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Book Review: Nietzsche and Music

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approaches taken by the historical economists make it difficult to identify a single conceptual core to their thought. Nevertheless, their ethical commitment to improving the lot of ordinary citizens, combined with a defence of inductive historical reasoning and commitment to objective empirical analysis as the foundation for policy, created a recognizable, unified framework for discussion. Along with their individual writings and the volumes of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (Association for Social Policy), the extensive record of imperial Germany's social legislation at all levels of government stands as their monument.

The 'mode of production' of their works lay in the German university system with its free exchange of ideas, research teaching, and students – the historical economists could be accused of being 'ivory tower socialists' (*Kathedarsozialisten*) because most of them held professorial chairs. Equally important, however, were the newly founded statistical bureaus of the German states and a number of entrepreneurial publishers. Throughout, Grimmer-Solem is very good on the ways in which individuals in these specific institutional structures worked to bring ideas into the public realm to influence policy. A notorious methodological argument with the Austrian Adolf Menger fits into this context. Austrian economists were peripheral members of the historical economists, being underfunded and provincial in the negative sense. Menger, who tutored Austrian Crown Prince Rudolf, was not in fact opposed to historical method as a tool of economic analysis, but he was opposed to government social legislation. He was also bitter about condescending reviews by Schmoller and others in Germany of a book he had published in 1871. In 1883, Menger published an angry attack on those who had wronged him. It was this attack on the 'German Historical School' that was taken up by later Austrian economists such as Joseph Schumpeter and Friedrich Hayek to construct a (largely mythical) pedigree for themselves, separate from the German branch of the profession. Here, and at a number of other points, this is a book with importance well beyond its specialized subject matter.

FRANK B. TIPTON, *University of Sydney*

Georges Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, trans. David Pellauer and Graham Parkes, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL and London, 2004; 280 pp.; 0226480879, $38/£27 (hbk)

There is a good number of 'operas about opera'. The very first great opera, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, treats the question of the genre's possibility and justification, as do many subsequent retellings of the Orpheus myth. Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* stands admired, if rarely loved, as the most profound twentieth-century exploration. It is Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, however, which wins the battle for hearts,

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and probably quite a few minds, from the twentieth-century category, thanks to the way in which it keeps Apollo and Dionysus in perfect balance – or should that be fruitful tension? This, in a sense, is what Nietzsche's relationship towards music is about – and what Georges Liébert's *Nietzsche and Music* is about. A striking authorial insight is that Nietzsche was in reality more attracted to the *birth* of tragedy than to tragedy itself. The claim holds for the entirety of Nietzsche's career, and in turn leads us to ask: if it is true that Nietzsche remained obsessed with that tense covenant between Apollo and Dionysus rather than primarily with the works themselves, has he been portrayed both as more Wagnerian in the beginning than he really was, and as less Wagnerian than he really was at the end? The answer, in both cases, would appear to be 'yes'. Wagner might come to repel Nietzsche, yet Wagner remained the exemplar of opera, of tragedy, and of music, at least partially on account of the qualified nature of Nietzsche's initial approval.

Liébert's book profits not only from heeding Nietzsche's views on music and musicians, rarer than one might expect, but in particular from viewing Nietzsche *as a composer* – which is how the philosopher so often saw himself. One of Liébert's most important points relates to that perennial problem of how one is supposed to *read* Nietzsche. Nietzsche as a philosopher is a musical *interpreter*; it had ever been thus since he first sat down at the piano. Moreover, Nietzsche's work, 'apparently discontinuous and even disparate', 'in fact obeys a principle of organisation and coherence that is thematic in nature. It implies a *musical* attentiveness comparable to . . . [that] required by Wagner's works.' What Nietzsche could not fully achieve in his own musical composition, he achieved in his other works; yet his compositional travails nonetheless pointed the way to how he should write.

It is a pity that references to Nietzsche's musical works, only published in 1976, are rather generalized. Substantial treatment of what, to most readers, will remain unknown territory would have strengthened much of what Liébert has to say. Even an isolated musical example would have helped the reader to consider the *Night of Saint Sylvester* as a 'maladroit reply to [Wagner's] *Siegfried Idyll*', or the *Manfred-Meditation* as a response to Schumann, coloured by *Tristan*. As it is, we simply have to take these portrayals on trust. Nevertheless, the emphasis on Nietzsche *as musician* – even when we think we are dealing with Nietzsche *as writer* – is salutary. It is worth considering an instance of how failure to appreciate this link has distorted commentators' understanding of Nietzsche's works. Walter Kaufmann could discern little in Wagner, the revolutionary comrade of Bakunin in 1848–9, other than 'proto-nazism'. He stood as a Nietzschean equivalent to the Bayreuth 'Wagnerians' who screamed of Nietzsche's apostasy and failed to appreciate the extent to which Nietzsche proffered, in Thomas Mann's words, 'a panegyric in reverse, another form of eulogy'. Indeed, Kaufmann evinces an almost total ignorance of Wagner's dramatic works, works with which Nietzsche was utterly obsessed and to which he constantly

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refers. Liébert, quite rightly, points to quasi-musical themes in Nietzsche's writing: 'ductile, dynamic, always underway', themes which, like Wagnerian motifs, can 'overlap, interweave, change timbre and sense depending on the momentarily adopted perspective'. Liébert, moreover, goes one step further; he shows a commendable, rare sympathy for Wagner amongst Nietzsche scholars, when writing that Wagner was 'in many ways a more perceptive psychologist than his disciple'.

Unfortunately, however, this translation leaves much to be desired. Take the following example: 'If Wagner no longer uses the expression "absolute music" to not appear to contradict himself, he continued to hold to the validity of this notion.' The best one can say is that one knows what is meant, or perhaps that one could readily re-translate it. Titles of non-French works are often left in French; Strauss's *Daphne* acquires an acute accent; Monteverdi's somewhat mysterious, abbreviated *Couronnement* should be rendered either in full, in Italian, as *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, or in English, as (*The Coronation of*) *Poppea*. Erwin Rohde is frequently, but not exclusively, rendered as 'Rhode'. And one can only assume that a computer 'spell check' altered Mozart's Cretan *Idomeneo* to *Idomea*. An editor ought to have noticed and corrected such solecisms, of which but a few are listed here.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude on so sour a note. Shortly before the end of the final scene of *Ariadne*, Zerbinetta, the actress *par excellence*, steals on to the stage. She both confirms and ever-so-lightly questions the main 'business' of Bacchus' and Ariadne's soaring duet: 'When a new god arrives, we are left speechless.' On the surface, this seems merely to refer to the helplessness of women in the face of pursuit by a god. Yet this is not just any god; it is Bacchus (Dionysus): 'the best source of joy in life for mortals', as Euripides has his Odysseus tell the Cyclops. If Dionysus is the best source of joy, the best source for the gay science of modern artistic production, he cannot yet come to us unmediated; that way lies the madness of Nietzsche's 'final' period. Did Nietzsche, despite his early insistence that music could be purely Dionysian, know implicitly all along that the tension between Apollo and Dionysus has had to be mediated? And does this render him closer to dialectical Hegelianism than he would ever have admitted – or realized? Liébert's book does not necessarily answer these questions, but it does point us towards them.

MARK BERRY, *Peterhouse, Cambridge*

Matthew Jefferies, *Imperial Culture in Germany, 1871–1918*, Palgrave: Basingstoke and New York, 2003; 338 pp., 16 illus.; 1403904219, £19.99 (pbk), 1403904200, £55.00 (hbk)

Matthew Jefferies has written an enormously erudite and readable synthesis of cultural life in imperial Germany, filled with illuminating juxtapositions, deft sum-

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