed itself disposed for action. The idea which I set before you, as the problem of our post-Beethoven period, actually brought together for the first time a large and increasing number of German musicians and friends of music; for objects, the natural significance of which was due to the appreciation of that problem.

It is to be accounted as true celebrity to the excellent Franz Brendel, who bravely gave the impetus

**First** to this movement (and whom accord-  
**impulses** ingly the Jewish journals started to  
**revived by** vilify) that he also realised what was

**Franz** necessary in this direction. The defect  
**Brendel.** common to all German Associations was obliged, however, to be so much the more felt in this case as a competition was thus set up, not only between this union of German musicians and the mighty sphere of State organisations under Government control—by which other free unions are also rendered ineffectual—but also between it and Judaism; that organisation of our time which is of supremest might.

Obviously any union of musicians conceived upon a large scale could only pursue an existence of use-

fulness by the practical method of giving absolutely finished performances of works of the first importance calculated to assist the cultivation of German musical style. Funds were necessary to this. But, the German musician being poor, the question was—who was to help him? No amount of talking and disputing about art interests could do so; for these things have, for many people, no sense at all, and easily lead to the ridiculous.\* The power which we fell short of was, however, possessed by the Jews.

With the Theatre given over to the young squires and the scum of the coulisses—and the Concert-institute entirely the property of the Jews, what remained for us?

Just a little musical paper in which to report the outcome of our conferences—once every two years.

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\* Wagner makes frequent reference to the futility of disputations, notwithstanding that, as his writings show, he was personally beset by a strong proclivity in that direction. But the circumstances of his life rendered much of this a necessity and his real view is probably represented by the passage in the paper written for F. Villot where he says:

“The great repugnance I now experience against so much as reading through my theoretic essays teaches me that I was in a thoroughly abnormal state of mind when I wrote them—a state such as well may arise for once in an artist’s life, but cannot fitly be repeated.”

## CHAPTER XII.

### APOSTROPHE.

**A**S you see, honoured Madam, I bear witness to you of the complete triumph of Judaism in every sense; and the fact of my once **The triumph of Judaism.** more loudly expatiating thereupon does not proceed from any belief in my power to stem in any way the completeness of this victory.

But, as my present exposition of the course of this peculiar culture-question relating to the German spirit may seem to bear the character of being a result of the agitation amongst the Jews evoked by my previous articles, a new question, equally inspired by astonishment, may well be suggested to you—as to why I should have originally called forth this agitation by my challenge.

I might excuse myself for this by pleading that I based my resolution for the attack not upon any estimation of the “*causa finalis*” but upon the inherent force of the “*causa efficiens*”—as the philosophers would say. I certainly did not indulge the notion that, in writing and publishing that essay, I



had any chance of successfully waging war with the influence of the Jews upon our music. The main-springs of all the successes which have accrued to them in the meantime were, even then, so clear to me that I have some satisfaction in testifying to the truth of this by republishing my description of them.

I should not be able, therefore, to state any express object; though I may plead, on the other hand, that an acute perception of impending ruin in our music matters rendered it inwardly incumbent upon me to state the causes of it. Possibly I may also have had at heart the desire of uniting it with a hopeful reception, as will be revealed to you by the concluding apostrophe in which I appeal to the Jews themselves.

In the same way as humane friends of the church have conceived that, by an appeal to the oppressed

**The** lower clergy, its wholesome reform might  
**present** be effected, so I kept in view the great  
**position.** endowments of heart and mind which have emanated from Jewish circles to my own true comfort. I am, further, also of the emphatic opinion that whatever has hitherto oppressed the German character bears upon the intellectual and sympathetic Jew in a still more frightful degree. I fancied at the time that there were indications of my appeal having been both understood and deeply felt.

Dependence in any position is a great evil and an impediment to free development, but that of the Jews amongst themselves appears to be a slavish

misery of the most extreme hardship. In view of the decision to live not only *with* us but *in* us much should be both granted to, and excused in the intelligent Jew by his more enlightened race-associates. We hear from them the most entertaining Jewish anecdotes, for instance, and are also familiarised with a certain amount of unrestrained free talk, regarded anyhow as permissible on their part, and which in general refers quite as much to themselves as it does to us.

Still, to make a close friend of anyone who is an outlaw of one's own race must necessarily be ever **Impediment** regarded by the Jew as a mortal offence. **to a closer** Moving experiences on this subject have **friendship.** fallen to my lot; but, in order to describe this tyranny let one case stand for many.

An admittedly, highly-gifted, really talented and intellectual author of Jewish extraction, who seems almost as if he had grown up amid characteristic German folk-life, and with whom I sustained communications for a long time and in many ways upon the question of Judaism, proceeded to make the acquaintance of my poems: "Der Ring des Nibelungen" and "Tristan und Isolde." He expressed himself upon them with such appreciative warmth, as well as with such conspicuous intelligence, that he was inclined to respond to the invitation of my friends—publicly to state his views of

poems so strangely ignored by our literary circles. This it was not possible for him to do.

You will understand, honoured Madam, from these indications, that, in replying to your question  
**Aspirations.** respecting the enigmatical origin of the hostilities directed against me, and particularly of those of the press, I should not have allowed myself the risk of almost exhausting your patience by such extension had I not been impelled by a hope still dear to my heart, though difficult to be expressed. Were I to seek to describe it I should, in the first place, remove all appearance of its seeming to be founded upon any concealment of my relation to Judaism; for it is this concealment which has contributed to the present confusion—not only of yourself, but of nearly all my sympathetic friends.

If this confusion is due to my former pseudonym—if the employment of the latter gave the enemy strategic means for a successful attack against me, it follows that I was now obliged to make the discovery to my friends of that which is already too well known to the opposite party. In believing that this openness is capable, not so much of drawing friends for me from the opposite camp as of strengthening them in the struggle for their own true emancipation, it may perhaps be found pardonable in me if a broad view of our culture-history conceals from me the traits of an illusion nestling at my heart.

For, about one thing I am perfectly clear. In the same way as the influence upon our spiritual life which the Jews have won is shown by the deviation or falsity of our highest culture-tendencies to be no mere physiological accident, so it is also to be recognised as undeniable and decisive.

## CONCLUSION.

WHETHER the decadence of our culture can be prevented by forcible expulsion of foreign elements of pernicious character I cannot say; as powers for this purpose are requisite, of the existence of which I am not aware.

Should, on the other hand, this element become so assimilated with us as to render it possible for both, in common, to ripen toward the higher cultivation of the nobler human talents, it is clearly not by any concealment of the difficulties of this assimilation, but by their most candid avowal that service can be rendered.

In the event of my having caused an earnest impetus in this direction to issue from what our newest æsthetics would describe as the harmless and agreeable domain of music the circumstance might appear as not altogether unfavourable to my personal view of the important vocation of the art; and, in any case, you, most honoured Madam, might be induced to accept it as an excuse for my having held forth before you so long upon an apparently abstruse subject.

RICHARD WAGNER.

TRIBSCHEN,  
NEAR LUCERNE.

*New Year, 1869.*



## NOTE.

### ON THE AUTHOR'S SUBSEQUENT VIEW OF THIS ESSAY.

**A** LIGHT is thrown upon Wagner's subsequent view of the foregoing in the remarks made by him in introducing the volume of his collected writings of which the essay forms part.

Having alluded to the advantages enjoyed by journalism in being enabled to use current events for the demonstration of ideas he goes on to complain that, on such occasions, the main attention is usually directed to the subject used for mere exemplification instead of to the thought which was to be illustrated by it; and he specially mentions "Judaism in Music" as a case in point; disavowing all intention of insult and maintaining his only purpose to have been artistic investigation.

He also claims that, in that respect, his plan was precisely the opposite of that pursued in the retaliative measures by which he was met; and which, in his view, consisted in commending principles which had been purposely formulated in order to serve a personal animosity.

The reference is, of course, to Dr. Hanslick; possibly also, in a lesser sense, to journalistic criticism.





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