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Content Guide The Nineteenth Century, Part 2: Nationalism and Ideology

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Content Guide

The Nineteenth Century, Part 2: Nationalism and Ideology

[Joseph E. Jones](#) and [Sarah Marie Lucas](#), Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Assigned Readings

Core Survey

- [Joseph E. Jones, “A Topical Survey of Nineteenth-Century Music”](#)
Focus on the following sections:
 - Nationalism
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Historical and Analytical Perspectives

- [Richard Bass, “Harmony and Key Relationships in Romantic Music”](#)
Focus on the following sections:
 - Romantic Harmonic Materials and Procedures
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- [Cindy L. Kim, “Verdi’s *La traviata*: The Fiasco, the Furor, and the Singers Who Caused Both”](#)
- “Liszt’s Transcendental Etude, No. 1” (coming soon)
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- [Matthew Pilcher, “Liszt’s Transcendental Etudes and Romantic Pianism: Contexts, Genres, Techniques”](#)
- [Christopher Ruth, “Genre & Forms in the Nineteenth Century”](#)
Focus on the following sections:
 - The New Genres: The Symphonic Poem, the Character Piece
 - Romantic Opera
 - Choral Music
 - Form: Operatic Forms

Composer Biographies

- *A-R Anthology*:
 - [Matthew Franke, “Giuseppe Verdi”](#)
 - Christopher Lynch, “Stephen Foster” (coming soon)
 - [Bryan Proksch, “John Philip Sousa”](#)
 - “Richard Wagner” (coming soon)

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- External biographies (requires subscription):
 - [Frances Barulich, “Isaac Albéniz”](#)
 - [Adrienne Fried Block, rev. E. Douglas Bomberger, “Amy Marcy Beach”](#)
 - [Klaus Döge, “Antonin Dvořák”](#)
 - [John Horton and Nils Grinde, “Edvard Grieg”](#)
 - [Hugh Macdonald, “Georges Bizet”](#)
 - [Diana McVeagh, “Sir Edward Elgar”](#)
 - [Marta Ottlová, Milan Pospíšil, and John Tyrrell; rev. Kelly St Pierre, “Bedřich Smetana”](#)
 - [Arnold T. Schwab, rev. David Macy, “Edward MacDowell”](#)
 - [Roland John Wiley, “Pyotr Il’yich Tchaikovsky”](#)

Supplementary Readings

Supplementary Reading 1

V. J. Novotný on “Smetana and the Czech National Style.”

Reproduced from Weiss and Taruskin,

Music in the Western World: A History in Documents

(New York: Schirmer, 1984), 388–90

I can see him now, eyes flashing as he told us how the idea of creating an independent Czech musical style began to mature in him for the first time.

It was in Weimar. The celebrated master Liszt had come to know Smetana from twelve character pieces for the piano which had then appeared in Leipzig. He conceived a great liking for our modest artist and invited him to come to Weimar, where he [Liszt] lived like a King of Music amid a select circle of artists from all parts of the world. Naturally, in such a heterogeneous circle of musical brains much wrangling went on about the most varied questions, directly or indirectly connected with art.

One of these musical disputes was to have a decisive influence on Smetana’s entire further musical creation.

In the Weimar music circle of that time there was, apart from Smetana, the well-known Viennese composer Herbeck, who was a confirmed enemy of everything Czech. They fell to discussing what various nations had done in the great sphere of music, and Herbeck began, pointedly and maliciously, to attack the honor of the Czech nation. “What have you achieved up to now,” he scoffed, turning to Smetana. “All that Bohemia can bring forth is fiddlers, mere performing musicians who can brag only of their perfection in craftsmanship, in the purely mechanical side of music, whereas on the real artist’s path of truth and beauty your creative strength dwindles; indeed hitherto you have not done anything for the development and progress of musical art, for you have not a single composition to show which is so purely Czech as to adorn and enrich European music literature by virtue of its characteristic originality.”

These words seared Smetana’s soul like a shaft of lightning, for in this accusation directed against our musical art at the beginning of our century there was, unhappily, more than a grain of truth. It is generally known that our country has always supplied all military bands and theater orchestras with musicians, who as mere musicians had always occupied a menial position in relation to those creative spirits whose compositions they performed. They greatly predominated over the small number of composers endowed with the creative spirit who, born in the Czech lands, strayed abroad and there, as time went on, became absolutely estranged from the Czech spirit; as mere followers of outstanding masters of differing schools, they could not, of course, contribute to new developments in music, nor to any reform in a Czech sense—indeed they did not wish to, since at that time their national awareness had not yet been awakened. Music was still cosmopolitan. The classics and after them the romantics held unlimited sway over all

educated nations. Modern musical art has shaken off this colorless cosmopolitanism and has raised national music to new heights by reaching out for elements characteristic in national music.

All this Smetana knew very well. He felt the burning truth of much of what his opponent said; it was very difficult to answer this. Smetana pointed to the older composer of Czech origin, above all Mysliveček.

“What sort of Czech was he,” laughed Herbeck; “under the name of Venatorini he wrote operas in typical Italian style to Italian words!”

“And what about Tomášek,” Smetana rallied. “Surely we all know,” Herbeck retaliated, “that he imitated Mozart, a German master—in everything, down to the smallest detail.”

Nothing was left to Smetana but to fall back on the outstanding musical talent of the Czech people which was the first to recognize and celebrate the epoch-making work of that great master, Mozart.

“Yes, yes, Smetana is right. Mozart wrote *Don Giovanni* for his beloved Prague,” came the cry from other artists in the company. This so roused the choleric Herbeck that he shouted: “Bah, Prague has gnawed that old Mozart bone long enough!”

Smetana shot up as though stung by a snake, righteous anger flashing in his eyes. At that moment, however, Liszt, who had followed the quarrel with a quiet smile, bent slightly forward, took a bundle of music from the table and with the words: “Allow me, gentlemen, to play you the latest, purely Czech music,” sat down at the piano. In his enchanting, brilliant style he played through the first book of Smetana’s character pieces.

After he had played the compositions, Liszt took Smetana, who was moved to tears, by the hand and with the words “here is a composer with a genuine Czech heart, an artist by the grace of God,” he took leave of the company. Herbeck sobered down and holding out his hand to Smetana asked his forgiveness.

It was already late when the artists separated in a strange mood. But on the way home, Smetana turned moist eyes to the starry heaven, raised his hand, and deeply moved swore in his heart the greatest oath; that he would dedicate his entire life to his nation, to the tireless service of his country’s art. And he remained true to his oath even during the most trying period of his life, to the last flickerings of his spirit, to the last breath.

Supplementary Reading 2
Excerpt from “The ‘Music of the Future’ Controversy”
in Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin,
Music in the Western World: A History in Documents
(New York: Schirmer, 1984), 381–85

Robert Schumann on Berlioz’s Symphonie fantastique (Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, 1835)
 Thus the program. All Germany is happy to let him keep it: such signposts always have something unworthy and charlatan-like about them! In any event the five titles would have been enough; word of mouth would have served to hand down the more circumstantial account, which would certainly arouse interest because of the personality of the composer who lived through the events of the symphony himself. In a word, the German, with his delicacy of feeling and his aversion to personal revelation, dislikes having his thought so rudely directed; he was already offended that Beethoven should not trust him to divine the sense of the *Pastoral Symphony* without assistance. . . .

But Berlioz was writing primarily for his French compatriots, who are not greatly impressed by refinements of modesty. I can imagine them, leaflet in hand, reading and applauding their countryman who has depicted it all so well; the music by itself does not interest them.

Whether a listener unfamiliar with the composer’s intent would find that the music suggested pictures similar to those he wished to draw, I cannot tell, since I read the program before hearing the music. Once the eye has been led to a given point, the ear no longer judges independently. But if you ask whether music can really do what Berlioz demands of it in his symphony, then try to associate with it different contrasting images.

At first the program spoiled my own enjoyment, my freedom of imagination. But as it receded more and more into the background and my own fancy began to work, I found not only that it was all indeed there, but what is more, that it was almost always embodied in warm, living sound.

Franz Liszt on Program Music

The program’s function is merely to indicate in a preparatory way the states of mind that impelled the composer to create his work, the thoughts he tried to embody in it. It is childishly useless, indeed for the most part quite wrong, to draw up programs after the event and to presume to explain the emotional content of an instrumental poem, for in this case words can only destroy the magic, profane the emotions, tear up the gossamer spiritual webs that took on this form, and not another. But then again, a master is the master of his own work and may well have created it under the influence of specific impressions, which he may then wish to bring to the listener’s full awareness.

All in all, the pure symphonist takes his listeners with him into ideal regions, which he leaves to one’s own imagination to penetrate and adorn. In such cases it is very dangerous for us to regale our neighbor with the scenes and trains of thought to which our

imagination draws us. Let, rather, each person silently rejoice in revelations and visions that have no names, no designation. But the poet-symphonist, who takes it upon himself to convey clearly an image distinctly perceived in his own mind, a succession of feelings unambiguously and definitely present in his consciousness—why, pray, should he not strive to be fully understood by the aid of a program?!

In so-called Classical music, the recurrence and thematic development of themes are determined by formal rules and are looked upon as irrevocable, even though its composers never had other guidelines than their own imagination and themselves hit upon those formal patterns which are now propounded as law. In program music, on the other hand, the recurrence, alternation, transformation, and modulation of motifs are determined by their relationship to a poetic conception. Here one theme does not elicit another in accordance with formal requirements, here the motifs are not a result of stereotyped juxtapositions or contrasts of timbres, and the coloring as such does not determine the grouping of ideas. All exclusively musical considerations, though by no means ignored, are subordinated to the incidents of the given subject. Accordingly, the incidents and the subject of this symphonic genre require an interest that transcends the technical treatment of the musical material, and indeterminate spiritual impressions are elevated to specific impressions by means of an explicit outline, which the ear apprehends much as the eye takes in a cycle of paintings. The artist who favors this type of artwork enjoys the advantage of being able to link all the affections (which the orchestra can express so powerfully) to a poetic model.

Franz Brendel on the “Music of the Future” (1859)

In this connection, an apparently inconsequential matter, the term “Music of the Future,” becomes important. To be sure, the term is fairly neutral in itself; but it gains in importance in that it is made a party slogan. *I would, therefore, propose and move that this name be dropped.* You are aware that the term is in itself nonsensical—indeed, I have dealt with the subject in our periodical. Wagner called the union of the arts the “Artwork of the Future.” By this he means a fusion of the arts, in which each art gives up a part of its independence in order to be dissolved into a greater whole. Each single art, consequently, ceases to be independent in this sense. But those who speak of “Music of the Future” make a specialty, music, independent again, contradicting the underlying concept—in other words, effecting the opposite of what was intended.

But this is only the first half of my motion. The other part is, to set up a new name for the one we have dropped.

I therefore take the liberty of suggesting a new name, while begging you to examine it and, should it meet with your approval, adopt it. The name I propose is: *Neo-German School*, or *New German School*. Perhaps you will be surprised by such a name, since it must be understood to include two non-German masters [Berlioz and Liszt]. Yet permit me a few remarks in order to dispel any bewilderment. There is no need to waste words of the aptness of the name I propose in the case of one member of the triumvirate that represents the Music of the Future—R. Wagner. It was he, after all, who, on the traces of

Beethoven, Weber, and some few others, for the first time realized most splendidly the ideal of a purely German opera, as against the Italian-French-German trend represented by Gluck, Mozart, and others. The matter becomes more complex if we are to include the two foreign masters under this denomination. To be sure, it is common knowledge that they, too, took Beethoven as their point of departure and so are German as to their origins. . . .

The birthplace cannot be considered decisive in matters of the spirit. The two artists would never have become what they are today had they not from the first drawn nourishment from the German spirit and grown strong with it. Therefore, too, Germany must of necessity be the true homeland of their works, and it is in this sense that I suggested the denomination *Neo-German School* for the entire post-Beethoven development.

Johannes Brahms on the "Music of the Future"

The undersigned have for long past followed with regret the activities of a certain party whose organ is Brendel's *Zeitschrift für Musik*.

The said periodical constantly disseminates the opinion that seriously striving musicians are fundamentally in accord with the tendencies it champions and recognize the compositions of the leaders of this movement as works of artistic value; and that, in general, and especially in North Germany, the controversy for and against the so-called "Music of the Future" has already been fought out, and settled in its favor. The undersigned consider it their duty to protest against such a distortion of the facts, and declare that, so far as they themselves are concerned, they do not recognize the principles which find expression in Brendel's *Zeitschrift*, and can only deplore or condemn as contrary to the most fundamental essence of music the productions of the leaders and disciples of the so-called "Neo-German" School, some of whom put these principles into practice, while others keep trying to impose the establishment of more and more novel and preposterous theories.

JOHANNES BRAHMS. JOSEPH JOACHIM. JULIUS OTTO GRIMM. BERNHARD SCHOLZ.

Summary List

Genres to understand

- ballet
- march
- music drama
- oratorio
- parlor song
- part songs
- piano suite/cycle
- symphonic poem

Musical terms to understand

- chromaticism
- developing variation
- divertissements
- double aria
 - scena
 - cantabile
 - tempo di mezzo
 - cabaletta
- endless melody
- *Gesamtkunstwerk*
- Leitmotif / associative motive
- reminiscence motive
- Tristan chord

Contextual Terms, Figures, and Events

- colonialism
- exoticism
- formation of the canon
- historicism / revivalism
- Mighty Handful (a.k.a. “The Five”)
- Mikhail Glinka
- nationalism
- orientalism
- realism
- Risorgimento
- Victor Emmanuel II

Main Concepts

- The rise of local/regional styles and institutions vis-à-vis the formation of an international musical canon. Students will be able to discuss major composers and representative works outside the predominantly French, German, and Italian traditions that dominated concert life in earlier eras.
- Techniques aimed at evoking national character. Students will be able to point to examples that draw upon native dances, instruments, scales, folk characters, geography, landmarks, etc. in order to emphasize “local” elements familiar to the composer and/or audiences.
- Techniques aimed at evoking distant or “foreign” subjects. Students will be able to point to examples of musical exoticism—works that recreate or exaggerate places, people, and cultures that typically are not native to the composer or the majority of the intended audience.
- Perspectives on tradition vs. innovation. Students will be able to position composers such as Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms on the one hand and Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner on the other with respect to ideological debates concerning the direction of music after the death of Beethoven.
- The impacts of social and economic change on music and its traditions. Students will be able to identify works that reflected upon contemporary political events (e.g. war,

revolution, unification), as well as genres and institutions that evolved or developed in response to changing class dynamics and demographics.

Scores and Recordings

Georges Bizet

- [Carmen, Act 1, “Séguedille et duo” \(video recording\)](#)

Johannes Brahms

- [Quartet no. 3 for piano and strings, Op. 60 \(video recording\)](#)
- [“Sonntag” \(recording\)](#)
- [“Frühlingslied” \(recording\)](#)
- [Vier ernste Gesänge \(recording\)](#)

Stephen Foster

- [Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair \(recording\)](#)

Louis Gottschalk

- [The Banjo \(recording\)](#)
- [Souvenir de Porto Rico \(Marche des Gibaros\) \(recording\)](#)

Edvard Grieg

- Lyric Pieces, op. 47
 - Scores:
 - [No. 1](#)
 - [No. 2](#)
 - [No. 3](#)
 - [No. 4](#)
 - [No. 5](#)
 - [No. 6](#)
 - [No. 7](#)
 - [Full recording](#)

Franz Liszt

- [Trois études de concert, no. 3, “Un sospiro” \(recording\)](#)

Modest Mussorgsky

- [Pictures at an Exhibition, “Promenade” \(recording\)](#)
- [Sunless \(recording\)](#)

Otto Scherzer

- [Ein Stündlein wohl vor Tag](#)

John Philip Sousa

- [“King Cotton” \(recording\)](#)
- [“The Stars and Stripes Forever” \(recording\)](#)

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky

- *The Nutcracker*, Act 2, Divertissement
 - [“Coffee” \(recording\)](#)
 - [“Tea” \(recording\)](#)
 - [“Trepak” \(recording\)](#)

Giuseppe Verdi

- [La traviata, Act 3, no. 10 \(recording\)](#)

Richard Wagner

- [Tristan und Isolde, Act 1, Prelude \(recording\)](#)

Exercises ([click here for key](#))

1. Match the composer/work on the left with the corresponding term on the right.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Carmen</i> | A. double aria |
| 2. Quartet No. 3 | B. chromaticism |
| 3. Mussorgsky | C. Risorgimento |
| 4. Verdi | D. exoticism |
| 5. <i>The Nutcracker</i> | E. folk tunes (nationalism) |
| 6. <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> | F. parlor songs |
| 7. Liszt | G. New German School |
| 8. <i>Lyric Pieces</i> | H. historicism |
| 9. Foster | I. Mighty Handful |
| 10. <i>La traviata</i> , Act 3 | J. ballet |

2. The concepts of nationalism and exoticism are closely linked; both rely upon quasi-subjective perceptions of *local* vs. *non-local* and *the self* vs. *the other*. Identify a major work that can be linked to nationalism and another work that can be linked to exoticism. Consider the ways in which each piece reflects its assigned category—nationalistic or exotic—both in terms of music (features in the score and their effects in performance) and contextual factors (the original audience, contemporary cultural norms, etc.).
3. Nineteenth-century composers developed a variety of methods for unifying expansive works, including motivic development, thematic recall, and the use of associative tonality. Elaborate on some of these strategies for achieving coherence by discussing at least two pieces covered in your coursework. For instrumental examples, what binds the piece together? For operas, how do these methods contribute to the unfolding of the drama?
4. Some composers and critics in the mid-nineteenth century held opposing views on absolute and programmatic music. Describe the position of the New German School and its more conservative opponents, identifying the main composers and writers associated with each. Then choose one piece of music you might associate with each group. What characteristics make it representative of its composer's aesthetic aims?

Key to Exercises

1. **Match the composer/work on the left with the corresponding term on the right.**

1–D; 2–H; 3–I; 4–C; 5–J; 6–B; 7–G; 8–E; 9–F; 10–A

2. **The concepts of nationalism and exoticism are closely linked; both rely upon quasi-subjective perceptions of *local vs. non-local* and *the self vs. the other*. Identify a major work that can be linked to nationalism and another work that can be linked to exoticism. Consider the ways in which each piece reflects its assigned category—nationalistic or exotic—both in terms of music (features in the score and their effects in performance) and contextual factors (the original audience, contemporary cultural norms, etc.).**

Of the pieces in this Content Guide, students may choose to write about Bizet's *Carmen* or excerpts from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* as examples of exoticism. Examples of nationalism might include Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*, the works by Mussorgsky, and Sousa's marches. For example:

Exoticism: Bizet's *Carmen*

- Portrayal of a Romani woman as “other” through her suggestive costume and language.
- French composer blending Spanish and Romani musical elements with contemporary French musical conventions.
 - use of augmented 2nds in motives related to Carmen
 - borrowing of Spanish tunes and dances
 - imitation of Spanish guitar in orchestral parts
 - plagal cadences mimicking flamenco music

Nationalism: Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*

- Inspired by an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Russian nationalist artist Viktor Hartmann.
- Final movement:
 - melody reminiscent of Russian folk tunes
 - modal harmonies
 - borrowing of Russian Orthodox hymn

3. **Nineteenth-century composers developed a variety of methods for unifying expansive works, including motivic development, thematic recall, and the use of associative tonality. Elaborate on some of these strategies for achieving coherence by discussing at least two pieces covered in your coursework. For instrumental examples, what binds the piece together? For operas, how do these methods contribute to the unfolding of the drama?**

Works for examination may include:

Instrumental works: Beethoven's symphonies, Brahms's Symphony no. 4, Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*

Operas: Reminiscence motives/thematic recall in Weber's *Der Freischütz*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Verdi's *La Traviata*; Leitmotifs in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*

Students might describe, for example, the development of short motives in the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony no. 3 that expands the sonata form to depict a hero's journey, during which the hero faces obstacles and eventually overcomes them. Effective answers could also include a description of Verdi's practice of placing a theme in the orchestral prelude that returns at important points in the opera (such as the "curse" motive in *Rigoletto*).

4. **Some composers and critics in the mid-nineteenth century held opposing views on absolute and programmatic music. Describe the position of the New German School and its more conservative opponents, identifying the main composers and writers associated with each. Then choose one piece of music you might associate with each group. What characteristics make it representative of its composer's aesthetic aims?**

Composers of the New German School, whose compositions were termed "the Music of the Future," argued that music can be connected with other arts, and that a written program can help a composer explain his or her intentions. Those on the other side of the "War of the Romantics" argued that music without extra-musical associations is beautiful on its own and that form is an integral part of musical content. Students may associate composers such as Wagner, Liszt, Bruckner, and Berlioz—as well as the critic Franz Brendel—with the New German School. They may list so-called "conservative" composers such as Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Robert Schumann—as well as violinist Joseph Joachim and critic Eduard Hanslick—as opponents of the ideas of the New German School. Students should associate programmatic music and/or music that represents a union of the arts with the New German School. One example from the Anthology is Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, which has extra-musical associations in the form of a semi-autobiographical program. Students might also choose to discuss the programmatic associations of Brahms's Quartet no. 3 for Piano and Strings, Op. 60 ("Werther") to illustrate that while Brahms rejected many of the aesthetic ideals of the "New German" composers, some of his pieces do carry extra-musical associations.