

New Perspectives on Imagology

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New Perspectives on Imagology

Edited by

Katharina Edtstadler, Sandra Folie and Gianna Zocco



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Blurring Stereotypes: “Aus dem Leben eines Tonkünstlers” as a Medium of Italian Musical Character around 1800

Carolin Krahn

Abstract

How can music history help us understand the establishment of national character? This article discusses a prosaic text by Johann Friedrich Rochlitz as a medium for implementing stereotypical ideas of “the Italian” in German music historiography and, thereby, in public consciousness. It shows how particular musical qualities of the story’s fictional protagonists are blurred with ideas of national character. Against this background, the predominant reception of the author Rochlitz in the realm of German music historiography can be reevaluated from a more transnational scholarly perspective. Key to this reassessment is investigation into the categories of fictional and musical characters with regard to notions of both “the German” and “the Italian.”

Keywords

national character in music – image of Italian music – German music historiography – stereotypes in musical fiction – Johann Friedrich Rochlitz

How can music history help us understand the processes through which images of national character are established? In order to answer this question, I will analyse an otherwise little-known text from the vast body of music historiography written by one of Germany’s leading music literati at the turn of the nineteenth century: Johann Friedrich Rochlitz (1769–1842) of Leipzig. My first goal is to depict the ways that notions of “the German” and “the Italian” are rhetorically shaped in regard to both the musical as well as the anthropological imagination, as found in a fictional anecdote in music-related German prose. By blurring stereotypes of both national categories, this story draws attention to how two well-travelled national characters, usually treated as dichotomies,

were paradoxically intertwined in music historiography of the era. Analysing this narrative casts light on the ways that character functions as a core category in imagological research on national thought from a musicological point of view. At the same time, this investigation allows for critical reflection on the problematic relationship of rhetorically shaped clichés as they were disseminated among readers of music-related texts.

My argument is structured in three steps: first, I will provide a brief overview on the reception of the author Johann Friedrich Rochlitz as a key figure in discourse on German music. This synopsis will draw attention to relevant historiography as well as musicological scholarship, with the aim of broadening hitherto existing perspectives on Rochlitz toward a more transnational scholarly horizon. The genre of the musical anecdote will play a crucial role in the context of this discussion. Following up on this, I will provide a close reading of Rochlitz's prosaic fragment "Aus dem Leben eines Tonkünstlers," paying particular attention to aspects that reach beyond the German-speaking world. The text at stake, which was first published in 1802,¹ illustrates how the idea of nation becomes part of a sophisticated cross-cultural play with stereotypes in music historiography. As a consequence, my discussion highlights a facet of the author that has long been overlooked, not least because of the strong focus on the German-speaking realm that scholarship has traditionally maintained. Finally, I will bundle up the insights from these preceding steps in light of stereotype formation to discuss how the chosen text becomes a medium of anthropologically charged anecdotes to promote the stereotypical "Italian" in relation to music. In conclusion, my elaborations respond to the question of how Italian musical character emerged in music historiography at the dawn of the nineteenth century.

1 Taking Anecdotes Seriously: Rochlitz and Discourse on German Music

A Protestant theologian by training, Johann Friedrich Rochlitz remains best known for his role as editor in chief of the leading music journal in the German-speaking world around 1800, the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. He served as the main editor from its beginnings in 1798 until 1818 and was the author of many articles on leading composers as well as a broad range of

¹ The first edition of the text came out in 1802, whereas I base my argument on the updated version published in 1822. See Rochlitz (1822, 317–382). I have also discussed this source and some aspects highlighted here in earlier versions and in further contexts in my first book, see Krahn (2021, 156–207).

topics related to both musical taste and life at large.² Given such a richness of activities within German printed media around 1800, Rochlitz is usually considered one of the key authors in the decidedly German-oriented musical discourse of his time.³

In fact, most musical scholarship presents Rochlitz as a leading “German voice,” a view reflected, for instance, in research published by Martin Staehelin (1977) and Ulrich Konrad (1995), who have explored the author’s importance for the public image of Mozart, or Joseph Müller-Blattau’s investigation of Rochlitz’s influence on the reception of Bach (Müller-Blattau 1926). Indeed, this type of research stresses some relevant aspects of Rochlitz’s work in the realm of composer-centred German music historiography. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the author himself, or the content of his writings, had an impact limited to the German-speaking world. In fact, Rochlitz—and, in part, the aforementioned scholarship⁴—have fed a great deal into the musical grand narrative of the hero as a key protagonist in music history, resulting in an emphatic “Heroengeschichtsschreibung,” with Beethoven as its formative model.⁵

This topic has been critically assessed most recently by Melanie Unseld (2014, 134–136) in a monograph on the connection between biography and music history. In this book, Unseld highlights, among other aspects, the importance of the anecdote as a means of publicly shaping and staging the image of individual artists within music historiography in the Age of Enlightenment. She bases her argument primarily on Rochlitz and points to the effects of anecdotes idealizing Mozart and Beethoven (*ibid.*, 135) as a central strategy in mythmaking. Yet, the powerful potential of the anecdote, which Unseld rightly discusses, is by no means limited to real-life musical protagonists such as “famous composers,” who became subject to stylization and, sometimes, to outright invention. The idea of musical character also emerges independently of real persons and, within Rochlitz’s musical prose, often in a rather abstract way. The following close reading of “Aus dem Leben eines Tonkünstlers” will demonstrate this by means of an example.

2 For a first insight into Rochlitz’s role in the media scene of Leipzig, see Ufer (2000, 128–132).

3 For an illustration of Rochlitz’s “journalistic” work in the context of German bourgeois culture, see Seidel (2007).

4 In this regard, Joep Leerssen’s plea for a comparative history that comprises a critical intellectual history of musical nationalism in Europe can only be reinforced. See Leerssen (2014, 607).

5 A nuanced discussion of this paradigm using the example of Beethoven reception is provided by Burnham (1995).

Before proceeding it should be noted that the manifestation of musical character through anecdotes plays an important role beyond the German-speaking realm alone. This needs to be kept in mind especially when investigating the relevance of national stereotypes to the emergence of German musical culture in the early nineteenth century. According to the musicologist Celia Applegate, the establishment of “Germanness” should be considered a process rather than a discrete historical event, since “the passage from folk to national stereotypes was underway but unstable and in flux, when German culture and Germanness were inventing themselves, consciously and not” (1998, 279). In the context of music, public discourse—including the use of anecdotes—was central to the circulation of national images. Here, Rochlitz elaborated an idea of German music, especially through notions of Italian music, in order to strengthen his idea of high-quality “Tonkunst” and often implicitly to support an image of German musical superiority. The overall tendency of such (conscious or unconscious) historiographical politics was to investigate established and admired strengths within Italian musical culture while downgrading contemporary Italian music and musicians,⁶ as I have shown through various examples in my first monograph on the image of “musical Italy” in German-speaking historiography around 1800 (Krahn 2021). Like several of his fellow authors, Rochlitz viewed German music in contrast to music and musicians pejoratively judged as shallow, soft, or female, and, as a result, he by and large dismissed the contemporary “Welsh” (if not explicitly Italian) musical culture that was, at the time, conquering audiences throughout Europe.⁷ This complex image was sketched out on multiple levels, comprising compositions, musicians, instruments, and musical infrastructures, and distributed via concert reviews and other music journalism, in novels, short stories, and anecdotes, as well as longer biographic sketches written or edited by Rochlitz and others.⁸

Against this background, the aforementioned scholarly focus on Rochlitz’s authorship will be expanded in the following discussion by rereading his work in light of two closely connected aspects: for one, a few significant passages on the image of Italian music will serve to deepen our understanding of strategies used to establish a German national character in music historiography against a transnational background; secondly, the contribution to music

6 Such ambiguity toward Italian culture resonates with the overall tendency noticeable in many nineteenth-century travel descriptions of Italians. Manfred Beller described this as an established “hetero-image of Italians”; see Beller (2007b, 197).

7 E.g. Hentschel (2006, chaps. 5.1.1–5.1.6).

8 Central to the momentum of this process, which needs to be considered against the broader context of contemporary Italian opera’s popularity, was the rising success of Gioachino Rossini in Europe. See Krahn (2018).

historiography of a select anecdote, one that can easily be underestimated on account of its prattling style, will be reevaluated. Doing so will allow us to trace in more detail the ways that such texts subtly implement national character in readers' imaginations, and even how music-related prose may thus guide the musical experience of readers.

2 "Aus dem Leben eines Tonkünstlers" as Transnational Music Historiography

The fragment "Aus dem Leben eines Tonkünstlers" (From a Composer's Life), first published in 1802,⁹ represents a particularly informative case study of how Rochlitz brings out ideas of German and Italian musical characters in his writing.

The text features four fictional letters by a German composer named Ludolph, who provides astute insights into his early musical socialization to his friend Anton. Ludolph's letters are full of stereotypical ideas of Italian music and musicians embedded into an intimate, domestic musical setting. These ideas are conveyed to the reader above all by means of two prototypical musical characters: a male Italian composer, Franzesco, and his daughter, the young Italian singer Laura. Remarks about anything Italian in these letters are consistently triggered by Ludolph's descriptions of his encounters with Franzesco. According to the story, Franzesco, who works at an unidentified German court, has brought with him his daughter, an ardent lover of chamber music. There, she befriends a princess, the daughter of her father's boss.

How are these characters portrayed in the text? While Laura at first represents a naive singer of simple Italian arias, her father Franzesco is summarily portrayed as a disreputable character, both when it comes to his physical appearance and to his persona. The following passage illustrates the degree to which Ludolph draws out his menacing temperament:

Franzesco is [...] fiery, deep and cordial; but everything he expresses, without it escaping him, is so hard, so rigid, so oppressive—and likewise so compelling and so cooled off! I honour him, I am exceedingly fond of him and long for any friendly look he might share, and I am wonderfully glad when he presses my hand once: but I cannot shed my shyness toward him, nor can I fasten my heart to him. How tyrannically he recently

⁹ See the information on this in the table of contents in Rochlitz (1822, 423).

offended the good Laura with poisonous speech concerning a poor little mistake she had made! She remained silent and wanted to leave. The despot commanded with sparkling looks: Stay! And looked sideways for a long time [...]. I trembled, it made me inwardly convulse, I should have seized him by his stiff, raven-black, curly hair, and was unable to enter his house for a few days.

ROCHLITZ 1822, 372¹⁰

The “sparkling looks” seems to be a rather common motif used to depict the physical appearance of Italian musicians; an aspect that was likewise supposed to reflect the inner, natural self of choleric characters. Not only did Rochlitz make use of this, but also his friend, the German composer and writer Carl Maria von Weber, who spoke of Rossini sparkling with “witzig glühende Funken aus seinen Augen” (Stendhal and Wendt [1824] 2003, 384; English: “funny glowing sparks from his eyes,” my translation). What such overarching descriptions of Italian musicians share is the parallel drawn between the musicians’ inner feelings and external appearance. Moreover, the physical and psychological dimensions of the Italian musical characters are blurred in regard to both the fictional character within the story and the actual musical character it served to represent on a more abstract level. Rochlitz’s design of the musical character Francesco and his symbolic representation of Italian musical character in general is underscored by the fact that Francesco is simply called “the Italian” at various points, and hence treated as a commonplace character.¹¹

In addition to this emphasis on physicality, it seems noteworthy that Rochlitz’s investigation of musical character is not limited to descriptions of

10 My translation. Original quote (German): “Franzesco ist [...] feurig, tief und herzlich; aber alles, was er äußert, ohne daß es ihm entwischt, ist so hart, so starr, so drückend—so zugleich anziehend und auskältend! Ich ehre ihn, ich bin überaus gern um ihn und geize nach jedem freundlichen Blick, und bin wunderfroh, wenn er mir etwa einmal die Hand drückt: doch aber kann ich die Scheu vor ihm nicht wegbringen und kein Herz zu ihm fassen. Wie tyrannisch fuhr er neulich mit giftiger Rede die gute Laura an, um eine armselige Kleinigkeit, worin sie es versehen hatte! Sie schwieg und wollte gehen. Der Despot befahl ihr mit funkelnden Blicken: Bleib! und schielte noch lange seitwärts [...]. Ich zitterte, es krampfte mich innerlich, ich hätt’ ihn bey den starren, rabenschwarzen, kurzgekräuselten Haaren fassen mögen, und vermochte einige Tage nicht, sein Haus zu betreten.”

11 While the fictional character Franzesco cannot be traced back to any particular composer, his image certainly resonates with a contemporary description of Rossini by Carl Maria von Weber, as I have shown in chapter 12.1 (“Sänger—Virtuososen—Komponisten—Publikum”) of my first book (Krahn 2021). Such parallels, however, should not obscure the fact that they are often part of a more general, anthropologically charged polemic against Italian musicians during the rise of nationalism.

single individuals. Their depictions are further reinforced by his illustration of their relationships to one another, which likewise serve as metaphors for the tension between Italian and German music and related musical personnel. Against this background, it does not come as a surprise that the princess Laura befriends is a German girl. In fact, Rochlitz arranged the constellation of characters within the story in a way that ties the Italian and the German spheres closely to one another. This strategy enables him to invoke a whole set of German versus Italian antipodes that likewise depend on one another, with the characters in the story serving as their personification. Along these lines, the first aspect to emphasize is the close, almost sisterly relationship between the Italian and German girls. At the same time, their physical appearances and behaviours differ drastically: the German princess is tall and very serious, while the Italian girl is short, talkative, and particularly cheerful, at the same time that she shows traces of conceitedness:

Franzesco didn't bother me. We heard the two friends leave—she will accompany the princess to the castle, said Franzesco. I stepped to the window. They came down into the garden. I only saw them from behind. The princess has a sisterly resemblance to Laura in her overall figure, only that the former is about two fingers taller. Laura seemed lively, the princess quiet and serious. Maybe she just wanted to cheer up her friend. She fiddled around her and chatted in a friendly manner in her direction. The Oberhofmeisterin, who followed at some distance, found early violets and handed them to the princess. The princess took them and stuck them to Laura's chest. It was a wonderful picture, as she, standing there quiet and smiling, her chest bent slightly forward, let her do it, and once the violets were in position, she gloated flirtatiously. The princess pulled her close then took her arm, and so they crossed the gothic bridge and passed out of my sight.

ROCHLITZ 1822, 364¹²

12 My translation. Original quote (German): "Franzesco störte mich nicht. Wir hörten die beyden Freundinnen gehen—Sie wird die Prinzessin nach dem Schlosse begleiten, sagte Franzesco. Ich trat zum Fenster. Sie kamen hinab in den Garten. Ich sahe sie nur von hinten. Die Prinzessin hat eine schwesterliche Aehnlichkeit in der ganzen Gestalt mit Lauren, nur daß jene etwa zwey Finger breit höher aufgeschossen ist. Laura schien munter, die Prinzessin still und ernst. Vielleicht wollte jene die Freundin nur aufheitern. Sie tändelte um sie her und schwatzte freundlich auf sie zu. Die Oberhofmeisterin, die in einiger Entfernung folgte, fand frühe Veilchen, und reichte sie der Prinzessin. Diese nahm sie und steckte sie Lauren an die Brust. Es war ein herrliches Bild, als diese still und lächelnd, die Brust etwas vorgebeugt, dastand, jene schaffen ließ, und da die Veilchen

More than a short intermezzo in prose, this scene plays with the reader's visual associations through its sharp and rich illustration. To clarify the suggestive potential of this scene, which oscillates between text and visual imagination, a piece of fine art, yet to be produced when Rochlitz's text was published, comes to mind: the fairly well-known painting *Italia und Germania* (the original title was supposed to be *Sulamith und Maria*¹³) by the Nazarene artist Johann Overbeck, dated 1828. At first glance, the description of the girls by Rochlitz has much in common with the arrangement of the two female characters in Overbeck's illustration (see Figure 21.1). In his painting, Overbeck draws on the idea of sisterly affection between the allegorical characters Italia, on the left, and Germania, on the right:



FIGURE 21.1 Friedrich Overbeck, *Italia und Germania* (1828).

13 gepflanzt waren, sich schäkernd höher brüstete. Die Prinzessin zog sie an sich, dann nahm sie ihren Arm und so kamen sie über die gothische Brücke und waren mir aus den Augen." More information on the genesis of the painting is available on the website of the Munich-based Pinakotheken: <https://www.pinakothek.de/kunst/meisterwerk/friedrich-overbeck/italia-und-germania> [July 12, 2021].

Yet, viewers taking a closer look at the nuances of Rochlitz's text and Overbeck's painting might discover many differences. Aside from the medieval town in the background, for instance, it is clear that the young, cheerful Italian girl in Rochlitz's text does not really match the tall and graceful character of the young female allegory of the *Repubblica Italia* in Overbeck's depiction.¹⁴ In the painting, Italia is rather represented by a goddess-like type of a mother similar to a statue, and it is this difference that distinguishes it most from Rochlitz's narrative portrayal of the Italian girl.¹⁵ In contrast to this later example of fine art, Rochlitz differentiates Italia and Germania in written form, while maintaining a certain imaginative ambiguity. On the one hand, it is possible to perceive the two girls as close; on the other hand, there is a clear distance that defines their relationship by means of both physical appearance and the varying behaviours sketched out in the story.

The relationship of the girls is rendered more complex by means of music. As Rochlitz's story continues, the two girls "exchange" repertoires: the German girl sings Italian vocal music, while her Italian friend suddenly begins to devote her time to German musical repertoire. On top of this, the two composers—that is, the German Ludolph, at the same time one of the authors of the correspondence, and Laura's father Franzesco—listen to the two girls and judge the pieces as well as their interpretation. What they listen to is an Italian romance and a ballade, the latter fulfilling all the clichés of "typical" German music with complicated harmony and few melodic passages:

I [Ludolph] asked to hear that song. Then he fell silent, and we listened together. The preceding voice [i.e. that of the princess] performed an Italian romance, and Laura was subsequently asked by the princess to repeat one of her old ballads. She sang one—if I am not mistaken, from Herder's collection of folk songs. The effect of its gruesome words, the extremely simple melody consisting of only five notes, the bold harmony, which rejected any smooth transition, the excellent, restrained, and muted voice—I cannot describe this effect to you. I sat there in silence for a long time when the song was over.

ROCHLITZ 1822, 363–364¹⁶

14 See Skokan (2009, 60–87).

15 Another transnational perspective on the image (in the imagological sense) of a young, Italian girl is offered by Karin Andersson's article in this volume (part 4, chapter 15).

16 My translation. Original quote (German): "Ich wünschte jenen Gesang zu hören: da schwieg er und wir hörten. Die vorige Stimme [i.e. jene der Prinzessin] sang eine italienische Romanze, und Laura wurde hernach von der Prinzessin gebeten, ihr eine ihrer alten Balladen zu wiederholen. Sie sang eine—irr' ich nicht aus Herders Sammlung von Volksliedern. Die Wirkung der schauerlichen Worte, der höchst einfachen Melo-

At this point, it becomes obvious not only that two individual musical worlds are being contrasted with one another by means of the romance and the ballade but also that by referring to Herder's collection of folk songs, these two genres are embedded in a prominent national discourse of the time¹⁷ (Rochlitz 1822, 377). This is fleshed out in a subsequent dialogue between the two composers, with Ludolph asking his Italian colleague how to develop a proper sense for the ballade in opposition to the canzonetta. Francesco's answer, which promotes the idea of the "cool" north as opposed to the "pathetic" south, allegedly concealed in their respective literary-musical genres, is as follows:

Study the ballad from the well-known collections of folk songs of the so-called raw, especially Nordic peoples. See how nowhere is the musical description spun out, nowhere is it quietly decorated, nowhere any pompous pathos, not to speak of any sudden switches to cold narratives or reflection, but how everything is life, a striving forward, action and unity. In the diction—what power without gaiety, what dignity without presumptuous verbiage! In the verse structure—what manifoldness, what euphony, what representational expression!

ROCHLITZ 1822, 366¹⁸

Questions of musical style are thus attributed to climatic conditions from the north in contrast to the south, as well as to their respective populations. The direct connection between natural environment and musical texture, as propagated in this way, has a tradition that can be traced back to at least the middle of the eighteenth century: in the course of transferring climate-theoretical considerations to aesthetic observations, it already served Winckelmann in "explaining" certain peculiarities of civilizational groups, as Manfred

die, die nur aus fünf Tönen bestand, der kühnen Harmonie, die geglättete Uebergänge verschmähete, der vortrefflichen, zurückgehaltenen und gedämpften Stimme—diese Wirkung kann ich Dir nicht beschreiben. Ich saß noch lange schweigend da, als das Lied zu Ende war."

- 17 It needs to be underscored that the ballade, especially at the start of the nineteenth century, cannot be considered a genuinely Italian genre. In this context, it rather serves as the German pendant to the Italian romance. For an overview of the genre's history, see Graf et al. (1994).
- 18 My translation. Original quote (German): "Studiren Sie die Ballade aus den bekannten Sammlungen der Volkslieder sogenannter roher, besonders nordischer Völker. Sehen Sie, wie da nirgends weit ausgespinnene, nirgends ruhig ausgepünktelte Schilderey, nirgends hochtrabendes Pathos, wol [sic] gar im Wechsel mit kalter Erzählung oder Reflexion, sondern wie alles Leben, Vorwärtsstreben, Handlung und Einheit ist. In der Diction—welche Kraft, ohne Schwulst, welche Würde, ohne anmaßliches Wortgepränge! im Versbau—welche Mannichfaltigkeit, welcher Wohlklang, welcher darstellende Ausdruck!"

Beller has shown in his reflections on the impact of climate theory in imagological research.¹⁹

In contrast to the concentration of musical material found in the case of the ballade, free of any redundancy, the style of the canzonetta as described by Francesco—and hence “the Italian” himself defining “the Italian style”—comes across as funny, light, rich, and elegant:

Get to know the canzonette of older Spaniards, and of older or newer Italians: such beautiful flirting almost without knowing with what, such graceful joking almost without knowing about what, such sweet sighing almost without knowing why, how she captures just a single, fleeting moment of the secret, inner life of the soul, capturing it with sweet pleasure for a few minutes, and then lets it flutter calmly, like a beautiful butterfly, wherever it wants to go. Once you develop the sense for both genres in poetry, you also have the music for it in your soul: for I maintain that both are perceived and born at the same time as their music, and cannot be properly understood without it.

ROCHLITZ 1822, 366–367²⁰

These are just a few select examples that provide insight into how elements of musical character are articulated by means of archetypical musicians or musical genres in a neglected portion of Rochlitz’s historiography. What can be drawn from this?

3 Implementing Italian Character in Musical Prose

To summarize my main observations up to this point, Rochlitz’s story provides a multifaceted example of how stereotypes are blurred. It is clear that Rochlitz did not only blur fiction and nonfiction in his made-up letters “Aus dem Leben eines Tonkünstlers,” but also textual as well as musical genres, musical

19 See Beller (2007a, 302).

20 My translation. Original quote (German): “Lernen Sie die Canzonette von ältern Spaniern, und von ältern oder neuern Italienern kennen: dies schöne Tändeln, fast ohne daß man weiß, womit? dies anmuthige Scherzen, fast ohne daß man weiß, worüber? dies süße Erseufzen, fast ohne daß man weiß, warum? wie sie nur einen einzigen, flüchtigen Moment des geheimern, innigern Seelenlebens erfasset, ihn einige Minuten mit süßem Wohlgefallen festhält, und dann ihn mit Ruhe flattern läßt, wie einen schönen Schmetterling, wohin er will. Haben Sie nur erst den Sinn für beyde Gattungen in der Poesie, so haben Sie auch die Musik dafür in ihrer Seele: denn ich behaupte, beyde sind zugleich mit ihrer Musik empfangen und geboren, und können ohne dieselbe gar nicht ganz verstanden werden.”

and anthropological categories, acoustic and visual components²¹—and even notions of “the German” and “the Italian,” for instance by exchanging repertoires between the central musical characters in the story. This renders the nationally inspired musical characters at stake all the more powerful, since the processes of their manifestation can be traced on multiple levels. National *doxa*²² are thus projected onto concrete yet abstract musical personalities possessing a noteworthy ambiguity: they represent musical personas within Rochlitz’s story but also stand for national musical styles at large. The fact that this can be located on at least two levels—that is, physical appearance and human behaviour—renders the anthropologically charged musical images established in the course of the story even stronger.

Both narrators and protagonists take on clearly defined musical roles as composers and singers. They are part of the story and tell it simultaneously. Likewise, there is a predefined hierarchy in terms of who tells the story (the German composer) and who becomes the “object” of the same reflection (the Italian composer and the two young singers). The framework of a dialogue in four letters by Anton and Ludolph supports the suspenseful negotiation of two musical cultures as a rhetoric strategy, stressing differing musical forms, modes of making music, or just the very being of a musician as most vividly illustrated by the two singers.

Moreover, the tension between ideas of Italian versus German music is charged with many different contents that likewise serve as projection screens for stereotypical tropes. It involves the musical personnel by means of different professions, and calls on their physicality, their particular spirits, the tunes of their voices, the differentiation between men and women, adults and children, as well as professional frameworks, such as private music-making (chamber music among friends) or public performance (in the broader context of the court). Mapping all these elements as they are negotiated between the German and Italian spheres within the story, one is reminded that there is no such thing as “music history as such.” Rather, music historiography as discussed above is informed by presumptions that are oftentimes difficult to

21 The reference to cross-media allusions was fairly common in the early nineteenth-century literary reception of musical personalities. This topic was formerly discussed with regards to Rochlitz, too. For example, see Woyke (2010, 103).

22 In his keynote lecture at the conference *New Perspectives on Imagology* titled “Nationalism and National-Self-Images: Character into Ideology into Doxa” on April 3, 2018, Joep Leerssen underscored the importance of looking at *doxa* in order to understand the particular ideological developments leading to specific notions of national character over the centuries. See the podcast documenting the conference produced by Julia Grillmayr, especially from min. 00:12:05: <https://soundcloud.com/user-213475004/new-perspective-on-imagology-the-podcast/s-OCrUE> [December 19, 2021].

define *either* just as a reproduced stereotype lacking any musical reality *or* as something indeed rooted in the everyday musical life of the time. In fact, the possibility that both might apply at the same time makes such anecdotes all the more alluring. They bring about a complex, dense narrative of music history around 1800 that is easily underestimated as “light fiction for pleasure.” With this in mind, it is above all the richness of various layers and prosaic illustrations that notably defined concepts of “the German” and “the Italian” in music and musicians. The entanglement of the two in this musical scene adds to Joep Leerssen’s suggestion that “nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe emerges first and foremost transnationally as a ‘cultivation of culture’” (2006, 620). Not least, exposing the reader to such a well-constructed narrative means spreading nationally informed musical characters that may influence future musical perception. In the context of personal musical experience, “rediscovering” one or the other element of so-called “Italianness”—or “Germanness,” for that matter—as outlined in musical prose encourages a reader to link individual observations or biases to broader narratives that ultimately manifest musical nationalism, with the potential to turn musical stereotypes into a “self-fulfilling prophecy” (McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears 2002, 10). Being aware of this process means rethinking not only individual approaches to “Heroengeschichte” but also established traditions of dealing with music historiography through a profound reassessment of questions of musical character against overarching, transnationally embedded national images. One challenge in this will be to avoid rewriting just another story of nationalism on a global level as we map out circulating tropes and images in imagological investigations of music history.

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