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Prolegomena to the Classification of German-American Music*

Whether viewed from the broad vantage point of American music history or within the more prescribed borders encompassing the diverse ethnic folk musics in the United States, German-American music and musicians have been among the most influential shaping forces of American music. Magnifying this influence has been the highly emblematic role of music in German-American society, inseparable from a symbolic role accorded German culture in the nineteenth century. One need only examine the censuses of the earliest American symphony orchestras to realize that their mid- and late-nineteenth-century propagation in the New World would have been impossible without the virtual transplantation of trained musicians from Central Europe.¹ In several cases, such as the Germania Musical Society, entire musical ensembles emigrated from Germany, influencing profoundly the standards of musical performance in the United States.² That bastion of German folk song, the singing society, arose also in North America as a ubiquitous *Vereinswesen* that could muster German-Americans from village and city to reinforce ethnicity with song. Concepts of German music education, too, were inculcated in America by the legions of American students who studied in German music academies.³ Even German-American religious music acquired special significance for the ethnic church because of the Reformation musical traditions spawned and absorbed by Protestantism.⁴

Despite this complex and pervasive role in German-American cultural history, music receives scant analytical attention from historian and musicologist alike, beyond the admission of its dramatic import and the enumeration of famous musicians bringing this about. When examined, German-American music seems manifest in only two forms: first, as a curiosity preserved by somewhat less representative groups, such as the Amish; and second, as a wholesale product somehow dished up to the mainstream society for more proper disposition therein. German-American music seems thus to lack a vital individuality, existing instead as

mere historical artifact or losing all identity at the moment of contact with other music. The vast area of musical change lying between these poles of preservation and abandonment remains perplexing and unexplored. It is, however, exactly in this area that music identifiable as German-American still thrives; here it is interwoven with and supportive of other aspects of German-American culture and ethnicity. Lacking is the necessary analytical framework to place these genres of music in their proper perspective and to illustrate the ways whereby music is in many senses central to German-American concepts of culture.

In the present article I shall endeavor to identify some of the reasons why the functions of German-American music for that group and for mainstream American society remain shrouded in misunderstanding. I submit that this misunderstanding derives from the special problems of acculturation and assimilation attending German-American culture. These patterns of cultural change, moreover, are directly paralleled by the patterns of musical change specific to music in that culture. Accordingly, the usual interpretive modes of the folk-music specialist or musicologist might well be insufficient or inappropriate in the case of German-American music. I shall propose, therefore, the outline of an approach to interpreting and classifying German-American musical activity based largely on the social and institutional structures of German-American culture. This approach addresses musical change as an inevitable product and reflection of acculturative patterns particular to the ethnic group and thus may serve also as a means of better understanding such patterns of change.

Concepts of Music and Musical Life in German-American Ethnicity

Basic to problems of understanding German-American music is its seeming inseparability from the musics in the mainstream of American society. This problem of identification is evident at both a broader structural level of German-American culture and within the nature of German music itself. It is this broader level that Kathleen Neils Conzen has called the "paradox of German-American assimilation."⁵ According to Conzen's persuasively argued interpretation, German-American ethnicity is distinct from that of other ethnic groups not only because of differences in background and history, but also—and more significantly—because of quite different patterns of assimilation and acculturation. Conzen asserts that particular cultural values, rather than the formation of ethnic communities enclosed within cultural boundaries, are central to German-American ethnicity.⁶ These cultural values are seldom dramatically overt expressions of ethnic behavior that set German-Americans apart from other ethnic groups. Instead, the cultural values assume more subtle forms that strengthen internal cohesion and patterns of expression. Rather than altering interaction with other groups, such values have a meaning only clearly perceived by the group itself. German-Americans may thus be rendered "invisible" as a group,⁷ despite their predominance in sheer numbers among ethnic

groups in the United States. Separability and inseparability from a mainstream society are, therefore, less related to change within the ethnic group. Whereas assimilation may well have progressed farther than with certain other ethnic groups, acculturation has lagged considerably behind. Any attempts to identify and investigate cultural values must take place at a more subliminal level rather than at the peripheral interface with other groups and mainstream society.

This paradox is even more evident when musical concerns are taken into consideration. Stated simply, German-American music of all genres is more American than the American. Some genres were readily accepted as prototypes for developing styles of American music; nineteenth-century orchestral music perhaps best exemplifies this phenomenon. At a more technical level, German music acquired those traits recognized as "Euro-American" or "Western" before the music of other national and ethnic groups.⁸ German folk songs in the United States usually tend toward full seven-note scales without gaps, thus making the occurrence of modes other than major and minor very rare. In contrast, many folk songs of British origin in the United States, which have historically been the primary object of folk-music collectors, frequently possess only five-note, or pentatonic, scales.⁹ The gaps inherent in such scales make it very difficult to harmonize with the chordal patterns usually applicable to melodies in major and minor modes. The appearance of triadic melodies with implied harmonic function (i.e., the melody itself outlines specific chords) can be identified at a historically earlier stage of development in German folk song.

German music also bears witness at an early stage to the impact of urbanization, such as the impingement of writing upon oral tradition. Urbanization further effected a breakdown in the differences between art, religious, and folk musics. The musical genres in each of these levels were distributed with much wider currency throughout German society than was the case for other national and cultural groups. Perhaps the most important characteristic of German music was the relatively high rate of musical literacy, even associated with the performance of folk music.¹⁰ Musical literacy, moreover, ascribed an even higher cultural value to the music, thereby rendering its meaning to German-American society more complex.

German-American music, too, is clearly plagued by a paradox. Much of it seems "invisible" when viewed from outside the group; and yet its complex development bespeaks a special cultural value for the ethnic group. This paradox imputes to the study of German-American music the potential to reveal not only some of the group's essential cultural values but also the ways whereby these values determine ethnicity. Because of its complex nature the practice of music *ipso facto* comprises central ethnic values. For example, folk music acts as a means of preserving language. The practice and performance of music is often carried out by organizations, whose myriad functions for an ethnic group also shape it from within. Music is both fragile and resilient when subjected to the pressures of acculturation, suffering from neglect over

time but lending itself also to revival at moments of resurgent interest in ethnicity.

Examination restricted to German-American music itself does illumine some reasons that assimilation might have been facilitated. In its shortcomings such examination also points to the need for a more social scientific interpretation of German-American music. With such an approach, change, rather than preservation or stability, becomes the focus of investigation. How does music function in German-American society, and what are the concepts associated with music in that society? What patterns of behavior are associated with the performance of German-American music, and what do these reveal about concomitant social structure? It is the answers to these questions, not simply collections and descriptions of musical artifacts, that will allow us to unravel the distinctive role of German-American music.

When approaching music for the answers to questions like these, it is necessary also to broaden the concept of music and to probe for a broader set of cultural meanings. In the present article this will be achieved by employing Alan P. Merriam's tripartite model of music's primary functions in culture: "conceptualization about music, behavior in relation to music, and music sound itself."¹¹ According to this model the sound of music is only one order of evidence for the study of music in culture. More important and more sweeping in the interpretation that they afford are musical concepts and behavior. Thus, the concepts associated with a folk-music repertory prior to immigration usually differ radically from the concepts several generations thereafter. Through examining the behavior associated with German-American religious music, a more fundamental approach to the interpretation of religion as an aspect of ethnicity may be engendered. Musical sound, behavior, and concept, of course, interact and influence one another. The determinants of the paradoxes of German-American music, however, lie embedded in the conceptualization of ethnic cultural values. The examination of music and musical behavior in German-American society should, therefore, take place with the explicit goal of discovering musical concepts and the deeper level of cultural meaning they embody.¹²

The Continuum of Musical Change in German-American Music

In order to arrive at a system of interpretation that more fully embraces all aspects of musical activity in German-American culture, I am proposing a series of descriptive categories that define processes of musical change rather than discrete musical repertoires, that is musical sound itself. These processes (Figure 1) occupy a continuum of cultural change and often overlap and intersect. Their application to particular repertoires or genres depends on both historical moment and geographic setting. Thus, a single folk song might be described by any or all of the processes, depending on where and by whom it was sung and on what sorts of musical behavior were associated with it.¹³

Figure 1

Processes of Musical Change in German-American Culture

Continuum Poles	Predominant Processes	Related Processes	Occasional or Special Processes
Complete Abandonment	Impoverishment		
	Classicization	Museumization	Satire
	Consolidation	Synthesis	Diversification
	Modernization	Revival	Urbanization
		Westernization (Americanization)	
	Marginal Survival		
Complete Preservation			

At the poles of the continuum stand two processes that, I believe, rarely occur, namely complete preservation and complete abandonment. In earlier studies of cultural and musical change, preservation was generally presented as an ideal. Any erosion of the original repertory of an immigrant group meant also the loss of an imagined pristine quality in the musical culture. In such studies the structure of folk cultures was measured only as it resembled communities, usually rural, in the old country, thus transforming any kind of change into an immediate enemy.¹⁴ Abandonment, on the other hand, was the accomplice of assimilation, a weather-worn cloak to be tossed aside when more comfortable surroundings were acquired. Change always preceded abandonment, but could proceed in only a single, inexorable direction before folk music was no longer present. Still, a survey of ethnic groups throughout the world turns up no group that has successfully preserved—or even sought to preserve—its complete musical culture when displaced because of immigration. The considerable diminution of human and institutional resources would make this impossible. To preserve under such conditions would mean stultification, and stultification would quickly lead to decay. Abandonment, too, seems not to have transpired, even though a few cultural groups, such as some aboriginal Australians, imagine that it has.

My concern here, then, is with the processes intermediary along the continuum. The five predominant processes that I observe along the continuum are ones I have identified in the German-American musical cultures of Wisconsin and in the musical activities of German groups elsewhere in the United States and the world. Dominant among these processes are those protective of values in different ways central to the German-American's concepts of music. These I have included on Figure 1 under four larger categories: classicization, consolidation, modernization, and marginal survival. All of these recognize and accept musical

change as inevitable, but do not find its path ineluctably leading toward disappearance of the distinctiveness of German-American music. In contrast, the fifth major category, impoverishment, results when the cultural values inherent in ethnic music are exchanged for those with different meaning. This exchange of values also leads to new functions for music within the ethnic group and new musical activities of the group elsewhere in the larger society. Accordingly, ethnic music may not be completely abandoned, but it has only limited importance and symbolic values when compared with other types of music.

That new meaning for cultural values is not always the harbinger of impoverishment is borne out by classicization, a process with relatively more significance for German-Americans than for many other ethnic groups. Through classicization traditional change is altered so that a cultural value or the repertory encapsulating that value remains fixed. The ethnic group thus accords special meaning to the value and consciously transfigures it as a symbol. One common means of achieving classicization is transforming oral into written tradition. German and German-American composers often isolated those values they deemed central and then reworked them into different forms. The plethora of nineteenth-century "folk songs" with texts by Goethe and Schiller is probably the best example of this process. In the realm of Protestant religious music, attempts to retrieve Reformation hymns by nineteenth-century German-American Lutheran synods stemmed also from a desire to classicize a period of religious and liturgical history.¹⁵

Classicization can lead to other processes, especially those in which the delegated cultural values become dysfunctional (museumization) or even parodies of themselves (satire). Museumized repertory has been identified as potentially bearing special symbolism and is to that end preserved. Lacking is suitable musical behavior within a given social structure, the result being the eventual enervation of the repertory. Satire is hardly absent in German-American music, especially those genres that would project the German-American as a beer-drinking polka fanatic; here, the false sense of ethnicity belies the reality of German social gatherings in the New World.

The most widespread process of change for an ethnic group is consolidation. Diverse types and styles of music are often combined into a single repertory, yielding the form of consolidation that transpired rapidly during the early history of the German-American singing society. The diverse functions of music may also be subject to consolidation, especially when a few types of musical behavior come to predominate. In rural Wisconsin a major manifestation of consolidation was the breakdown of functional differences between religious and secular music. Traditions of hymnody entered the home, just as secular music entered the various religious institutions in a community.¹⁶ Music and musical behavior that are consolidated tend also to play a more central role in the entire musical culture and thus represent a distillation of concepts relative to ethnic music. The consolidation of religious and secular musics in rural Wisconsin resulted in a new tradition in which new cultural values were at work. Such values were no longer strictly

those of the Old World, but were instead concomitant with the ingathering of diverse regional and occupational groups.

To the extent that new cultural values resulting from consolidation become central to the ethnic group, one may observe synthesis. Synthesis of musical behavior in some German communities of the Midwest occurred at the locus of performance organizations. Choral performance achieved a special role, both for secular and for religious music, hence facilitating the sharing of repertory and members by both organizations. In many areas of rural Wisconsin, the German-American singing society was, in essence, the same as the German Protestant church choir. In the same communities, the German "church band" also performed for a wide range of musical activities, serving both within the church and in the manner of a community social orchestra.¹⁷

Extremely tenacious retention of central values is evident in marginal survival. This process tends to result in the preservation of music by a particular group, but usually of only a limited repertory. That repertory, in turn, must be protected against musical change encroaching from the outside by musical behavior differing sharply with that of the mainstream society. So extreme is this process among the Amish that their music is often cited as the textbook example of marginal survival.¹⁸ The application of marginal survival to Amish culture in America may, in fact, have caused the process to become too closely associated with that single subsociety, rendering it thereby genre- and repertory-bound. The approach may also lend itself to a less dramatic application, such as the association of chamber music with nineteenth-century Romanticism and the educated German *Musikliebhaber*.¹⁹ Yet another example would be the survival of specific venues for a few, symbol-laden songs.

Modernization is the best acculturative parry to assimilation. It allows the context of musical performance to change—usually reflecting contexts in the mainstream society—but does so in order to solidify the cultural values represented by the music. Revival is the most widely known example of modernization. It relies often on the emergence of new musical concepts and behavior in order to repackage an older, often vanishing, repertory. Revival may depend on other aspects of modernization, such as dissemination by recordings. Westernization, the usual counterpart to modernization in the interpretation of ethnic music, is not appropriate in the case of German-American music because of that music's extreme manifestation of Western musical traits. If, however, we supplant Westernization with the term, Americanization, we might better describe the social transformation that occurs when German-American dance bands adopt neutral trappings to present their music to an audience that is not representative of any single ethnic group.

Cultural Change and the Music Itself

I shall now turn briefly to the application of a few processes described in the previous section to songs collected from German-American communities in Wisconsin. The examples are intended to represent songs and performances that usually receive too little attention from the scholar because the music is deemed commonplace or the

performances unsuitable for recorded anthology. Others receive too much attention because they are the vestiges of a tradition that has actually subsided. Such songs as the following usually challenge the researcher's expectations, effecting bewilderment and relegation to the back of the archival drawer. Yet interpreted in light of the preceding continuum, they reveal the persistence of a dynamic and changing tradition.

The first example was collected in 1977 during fieldwork in northern Wisconsin. The version of "Herbei, o ihr Gläub'gen" that appears as Figure 2 is not simply a variant of that well-known Christmas song. It is, instead, an example of the rather extreme consolidation of an earlier diversified repertory in this region. The singer combines two melodies, the usual and that for "Ihr Kinderlein kommet," thus reshaping and partially preserving both. The melody of "Ihr Kinderlein kommet" is most clearly discernible in the first three lines, whereas "Herbei, o ihr Gläub'gen" finds its clearest statement in the refrain that begins with line four. Such a combination is really not so very unlikely and is no doubt encouraged by the essentially dactylic meter underlying the opening of both songs. Most important, this process of consolidation has succeeded in removing "Herbei, o ihr Gläub'gen" from strict association with the fixed traditions of the church, nudging it instead into the oral traditions of folk music, where it may well even absorb other melodies.

Figure 2

Herbei, o ihr Gläub'gen

Singer: Olga Goeke

August 18, 1977

$\text{♩} = 138 \text{ mm.}$

Antigo, Wisconsin

Originally sung in D Major

Her- bei, o ihr Glau-ben [sic], fröh-lich tri-um-phi-rend; o
 kom- met, o kom- met nach Beth- le- hem.
 Ge- [sic] het das Kind- lein, uns zum Heil ge- bo- ren. O
 las- set uns an- be- ten, o las- set uns an- be- ten, o
 las- set uns an- be- ten, den KÜ- nig.

One of the most interesting transformations in the rural German-American community of the Upper Midwest is the secularization of religious musical traditions, a process that exhibits various patterns of consolidation. Figure 3 is extracted from the repertory of two singers living in Bonduel, Wisconsin. The two singers always perform together and utilize harmonized versions. Though sung without reference to music, the versions are almost exactly the same as those printed in songbooks found in the community.²⁰ The performances of these singers mark a wide variety of social functions observable throughout the community. Some of these may be still related to the church, but most are now devoid of specific religious function. Although the music itself has not changed, the behavior and concepts associated with it have.

Figure 3

Laßt mich geh'n

Music by Karl Voigtländer
 Text by G.F.L. Knat
 (*Unser Liederbuch* 1893?:239)
 ♩ = 50 mm.

Meta Brusewitz, Soprano
 Clara Stuewer, Alto
 January 11, 1978
 Bonduel, Wisconsin

Verse
 1 Laßt mich geh'n, Laßt mich geh'n, Daß ich Je-sum mö-ge
 seh'n Mei-ne Seel' ist voll Ver-lan-gen, Ihn auf
 e-wig zu um-fan-gen, Und vor sei-nem Thron zu steh'n.

The next example should be a ballad collector's jewel, turning his eyes back to Europe, where the relations among different ballad repertoires are still the subject of considerable investigation. "In des Gartens dunkler Laube" is a German variant of the Child Ballad, "Lord Lovell," number 75, and one of the most common ballads from Francis James Child's corpus of primarily Anglo-Scottish song.²¹ This German variant, recorded in 1946 by Helene Stratman-Thomas,²² exemplifies marginal survival. But the performance tradition that survives is not so much a remnant from Europe, to which one would be hard-pressed to trace it from Wisconsin, but from the Schlitz Palm-Garten in Milwaukee, where the singer performed it as a young woman in the social context of an immigrant community.

Figure 4

In des Gartens dunkler Laube

Singer: Ella Mittelstadt Fischer August 27, 1946 (Stratman-Thomas)
Mayville, Wisconsin
♩ = 88 mm.

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first staff shows the instrumental introduction. The second staff is labeled 'Verse' and contains the lyrics: 'In des Gar- tens dun- kle(r) Lau- be sa- tzen bei- de'. The third staff continues the lyrics: 'Hand in Hand. Rit- ter E- du- ard mit sei- ner Li- na, schlos- sen sie ein fes- tes Band.' The score ends with a double bar line.

The final example is a type of revival. Performed by the Merrill German Club of northern Wisconsin, this common version of "Heidenröslein" represents the transformation of a regional repertory through the appearance of new performers, who emigrated from Germany just before and after World War II. Songbooks widely used in rural northern Wisconsin prior to the 1940s do not contain "Heidenröslein," despite its ubiquity in the repertoires of urban German singing societies in the United States and Central Europe. The reason for this stems from the basic orientation of nineteenth-century immigrants in the region to religious musical traditions and the relatively gradual entrance of songs from secular traditions. Although "Heidenröslein" is by no means unusual in the larger body of German folk music, its appearance in northern Wisconsin along with a specific group of immigrants has resulted in the injection of new cultural values into the musical tradition of that region. These new values have, furthermore, signaled a change in the basic conceptualization of German-American music, stimulating its continued practice in the region because of the ability of the tradition to countenance change.

Figure 5

Heidenröslein

Text: Wolfgang von Goethe
Music: Heinrich Werner
♩ = 138 mm.

Singers: Merrill German Club
Wausau, Wisconsin
January 15, 1978

Verse

Sah' ein Knab' ein Rös-lein steh'n, Rös- lein auf der
Hei- den, war so jung und mor- gen-schön,
lief er schnell, es nah' zu seh'n, sah's mit vie- len
Freu- den. Rös- lein, Rös-lein, Rös-lein rot,
Rös- lein auf der Hei- den.

Cultural Change and Musical Behavior

Practices of German-American music are most difficult to distinguish and define in those venues where one might presume its repository to be the most expansive: a small, rural town settled almost entirely by Germans. There one would expect to find elderly residents with extensive repertoires of German folk songs and to discover social gatherings accompanied with music long ago abandoned by assimilated groups. Such dreams of pristine German folk culture, however, are rarely fulfilled.

If one broadens the interpretation of German-American music to include musical behavior and to elucidate the local conceptualization of music, the musical activity within the rural community emerges. Such was the case in Bonduel, Wisconsin, a small town of approximately 1,000 northwest of Green Bay, in which I conducted fieldwork four times from 1977 to 1979 and again in 1985. A town whose residents have been almost completely German in background since its inception in the mid-nineteenth century, Bonduel is furthermore surrounded by other largely German towns. Because of this continuous contact with German-American culture for over a century, my original intent was to collect folk songs and, further, to examine the degree to which relatively isolated musical genres might survive in such a setting. But folk songs

were not to be found in abundance, nor were there social institutions, such as singing societies, that maintained the more classicized versions of German folk songs. Rather than through a diverse repertory of folk songs, Bonduel's German musical heritage found its primary expression through religion and religious organizations. Within these organizations, moreover, there was remarkable diversity, which in turn yielded new functions to the genres of religious music.

Bonduel's sense of German-American ethnicity lies rooted in its religious institutions. The Missouri and Wisconsin Synod Lutheran churches and the Methodist (formerly German Methodist) church were founded in the nineteenth century, and only a recently established fundamentalist church is not historically associated with German-American Protestantism. The primary musical organizations in Bonduel are centered in the churches. The churches, thus, provide a cultural focus for musical activities. As illustrated by Figure 3, the repertoires present in diverse performance settings derive largely from religious sources. During the history of the town other social institutions were dependent on the churches. A public high school was not established until 1939, and the Missouri Synod parochial school continues to be strong. The parochial school system long provided a means of music education for Bonduel, undergirding the town's music with religious functions.

The process of historical change in Bonduel was one in which the values central to local German-American ethnicity were also central to the community's churches. Musical behavior bore witness to these cultural values and had become one of the primary means for their expression. Examined only in terms of the music itself, the German repertoires of Bonduel were clearly derived from the hymnals and religious *Gesangbücher* in many homes. The performance of the songs, however, had diversified. By the mid-twentieth century local performance transcended both home and church and pervaded community activities as a reminder of a history in which ethnic values were consolidated within a few, limited musical repertoires.

Cultural Change and the Conceptualization of Music

Study of musical behavior often leads to a more complete understanding of the cultural history of a particular region or community. Conversely, it may be the closer observation and recounting of history that lead toward the understanding of changing patterns in an ethnic group's conceptualization of music. As musical behavior responds to different social settings, concepts of music change accordingly. When an ethnic group alters its concepts of music, one of the processes of change in Figure 1 usually ensues.

The music of German-Americans lends itself quite well to historical examination because of its frequent development within particular organizations, themselves serving as institutional responses to changing cultural values. It is for this reason that I shall offer a brief historical overview of the German-American singing society as an illustration of

changing concepts of music within a relatively fixed musical institution. The overview and the historical periods determined here are intended as general descriptions, rather than accounts of individual singing societies. As such, they may speak to somewhat broader musical values and concepts, as well as broader cultural values for German-American society.²³

The development of German singing societies in the United States falls roughly into four periods, each of which is characterized by distinct concepts of appropriate music and musical activity. These concepts have changed because of the need to respond to historical pressures both inside and outside the ethnic group. During the earliest historical period (ca. 1835-1885) musical programs varied greatly and contained a relatively small percentage of works drawn from the German folk-song literature.²⁴ Interlacing *Männerchor* standards were arias from operettas, works for social orchestra or band, solo performances, and sundry other genres; the exact ordering of such programs depended largely on the specific chorus, the region in which it was active, and the occasion for the performance. Most members of singing societies during this period were first-generation immigrants and had no special need to assert their ethnicity through song. Many singing-society activities were intended only for other German-speaking Americans, but the mere perpetuation of the organization itself symbolized the values intrinsic to it. Between 1885 and 1920, singing societies diversified their programs and activities, undergoing in the process a period of classicization. Two basic types of music are generally to be found on programs from this period: standard German *Volkslieder* arranged for chorus (usually mammoth and male) and works from the standard orchestral literature of Central Europe (usually with an emphasis on virtuosic playing and concerti). Classicization of ethnicity, thus, assumed two forms, one of them rising from German folk music, the other emphasizing the place of German culture in the history of Western art music. For various reasons, not the least of which was the impact of two world wars with Germany, the third period of development (1920-1950) was characterized by consolidation. The mammoth concerts of the second period, intended as they were to draw external attention to the musical offerings of the German singing societies, were reshaped and refined for the group itself. Repertoires were greatly reduced, but retained an emphasis on classicized works. Classicization thus achieved even more distilled form. During the final period (1950 to the present) consolidation has become manifest as revival.²⁵ The repertory of many present-day singing societies is completely classicized and purely symbolic. Within the larger context of German-American music, museumization can be observed, for preservation of certain symbol-laden songs from the past dominates the preparation of concert programs.

The gradually changing concepts of music reflected in the history of the singing society reveal also changing patterns of ethnicity. Just as the singing society had to respond to social pressures and a constantly shifting balance of membership from different immigrant generations, so too were the cultural values central to German-American society in

constant flux. Because of their responsiveness to change, the concepts of music emerging from the history of German-American singing societies possess the potential to reveal certain cultural values that were presumed invisible or even absent. Like other aspects of ethnic expression, changing concepts of German-American music are engendered by those consciously aware of unremitting values essential to their own vision of German-American ethnicity.

The approaches to the interpretation and classification of German-American music and musical activity that I have introduced in this article offer the advantage of cutting across the boundaries established by standard methodologies for the study of ethnic groups in the United States. Thus, they do not require that the researcher stuff German-Americans into ghettos or determine those levels of the subsociety at which structural assimilation has or has not occurred. On the contrary, these approaches accept a broad spectrum of change that cannot easily be packaged in the usual wrappers for the ethnic-group model.

The ultimate aim and value of these approaches would be that of contributing to a more comprehensive history of German-American music. This in turn would yield new perspective to the cultural history of the ethnic group and contribute multifariously to the diverse areas integrated by the interdisciplinary focus emphasized by the field of German-American studies. Collaboration among historian, musicologist, folklorist, and linguist would not only be encouraged, but facilitated because such an interpretive framework demands broadly inclusive, rather than narrowly technical, data. If indeed we begin to accept the history of German-American culture as one in which a more profound adherence to distinctive cultural values belies the appearance of assimilation, our study must plumb the values central to that distinctiveness. Subscribing to the premise that German-American music is one of the most salient and fundamental of such values, the approaches introduced here are intended as steps in that direction.

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Notes

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¹ The census cited most frequently in studies of German-American cultural history is that for the New York Philharmonic in 1890, at which time 89 of the orchestra's 94

members were German. See Frédéric Louis Ritter, *Music in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), p. 356; Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, Vol. II: *The Influence of the German Element in the United States* (New York: Arno Press, 1969 [1927]), p. 261; Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Germans," in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. by Stephan Thernstrom et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 425.

The influence of German music and musicians on art music in America decreased significantly after World War I, when France supplanted Germany as a more important center for musical study abroad, at least until World War II; see Alan Howard Levy, *Musical Nationalism: American Composers' Search for Identity* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983). Since World War II, the Federal Republic of Germany has again assumed an important role in the training of American musicians, especially in areas such as opera and musicology.

² H. Earle Johnson, "The Germania Musical Society," *The Musical Quarterly*, 34, No. 1 (January 1953), 75-93. Of the five "immigrant orchestras" arriving in the United States during the 1840s, Johnson observes that four were constituted primarily of German members (pp. 77-78).

³ Levy, pp. 8-9.

⁴ See Philip V. Bohlman, "Hymnody in the Rural German-American Community of the Upper Midwest," *The Hymn*, 35, No. 3 (July 1984), 158-64.

⁵ Kathleen Neils Conzen, "The Paradox of German-American Assimilation," *Yearbook of German-American Studies*, 16 (1981), 153-60.

⁶ The most influential theory of ethnic-group boundaries is that of Fredrik Barth, which is most fully stated in Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Ethnic Groups* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969); building upon Barth, Anya Peterson Royce expands the model of boundaries in her *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

⁷ Andrew M. Greeley, *Ethnicity in the United States: A Preliminary Reconnaissance* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974), p. 112. Though describing German-Americans as an "invisible ethnic group," Greeley shows that internal ethnic mechanisms are unquestionably present and often override other social demands on the group (pp. 111-20).

⁸ Admittedly fraught with problems, the distinction between Western and non-Western music has come to form a canon for modern musical scholarship. Regardless of the particular allegiance chosen for the more subtle issues of this distinction, few would question the central role of German music in the nineteenth century, when the "common-practice period"—the central stream in the development of Western tonal-harmonic complexity—culminated before the onset of modernism.

⁹ The most common pentatonic scale may be produced by playing only the five black notes of the piano.

¹⁰ Fairly widespread musical literacy undergirded the singing-society movements among Germans in both Central Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century; see, for example, Theodore J. Albrecht, "The Music Libraries of the German Singing Societies in Texas, 1850-1855," *Notes*, 31, No. 3 (March 1975), 517-29.

¹¹ Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 32.

¹² Merriam, p. 33.

¹³ The approaches here are derived from several recent theories of musical response to culture contact. The continuum introduced here is intended as an application of these theories, rather than modification of them. See Margaret J. Kartomi, "The Processes and Results of Musical Culture Contact: A Discussion of Terminology and Concepts," *Ethnomusicology*, 25, No. 2 (May 1981), 227-49; Bruno Nettl, "Some Aspects of the History of World Music in the Twentieth Century: Questions, Problems, and Concepts," *Ethnomusicology*, 22, No. 1 (January 1978), 123-36, and *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), pp. 349-54; Amnon Shiloah and Erik Cohen, "The Dynamics of Change in Jewish Oriental Ethnic Music in Israel," *Ethnomusicology*, 27, No. 2 (May 1983), 227-52.

¹⁴ Attempts to collect Anglo-Scottish ballads in the Appalachians earlier this century proceeded in exactly this way. Only those versions reflecting no change qualified as authentic folk music, and all other types of music were ignored. See, for example, Cecil J. Sharp, *Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1917).

¹⁵ Bohlman, "Hymnody," and Carl Schalk, *The Roots of Hymnody in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965).

¹⁶ Bohlman, "Hymnody."

¹⁷ Musical repertory often followed the same path of organizational synthesis. Song-books published by the Protestant German-American church presses, such as the ubiquitous *Lieder-Perlen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House) and *Unser Liederbuch* (Reading: Pilger Buchhandlung), were interspersed with secular folk songs. The Antigo (Wisconsin) Publishing House specialized in the printing of music for the German church band.

¹⁸ John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 3rd ed., revised (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 224-30; Bruno Nettl, "The Hymns of the Amish: An Example of Marginal Survival," *Journal of American Folklore*, 70 (1957), 323-28; John Umble, "The Old Order Amish, Their Hymns and Hymn-Tunes," *Journal of American Folklore*, 52 (1939), 82-95.

¹⁹ For a study of the special role of chamber music in the musical culture of the German-Jewish ethnic community in contemporary Israel, see Philip V. Bohlman, "Central European Jews in Israel: The Reurbanization of Musical Life in an Immigrant Culture," *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 16 (1984), 67-83.

²⁰ *Unser Liederbuch* (Reading: Pilger Buchhandlung, 1893), p. 239.

²¹ See "Lord Lovell" in Bertrand Harris Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*, Vol. III (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 189-217, for different versions of the ballad from the Anglo-Scottish tradition.

²² Tapes of the Stratman-Thomas Collection are held in the Mills Music Library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

²³ The following overview is based largely on my study in 1983-1984 of German singing societies in Chicago, descriptions, records, and documents of which are held in the Chicago Historical Society and the Special Collections of the Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago. Summary of the most recent period of development is based largely on fieldwork with singing societies in Pittsburgh during 1984-1985.

²⁴ The dates assigned to such periods are necessarily approximate and may not take into account all local and regional differences. This is especially true during the first period, when singing societies in the Eastern United States took root before those elsewhere in the country. It is notable, however, that developments in the subsequent periods were relatively more coeval throughout the United States, thus allowing one to speak with more accuracy of national patterns of change.

²⁵ In the recently published history of the Washington Sängerbund, this contemporary period is called the "Second Rebirth," a denotation I take as equivalent in this context to revival. See Frank H. Pierce III, *The Washington Saengerbund: A History of German Song and German Culture in the Nation's Capital* (Washington, DC: The Washington Saengerbund, 1981), pp. 129-82.