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Beethoven in National Socialist Political Culture

by

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History Departments

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We will constantly achieve success if we stride forward on the
highpoints of [our] spiritual heritage...: if we stride forward from
Beethoven to Hitler.

Eugen Hadamovsky, (1934)[1]

Sometime in 1934, shortly before emigrating from Germany, the photo journalist Alfred Eisenstaedt did a story on the *Beethovenhaus* in Bonn. Having climbed the narrow steps of the apartment, he prepared to take a shot of the cramped attic room where the great composer had been born. "By sheer coincidence," in his words, "the Nazis came into the room. . . and laid a wreath with a swastika at the base of [Beethoven's] bust in honor of the Führer's birthday. After they left, I took the picture both with and without the swastika. I was a little afraid to remove it, but I was willing to take a chance for a good picture." [2]

Beyond the action of the few Nazis involved or the risky counteraction of Eisenstaedt, this appropriation of a Beethoven icon belonged to was part of a grand propaganda scheme undertaken by the cultural politicians of National Socialism. Their purpose was to persuade the German public to revere Ludwig van Beethoven not only as a great composer, but as a man who had held views comparable to those of Nazi leaders. In fact, people were expected to believe that he had attempted to express them in his music.

Historians of the National Socialist phenomenon ism have established that its propaganda had a pronounced "aesthetic" aspect. Recognizing, along with heads of other modern mass movements, that twentieth-century politics involves reaching tremendous numbers of people, National Socialist leaders resolved to communicate their messages through existing cultural images, phrases and symbols. Through literary reference, visual ornament, architectural design, dramatic presentation, cinematic display and musical atmosphere, the Nazis imbued their movement with almost religious pageantry. [3] By analyzing publications, dramas, paintings, sculptures, buildings, rallies and films of the Nazi period, scholars have pieced together most of the literary and visual parts of the ceremonial

atmosphere formed by NSDAP propaganda. But few have construed the role that music has played in the *Gesamtkunstwerke* orchestrated by National Socialist ideologues.

Those who have determined Nazi policies toward serious-music performers and performances have made an important contribution to filling in this part of National Socialist cultural history.[4] Knowledge about the fate of conductors, orchestras and concerts proves that party leaders took their "*Musikpolitik*" seriously. However, it does not show how they made the music itself part of their "liturgy." This entails assessing how Nazis desired "their" music to be understood and how they forced Germans to so interpret it. Study of how they appropriated Beethoven's music and legend affords many insights into this aspect of Nazi "*Kulturpolitik*."

Nazi ideologues of the National Socialist Party believed that formulating and diffusing a "nazified" interpretation of the art and life of Beethoven, along with other "German Masters," was part of their mission to gain the confidence of the German people. Nazis fabricated a version of the "Beethoven Myth"[5] to accomplish some of the principle goals of their cultural politics: to demonstrate their "*völkisch*" objective of reestablishing "traditional values"; to present their movement as a "respectable" one of high- cultural taste; and most importantly, to intimate that legendary German heroes would have agreed with their policies.

Tracing the evolution of a "National Socialist Beethoven" involves studying party control over institutions of music production and its direction of music scholarship, education and criticism. Analysis of scholarly works, newspaper articles, school textbooks, concert programs, radio transmissions, newsreels and feature films reveals how the ideological weapon of a nazified Beethoven was wielded.

All professional organizations for musicians in Germany were subsumed under the Nuremberg Civil Servants Law of 7 April 1933. They were thus incorporated into the state apparatus and forced to "cleanse"purge themselves of non-"Aryans" and communists. On 7 June 1934, the Association of German Musicians was integrated with into Goebbels' Reich Culture Chamber (*Reichskulturkammer*) and renamed the Reich Music Chamber (*Reichsmusikkammer*). According to Peter Raabe, its president after 1935, music under the control of the *Reichsmusikkammer* was "to serve a social function, to be clearly defined in subordination to the general aims of National Socialism, and to be denied traditional autonomy. . . ." [6]

The world of music performance was henceforth at the disposal of the state, and leaders made extensive use of it. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra performed throughout Europe as an ambassador of German culture until the end of the war. Other orchestras and music groups were made part of the liturgical pageantry of state functions and rallies. Throughout the period of the Third Reich, programs of all orchestras were carefully monitored according to the dictates of Nazi music theory and the needs of party propagandists.[7]

More important than controlling music performers was mastering those who

determined how music was conceived: music scholars and critics. These persons could ensure that Germans would comprehend music as the Nazis wished. Stringent supervision of music critics, music theorists and other musicological scholars was the primary means by which the Nazis attempted to imbue music with the political meaning they preferred, and adjust audiences' perceptions accordingly.

Music scholars and educators were subjected to the same measures that affected their colleagues academics in other fields. At the Prussian Academy of the Arts in 1933, writer Heinrich Mann and artist Käthe Kollwitz were forced to resign for signing a proclamation calling for resistance to the Nazis. In the world of music education, Leo Kestenberg and Paul Hindemith were treated in comparable fashion. No music scholar could publish work contrary to the National Socialist line and expect to retain his or her position.

Outlets of music criticism were also swiftly coordinated. All progressive music journals were eliminated or transformed into organs of Nazi music theory policy. After 1933 the *Zeitschrift für Musik*, originally founded by Robert Schumann, began "to express confidence in the new order and communicate government policies toward music." [8] Likewise was *Die Musik* "made to coincide with the 'national' press." [9] In 1940, both of these publications were united with the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* and the *Neues Musikblatt* to form a journal entitled *Musik im Kriege*. Music critics themselves complied with the strictures of the regime by founding organizations such as the "Study Group of Berlin Music Critics" and the "Reich Union of German Radio Critics." Membership in both "was predicated on national sentiment and Aryan ancestry....All German critics were to be included through strict national organization." [10]

Thus did Goebbels and his *Reichskulturkammer* expropriate the machinery necessary for diffusing National Socialist music interpretations and molding this art form into a propaganda instrument. Michael Meyer, historian of the administrative aspects of Nazi *Musikpolitik*, has shown that National Socialists "justified totalitarian design and practice" in music analysis by insinuating that composers endorsed specific political, social, and military schemes. [11] According to National Socialist operatives, atonal music was not just "alien" (*artfremde*), as earlier music conservatives had argued, but "musical Bolshevism" created by internationalist Jewry to cause worldwide chaos in preparation for revolution. Supporters of "progressive" music trends were branded "active agents of subversion" who wrote music meant to "undermine the blood and soul of the German people." [12]

While warning of cultural and national enemies, Nazi pamphleteers also used music criticism to legitimate party dogma. "German Masters" were "Germanic" not only because of their "Aryan" background or their "native" (*arteigene*) styles of musical expression, but because they had "*Weltanschauungen*" comparable to Hitler's own. No matter how anachronistic, signs were sought in the biographies of important German composers to show that they would have supported at least the spirit of nationalist, militarist and anti-communist views. Insisting that music could be interpreted in literal terms, Nazi functionaries read into

compositions general meanings or even clear messages sanctioning their political opinions.[13]

These methods of cultural-political musicology were not innovations of the "Hitler State." At least in the case of Beethoven, such procedures had been undertaken well before the "*Machtergreifung*" by every major group in the German political spectrum. The common attribution of the processes of *Musikpolitik* solely to Nazi propagandists is inaccurate.[14] However, with Hitler's accession to power, the NSDAP was able to refine and expand these techniques without restriction.

In implementing Beethoven as a symbol for National Socialism, scholars and critics had to work to make the "idea of Beethoven" fit into their schema. Critical exertion was necessary because, curiously, Beethoven's worthiness of the status of German hero was contested among *völkisch* and racial scholars. Unlike Richard Wagner, whose allegiance to the German nation, skepticism about revolutionary politics (after he had renounced his participation in the failed uprisings of 1849), and racial "purity" were beyond question, Beethoven was a problematic case for Nazi culture-makers: some of his political actions and statements could be interpreted as having been "left of center," if not actually revolutionary.[15] This was bothersome to those intent on making him a hero of the authoritarian right.

Even more disquieting to racial "scholars" was Beethoven's physical appearance. While portraits and observations by his contemporaries differ tremendously, all reveal that Beethoven had few of the characteristics associated with "Aryan" stereotypes.[16] Noticing this, important racial "scientists" concluded that Beethoven had been of "impure blood." Careful analysis of his portraits, they said, led to the "discoveries" that although his eye color may have been blue [it was not], he was short, had dark hair, and swarthy skin. Based on these "findings," race experts such as Hans F.K. Günther and Ludwig Ferdinand-Clauss determined that Beethoven's genetic background was "mixed":

We must describe the racial mixture that is present in Beethoven as
fälisch-Nordic-eastish-and-westish. [17]

Nevertheless, although their party ideology was firmly grounded upon tenets of racial "science," Nazi propagandists did not accept the conclusion that Beethoven had been of impure racial stock. Upholding this position would have meant discarding Beethoven's music as "alien." But leading spokesmen for the Nazi Party wished to designate Beethoven's art a symbol of how the German *Volk* would thrive under Hitler's rule: his legend was too valuable to be repudiated. Therefore, they made a concerted effort to rehabilitate him as a nordic hero.

The *Völkischer Beobachter* recognized its duty to "purify" Beethoven for National Socialist applications. Edited by Alfred Rosenberg, the principal paper of the Nazi movement countered concerns about Beethoven by officially vouching for his racial acceptability. A number of articles produced with the obvious intent of cleansing Beethoven of physical impurities appeared in the "Art and Culture" section of this paper. One of these, "Portrait of his Heredity" (*Erbbild*),

attempted to dispel worry about Beethoven's racial background by stressing that his grandfather was of Germanic ancestry:

In the portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven's grandfather by Nadour, the court painter in Bonn, we see a conspicuously nordic head of the finest racial stamp.[18]

Another, "The Outward Appearance of Beethoven" (*Erscheinungsbild*) did the same for the grandson. This report opened with a seemingly innocuous citation from Anton Schindler's contemporary depiction of the composer's stocky physique, overbearing laugh, and messy hair. The Nazis revealed their ulterior motive with a telling "correction" of Schindler's observations. To the sentence wherein Schindler stated that Beethoven's "forehead was high and wide; his brown eyes small" the Nazis added the question, "(blue?)," insinuating that Beethoven's worshipful secretary had not described his eye-color accurately.[19] Thereafter, the passage continued without additional annotations in a way which nevertheless indicated why the *Völkischer Beobachter* reproduced it:

The tint of Beethoven's face was yellowish. He usually lost this, however, through his wanderings in free nature during the summertime, when he received a good baking and his skin came to be covered with a fresh varnish of red and brown.[20]

Evidently, this citation was expected to discount reports that Beethoven was a "dark" racial type, since it implied that his skin was browned by the sun.

Confirmation of this assumption came in the next paragraph. Opening with the revelatory information that

Friederich August Klöber, the sculptor who made a bust of Beethoven in 1818 and who also painted [him], reports to us in words and in images that *Beethoven's eye-color was grey-blue* [original emphasis],[21]

this paragraph went on to pronounce the NSDAP opinion of racial scholars who had questioned Beethoven's genetic purity:

Dr. Hans Günther errs decidedly when, in his *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, he characterizes Beethoven as predominantly Eastern. Quite aside from the fact that the talent for musical creation does not arise in the eastern races.[22] [original emphasis]

Thus did the *Völkischer Beobachter* try to eradicate signs that Beethoven might not have been worthy of leadership status in the racially pure *Volk* Nazis fantasized.

In this cover-up designed for public consumption, the Nazis apparently did not consider sophisticated explanations of the discrepancy between Beethoven's appearance and his supposed significance as a nordic hero necessary. For a mass audience, the "big lie" sufficed: the *Völkischer Beobachter* simply insisted that Beethoven was of pure German descent and justified its position by misrepresenting contemporary descriptions.

A more persuasive argument was needed to pacify race "experts" who called for strict adherence to racial criteria in choosing party heroes. A secondary school teacher from Bochum, Richard Eichenauer, provided the Nazis with the racial-scientific assessment required to justify use of Beethoven as a party symbol. An obscure *völkisch* thinker,[23] Eichenauer was not a trained scholar of music. However, his book, *Music and Race* (1937), synthesized racial sociology Germanic ideology and music history in a way National Socialist ideologues found useful.[24]

Opening his chapter on Beethoven, Eichenauer admitted that he had agreed with the negative evaluations of Beethoven's racial ancestry made by Günther and Ferdinand-Clauss. Upon reconsidering the issue of "Beethoven's racial-scientific representation," however, Eichenauer felt himself "required to deviate in many ways from the views that [he] had expressed earlier." [25] Having sensed or been told that the Nazi leadership wished to employ Beethoven as an ideological symbol, Eichenauer altered his opinion. In the rest of his discussion he labored rigorously to force Beethoven into the National Socialist paradigm of racial acceptability.[26]

Eichenauer's efforts to reinstate Beethoven began with a partial retraction of the view he had shared with other racial scholars: he had never said that Beethoven's "spirit" or "world of tones" were racially mixed, only his physical qualities.[27] Beethoven's attitudes, actions, expressions and art were clearly not "eastern." [28] In fact, Beethoven's Germanic "fighting nature" was greater than that of any purely Aryan composer, including Schütz, Bach, Händel, Gluck, and Haydn.[29] This was because, Eichenauer said, Beethoven had fought "like the descendent of a dragon-slayer" to overcome his racial impediment and create the greatest of "nordic music." [30] Since Beethoven had struggled to overcome his mixed nature, Eichenauer felt he should be considered even *more* nordic than they had been. He concluded:

We believe that we have shown that Beethoven's un-nordic inheritance worked, in the highest sense, not as an limitation, but as a steady impetus for raising himself to become nordic. So he is to us, in spite of his undoubtedly impure nordic nature, one of the most stirring developers of the inner soul [and therefore] a nordic fighter and hero.[31]

Thus did Eichenauer help to save Beethoven's legend from extermination by the Nazis.

Nevertheless, diligent wardens of the Aryan community discovered another aspect of Beethoven's family background which could have led to trouble: problems with his father.[32] Since Johann van Beethoven had been a heavy drinker and rather unethical, some National Socialist ideologues perceived difficulties correlating the life of Ludwig with their theories of inheritance. If blood and family background were the basis for acceptance in the Nazi *Gemeinschaft*, Beethoven could not be one of its icons: his father's record was wholly unacceptable. Nazi scholars had

to come to the composer's rescue again.

To mitigate this additional family "problem," some Nazi interpreters brazenly defied the historical record by contending that Beethoven's father had not been an unruly sort at all. In an article entitled "The Truth About Beethoven's Father," *Die Musik* presented Johann van Beethoven as having had "a heroic fighting nature of nordic essence." By trying to establish a "German Theatre" in Bonn, *Die Musik* vindicated, Johann had attempted a "nationalistic deed." Therefore, this newly nazified journal concluded, the "heroic [aspects] of Beethoven's works" could be seen as "racial-spiritual monuments" to the "deeds of his father."^[33]

Ludwig Schiedermaier, then director of the *Beethovenhaus* in Bonn, also had a remedy for this blemish on his hero's background. In an article on "Beethoven's Parents" for the *Völkischer Beobachter*, he contended that the damning of Beethoven's father was unjust. Notions that he was a drunk were, according to Schiedermaier, errors committed by persons who did not understand the importance of alcohol in Rhenish culture. The idea that Beethoven derived from a "family swamp" (*Familiensumpf*) was absurd, Schiedermaier avowed in a cyclical argument, because this would "contradict biological laws."^[34]

In a sick twist of thought, Schiedermaier suggested that his resolution of this issue invalidated arguments against "legal measures of sterilization or castration." Some, he said, had contested such legislation by referring to Johann van Beethoven. Under its strictures, they contended, he would have been castrated and his great son never born. Schiedermaier considered this stance preposterous only because he was sure Johann had not been racially or emotionally inferior, and therefore would not have been subject to sterilization under National Socialist law.^[35] Thus did the head of the *Beethovenhaus* ingratiate himself with party authorities.^[36]

Other Nazi biographers maintained that although Beethoven's father had been an unsavory figure, the composer had hated him.^[37] Intimating that he was more attached to her than to his father, Nazi literature emphasized Beethoven's love for his mother. Much was made of the fact that Beethoven had written, upon her death:

She was such a good mother, so worthy of love. She was my best friend. Oh, who was as lucky as I when I could still cry out the sweet name, "Mother," and it would be heard.^[38]

Magdalena van Beethoven was frequently portrayed as a traditional mother-type who cared for the kitchen and served as a refuge from the father.^[39] By so depicting her, the Nazis achieved two goals: they promoted a model for their notion of the woman's place in traditional family life and they insinuated that Beethoven had received a greater amount of her more "acceptable" blood.

The job of decontaminating Beethoven was essentially finished by race "scholar," Walther Rauschenberger. In "Racial Features of Beethoven and His Nearest Relatives," written for *Volk und Rasse*, the "Journal of the Reich Committee

for the *Volk's* Health Service and the German Society for Racial Hygiene," Rauschenberger gave Beethoven a clean bill of (racial) health. Rauschenberger resolved the issue of Beethoven's heritage by verifying and sharpening Richard Eichenauer's argument. In spite of his "mixed" racial appearance and imperfect family background, Rauschenberger reiterated, Beethoven had created compelling "nordic" art:

Nordic are, above all, the heroic aspects of his works which often rise to titanic greatness. It is significant that today, in a time of national renovation, Beethoven's works are played more often than any others, that one hears his works at almost all events of heroic tenor.[40]

Thus did Rauschenberger deem Beethoven's music appropriate for use at National Socialist events regardless of his "tainted" heritage. He, with the help of other racial "experts," guaranteed Beethoven's eligibility for Nazi hero status and sanctioned this practice, which party propagandists obviously wanted to continue.

Upon completing this process of racial purification, Nazi propagandists aimed to use Beethoven and his music to symbolize their ideological program. However, even after this reevaluation of his heredity, the case of Beethoven was still problematic for the Nazi cultural leadership. Though Beethoven could, with some reservations, be counted as a member of the German race, the fact remained that he had exhibited some leftist political tendencies. This necessitated purging his image of contamination by socialist political ideology.[41]

To minimize Beethoven's enthusiasm about the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon, analysts associated with the Nazi Party contended that whereas Beethoven had been exposed to revolutionary (in their words, "French," "cosmopolitan" and "internationalist") political ideals, he was "always a Rhinelander" at heart. As such, they felt, he could not maintain such opinions unconditionally. When it came to defending his nation against French rule, the *Völkischer Beobachter* held, Beethoven had always sided with Germany: though he temporarily suffered from what he called "revolutionary fever," his heart remained with his German "*Heimat*." [42]

Substantiation of these assertions was offered in various stilted forms. One essay in the *Völkischer Beobachter* reviewed the story of the Schloss Gratz incident. In 1806, Beethoven fled the country home of Prince Lichnowsky after refusing to perform on the piano for guests who included French officers. Significantly titled "The Patriot," the Nazi version retold this legend without mentioning the standard explanation of Beethoven's anger on this occasion: that his artistic pride had been affronted. They implied that he had acted on nationalistic impulse alone.[43]

In articles like "The Words of Beethoven," National Socialist journalists ripped citations out of context, including Beethoven's jest that "power" was his "morality" and his angry wish that he could meet Napoleon on the battlefield, as evidence that the composer had been a violent enemy of the French.[44] Carefully selected and often doctored material like this suited the Nazis' purpose

of using Beethoven's image to maintain national commitment in the struggle against Germany's perennial enemy. In the words of another Nazi publication, the *Deutsche Arbeiterpresse* of Vienna, all Germans had to fight along with National Socialists to keep Beethoven's spirit from being appropriated by the French:

Woe if [Beethoven's] spirit is ever stolen from us, since that would mean ultimate defeat, because this spirit is *German* spirit.[45]

More than an enemy of France, Nazis presented Beethoven as a "fighting man." To this end, they revived a First World War anecdote about the fate of Beethoven's grand nephew. "Landsturmmann Beethoven: A Wartime Memory" narrated the true story of a German officer who trained men called up to serve during World War I. Among his charges was the last descendent of Beethoven, a grandson of nephew Karl. This Beethoven was not cut out for military service, and the bulk of the story tells of his comic efforts to survive the training. The end of the piece, however, carried a different tone:

A few days later I entered the Officer's School [where they were encamped] and, as I dismissed my squad, squeezed Beethoven's hand with particularly heart-felt feelings. Tears rolled down his cheeks. A half of a year later he was no longer among the living. He died in a garrison hospital of blood-poisoning caused by a leg-wound that he had neglected. The sad end of Landsturmmann Beethoven. The last descendent of the Creator of the 'Ninth'![46]

The editors must have estimated that had they not already convinced Germans that Beethoven would support his nation at war, record of his descendent's service might. Implicit in this article was the notion that Beethoven too would have fought in the First World War, and could be considered a symbolic flag-bearer in future battles.

The *Deutsche Arbeiterpresse* hoped the biography of Beethoven would signify that military strength was necessary and desirable:

Let Youth apprehend the spirit of Beethoven, and thereby learn and comprehend in the deepest sense [the fact] that Life means *Struggle*." [47]

Beethoven's modern German admirers, this journal added, should emulate him not as an artist, but as a warrior, for that was what Nazi Germany required:

To love Beethoven means to love battle and to honor the essence of heroism. We need this.[48]

Nazis also denied that Beethoven had been a supporter of democratic ideals. They asserted instead that he recognized the need for autocratic leadership and would have seconded the National Socialist call for the strong hand of a *Führer*. Again, Eichenauer came up with a way to dismiss rumors that Beethoven had been a "democrat":

If one calls Beethoven a "democrat," one must be aware of the difference in the meaning of the word between then and now. God knows he was never a representative of mushy feelings for the masses; even the *Seid umschlungen Millionen* makes him less a democrat in this sense than the spiritually related Schiller. He had wished to honor outstanding men in Napoleon. As soon as he found him to be a small man, he ripped up his dedication. That is representative of a wholly aristocratic outlook.[49]

The *Völkischer Beobachter* similarly stipulated that Beethoven "had no absolute hatred of aristocrats," [50] holding that what Beethoven had really liked about Napoleon were his powerful personality and strong-arm tactics:

What made him enthusiastic about Napoleon were not the political views of the Consul, but rather [his] fascinating personality...[which] with a strong hand transformed the chaos of the gruesome revolution into state order.[51]

Ultimately, the paper argued, Beethoven feared "chaos" brought on by "revolutionary fever" and recognized that authoritarian rule was occasionally necessary:

He did not close his mind to the understanding that in special times of anarchical uprising an oligarchic aristocracy had its attractions.[52]

Thus was Beethoven cleared of suspicion that he might have opposed National Socialist plans to overcome the "anarchy" of the Weimar era by force.

Once determined no risk to national or racial security, Beethoven was promoted in the Third Reich as having shared National Socialist political ideals. Beethoven, the musical warrior, fighting victoriously against the enemies of the German people, was compared by "objective" scholars like Hans Joachim Moser to "Parsival at the Round Table of King Arthur." [53] In Moser's opinion, his works "had a sound which was holy for every German" since the "holy circulation of the *Volk's* blood pounds in the music of Beethoven." [54] By listening to them, said others, Germans would sense the "roots and demands of the Fatherland" and be moved to use the "central power of the homeland" to achieve world-historical status, as Beethoven had.[55]

The idea of Beethoven as "world conqueror" was an important element of the Nazi edition of his *Mythos*.

The Beethoven portrait of our time should in no way be limited or stunted...; only then will it do justice to the great man's power to have political effect, which shows itself in the fact that all those peoples of the earth which it has peacefully subjugated consider his art an admirable manifestation of German style....It is Beethoven that we have to thank for founding a musical world-literature of German-national origins. The only comparable spiritual domination of the world to spread from Germany was [that] of Goethe.[56]

Such descriptions of Beethoven as "conqueror" were part of an effort to associate him with Adolf Hitler. Rejecting all former interpretations of Beethoven as a "democrat" or even an "aristocrat" as the outmoded thought of "parliamentarians," Nazis said he had yearned for a "*Führer*-personality":

We will today no longer speak of a "democratic folk-overture to *Egmont*." [Instead] we will fully agree that, in a critical period of total misery for his race, Beethoven felt in his heart yearning for a born *Führer*-personality, and represented this feeling immediately in a great work, the *Eroica*.^[57]

National Socialists even intimated that Beethoven was himself a model *Führer*, both artistic and political:

Beethoven appears to us today as one of the artistic *Führer* of epochal dimensions from the German past who maintained German ideals against ephemeral political and artistic trends....^[58]

As a *Führer*, Beethoven was supposed to have assigned the German people a "duty" (*Verpflichtung*):

to seek unity in multiplicity, to trace the forceful spiritual-soulful powers behind that unity, and to point out the link between these powers and the movements and currents [running toward] the Beethovenian future.^[59]

Beethoven himself had been unable to complete this mission; neither had nineteenth-century Germans unified the *Volk*.^[60] But by following the newest *Führer*, Germans could finally reach the *völkisch* "Beethovenian future":

We will constantly achieve success if we stride forward on the highpoints of [our] spiritual heritage...: if we stride forward from Beethoven to Hitler.^[61]

Its composer deemed politically sound, Beethoven's music was also incorporated into National Socialist cultural propaganda. Nazi cultural politicians emphatically promoted the idea that Beethoven's compositions exemplified the greatness of Germanic art, and the German race. Beethoven's music is "indisputably nordic," they said: after all, "the greatest nordic poetry of all times and peoples" (denoted as Homer, Euripedes, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe, and Schiller) influenced him directly.^[62] *Fidelio*, they asserted, "should be seen as the first truly nordic opera."^[63] All of his symphonies were renditions of "nordic-colored heroism."^[64] Every "cosmopolitan" interpretation of Beethoven's music as carrying a "universal" message about man's capacity to overcome some abstract notion of "fate," the Nazis implied, is wrong. The fate that Beethoven worked to surmount was "his own racial background, and it is for this that he should be celebrated."^[65]

Nazi ideologues were very open about appropriating Beethoven's music. One forthrightly recommended use of the Third Symphony to symbolize the new

state:

The *Eroica* will certainly be very useful to musicians as well as the musical *Volk* as a political symbol: as an idea of the state order under which the national worth of life and the art of the nation will be cared for.[66]

Interpretations of Beethoven's music favored during the Third Reich highlighted its heroic and military aspects: the Third Symphony was not a representation of Napoleon, but a celebration of German patriotism[67]; the Fifth was held up as a "*heroische Sinfonie*"[68]; and Beethoven's military pieces were widely discussed.

Nazi commentary also alluded to the supposed mystical link between the composer and Hitler. The Third Symphony represented Beethoven's "yearning for a born *Führer* personality." According to Beethoven scholar Arnold Schering: "the vague sense of *per aspera ad astra* in the Fifth Symphony" could be "understood as a depiction of the fight for existence waged by a *Volk* which looks for its *Führer* and finally finds it." If this view were popularized, Schering went on, the Fifth "could be transformed into a symbol which would illuminate contemporary Germans in the purest light of day." [69]

Strangely, the Ninth Symphony was not immediately included as part of Nazi ideological symbolism. Some National Socialists considered it "suspect" because the idea of "all men" becoming brothers did not go well with party ideology.[70] In contrast to Beethoven's "heroic symphonies," the Third and Fifth, Nazi hard-liners regarded the "Symphony of Joy" with its "kiss for the whole world" as "shameless." Especially during the Weimar Republic, performances of it were in "crass discord with human and artistic feelings," according to Nazis.[71] The "contradiction between ideal and reality did not allow one to forget, when hearing the Chorus of Joy, that humanity was not yet worthy of following its fighting prophets." [72] Until disturbing conditions in modern Germany were rectified, Beethoven's other works had to be emphasized.[73]

Once Nazi rule was secure, supporters asserted that the New Germany was much closer to the achievement of the dream of the Ninth than the Weimar Republic had been:

Today...the German *Volk* again stands united--the high ideal of humanity of Schiller and Beethoven is starting to be fulfilled. The band of joy is again wrapping itself around the nation....[74]

Nonetheless, before it could become an important part of the Nazi liturgy, the Ninth had to be reinterpreted in purely German terms. Throughout the existence of the Third Reich, Nazi ideologues worked to eradicate "internationalist" interpretations of Ninth.[75] Hans Joachim Moser's contribution to the effort went as follows:

His "*Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt*" means anything but a desire to fraternize with every Tom, Dick and Harry (as it was too willingly

misunderstood back in Germany's red years). It was much more an [expression of] glowing devotion to the notion, the dream, the simple idea of a humanity--as German as one can possibly conceive it![76]

As this and other examples attest, National Socialists constantly promoted the notion most essential to their ideology in references to Beethoven: the need to establish a united, racially pure "community." They also used Beethoven and his music to convey a sense that Hitler's rule would reestablish the stability they had missed since the First World War. By playing Beethoven's "traditional" works often, Nazis hoped Germans would "feel at home" when they heard "their music," or at least more secure than they had during the "*System-Zeit*," when "unsettling" styles of progressive musical expression had been common:[77]

Every German able to listen to and explain musical experience profoundly...will run up against something in the Ninth Symphony which is perhaps best described as a "sense of the homeland": the individual feels secure, as if "at home." He feels warmly surrounded by old friends, [not only] because this type of music is familiar to us, but because something of the blood and race of our own nature lives in it.[78]

Like the Ancient Oak, the Holy Flame and references to the medieval past, Beethoven's music became a symbol meant to root the National Socialist state in a longstanding tradition of Germanic strength and order.

National Socialist control of newspapers and journals compelled writers and editors to present the party's ideas about Beethoven and other German artists. Likewise was pressure on the institutions of German scholarship effective. Many important music scholars "did their duty" for the Third Reich by developing and propagating the Nazi image of Beethoven in their work. Almost all facets of the Nazi "*Beethovenbild*" described above were first formulated by important musicologists. Among these were Hans Joachim Moser,[79] Walter Vetter,[80] Max Unger,[81] Arnold Schering[82] and Ludwig Schieder-mair. To maintain their positions, these scholars had to do their part in Nazi propaganda efforts. The obvious enthusiasm with which they did so, however, is a blot on the tradition of Beethoven and general scholarship which is only now being revealed in Germany.[83]

Adults were not the only people force-fed the National Socialist version of the Beethoven myth. The Nazis felt it important to educate children about their ideals and plans, since they would carry the program forth in coming eras of the "Thousand Year Reich." An excellent example of Beethoven's portrait in didactic literature is found in *Our Youth: A Book for Entertainment, Learning and General Interest (Unseren Jungen: Ein Buch zur Unterhaltung, Belehrung, und Beschäftigung)*. Published in 1937, *Our Youth* was a collection of stories and anecdotes for the edification of German children. It included chapters on "Boxing: the Fighting Sport of Our Youth," "Africa," "The Hero from Kolberg," "Old Frederick" [The "Sergeant King"], "The Birth of Radio," and "Ludwig van

Beethoven."

The chapter on Beethoven contained all the elements one would expect in a biographical sketch written for pedagogical purposes. Beethoven was presented as having been a very hard worker, especially as a young man. It noted that he wanted to overcome his lack of classical education by reading the great poets and writers: he had even underlined a passage by Homer which said that sleeping too much is shameful.[84] "Above all," *Our Youth* reported, Beethoven "never whined." Even when he was turning deaf, "he took courage in his pain until his heroic will helped him to get over this terrible turn in his fate and he was able to return to his work." [85] In this publication for young people, Beethoven's self-discipline and intensive work habits were highlighted.

That was not all. Rehashing National Socialist versions of Beethoven's rededication of the Third Symphony and the flight from Schloss Gratz,[86] *Our Youth* led young readers to believe that the primary significance of his music was its contribution to the defeat of Napoleon:

In [Beethoven's] work everything that struggled to be expressed in the enslaved German people is represented through monstrous waves of music and a powerful language that would carry away and anger its listeners.[87]

Thus were German youth taught to perceive Beethoven's symphonies as nationalistic fight-songs.

Nazis used their Beethoven myth to intensively promote the idea of heroism. This campaign was directed toward youth in particular. In an article entitled "Let's Ask the Young Generation: Beethoven? Yes, Beethoven!" *Deutsche Musikkultur* argued that this composer manifested perfectly the goals which German youth were striving for in the "new era": "heroic behavior, recognition of the tragedy of life and untheatrical faith." To prove "how heroically Beethoven can make one think, feel and act," this journal told the story of a First World War fighter-pilot who had been shot down. For three days this "knightly" flier struggled against death. But when the moment did come, he died with the word "Beethoven" on his lips.[88] Stories like these goaded German youth to emulate the composer in the same way this warrior had.

Besides pedagogical literature, Beethoven's art was highlighted in the National Socialist school curriculum. Journals of the National Socialist Teacher's Union (*National Sozialistische Lehrerbundes*) encouraged educators to read the "latest" literature on Beethoven and consider his works as "depictions of nordic fate" (*nordische Schicksalsbilder*).[89] One Nazi pedagogue "treasured" Beethoven's "idea-music" as the "teaching master (*Lehrmeisterin*) of the nation." [90] That teachers introduced him into the classroom is affirmed by one who described the effect of Beethoven's music on her pupils.

After listening to Beethoven in her class, Ida Deeke reported in the *Zeitschrift für Musik*, one boy was deeply affected: on the following day he came in with a

"brooding face, as if his eyes were inner-directed." He worked through the morning "furiously, feverishly," without speaking to his comrades. In the afternoon, he broke down and cried. The next day, however,

it was as though light were emitting from him. His eyes gleamed like suns, his brow was clear and free, his boyish mouth laughed proudly, victoriously, while his hands worked with inexhaustible diligence, not bitterly like the day before, but with joyous, jubilant, victorious power. He had heard Beethoven for the first time in his young life and only in the second night thereafter grasped its strength and triumphant, exultant joy.[91]

Evidently, this boy was ready to participate in Beethoven-related activities which Nazi cultural authorities arranged for him and his classmates. The party promoted its Beethoven image within the ranks of children through a "Beethoven Festival" administered by the Hitler Youth organization (*Hitler Jugend*). Part of a large program of music education undertaken by the group,[92] the 1938 "Beethoven Festival of the Hitler Youth" at Bad Wildbad in the Black Forest epitomized the National Socialist use of Beethoven's music to motivate young persons. Five hundred members of the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*) were brought together for a three-day festival of Beethoven's music. In that time, all of Beethoven's symphonies (except the Ninth), three of the piano concertos, the Violin Concerto, both Romances, five overtures and a handful of chamber works were performed by a "state orchestra." "Lively directives about the life and fate of Beethoven" were given to the children in order to "prepare a foundation" for them to understand him as a "role model" (*Vorbild*).[93]

The tenor of these "directives" was unambiguous in the statements which opened the festivities. Elly Ney, who played the piano concertos for the festival, inaugurated the program by declaiming:

Beethoven for the Hitler-Youth! Lively German youth, you are being carried away by the fire of enthusiasm. In you the desire for Beauty, Truth and Heroism awakes and urges you toward action. How beautiful it is for the participating German musicians to bring you closer to Beethoven. This great German Master shakes the soul through the incomprehensible miracle of his work. Powers and forces threatened him terribly--but he found redemption in his art work....Heroic is the essence of nordic art. Here it lives in every tone....And this holy fire should ignite the hearts of youth, awaken [in them] a sense of responsibility, strengthen them in battle, comfort them in distress. So come, you German youth! Leave daily concerns behind! In these days and hours we want to open ourselves together to the currents of the soulful powers of our *Volk*. May great and enlightened deeds in the service of the *Führer* grow from this [experience]![94]

The next speaker, Professor Max Strub, encouraged the young audience to think of Beethoven during this music marathon in the following way:

His life was battle and triumph! His music, the accomplishment of the highest clarity and purity. According to his statements, music is not made to be heard superficially as entertainment. *No*, it should ignite fire in the souls of the men, and [provide women with] an ideal model of Womanhood, of which Beethoven created an eternal, virtuous monument in his opera *Fidelio*.^[95]

Later, the originator of this festival, Artur Haelssig, who also conducted the orchestra, looked back on the event very proudly:

It was aimed at achieving the goal [of developing] a young generation artistically and soulfully aligned with Beethoven [which would] know no insecurity in the valuation of artistic and human things....In this way will be created a German Man; a Man who is freed of all liberal and foreign influences and legacies; the National Socialist Man; the generation which will carry the future....At this decisive moment I have forged a weapon in this Beethoven Festival. With this weapon youth will prosecute the war. And [youth] will carry out the struggle even quicker if we help it to limit the danger of infection by cowardice, temptation by exhaustion, and the enticement of unresisting, timid passivity, if we strengthen its understanding of the joy to be experienced in fighting this battle....Since the Wildbad Beethoven Festival of the HJ, my mind has been at ease. Because through this festival youth grasped these ideas.

Haelssig was so excited about his accomplishment that he desired to found a permanent "Beethoven Orchestra of the HJ" which would travel throughout Germany "like a giant seed which goes out to plant smaller seeds" (*vergleichbar einem Riesen-Sämann, der ausgeht, seinen Samen zu legen*). "It is almost intoxicating to think" of what could happen, he went on to say, "if this Beethoven Orchestra were to visit all German regions." Then,

every German boy, every BDM-girl would have a chance in their lives to come close to this titan. What a community of music-listeners would be provided for German music! What a source of power would be developed for the German people!^[96]

Evidence does not indicated that Haelssig was given control of such a cultural-political juggernaut. But to complement their journalistic, scholarly and educational programs, the Nazis did made use of the newest technologies of mass communication. Following Goebbels' edicts about modern propaganda techniques, Nazis developed radio broadcasting as a medium for propagating ideology to great effect. Through common cultural experiences produced by the Nazis on the radio, the German *Volk* was to be drawn closer together than ever before:

Radio was...born with us [the NSDAP]: a child of our century. Like

National Socialism, it can only be the carrier and herald of an idea which demands neither individuals, nor classes, neither high or low, poor or rich, but rather the *Gemeinschaft*, the whole, undivided *Volk*.^[97]

Beethoven's music was a seminal aspect of National Socialist radio propaganda. Articles in radio trade journals extolled the suitability of Beethoven's music for National Socialist radio programming. According to one, the *best* proof of radio's contribution to the *Volk* was its transmission of Beethoven's music:

The important thing is whether the broadcast resonates in the soul of the hearer, whether it releases free, joyous and festive feelings. That a Beethoven symphony can achieve this is self-evident, and will be constantly proven by the radio....Beethoven for everyone? Absolutely!...In selecting this healthy, constructive, positive material, [programmers] have made radio what it should and must be: a source of strength for a *Volk* of 70 million people which fights under its *Führer* in a hard struggle for its daily bread and for the place in the sun it deserves.^[98]

Another supporter of this policy put it this way:

Beethoven will bring the *Volk* together. Let his works sound in every house through the magnificent medium of radio!^[99]

Working from these assumptions, Nazi radio authorities programmed a great amount of Beethoven's music.^[100] It was often transmitted on the most popular Nazi radio program, the "Request Concert" (*Wunschkonzerte*).^[101] In 1935 German state radio broadcast a tour of the *Beethovenhaus* led by Ludwig Schiedermair and ending in a performance of Beethoven chamber music.^[102] The most dramatic example of this propaganda technique was the "Beethoven Cycle" (*Beethoven-Zyklus*) broadcast in January of 1934. Produced immediately after the Nazis had gained full control of the German broadcast system, this series was meant to symbolize the start of a "new phase" in the development of radio in Germany.^[103] Each night between January 14 and 25 (beginning at 9 p.m., so that working people could listen), a Beethoven symphony was broadcast live.

According to the Reich Radio Society (*Reichsrundfunk-gesellschaft*) which governed the "new era" of German broadcasting, this "cycle" was a great success:

The Beethoven Week has been an incomparable achievement. It has contributed to radio's effort to conquer the whole German *Volk*. It has [also helped] to forge the unfailing instrument which the *Führer* needs to remain close to his *Volk*, which must thank him for so much.^[104]

The cycle was also celebrated for having contributed to the foreign-political designs of the regime:

Just as in Germany, Beethoven was heard in the rest of the world. From Japan, over Finland, to North and South America, the broadcast companies of the world tuned to our station and transmitted these German art works to their listeners....Even if politics were not mentioned once in these broadcasts, and the word "propaganda" never used, they were still a cultural advertisement of the greatest style and deepest effect. The fact that Beethoven's heroic German music was made accessible to foreign peoples, awoke understanding for the German nature, and thereby must have offset base lies, was a great achievement of this work.[105]

Beethoven's music was also an important feature of motion pictures which the Nazis produced for their propaganda blitz. Concerts by major German orchestras were filmed and shown in cinemas, among them a performance of the Ninth Symphony led by Wilhelm Furtwängler.[106] Newsreels acclaiming the achievements of *Führer* and party opened with the music of Beethoven's *Weihe des Hauses*. [107] A major newsreel created to inform the German people of the "Great German Art Exhibition" in Munich in 1937 had no narration: it was accompanied only by a recording of the first movement of Beethoven's Second Symphony. This synchronization, Berthold Hinz later noted, contributed to the "sacred aura" of the exhibition.[108] In addition, Beethoven's music was integrated into feature movies: a 1936 U.F.A. film, *Schlussakkord*, depicted a conductor leading the Ninth just before a major character committed suicide.[109] Beethoven's piano music was an important motif in the wartime film, *Wunschkonzerte*. This epitome of Nazi *Kitsch* included a scene wherein a music student played a Beethoven sonata for his roommates just before marching off to war. Later in the film, this musician-soldier died while playing Bach's music as if possessed on the organ of a Gothic church under bombardment.[110]

Apart from modern media, more traditional methods of associating Beethoven with the new Reich were also implemented. Had the Nazis completed all of their plans for monumental construction in the "Thousand Year Reich," Bonn and Frankfurt would have each gained new sculptures of the composer. Even before the "seizure of power," plans were drawn up for an additional "*Beethoven-Denkmal*" in Bonn, fashioned in the austere style characteristic of National Socialist design.[111] When funds for this project ran out, 22,000 Reichsmark were donated from Hitler's private account, earning the *Führer* grateful thanks in the press.[112]

The most important Nazi efforts to connect the music of Beethoven with their political liturgy were live performances. Many "traditional" concerts of Beethoven's music took place during the Third Reich.[113] Although often produced under the auspices of a party patron (*Schirmherr*) and certainly attended by political leaders, events such as the 1937 "*Beethovenfeier in Lauenburg*," the 1939 "*Badener Beethovenfest*," ongoing festivals in Bonn and a multitude of other performances of Beethoven's music may have been relatively free of political significance. It is important to note, nevertheless, that even in the case of such conventional

events not everything was normal. As noted above, all Jewish musicians had been removed from German orchestras. Those who remained in the country were only allowed to play for symphonies associated with the Jewish Cultural Organization (*Jüdischer Kulturbund*). These orchestras were prohibited from performing the music of Beethoven.[114] The political significance of this void must not be underestimated.

Beside patronizing some standard events and proscribing others, Nazi propagandists were most concerned with arranging performances of Beethoven's music as part of party pageantry. Throughout the Nazi era, his compositions were enlisted to serve as inspirational elements in National Socialist ceremonial events. The list of these music-propagandistic applications is extensive. A few dramatic examples signify that this was the culmination of the National Socialist politicization of Beethoven and his music.

During the Third Reich, it was common practice to perform Beethoven's *Weihe des Hauses*, as well as the *Coriolan* and *Egmont* Overtures, at ceremonies inaugurating cultural and political institutions.[115] The opening of the *Reichskulturkammer* itself was marked, before Goebbels' speech on "German Culture Before a New Beginning," with a performance of the *Egmont* Overture by the Berlin Philharmonic under Wilhelm Furtwängler.[116] For the "Cultural Day of the Party Congress" (*Kulturtagung des Parteikongresses*) in 1935, Hitler himself requested that the Fifth Symphony be played at the Apollo-Theater in Nuremberg. Furtwängler, the scheduled conductor, talked his way out of performing, so Peter Raabe directed the *Egmont* Overture instead.[117] The crowning event of the musicological conference associated with the exhibition of "Degenerate Music" (*Entartete Musik*) in 1938 was a performance of the Ninth Symphony after speeches by Goebbels and the composer Richard Strauss.[118]

The effect of Beethoven's music in National Socialist rituals can only be imagined. Film records of such events do exist, but they do not convey the potency of these rites. Perhaps the emotional content of these cultural-political "*Gesamtkunstwerke*" was best described in a report by William Shirer. At the national NSDAP rally in Nuremberg in 1934, Shirer attended a spectacle which included music by Beethoven. Afterward he admitted:

I'm beginning to comprehend, I think, some of the reasons for Hitler's astounding success. Borrowing a chapter from the Roman church, he is restoring pageantry and color and mysticism to the drab lives of twentieth-century Germans. This morning's opening meeting...was more than a gorgeous show; it also had something of the mysticism and religious fervor of an Easter or Christmas mass in a great Gothic cathedral. The hall was a sea of brightly colored flags. Even Hitler's arrival was made dramatic. The band stopped playing. There was a hush over the thirty thousand people packed in the hall. Then the band struck up the *Badenweiler Marsch*, a very catchy tune, and used only, I'm told, when Hitler makes his big entries. Hitler appeared in the back of the auditorium, and followed by his aides, Göring,

Goebbels, Hess, Himmler, and the others, he strode slowly down the long centre aisle while thirty thousand hands were raised in salute. It is a ritual, the old-timers say, which is always followed. Then an immense symphony orchestra played Beethoven's *Egmont* Overture. Great Klieg lights played on the stage, where Hitler sat surrounded by a hundred party officials and officers of the army and navy....In such an atmosphere no wonder, then, that every word dropped by Hitler seemed like an inspired Word from on high. Man's--or at least the German's--critical faculty is swept away at such moments, and every lie pronounced is accepted as the truth itself.[119]

The most telling use of Beethoven in the liturgical events of the National Socialist "religion" was the playing of his music on Hitler's birthday, both live and on the radio. In 1937, at Goebbels' request, Furtwängler conducted the Ninth Symphony to honor the *Führer*. Apparently, the controversy over the "meaning" of the Ninth had been settled, at least in Goebbels' mind. According to his newspaper, *Der Angriff*, playing this music was the perfect way to mark the day because, "with its fighting and struggling," the piece denoted the *Führer's* capacity for "triumph and joyous victory." [120] In 1938, Herbert von Karajan led his Aachen orchestra in a performance of *Fidelio* to mark Hitler's birthday. As a later commentator reminded, the *Führer* was not, as might be assumed today, to be identified with Pizarro the jailor, but with Fidelio the savior.[121]

During wartime, Beethoven's music continued to be broadcast on the eve of Hitler's birthday. On 19 April 1942, just after Hitler took control of the army in Russia, Goebbels arranged a special birthday celebration to announce his new role. The culmination of the ceremony was a performance of the Ninth. In a speech given just before the music, Goebbels orchestrated the emotions he expected this selection to evoke:

If ever the German nation felt itself united in one thought and one will, then it is in the thought of serving and obeying [Hitler]. This time, the sounds of the most heroic music of titans that ever flowed from a Faustian German heart should raise this realization to a serious and devotional height. When, at the end of our celebration, the voices and instruments strike the tremendous closing chord of the Ninth Symphony, when the exhilarating Chorale sounds joy and carries a feeling for the greatness of these times into each and every German cabin, when [Beethoven's] hymn resounds over all distant countries where German regiments stand guard, then we want everyone, whether man, woman, child, soldier, farmer, worker or civil servant, to be equally aware of the seriousness of the hour and to experience the great happiness of being able to witness and take part in this, the greatest historical epoch of our *Volk*. [122]

On 20 April 1945, Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, supposedly the "Symphony of Nazi Victory," was broadcast in honor of the Reichschancellor's last birthday while Russian guns pounded Berlin.[123] Finally, on 30 April 1945, the *Grossdeutsche*

Rundfunk announced the death of Adolf Hitler. In his honor were read a few lines by the First World War writer, Walter Flex:

He lived
He fought
He fell
And he died
For us.[124]

As accompaniment to this poem, the music of Beethoven was pressed into one last duty for the Third Reich. In this transmission, the Funeral March composed by Beethoven "to celebrate the memory of a great man" was forced to serve as a requiem for the Nazi "*Führer*." [125]

[1] E. Hadamovsky, "Dein Rundfunk," *Das Rundfunkbuch für alle Volksgenossen* (Munich, 1934), 78.

[2] Gregory Vitiello, ed., *Eisenstaedt: Germany* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980), 27.

[3] As George L. Mosse put it: "The phenomenon which is our concern was a secular religion, the continuation from primitive and Christian times of viewing the world through myth and symbol" (*Nazism: A Historical and Comparative Analysis of National Socialism* [New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1978], 15).

[4] For more on Nazi policies toward "serious" (*Ernst*) music performers and organizations, see: Fred K. Prieberg, *Kraftprobe: Wilhelm Furtwängler im Dritten Reich* (Wiesbaden: F.A. Brockhaus, 1986); Berta Geissmar, *The Baton and the Jackboot* (London, 1945); Hanns-Werner Heister and Hans-Günter Klein, eds., *Musik und Musikpolitik im faschistischen Deutschland* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984); Stephen Gallup, *A History of the Salzburg Festival* (Topsfield, MA: Salem House Publishers, 1987); and Michael P. Steinberg, *The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival: Austria as Theater and Ideology, 1890-1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[5] Many analysts of the reception of Beethoven have noted the "mythopoetical" terms in which Beethoven has been interpreted since the Romantic era. See Arnold Schmitz, *Das romantische Beethovenbild. Darstellung und Kritik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978); Leo Schrade, *Beethoven in France: The Development of an Idea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942);

Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, *Zur Geschichte der Beethoven-Rezeption* (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literature, 1970); and Alessandra Comini, *The Changing Image of Beethoven: A Study in Mythmaking* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

[6] Peter Raabe, *Die Musik im Dritten Reich* (Regensburg, 1936), 9.

[7] For more on the theoretical background to the Nazi evocation of Beethoven and other composers, see: Joseph Wulf, *Musik im Dritten Reich. Eine Dokumentation* (1966, Frankfurt a.M.: Ullstein, 1983); Fred K. Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982) and *Kraftprobe*; Heister and Klein, *Musik und Musikpolitik*; Albrecht Dühmling and Peter Girth, *Entartete Musik: Zur Düsseldorfer Ausstellung von 1938. Eine kommentierte Rekonstruktion* (Düsseldorf, 1986); and Michael Meyer, "Assumptions and Implementation of Nazi Policy toward Music," 2 vols. (Ph.D. dissertation. University of California at Los Angeles, 1971) and *The Politics of Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991).

[8] Meyer, "Nazi Policy toward Music," 651.

[9] *Ibid.*, 651.

[10] *Ibid.*, 398.

[11] Michael Meyer, "The Nazi Musicologist as Myth Maker in the Third Reich" (*Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 10, Number 4, October 1975), 649.

[12] *Ibid.*, 488.

[13] *Ibid.*, 651.

[14] David Bruce Dennis, "The Indoctrination of a Muse: Myths of Ludwig van Beethoven and his Music as Evoked in German Political Culture from 1789 to 1989" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1991). Therein I demonstrate that since his lifetime every major political group in Germany made Beethoven and his music part of its liturgy.

[15] See Sieghard Brandenburg, *Beethoven Zwischen Revolution und Restauration* (Bonn: Beethoven-Haus, 1989) among many other biographical sources which treat Beethoven's political record.

[16] See Comini, *The Changing Image*, *passim.*, for detailed discussion of the iconography of Beethoven reception in the visual arts.

[17] Richard Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse* (Munich: J.F. Lehmann, 1932 and 1937), 227. With this sentence, Richard Eichenauer summarized the findings of his colleagues. See Hans F. K. Günther, *Rasse und Stil* (Munich: J.F. Lehmann, 1926), 30 and Ludwig Ferdinand-Clauss, *Rasse und Seele* (Munich: J.F. Lehmann, 1926), 60. Further discussion of these sources appears in Heribert Schröder, "Beethoven im Dritten Reich. Eine Materialsammlung" in Helmut Loos, ed., *Beethoven und die Nachwelt* (Bonn: Beethovenhaus, 1986), 205. A final note on this unsavory issue: the word "fälsch" was a racial-theoretical term describing a type of German with mixed racial characteristics.

[18] "Erbbild," *Völkischer Beobachter* (26 Mar. 1927).

[19] "Erscheinungsbild," *Völkischer Beobachter* (27 Mar. 1927).

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] See "the young poet" Eichenauer's reworking of "Das Niebelungenlied" in *Deutschlands Erneuerung* 10 (Oct. 1927), 470.

[24] Republished by the Nazis after they achieved power, Eichenauer's book became the Third Reich's most influential guide to applying racial theory to music and musicians. In 1938, it was recommended as background reading for a National Socialist musicological congress which carried the same name (*Musik und Rasse*). This congress was held in Düsseldorf in conjunction with the infamous exhibit of "Degenerate Music." (See Dühmling and Girth, *Entartete Musik* and Meyer, "Nazi Policy toward Music," 247.)

[25] Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse*, 226.

[26] Michael Meyer also came to this conclusion in "The Nazi Musicologist as Myth Maker in the Third Reich," *Journal of Contemporary History* 10 (Oct. 1975), arguing that since "Rosenberg wanted to claim his music as the 'Eroica of the German people'" persons like Eichenauer and Walther Rauschenberg "attempted to resolve the conflict by granting that nordic souls could reside in dark Germans."

[27] Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse*, 227.

[28] *Ibid.*, 227.

[29] *Ibid.*, 229.

[30] *Ibid.*, 229.

- [31] *Ibid.*, 232.
- [32] Schröder has also perceived this aspect of NS Beethoven reception. See his review of it in "Beethoven im Dritten Reich," page 203.
- [33] Hans Pfeiffer, "Die Wahrheit über den Vater Beethovens," *Die Musik* 28 (1935-36), 13-19.
- [34] Ludwig Schieder mair, "Beethovens Eltern," *Völkischer Beobachter* (Apr. 1935).
- [35] *Ibid.*
- [36] Dr. Ludwig Schieder mair was an "*Ordinarius der Bonner Universität und erste Vorsitzter des Beethoven-Hauses*" [*Völkischer Beobachter* (26 March 1937)]. He remained in that position and continued to publish through the Nazi period. The fact that he maintained his post at an institution that the Nazis were fond of using as a symbol of German cultural greatness (see "*Zehn Jahre Beethoven-Archiv in Bonn*" *Völkischer Beobachter*, 26 March 1937) indicates that he must have been willing to pay lip-service to the cultural policies of the regime. His major work, *Beethoven und das Rheinland* (1928 and 1937), was an extensive effort to prove Beethoven's German roots. Two other essays, "*Die Gestaltung weltanschaulicher Ideen in der Volksmusik Beethovens*" and "*Eine Neue Beethovendeutung*" (Leipzig: Quelle and Mayer, 1934, 56, 4), also indicate that Schieder mair's work was affected by the *Gleichschaltung* of German music scholarship. In 1937 Schieder mair was elected president of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Musikwissenschaft and in 1940 chairman of the music section of the Deutsche Akademie (Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 641).
- [37] Heinrich Zerkaulen, "Beethovens Reise nach Amsterdam," *Völkischer Beobachter* (7 Aug. 1940).
- [38] Reproduced in *Unseren Jungen: Ein Buch zur Unterhaltung, Belehrung und Beschäftigung* (Stuttgarg: Loewes Verlag Ferdinand Karl, 1937), 208.
- [39] Zerkaulen, "Beethovens Reise nach Amsterdam." A trip Beethoven took to Amsterdam with his mother is presented here as an escape from the father and his constant exploitation of the son. On the way, Magdalena cooks for the boat crew and dries Beethoven's tears.
- [40] Walther Rauschenberger, "Rassenmerkmale Beethovens und seiner nächsten Verwandten," *Volk und Rasse. Organ des Reichsausschusses für Volksgesundheitsdienst und der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene* 9 (1934). Rauschenberger reprinted

this article later in *Familie, Sippe, Volk. Monatsschrift für Sippenkunde und Sippenpflege* (Berlin: Amt für Sippenforschung der NSDAP) 5 (August 1939), 114-119 under the title, "Beethovens Abstammung und Rassenmerkmale."

[41] Dennis, "The Indoctrination of a Muse," 77-79, 110-123, 171-213 and 374-430. The history of evocations of Beethoven in Socialist political culture extends from before the formation of the SPD through the demise of the GDR.

[42] Ludwig Schiedermaier, "Beethoven und die Politik," *Völkischer Beobachter* (26 Mar. 1927).

[43] "Der Patriot," *Völkischer Beobachter* (26 Mar. 1927). This incident is commonly included in Beethoven biographies to exemplify his reluctance to be treated by the nobility as a common performer. The usual explanation for the fury Beethoven exhibited on this occasion is that Prince Lichnowsky, the "Maecenas" of Thayer's version, jested that he might force the composer to play for the guests. Affronted by this teasing, Beethoven fled, leaving behind a letter containing the famous line: "Prince, what you are, you are by accident of birth; what I am, I am through myself. There have been and will still be thousands of princes; there is only one Beethoven." However, according to the writers of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the reason for Beethoven's tantrum was not anger at having his artistic integrity threatened, but outrage at being asked "to play for enemies of Germany." This story was presented here, therefore, not to depict Beethoven as a defender of his own aesthetic principles, but as a preserver of his nation's military honor.

[44] "Wörter Beethovens," *Völkischer Beobachter* (27 Mar. 1927).

[45] Brunnhilde Wastl, "Ludwig van Beethoven. Zu seinem hundertsten Todestag," *Deutsche Arbeiterpresse. Nationalsozialistische Wochenblatt* (26 Mar. 1927).

[46] Josef Stolzing-Cerny, "Landsturmmann Beethoven: Eine Kriegserinnerung," *Völkischer Beobachter* (26 Mar. 1927).

[47] Wastl, "Ludwig van Beethoven."

[48] Franz Gottinger, "Eine deutsche Beethoven-Feier," *Deutsche Arbeiterpresse. Nationalsozialistische Wochenblatt* (26 Mar. 1927). Emphasis on martial themes in Beethoven's music and personality was intensified during the war (Dennis, "The Indoctrination of a Muse," 356-373). I have refrained from discussing most of these examples to save space in this article on the Nazi interpretation in general.

- [49] Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse*, 228.
- [50] Schiedermaier, "Beethoven und die Politik."
- [51] *Ibid.*
- [52] *Ibid.*
- [53] Hans Joachim Moser, "Beethovens rheinische Sendung zur Wiener Klassik," *Bonner Geschichtsblätter*, vol. 2 (Bonn: 1938), 139.
- [54] Hans Joachim Moser, "Ludwig van Beethoven," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 7 May 1941.
- [55] A. Kruell, "Ludwig van Beethoven und unsere Zeit," *Westdeutscher Beobachter* (23 June 1935).
- [56] Walther Vetter, "Eine politische Beethoven-Betrachtung," in *Festschrift Arnold Schering. Zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Berlin: A.Gas Verlag, 1937), 249.
- [57] *Ibid.*, 247.
- [58] Ludwig Schiedermaier, "Zu Beethovens Schicksalidee," in *Von Deutscher Tonkunst. Festschrift zu Peter Raabes 70. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1942), 76.
- [59] Vetter, "Eine politische Beethoven-Betrachtung."
- [60] *Ibid.*
- [61] Hadamovsky, "Dein Rundfunk," 78.
- [62] *Ibid.*, 231.
- [63] Eichenauer, *Musik und Rasse*, 231.
- [64] *Ibid.*, 231.
- [65] *Ibid.*, 229.
- [66] Walter Jacobs, "Beethoven im Rundfunk. Musik- und Staatspolitik," *Kölnische Zeitung* (16 Dec. 1934).
- [67] *Unseren Jungen*, 216.
- [68] Walter Jacobs, "Beethoven im Rundfunk," *Kölnische Zeitung* (16 Dec. 1934).
- [69] Arnold Schering, "Zur Sinndeutung der 4. und 5. Symphonie von Beethoven," *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 16 (1934), 83.
- [70] Schröder, "Beethoven im Dritten Reich," 196.
- [71] Jacobs, "Beethoven im Rundfunk."

[72] "Beethovens Neunte Symphonie. Das zweite Konzert des Münchener Festsommers," *Völkischer Beobachter* (23 June 1935).

[73] Jacobs, "Beethoven im Rundfunk."

[74] "Beethovens Neunte Symphonie," *Völkischer Beobachter* (23 June 1935).

[75] Schröder, "Beethoven im Dritten Reich," 196. Through the Weimar Era, the Ninth Symphony had in fact been made a center-piece of Socialist political culture, often performed by mass choruses comprised of Workers' Choirs (Dennis, "The Indoctrination of a Muse," 171-213).

[76] Hans Joachim Moser, "Ludwig van Beethoven," *Stuttgarter Neues Tageblatt* (26 Jan. 1941).

[77] General Nazi music theory was grounded in basic notions of music conservatism developed long before 1933. Against the "threatening" music of composers who practiced atonal and serial methods, they posited works composed according to "Germanic" music structures. These included: the "non-problematic" sonata form, "free from self-contradictions [*sic*] introduced by the progressive dialecticians"; traditional folk melodies, accessible to German masses and capable of instilling pride in their peasant background; and traditional harmonic structures in the major mode, representing the orderly nature of reality and the hierarchical structure of society; all of which Beethoven's music supposedly contained, if "correctly" understood. For more on how music "conservatives" and Nazi *Musikpolitiker* worked to counter the tendencies of musical "modernism," a subject which lies just outside the topic of political interpretation, see Michael H. Kater, "The Revenge of the Fathers: The Demise of Modern Music at the End of the Weimar Republic" (*German Studies Review*, Vol. XV, No. 2, May 1992, 295-316) and Meyer, "Nazi Policy toward Music," 294-349, 481-486.

[78] Friedrich Blume, "Musik und Rasse. Grundfragen einer musikalischen Rassenforschung," *Die Musik* (Aug. 1938), 736. See other examples of this view listed in Schröder, "Beethoven im Dritten Reich," 190-91, 211. Invocation of a sense of being "at home" was a powerful aspect of National Socialist propaganda. As George L. Mosse put it: "When representative government, which symbolizes...division, threatens to break down, men again wish for a fully furnished home where what is beautiful and gives pleasure should not be separated from the useful and the necessary" (Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses*, 215).

[79] Apart from politicizing Beethoven's and other music in articles such as those discussed here, Moser served the regime in

many other ways. A student of Schieder, he published in 1935 his infamous *Musiklexikon*, a handbook of music classification by race. From 1940 to 1945, he led the "Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitung" in Goebbels' Propagandaministerium. This organization was devoted, among other things, to rewriting the texts of liturgical words for use in "political rituals," and eliminating signs that Jewish artists had anything to do with the composition of "German classics" (as in the case of Lorenzo da Ponte, for instance). See Dühmling and Girth, *Entartete Musik*, 87-91, and Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat*, 335, for more on Moser.

[80] Having outlined the preferred historical approach to Beethoven's biography for National Socialist musicologists in his "Eine politische Beethoven-Betrachtung," Vetter would become a principal purveyor of *Musikpolitik* for the GDR after the war.

[81] Earlier a Beethoven scholar in the most "positivistic" tradition of musicology, who produced manuscript catalogues and studies of the composer's handwriting, Unger became a frequent contributor, along with Moser, to the Nazi wartime music journal, *Musik im Kriege*. For this publication, he applied his talents to popularizing "Beethovens Militärmärsche" (Heft 7/8, Oct. 1943) and "Beethovens vaterländische Musik" (Heft 9/10, December 1943-44).

[82] Criticized during the Third Reich for his free "poetic" interpretations which lay firmly in the "idealistic" tradition of reception of Beethoven [see a series of articles on his *Beethoven in neuer Deutung* (Leipzig, 1934) in *Deutsche Musikkultur*, June 1937], Schering may have felt more compulsion than enthusiasm in alluding to the *Führer* in his studies of the symphonies. However, he strongly accorded with Nazi views in 1936 when dedicating his next book, *Beethoven und die Dichtung* (Berlin: Junker und Dönhaupt, 1936), to "the young Germany" and said in its prologue: "If a brutal, racially foreign music has long threatened the indivisible relationship between high music and high poetry, it will now be Beethoven who will reestablish this ideal bond."

[83] See Prieberg, *Musik im NS Staat* and *Kraftprobe*; Dühmling and Girth, *Entartete Musik*; and Schröder, "Beethoven im dritten Reich."

[84] *Unseren Jungen*, 210.

[85] *Ibid.*, 213.

[86] *Ibid.*, 204-5, 213-16.

[87] *Ibid.*, 216.

[88] Erich Wintermeier, "Die junge Generation hat

das Wort: Beethoven? Ja, Beethoven!" *Deutsche Musikkultur* (June 1937), 73-77.

[89] Willi Kahl, "Zur neueren Beethovenliteratur" and K. Klinck, "Beethovens und Bruckners 5. Symphonie. Zwei nordische Schicksalsbilder," both in *Der Westfälische Erzieher. Gauamtliche Halbmonatsschrift des NSLB Gau Westfalen-Nord* 5 (1937).

[90] Jacobs, "Beethoven im Rundfunk."

[91] Ida Deeke, "Beethoven," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 107 (1940), 779.

[92] See *Obergebietsführer* Karl Cerff, "Beethovenfest der HJ. Musikerziehung und Hitlerjugend," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 7 (July 1938), 728-732 for further information about this program.

[93] Erich Valentin, "Beethovenfest der Hitlerjugend. Bad Wildbad (Schwarzwald) 20. bis 22. Mai 1938," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 7 (July 1938), 735.

[94] "Geleitsätze zum Beethovenfest der Hitler-Jugend," *Zeitschrift für Musik* (July 1938), 732.

[95] *Ibid.*

[96] Artur Haelssig, "Ein Beethoven-Orchester der Hitler-Jugend als Folgerung aus dem Beethovenfest der Hitler-Jugend in Bad Wildbad Mai 1938," *Zeitschrift für Musik* 7 (Oct. 1938), 1095.

[97] Johann Georg Bachmann, "Der Rundfunk: 'Beethoven für alle?'" *Deutsche Musikkultur* (June-July 1937), 115.

[98] *Ibid.*, 118.

[99] *Der Deutsche Rundfunk*, vol. 12, 4 (19 Jan. 1934), 11.

[100] To date, I have not discovered a statistical analysis of National Socialist music programming arranged by composer. Most literature on this subject refers to the frequent play of Beethoven's music during the Third Reich as a well-known phenomenon. For some further information about the quantity of classical music played over the Nazi radio, see Nanny Drechsler, *Die Funktion der Musik im deutschen Rundfunk 1933-45* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1988) and Rita von der Grün, "Funktionen und Formen von Musiksendungen im Rundfunk" in Heister and Klein, *Musik und Musikpolitik*, 98-106.

[101] Peter Adams, writer and producer, *Art in the Third Reich* (London: BBC TV with ALLCOM Film GmbH, 1989).

[102] Bachmann, "Der Rundfunk," 117.

- [103] Drechsler, *Die Funktion der Musik im deutschen Rundfunk 1933-45*, 58.
- [104] *Mitteilungen der Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft*, 11. Januar 1934, quoted in Drechsler, 36.
- [105] Hadamovsky, "Dein Rundfunk," 77. References to Beethoven in the context of Nazi foreign policy were abundant. In addition to broadcasts and concerts meant to warm foreigners to German culture, aggressive steps such as the *Anschluss* of Austria, the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the attack on Poland were justified with allusions to Beethoven's connections with those countries (Dennis, "The Indoctrination of a Muse," 353-358).
- [106] Reproduced as part of Adams, *Art in the Third Reich*.
- [107] Peter Wapnewski, interview (Berlin, January 1989).
- [108] Berthold Hinz, *Art in the Third Reich*, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), introduction.
- [109] F. Herzfeld, "Musik im Film," *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 63 (1936), 670.
- [110] *Wunschkonzerte*, U.F.A. Films, 1940.
- [111] Rainer Cadenbach, ed., *Mythos Beethoven: Ausstellungskatalog* (Bonn: Laaber Verlag, 1986), 157, #234.
- [112] Werner Lasarzewski-Meinenreis, "Eine Beethoven Ehrung in Bonn am Rhein," *Der Kämpfer* (Feb. 1939). Dedicated in 1938, the sculpture stood overlooking the Rhine in the park of the old *Zollamt* near the university in Bonn. After the war it was moved to the *Bonner Rheingau* (Schröder, "Beethoven im Dritten Reich," 192). The designer of this ill-fated sculpture was Peter Breuer.
- [113] I have not seen or myself compiled a full statistical study of the frequency with which Beethoven's music was performed during the Third Reich. However, a 1937 article in *Deutsche Musikkultur* discussing the prominence of Beethoven compositions in the repertoire of German orchestras suggests that his was performed more than any other composer's music (Willy Siebert, "Beethoven im Musikleben der Gegenwart: Beethoven im Konzertsaal," *Deutsche Musikkultur* [June-July 1937] 114-5).
- [114] "Jüdischer Kulturbund. Geschlossene Gesellschaft," *Der Spiegel* 33 (1965), 73. Significantly, Beethoven was the first composer whose music the *Jüdischer Kulturbund* orchestras were barred from playing.
- [115] Heister and Wolff, "Macht und Schicksal," 117.

- [116] "Program zur feierlichen Eröffnung der Reichskulturkammer 15. November 1933," Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Program.
- [117] Prieberg, *Kraftprobe*, 244-5.
- [118] Dühmling and Girth, *Entartete Musik*, 109.
- [119] William Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 18-19.
- [120] *Der Angriff* 93 (22 Apr. 1937). Cited in Prieberg, *Kraftprobe*, 276.
- [121] Prieberg, *Kraftprobe*, 301.
- [122] "In Dankbarkeit und Treue. Ansprache von Reichsminister Dr. Goebbels in der Feierstunde der NSDAP am Vorabend des Geburtstages Adolf Hitlers," *Völkischer Beobachter* (20 Apr. 1942).
- [123] *De Nuremburg à Nuremburg*, French documentary film, 1990.
- [124] Walter Flex, excerpt from "Ein Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten," reproduced in Hans-Jochen Gamm, *Der Braune Kult* (Hamburg, 1962), 155.
- [125] Gamm, *Der Braune Kult*, 155.