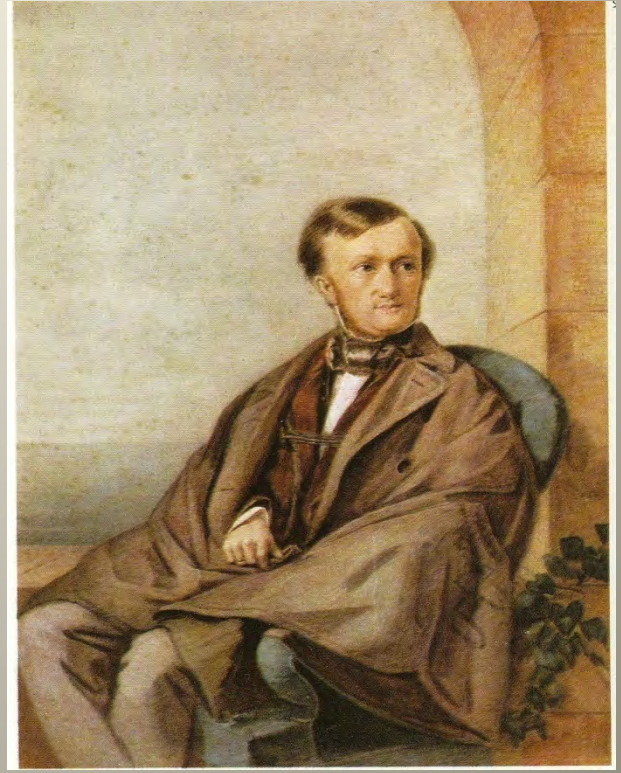
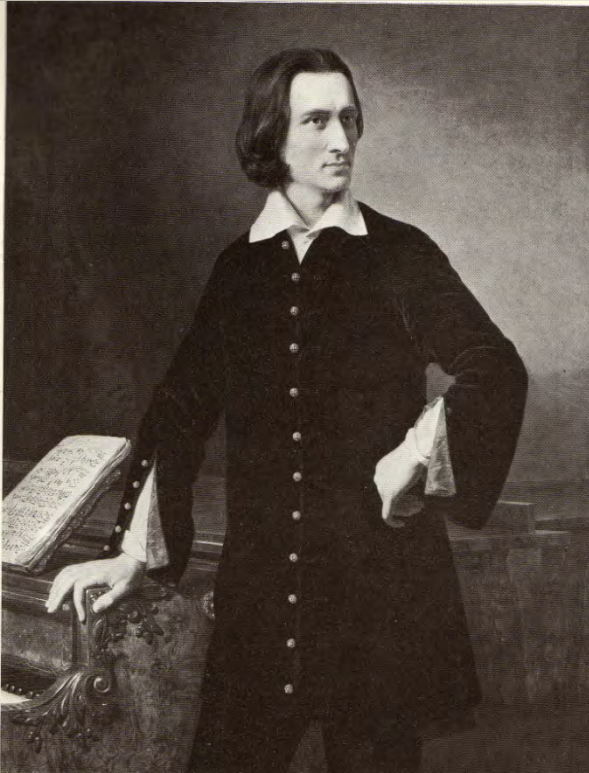


“The Sovereign Art of the Present”: The *Lohengrin* Premiere, Franz Brendel, and the “War” for German Music



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American Musicological Society
November 12, 2011 – San Francisco, CA

Hof-Theater.
 Weimar, Mittwoch den 28. August 1850.
Zur Goethe-Feier:
Prolog
 von Frau Dingelstedt, gesprochen von Herrn Jaffe.

S i e e a u f:
 Z u m E r s t e n m a l e:

L o h e n g r i n.
 Romantische Oper in drei Acten,
 (letzter Act in zwei Abtheilungen)
 von Richard Wagner.

Heinrich der Finkler, deutscher König, Herr Höfer.
 Hohenarin, Herr Bed.
 Elsa von Brabant, Fräulein Kathr.
 Herzog Gottfried, ihr Bruder, Frau Bettke.
 Friedrich von Trüramund, brabantischer Graf, Herr Rilke.
 Ertrud, seine Gemahlin, Fräulein Hoffinger.
 Der Herrufer des Königs, Herr Pätz.
 Sachsisch und Thüringische Grafen und Edle.
 Brabantische Grafen und Edle.
 Oeffnen.
 Knechten.
 Frauen. Knechte.

Hinterworte: erste Hälfte des sechsten Jahrhunderts.

Die Textbücher sind an der Kasse für 5 Sgr. zu haben.

Preise der Plätze:

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Anfang um 6 Uhr. Ende gegen 10 Uhr.


Die Billets gelten nur am Tage der Vorstellung, wo sie gelöst worden.
 Der Zutritt auf die Bühne, bei den Proben wie bei den Vorstellungen, ist nicht gestattet.

Das Theater wird halb 5 Uhr geöffnet.

Die freien Entrees sind ohne Ausnahme unanständig.

Poster announcing performance of *Lohengrin* on August 28, 1850, Weimar Hoftheater (Wagner: *A Documentary Study*, plate 89)

LOHENGRIN.



Romantische Oper in drei Acten,
 (letzter Act in zwei Abtheilungen)

v o n
RICHARD WAGNER.

M. Manuscript gedruckt.

Title page of libretto for *Lohengrin* (Wagner, plate 90)

Franz Brendel on Wagner

The correctness of my suggested name [New German School] needs no proof as regards at least one member of the triumvirate representing the “music of the future”: Richard Wagner. He was the first one who gloriously realized the ideal of a purely German opera, following the example of Beethoven, Weber, and a few others, and in contrast to the Italian-French-German direction represented by Gluck, Mozart, et al.

“Advancing an Understanding” (quoted in *Richard Wagner and His World*, 327).

The Leipzig “manifesto”

The undersigned have long followed with regret the pursuits of a certain party, whose organ is Brendel’s *Zeitschrift für Musik*,

The above journal continually spreads the view that musicians of more serious endeavour are fundamentally in accord with the tendencies it represents, that they recognize in the compositions of the leaders of this group works of artistic value, and that altogether, and especially in northern Germany, the contentions for and against the so-called Music of the Future are concluded, and the dispute settled in its favour.

To protest against such a misrepresentation of facts is regarded as their duty by the undersigned, and they declare that, so far at least as they are concerned, the principles stated by Brendel’s journal are not recognized, and that they regard the productions of the leaders and pupils of the so-called New German School, which in part simply reinforce these principles in practice and in part again reinforce new and unheard-of theories, as contrary to the innermost spirit of music, strongly to be deplored and condemned.

JOHANNES BRAHMS

JOSEPH JOACHIM

JULIUS OTTO GRIMM

BERNHARD SCHOLZ

(quoted in Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt – Volume II*, 349)

Liszt on the *Lohengrin* prelude

“This introduction encompasses and reveals the mystic element always present and always hidden in the piece, the divine secret, the supernatural force, the supreme law of the characters’ destiny and of the chain of events we are about to contemplate. To each us the unrepresentable power of this secret, Wagner first shows us the ineffable beauty of the sanctuary, inhabited by a God who avenges the oppressed and asks nothing but love and faith from His worshippers. [Wagner] initiates us into the Holy Grail: he causes to shimmer before our eyes the temple of incorruptible woods, with fragrant walls, doors of gold....

(quoted in Lawrence Kramer, *Opera and Modern Culture* (2004), p. 44)

Wagner on the *Lohengrin* prelude

So it was the mystic imagination located the source of this intangible longing for love, and likewise its final destination, outside of the empirical world, ascribing to it a marvellous form... This object was imagined as really existing, though infinitely far away: it was believed in, longed for, and sought for under the name of the “Holy Grail”... This sacred vessel had been for some time removed from unworthy humanity when a host of angels from on high returned it to a band of devoted, loving men who lived withdrawn from the world. These pure ones were thus consecrated as its guardians, finding themselves marvellously strengthened and blessed by its presence, and so they became earthly champions of eternal love.

The tone poet of *Lohengrin* chose this episode of the miraculous descent of the Grail accompanied by the host of angels, and their entrusting of it to these happy mortals, as the object of the introduction to his drama concerning the Grail-knight (Lohengrin).

(quoted in *Richard Wagner and His World* (2009), pp.499-500)



Act I, Scene 2

Illustrierte Zeitung, Leipzig, April 12, 1851

(*Wagner*, plate 91)

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