A NATION THAT SINGS CAN NEVER BE BEATEN:
An Analysis of Musical Propaganda, Development, and Censorship in WWII
CHRISTOPHER ROBERT SEELEY

A NATION THAT SINGS CAN NEVER BE BEATEN:
An Analysis of Musical Propaganda, Development, and Censorship in WWII

Submitted to the Departments of Political Science and Music of Allegheny College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

I hereby recognize and pledge to fulfill my responsibilities as defined in the Honor Code and to maintain the integrity of both myself and the College community as a whole.

(NAME PRINTED HERE)

(HONOR CODE SIGNATURE)

Approved by:

____________________________ (1st Reader’s Name)

____________________________ (2nd Reader’s Name)

____________________________ (3rd Reader’s Name)
Acknowledgements

No one in the world succeeds alone. My life has been tooled toward creating a better situation for myself, the ones I love and respect, and the ones that I serve. So even when the hours of solitude compiling this project wore away my sanity, I kept in mind the prize at the end of the tunnel.

First, a debt of appreciation is owed to my project readers and advisors. I hope that you’ve enjoyed working with me as much as I have you. I often think about the countless hours you have each spent over your careers reading papers submitted from know-it-all college kids. If mine blends in with the rest of the crowd, I certainly understand…and frankly I’d feel pretty self-conscious if any of you really remembered much of this in 15 years. All I can hope is that you remember me as a student and an individual.

To my parents and family, I extend the warmest thanks. I was fortunate enough to have a life free from want and need. They have never hesitated to sacrifice anything in their power to give me a better life and to maximize my potential. The idea of a dysfunctional family is largely foreign to me and I thank God for that. I could never ask for a better one.

Finally, I’d like to thank my friends and my constituents. Whether they all realize it or not, they were all critical to this project and my well-being during the duration thereof. Bouncing political science and music around for four years wears on a guy, and I’m certain it wears on a guy’s friends. However, I can’t live and breathe the subjects alone, so the ever-so-relaxing time away, whether it be at the lake with Matt,
Ben, and Joe, or Jimmy’s Place with any of the Allegheny guys, or the borough office muddling through bureaucracy and talking to my consistently-pleased constituents, I valued the moments of “awayness” from the rigors of academia.

So without further ado, I present to you, the Venerable Reader, **A Nation Who Sings Cannot Be Beaten: An Analysis of Musical Propaganda, Development, and Censorship in WWII.**

-Christopher R. Seeley
# Table of Contents

- Introduction..................................................................................................................1
- Chapter 1: A Brief History of German Nationalist Music..............................................4
- Chapter 2: A Brief History of American Patriotic Music................................................9
- Chapter 3: The Music of the Reich................................................................................14
- Chapter 4: The American Musical War Effort.................................................................33
- Bibliography..................................................................................................................47
Introduction

Propaganda and wartime go hand-in-hand. The task of controlling the shifting sands of public opinion in the face of an international adversary is nearly as old as organized conflict itself. We see it in all forms; print, cinema, news, and in the arts. I would like to take an investigative look at the extensive use of music as a means of steering the views of the masses toward that universal wartime goal: victory.

Specifically, the Second World War is a terrific example of a historical conflict that is not far outside the memories of our own generation. Therefore, WWII gives us a unique perspective into a time past, but not so far gone that we cannot relate to the causes, conduct, and lessons of that particular conflict. For that reason, I feel that a scholarly look at the use of music as propaganda during this period of history offers us a useful dichotomy.

For the purposes of my research, I'll be focusing primarily on Nazi Germany and the United States. I would like to draw contrasts between the two powers as well as find common practices and uses for music as a means of propaganda. Though the two nations have very different musical traditions and cultures, I would like to examine some of the similarities in the employment of music during armed conflict.

The Germans have a musical situation far removed from that of the United States. They have seen the greatest of composers and works live, develop, and die within their borders. This has given them a rallying point for musical nationalism. The national identity of “pure Germans” can be largely demonstrated through their dedication and loyalty to their composers and their respective works. It is my opinion
that the Third Reich was in a better position to use nationalist music, and music in
general, as propaganda during the Second World War.

Contrary to this, the United States lacked a deep traditional musical history.
Subsequently, it was more difficult for the Americans to identify with a uniform musical
style or even composer. As a consequence, widespread musical propaganda could not
have been as successful as its counterpart in Germany. Part of this dilemma lies in the
inability of the private music industry of the United States to produce a war song that
resonated with the largely resistant American public. The radio and widespread
recording introduced a powerful adversary to live music, the preferred method of
delivery for musical propaganda.

Though it is but one narrow aspect of the grand scheme of the propaganda
machines of both powers, I feel as though it would be important to touch upon the
musical history of both nations and how this impacted the propaganda efforts of their
respective administrations. It is widely known in the musical community of Adolf Hitler’s
affinity for German classics, specifically the work of Richard Wagner. I would like to
explore the argument that this personal passion on the part of the Chancellor directly
translated into the propaganda machine that fueled Nazi Germany. The leadership in
the United States didn’t have this mythical devotion music, and I would like to conclude
whether or not this handicapped the American propaganda efforts in regards to music.

To conclude, there is rich and plentiful information regarding the machines of
public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic and there is an equal amount of speculation
on their effectiveness. I make the assertion that the conditions leading up to, and during
the Second World War allowed for the Third Reich to use nationalist music as a means
of propaganda exponentially more effectively than could the United States, who was hampered by a lack of a classical music identity as well as the absence of a receptive public and focused industry.
Chapter 1
A Brief History of German Nationalist Music

-Johann Sebastian Bach and the Lutheran Church-

The term ‘nationalism’ as it applies to music can be easily misconstrued. Rather, it is best described in the terms of its use and context. Militant nationalism is radically different, conceptually, than the scenic and pastoral nationalism conveyed by composers such as Smetana. Above all, it is the application of such nationalism that determines its spot in history. The story of German nationalism is a tumultuous one. The evolution of the German state itself is a tale of a long, difficult trek to the republic we know today. Some of the earliest notable trademarks of German composition came from the hands of Johann Sebastian Bach and his lifelong dedication to the teachings of Martin Luther.

The Lutheran Church in itself is a predominantly Scandinavian-German institution, with its origin in Wittenberg, Saxony, in the Holy Roman Empire. By the time J.S. Bach was working within Protestant churches in 1703, the Reformation was over a century past. (Grout, Burkholder, & Palisca, 442) Because of Germany’s heavy Lutheran population, the works of Bach and other church composers took on a brand unique to Germany. Though he may not have realized it at the time, Bach was giving the world some of the first “pure German” music.

Interestingly, Bach’s music faded into obscurity for generations after his death. The complex contrapuntal devices and rapid harmonic rhythms fell out of favor with the musical times, now entering the Classical Period. It was during a nationalist revival that Bach’s music was once again resurrected by German musicians. Following a biography written by Johann Nikolaus Forkel in 1802, it was none other than Felix Mendelssohn
who became the impresario-designate for the treasure trove of Bach manuscripts that were being publicized. (Grout, Burkholder, & Palisca, 471)

Though it was certainly not his intent, Bach is today recognized as one of the greatest composers to ever live. Additionally, he is viewed by Germans, past and present, as a national hero. He was admired by Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and countless composers who graced the world’s musical stage long after Bach’s departure.

-Beethoven and Symphonic Ownership-

“The Frenchman has his revolution and the Englishman his shipping, the German has his Beethoven Symphonies.” -Robert Schumann

The history of the symphony lies rooted in the history of Germany. Franz Josef Haydn, the “Father of the Symphony” is held in similar esteem to Beethoven and Mozart with regards to his contribution to German music. In essence, the symphony is the most nationalist of the musical forms for German musicians. Though in reality, the form has its origins in Italian operatic sinfonia, or overtures. (Grout, Burkholder, & Palisca, 510)

However, it was the Germans who felt they had perfected it. Following 41 by Mozart and 106 by Haydn, the culmination of nearly two centuries of musical progress into the glorious Ninth Symphony of Beethoven brought the form to its peak. Even Wagner would later claim that traditional orchestral symphonies had been so matured by Beethoven there was simply nowhere else to go.

By the time the Third Reich came to power in 1933, there were few symphonies in the same vein as Beethoven’s being written in Germany and Austria. Gustav Mahler
and Anton Bruckner had composed full symphonic works shortly before the turn of the century. Those of Bruckner were favored by the Reich and were performed regularly, while those of Mahler were chastised for leaning too far toward the modernist atonality the Nazis had demonized. Also, based on Mahler’s ancestry, they were seen as racially inferior.

Other genres had clear political uses. Marches and war songs could thunder from public announcement speakers at rallies, while new oratorios and cantatas made for a convenient alternative to the Christian-laden classics the regime wished to supplant. The symphony, however, had a very different feel and application. It was less blunt in its statement. It is balanced, but maintains a dialogue within itself. It is emblematic of a higher form of human consciousness; patience and understanding. To hear a symphony is to step out of oneself and hear the music at deeper levels. (Painter, 5)

A notion that the National Socialists spoke very little of who how Beethoven, their acclaimed symphonier, had political views that fell well outside of those in the Nazi government. He was a revolutionary, not unlike the ideological early days of the Party leadership, but with wildly different perceptions of the ideal end result. Beethoven espoused an ideology based in democracy. He abhorred authoritarian leadership, as demonstrated by the circumstances surrounding the composition of his Third Symphony. Beethoven identified himself as both an admirer and, in a sense, colleague of Napoleon Bonaparte. He saw in him the embodiment of the French Revolutionary ideals and his “artistic wills to success.” The Third Symphony, initially dedicated to Bonaparte, was said to symbolize not the battles of which Napoleon took part in, but the
struggle within his own soul to lead the French to liberation. However in May 1804, when Bonaparte proclaimed himself Emperor of France, Beethoven struck the name of the dictator from the symphony and instead dedicated it to “the memory of a great man.” (Painter, 138)

-Wagner and the Gesamtkunstwerk-

There is no composer that commands a claim on German nationalism like that of Wilhelm Richard Wagner. His controversy, to many, clouds his legacy as one of the greatest German composers to ever live. His music, his writings, and his associations have combined to form a complex individual that has left a deep and eternal mark on the history of his homeland and the history of the world, for better or worse.

Wagner was a composer of staged musical dramas. He was responsible for the development of the so-called Gesamtkunstwerk (“Total Artwork”) manner of staging and composing. Rather than relying on a group of coordinated professionals to manage and produce a staged performance, all individual aspects of the show (including music, libretto, costumes, sets, etc.) were governed by one central director as to ensure continuity and uniformity over all facets of the production.

His works were noted for their intimidating proportions, grand orchestration, and use of Teutonic and Scandinavian myths and folklore for plot bases. The characters and storylines of Wagner’s operas instill a larger-than-life image of a foregone Germany of old. It was this theme that captivated audiences during his time and subsequent generations. Therein, however, there brewed the catalyst for radical nationalism.
His stage accomplishments were supplemented by a lengthy list of publications and essays ranging on topics from music to politics to race. Wagner held deeply anti-Semitic leanings taken mostly from his childhood and his following of Count Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, the French racial theorist. (Millington, 105) It was these prose, such as his controversial *Jewishness in Music*, that tied him forever to the hatred and discrimination of the Nazi Regime.

Wagner strived to portray a revived German soul. He used heroism and symbolic representation to render his protagonists as pure German. Not only were they representative of a mythical character, but of the country itself, fighting back against the evils of the world, namely the non-Aryans who had been allowed to fleece Germany of its riches and dignity. (Perris, 51)

The themes of fervent nationalism and a glorified German nation would translate from the composer’s art to the mind of a young Austrian artist destined to carry that ideology to the forefront of world history.
In 1776 the United States had little to speak of in regards to its musical heritage. There were no orchestras, no high art music being written, and no opera houses opening. Though colonists had brought songs, hymns, and folk music with them to the new world, there was little music being composed that could compare that that of Europe. The origins of early American music were nested within the heritage our ancestors brought with them from their homelands.

The first catalyst for the composition of American patriotic music was the Revolutionary War. Strategically, drum and fife bands were critical to the war effort in that they were used to communicate messages on the battlefield. Just as most of the minutemen and militia brigades dotting the colonial United States were disorganized and scattered, such was the story with military musicians. A critical cog in the organizational structure of war music was Lieutenant John Hiwell, the Superintendent and Inspector of Music in the Continental Army. Oddly, most of what remains of the records associated with Hiwell are purchase orders and requisitions for musical equipment for the various regiments he audited. (Howe 92-96)

Among some of these reports were requests for books of blank staff paper. This suggested that some of the military musicians he was working with were musically literate or working to attain such skills. “The Drummer’s Book of Music” was one of these recovered manuscript pads. Inside it were drumming patterns for “White Cockade”, “The Valley Forg” (sic) and “Soldier’s Joy”, all documented Revolutionary War-era songs. There is some academic conflicting speculation as to when exactly the
book was compiled. All material it contains is dated to the war, but watermarks on the manuscript lead some to believe it could have been written as late as 1805. Regardless, the presence of notated Revolutionary War music is evident of efforts that were made to organize early American patriotic music. (Howe, 97)

Development of small military bands continued into the nineteenth century. Thomas Jefferson had a small ensemble play at his inauguration. It consisted of two horns, two clarinets, a bassoon, and a bass drum. (Howe, 104) By now, the threat of external confrontation with France or Britain was resting on most military minds. It is unclear as to the intent of military music at this point. There is limited documented evidence to make details clear, but it is assumed that a musical effort was made at West Point to organize a small ensemble.

In his 1808 report to President Jefferson on the status of West Point Academy, Superintendent Jonathan Williams wrote:

“Music is the grand thing of military spirit, it is also the soul of harmony, in a moral, as well as a physical sense; and considering the whole of this body of men, to be designated as future instructors, the number of musicians ought to be sufficient to form a School of Military Music.”

Though it is clear he meant well, Williams failed to mention to Jefferson that the 1808 roster of personnel at West Point included only two musicians; John Dunn and Thomas Darby. Darby was discharged in April 1811 and Dunn drowned in August of the same year. Subsequent to that, there were no musicians present at West Point until 1813. In April 1812, Congress authorized formal music education at West Point in the form of adding four musicians to each company of 250 cadets. By the early 1820s, as many as sixteen musicians could have been on staff at West Point. A formal band was not in place until after the conclusion of the War of 1812. (Howe, 118)
The American Civil War ushered in a new level of music being used in times of national conflict. Though the Revolution gave us such simple tunes as “Yankee Doodle”, the Civil War has arguably given Americans the longest list of lasting, immortal war songs.

What is most unique about the Civil War musical canon is its inherent focus on American regionalism. Confederate songwriters wrote largely about the allure of southern hospitality and simple living. The song *Dixie* epitomizes the pastoral setting of the American south. For many Confederates, it summed up the pride of a culture distinctly different from their northern counterparts.

The rousing marches of the era were largely the first of their kind. American songwriter George F. Root was one of the better known musical success stories of the American Civil War. Root was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts in 1820. While a boy, he was trained as a flutist and a keyboardist on piano and organ. He moved to New York in 1844 to take a job as a music instructor at the Abbott Institute for Young Ladies. Beginning in 1863, Root began to compose war songs, most notably “The Battle Cry of Freedom”, regarded by most to be the trademark song of the Civil War. Other popular Civil War tunes offered by Cook were “Tramp, Tramp, Tramp” and “The Vacant Chair.”

Unlike many of his future colleagues in the composition world of the Second World War, Root was able to span a wide variety of musical idioms, from the upbeat to the slow and songful.

The most memorable war song to come from the Civil War was “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” by Julia Ward Howe. It is primarily associated with the victorious Union
Army of the north. Unlike any of its contemporary musical counterparts, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” has been applied to nearly every armed conflict following its composition. (Snyder, 233)

-The Onset of the Great War-

The United States was involved in World War I for less than two years. During that time, distribution and composition of patriotic music on the home front was widely encouraged. A plethora of folk and popular music was written to aid the war effort on the home front, however none was as successful as the George M. Cohan hit, “Over There.”

Second only to “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”, “Over There” has taken its place in history as the quintessential American war anthem. It was composed in 1917 shortly after the declaration of war on Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire by the United States Congress. It was published in August of the same year. During the fifteen months of US military involvement following its publication, the Cohan hit sold over 2 million copies of sheet music and 1 million records, making it one of the best selling singles in United States history. (Druesedow, 371-372)

The historical context of “Over There” following the First World War is most relevant to this project. In essence, the wild success of the song in its WWI heyday effectively set the United States up for musical failure in the more savage environment of the Second World War. The American music industry and the United States government felt an equivalent war song could be produced to fit the new generation conflict being waged on familiar ground in Europe. It was soon discovered that such a
song could not exist within the musical and social climate of the United States at that time.

The history of American patriotic and nationalist music until 1933 is humble. The culture of the United States had not yet been tailored to accommodate domestic musical exploration and innovation. Therefore, nearly all classical art music was imported from Western Europe and hardly served as a source of national pride as it so effectively did in France, Italy, and Germany.
Chapter 3
The Music of the Reich

- The Favorite of the Fuhrer -

Though the world remembers him as a tyrannical leader with an unwavering commitment to the eradication of non-Aryans and a restored grandeur of a pure German state, Adolf Hitler has secured his place in history as a curious combination of evil and intellectualism. From his early days as an artist in Vienna, Hitler was a student of a variety of cultural subjects ranging from theater to architecture. His understanding and interest in music deserves special attention, as it was upon this art form he exercised an incredible amount of influence during the Third Reich. Side by side with architecture, he held music to be a “queen of the arts” (Hitler, 39) and devoted a great deal of his student life to cultivating his understanding of it.

Hitler himself regarded himself as both a revolutionary in politics and a revolutionary in the arts. Shortly after the First World War, he had first experience with theater by seeing the Friedrich Schiller play William Tell in an Upper Austrian provincial theater. Because of his own disdain for the Hapsburgs, Hitler held the titular character of the production in high esteem. It was also at this theater, months later, Hitler was exposed to his first opera; the Richard Wagner masterpiece Lohengrin. (Hitler, 26)

In many ways, the Wagner legacy is intertwined with that of Hitler's, and vice versa. It should be expected that the greatest German chauvinist of the 19th Century would play such a critical role in the life of the greatest German chauvinist of the 20th Century. It can be assumed that Hitler was familiar with the prose of the composer on such topics as racial purity and global politics, but it is also very clear that Hitler's affinity for Wagner was first based in the musical works as they were presented. He fell in love
with the internal attitude of the music and the overall skillful art of Wagnerian masterpieces. He proudly committed the libretto of *Lohengrin* to memory. (Perris, 52)

As many Germans did at the time, Hitler distilled what he was seeing on stage into several basic ideological themes.

First, he recognized the profound focus placed upon the nobility of German culture and the superiority of the race. Hitler’s frustration with the Austrian-German defeat in 1918 complimented the content of the operas he would patronize. His deeply-held belief that the German Volk had been robbed of their dignity and betrayed by the democrats and Jews was focused by the tenor of Wagner’s productions. He saw the pure Aryan race fighting, toiling, succeeding, and being elevated to their ennobled status as rulers of continental Europe. Herein was a voice that could speak to the young revolutionary. The music of Wagner embodied what was to become the overarching goal of the Third Reich.

Second, was the sinister tone of anti-Semitism throughout many of the stage works of Wagner. Hitler and Wagner both unabashedly espoused anti-Semitic attitudes, but in drastically different ways. Similar to their similar thoughts on a superior German state, Wagner elected to prove German racial and cultural superiority through artistic and literary outlets, while Hitler opted for military force and social controls. Wagner’s aversion to the Jewish people was shockingly clear in his published writings and correspondences between he and his wife, Cosima, or his father-in-law, Franz Liszt. Though the bulk of Wagner’s ideological views on race manifested itself in writing, allusions can be found throughout his stage works. However, the portrayal of greed and social injustice in Wagnerian works very frequently were associated with
characters framed as Jewish. The most stark example would be the subhuman *Nibelungen* tribe that appears in the Ring Cycle. They are largely shown as being uncaring, unscrupulous, and lusting for riches. During production, Wagner delivered instruction to the men’s chorus making up a group of *Nibelungen* males that their musical inflection should be “in the Jewish manner of speech- shrill, hissing, buzzing, a wholly foreign and arbitrary distortion of our national idiom.” (Perris, 51) It was in statements such as this that Wagner made very clear his complaint of the Jew’s defilement of the language of the pure race. As German Jews spoke mostly Yiddish (a sort of fusion of Hebrew and German), he effectively coupled the language contour to the people and made the portrayal of the *Nibelung* symbolic of the Jews who had robbed the world, and Germany, of its riches and dignity. They are cast as hunchbacked, crooked, unkempt, and small. This puts them in direct contrast against the tall, postured, blonde Aryans that share the stage with them.

Aside from the connection through history between the two men on the basis of ideological commonality, there are many dimensions of indirect association between them. As direct contact between the two was not feasible (Wagner died 6 years before the birth of Hitler), the closest Hitler could get to Wagner himself was through his surviving family and the Bayreuth musical society that surrounded their estate, the so-called “Bayreuth Circle.” It was on September 30, 1923 that Hitler began his relationship with the family of Wagner. He was received at Bayreuth by Cosima Liszt Wagner, now 86, who warmly embraced him upon his arrival. He was then introduced to Wagner’s children, Seigfried and Eva, as well as their spouses Winifred Wagner and
political philosopher and racial theorist Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who referred to the young Hitler as “God’s gift to Germany.” (Solomon)

Upon his ascension to the Chancellorship of Germany in 1933, Hitler became a frequent houseguest of the Wagner villa, to which a custom annex was appended to receive him when he visited. He became a patron of the annual Bayreuth Festival and enthusiastically attended. It was Friedlinde Wagner, one of the four Wagner grandchildren, who saw the erratic and potentially dangerous behavior of their frequent guest. Upon her emigration to the United States during the height of the war in 1941, her published memoirs, *The Royal Family of Bayreuth*, claimed “everything about the Festspielhaus was polluted by Nazism, by false emphasis and false values.” (Perris, 58)

When in attendance at the Festival, the Reich command center followed Hitler to his private box. On July 25, 1934, during a production of *Rheingold*, Hitler was delivered a frantic message by two aides. Barely concealing his pleasure, he informed the Wagner family shortly after that the Chancellor of Austria, diminutive Engelbert Dollfuss, had been assassinated in Vienna. He added that he would “go out for an hour and show myself, or people will think I had something to do with this.” (Perris, 59) It was later discovered that the conspirators were not Austrian militants staging a coup, but rather Austrian Nazi agents aiming to destabilize the Austrian federal government. This was one of the few times during the Third Reich that Benito Mussolini, who had been a staunch supporter of the Dollfuss government, disagreed with Hitler to the degree of threatening war should Germany make an attempt to invade Austria. (Austria)
In a similar account, word of Francisco Franco’s request for high-altitude bomber support from the Reich was received during a Bayreuth opera. Upon conferring with Hermann Goring, it was decided the German Luftwaffe would support the side of Franco in the Spanish Civil War. (Perris, 59)

Of the Wagner line who had direct contact with Hitler, it was the composer’s British-born daughter-in-law Winifred who was the most ardent supporter. During his time in prison following the failed Munich Beer Hall Putsch, Hitler received regular correspondence from Winifred. The paper he wrote *Mein Kampf* upon, often while listening to Wagner gramophone recordings, was sent to him by Winifred. She said of him:

“For years we have been following with the greatest inner sympathy and approval the uplifting work of Adolf Hitler, this German man who, filled with ardent love for his fatherland, is sacrificing his life for his idea of a purified, united, national greater Germany, who has set himself the task of opening the eyes of the working class to the enemy within.” (Solomon)

After her husband Siegfried’s death in 1930, she became the de facto head of the Wagner family. Siegfried, who was 28 years Winifred’s senior, has a closeted homosexual and had little interest in marriage to Winifred. However, the couple bore four children that would go on to become heavily involved with the Bayreuth Festival, with the exception of Friedlinde. Winifred’s relationship with Hitler became close throughout the duration of the war, though she ardently denied any direct support of the Nazi party or the violent anti-Semitism espoused by the Fuhrer. Her personal commitment to National Socialism was, however, well-documented and continued into her old age long after the fall of the Third Reich. She attributed the failure of the Nazi movement to the extensive bureaucracy and deputies of Hitler that weakened the
ideological consistency and military focus. Her lifelong commitment to the adoration of Adolf Hitler and his goals rooted in National Socialism caused her great friction with her younger family, specifically her grandchildren. (Kater, 638)

Hitler acknowledged Wagner as being his greatest cultural influence. The regard in which he held Wagner’s work is not unlike many of his contemporaries in German culture, but the extent of which it was exploited for ideological and propaganda uses by Hitler is unparalleled. It is difficult to assume how the eventual use of his music by the Third Reich and its leader would have struck Wagner himself. The fervent anti-Semitism and nationalist leanings of Cosima and Siegfried (who both passed in 1930) were very clear. However, they did not live long enough to see the heinous treatment of Jews at the hands of the Nazis following the beginning of Hitler’s administration. Knowledge of the genocide was denied by the living relatives at Bayreuth.

The national identity of a unified German state was an idea shared by the entire Wagner family, as it was by Hitler. For this, they were unapologetic. As previously mentioned, this was especially the case with Winifred. In addition, her sons Wolfgang and Wieland became close followers of the cause. Since being banned from involvement in the Festival, Winifred transferred all executive authority to her two sons. They served jointly as directors of the Festival from 1951 to Wieland’s death in 1966. Wolfgang continued as sole director until his retirement in 2008. Unlike his brother, Wolfgang claimed to have a genuine abhorrence for Hitler and his regime. (Solomon) Currently, the Festspielhaus is under the direction of Wolfgang’s daughters Katharina Wagner and Eva Wagner-Pasquier. Wolfgang died in March of 2010. (BBC)
The propaganda machine of Nazi Germany is arguably one of the most effective and well-run agencies in the history of public persuasion. It controlled all aspects of German art, culture, broadcasting, and news to the degree that government achieved a well-carved role in the development of new music and the filtration of the old. Though the United States created the executive Office of War Information in 1942, the German government authorized the creation of a cabinet-level outlet of war propaganda: the Reich Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment. As a result of his experiences with the extensive Allied propaganda of the First World War, Hitler saw the value of well-regulated information dissemination and control over the arts and culture. Subsequently, the Ministry was created in 1933 with Party propaganda head Dr. Josef Goebbels as its chief Minister.

To understand Goebbels is to understand Nazi Propaganda. He was born in 1897 in Rheydt, in western Rhineland. Through his early life he suffered frequently illness as a result of his slight figure. He was born with congenital talipes equinovarus, or clubfoot. Subsequently, he was unable to participate in athletics and most physical activities. He was rejected for service in the Kaiser’s army in WWI, when most German youth were dreaming of glory on the battlefields of France. However, he sharpened his mind to compensate for his lack of bodily strength. He claimed:

“My foot is a hindrance, I am small and not strong, but Nature is just, she gave me instead a brain such as few others possess.” (Baird, 13)

He performed outstandingly in the Rheydt Gymnasium and the Universities of Heidelberg, Bonn, and Freiburg. (Baird, 12-13)
Goebbels became involved in National Socialist politics in 1924. During the period of Hitler’s imprisonment until his release in 1925, Goebbels worked in his home Ruhr district as a lower level operative and promoter. Hitler recognized the intellectual talents of Goebbels and appointed him gauleiter (regional director of Party affairs) for Berlin in late 1926. Upon his arrival in the city, Goebbels retooled his normally cool and gathered style of leadership into one based more on spectacle. Nazi Party rallies were to be vast and energetic, while the S.A. stormtroopers under his command were to be brutal and relentless. Street fights and beer hall became venues of showmanship for the Nazi ruffians and were exploited by Goebbels as battles for “Volk und Vaterland” being fought courageously by Party foot-soldiers. One of these fallen heroes of the S.A. was Horst Wessel, the notable composer of _Die Fahne hoch_ (roughly translated, “Raise High the Flag”). In 1929, one year before his death at the hands of Communist agents in Berlin, Wessel penned the famous lyrics that would later become known simply as _Horst Wessel Lied._

The flag high! The ranks tightly closed!
SA march with calm, firm steps.
Comrades shot by the Red Front and reactionaries
March in spirit in our ranks.

Clear the streets for the brown battalions,
Clear the streets for the stormtroopers!
Already millions look with hope to the swastika
The day of freedom and bread is dawning!

Roll call has sounded for the last time
We are all already prepared for the fight!
Soon Hitler’s flag will fly over all streets.
Our servitude will soon end!
The flag high! The ranks tightly closed!
SA marches with a calm, firm pace.
Comrades shot by the Red Front and reactionaries
March in spirit in our ranks. (Wessel)

During the entirety of the Third Reich, the Horst Wessel Lied became a national anthem for the Nazi movement and one of the most popular songs of the war on either side. (Baird, 14)

As a result of the brutal violence perpetrated by Party-sanctioned operations, it was banned in Berlin in 1927. This did not daunt Goebbels, who moved his organization to covert meetings and camouflaged recruiting techniques. A new Party pamphlet, Der Angriff (“The Attack) was published on July 4th of the same year, indicating the movement was still alive and well despite its largely hidden organizational activities.

This new newspaper published by the Party was an additional opportunity for organizers, and more specifically Goebbels, to spread their anti-Semitic views. Goebbels had grown increasingly more hateful of the Jews during his tenure with the early Party organization. (Sington & Weidenfeld, 14) His own encounters with Jews contributed to this a great deal. In 1933, after returning home late one evening from a rally, Goebbels stopped at a newsstand to purchase the evening Berlin journals. A group of Communists attacked the automobile and shot his chauffer. Acting quickly, Goebbels bandaged the wound with a handkerchief and managed to deliver the driver safely to a nearby. Sometime later, he phoned the hospital to inquire into the condition of his friend. He was told by a Jewish doctor that a group of Communists had shown up and killed the man in his hospital room. Upon inquiring as to how such a thing was
permitted to happen, Goebbels was told by the doctor that his "patients got the visitors they deserve." (Baird, 15)

After the formation of the Ministry following the election of 1932, Goebbels became more of an administrator than a boots-on-the-ground orator. Instead, his primary role was to exalt the image of Hitler to a divine status above all criticism and satire. To better enable the organized dissemination and censorship of information pertinent to daily German life, the Ministry implemented the Reichskulturkammer ("Reich Chamber of Culture) into law in September of 1933. The Reichskulturkammer (RMK) was subdivided into seven branches representing all aspects of German popular culture: Fine Art, Theater, Literature, News and Press, Radio, Film, and Music. The Reichsmusikkammer (RMK) was unveiled on November 15th of the same year with Richard Strauss, the most prominent living German composer, as President. (Levi, 24)

Strauss was often ambiguous in his feelings toward the Nazi regime. His style of composition was well-received by Party leadership as being conservative and “pure” enough to be acceptable. In June of 1933 he was called in to replace Arturo Toscanini as the director of a Parsifal staging in Bayreuth. This perceived cooperation with the Wagner family, and by extension, the Nazi leadership, endeared Strauss to them as a sympathizer. Toscanini withdrew from the production in protest over the racial policies put into place by the Hitler government. Earlier, on April 1, 1933, Hitler received correspondence from Toscanini and multiple other European-born musicians living in the United States opposing his harsh treatment of the German Jews. (Levi, 268-269)

It was Strauss’ genuine hope that he could use his new position for the betterment of German music. The fact that he and RMK Vice President Wilhelm
Furtwangler were not ideologically or politically connected to the Nazi leadership gave them an air of credibility to those in musical society still suspicious of the Nazi movement. In his opening address to the RMK, Strauss offered great thanks to Goebbels and Hitler for allowing music to once again be promoted in an official capacity to the people of Germany. Strauss immediately began to pursue goals and objectives that he felt were beneficial to the German musical community. He was able to successfully lobby for an extension of copyrights, thereby enabling composers to reap the financial harvests of their music for a longer period of time before said music became public domain. He was also instrumental in negotiating with German broadcasters to give airtime to relatively unknown composers.

For all of his popularity with the German government, as well as the German people at-large, Strauss was not without his faults. Many of his works, including his opera *Die Schweigsame Frau* were banned because of Jewish influences. Strauss frequently worked closely with Jewish librettist Stefan Zweig. It was this association that caused Strauss’ forced resignation in July 1935 from his post as President of the RMK. He fervently refused to remove the name of Zweig from the playbill of *Die Schweigsame Frau*. He wrote a letter to Zweig defending him and condemning the heavy-handed, repressive tactics of the Nazis. The letter was intercepted by Gestapo agents and the fallout resulting from the scandal hastened Strauss’ resignation. Peter Raabe, a Party member, conductor, and musicologist, was selected to replace him. Paul Graener would head the composers’ division. (Levi, 23)

Raabe was similar to Strauss in that he felt his position could be used as a bully pulpit to improve the music industry in Germany, specifically the rights of individual
working musicians. He continued efforts that had begun in February to further secure the financial niche of German professional musicians. A minimum wage was established for orchestral musicians, and in addition, work days were regulated and obligatory time off was mandated. In 1936, it was decreed that radio orchestra members were prohibited from accepting outside work, in order not to undermine freelance musicians and drive up unemployment.

Structurally, the RMK followed a well-organized chain of command. At the top was an inner council of officers consisting of a President, Vice President, and an executive board made up of politicians, composers, and Reich administrators. The second tier nested internal administrative departments such as finance, information, legal affairs, and a Press Culture Office. Subordinate to that was the layer of direct industry outreach offices. There were seven divisions for each of the various components of German musical operations: composers, musicians, concert management, choral and folk music, publishers, music dealers, and the domestic instrument trade. The lowest level of the command structure was comprised of regional officers and headquarters for managing the entire department throughout the Reich. (Bramsted, 80-81)

The comprehensive nature of the agency contributed largely to its success. The rigid command structure was well adhered to by operatives within and it was cooperatively received by industry members on the outside. (Levi, 27)

The entire RKK was organized in a similar fashion. At the inaugural meeting of the department in November 1933, Goebbels emphasized the need for order to be born from the chaos of contemporary Germany. He argued it was not the Chamber's
directive to repress cultural development or deliver cultural content from on high, but rather to rein in the scattered elements of German life and unite them into a common mass to promote the message of Nazism and of Hitler.

It was impressed upon Raabe and RMK administrators by Goebbels that they should take further steps to purify their numbers from the Jewish menace. However, the vast bureaucracy made it difficult to remove members based on racial impurity. Though the statutes governing the body allowed the President to remove members based on racial suspicions, the individual was permitted to appeal such removal to his or her local Nazi Party headquarters, at which point the matter could be undertaken by the RKK organization itself for further investigation. Determining the genetics of a member often proved laborious and many within the organization felt it detracted from the mission of improving music and streamlining the industry to function better with cooperation toward the Reich. The amount of time and effort involved in this procedure, however, allowed some mixed-blood musicians to retain membership through the sheer inertia of the system. (Levi, 33)

-Music and the Jewish Question-

Nazi propaganda not only blamed the Jews for Germany’s defeat in World War One and the social and economic disorder that followed, but also accused the government of succumbing to domination from the international Jewish conspiracy. The charge of high-level Jewish dominance proved especial potent in the area of cultural activity within Germany. Although statistics released in June of 1933 pointed to only two percent of German musical professionals were Jewish, the prominence held by men like Otto Klemperer, Kurt Weill, and Arnold Schoenberg during the early days of Nazi
political relevance made the task of portraying Jews as cultural elites an easy one. In the wake of the economic catastrophes and severe unemployment which befell the German music profession during the same period, Nazi propaganda gained further credibility in stressing that only their firm commitment to the elimination of the Jews and the subsequent dismantling of the vestiges of the Weimar Republic musical culture held the solution to future German musical regeneration, as it was the Jews and Weimar loyalists whose prime intention was to defraud and debase national musical values.

There were two fundamental methods of expunging Jews from German musical culture. The first was subjugation of Jewish musicians and their ability to continue to function within the increasingly hostile environment. As early as September 1919, Hitler made it clear through his writings that the answer to the Jewish Question would come only from a “rational” form of anti-Semitism. He wrote that a policy would begin as a systematic process of limiting and restricting privileges afforded to Jews and its final result would be the total eradication of the Jews from German culture. In April 1933, the Reichstag passed Der Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtenums, a law restoring tenure to civil service and governing hiring practices. This was perhaps the furthest reaching legal tool given to the Nazis for early removal of Jewish influence in German government administration. For musicians, this meant that non-Aryans were no longer permitted to teach in conservatories or work for state operas and other government run musical institutions. (Law)

However, even prior to the passage of the mentioned law there were grassroots efforts to block performance of Jewish music and disrupt concerts given by non-Aryan musicians. Jewish conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra arrived at the hall
on March 16, 1933 to conduct a rehearsal only to find it locked. He discovered that the concert had been prohibited by the Reichskommissar of Saxony on the grounds that the safety of the musicians and staff could not be guaranteed should there be a public demonstration against the performance. Similarly, Fritz Busch of the Dresden State Opera suffered a like set of circumstances ten days before. As a result, Busch tendered his resignation as principal conductor and departs Germany. Busch was not Jewish, but had little love for the Nazi regime and was unashamed to speak to that affect. (Levi, 267)

Just days after his embarrassment in Leipzig, Walter was contracted to give a series of concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic. Hoping to avoid another incident of civil unrest, he petitioned for police protection as to ensure his performances would go uninterrupted. The Propaganda Ministry rejected the request saying that if the orchestra should seek the services of an Aryan conductor if they wanted the performance to be staged. After overtures made to Wilhelm Furtwangler (soon-to-be Vice President of the RMK) to convince Reich officials to preserve the concert failed, the services of Richard Strauss were employed to take Walter’s place at the podium. This played well into the hands of the Ministry as they could now bill the concert as being rescued and administered by a pillar of German musical purity, going so far to claim that Strauss accepted the offer amid dangerous and hateful mail from American Jews. (Levi, 43)

In August 1934, the RMK issued an official decree banning all non-Aryans from being employed by any orchestra in Germany. This came three weeks after three members of the Frankfurt Opera Orchestra were dismissed for having Jewish wives.
The practice of terminating employment of those with non-Aryan spouses had been an unofficial policy up to this point, but subsequent to the pressure from Reich officials upon new RMK President Peter Raabe, it now became national standard policy. (Levi, 273)

The second means of eliminating the Jewish influence on musical culture was the censorship of music written by Jewish composers or by those with non-Aryan ties. This was done largely through the media. Where individual musicians were fairly easy to sweep under the rug and deny livelihoods, composers often had a gravitas that was not so easily undermined. Such was the case with Paul Hindemith.

Perhaps the most outspoken manifestation of Nazi condemnation of music came in the form of the Entartete Musik exhibit. Jewish and modernist musical compositions and their composers were displayed as being degenerative to the integrity of German music. Such controversial musical figures as Stravinsky, Weill, and Schoenberg were featured, as was Hindemith. In addition to being married to a Jewish woman, his music was attacked as being the product of an “atonal noisemaker” by Goebbels in December 1934. Although his treatment differs little than that of his atonal musical contemporaries, it was the involvement of Wilhelm Furtwangler that complicated the grizzly situation.

Finding himself displeased with the unjustified hostility toward Hindemith, Furtwangler, who was at that time the incumbent Vice President of the RMK, published an article entitled ‘The Hindemith Case’ in defense of the ostracized composer on November 25, 1934. In quick response, Goebbels’ Der Angriff issued a contrary article
three days later by music editor Erich Roeder condemning Hindemith for self-absorbed promotion of music at the expense of worthy German classicists.

Shortly after the dueling articles ran, on December 4, Furtwangler was shown overwhelming public support at the Berlin State Opera by an adoring public during a production of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*. Attendees Goebbels and Hermann Goering interpreted the applause as support of the conductor’s defense of musical freedom in the Hindemith article, and in a rare collaboration, united to deny Furtwangler an audience with Hitler to discuss an upcoming Hindemith premiere. In addition, he was coerced into resigning his position with the RMK, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Berlin State Opera. On December 6, Goebbels, who had largely been silent on Hindemith to this point, launched into the following tirade during a celebration of the anniversary of the founding of the RKK:

“Technical craftsmanship never excuses, but is rather an obligation. To misuse it in writing purely motoric and empty *Bewegungsmusik* [mechanical music] is a mockery of the genius that stands above every true art. When the occasion is right not just thieves, but atonal musicians arrive on the scene who, in order to attain a particular sensation or remain close to the spirit of the time, allow naked women to appear on the stage in obscene scenes in a bathtub, making a mockery of the female sex, and in general surrounding themselves with the biting dissonances of musical bankruptcy.” (Levi, 114)

Without specifically mentioning the composer, Goebbels eludes to Hindemith’s early operas as being quasi-erotic and lacking in proper taste.

As a result of the disagreement with the Party leadership, Furtwangler was denied not only his official positions, but his passport. This prevented him from leaving to country to find work or refuge. A mere eight days after the situation had climaxed by the rant of Goebbels, Furtwangler was pressured into signing a loyalty oath to the Fuhrer and his passport was returned. He repented writing the article claiming that the
defense was not of Hindemith’s politics or relationships with Jews, but rather his musical freedom. (Levi, 114)

The regime observed few boundaries when attacking Jews in the media, as demonstrated by the assault on RMK’s own Wilhelm Furtwangler. The extremism grew continually more bizarre and far-reaching. German nationals such as Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, and Kurt Weill were castigated and mocked by the Reich for their modernism, but mostly for their Jewish origins. However, it was Felix Mendelssohn’s music that caused the Propaganda Ministry the most difficulty in eliminating. A vast repertoire of his music was immensely popular with the German public, specifically his *Italian Symphony* and *Violin Concerto*. Though his music fell under the same censorship laws that had taken effect in 1933 as any other non-Aryan composer, it wasn’t until 1938 that propagandists were able to universally eliminate performance and publishing of his music. Once again, it was Wilhelm Furtwangler who stood out from the complacent crowd of conductors to program excerpts from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* for performance by the Berlin Philharmonic in February 1934 to honor the 125th anniversary of the composer’s birth. In order to avoid a heated public debate, the Nazi press opted to simply ignore critical response to the performance of any kind. (Levi, 71)

An unintended consequence of Mendelssohn’s musical obstinacy was the Reich concocting another solution to the perpetuity of his works. Beginning in late 1933, Reich officials encouraged, and often contracted, composers to write alternatives to Mendelssohn’s pieces, most notably *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. It is estimated that during the course of the Third Reich, as many as 44 different versions of incidental music for the Shakespeare play were written and performed. Musicologists and critics,
even those aligned with Nazi press, conceded that even if there were legitimate objections to the work of Mendelssohn, the false rewritings paled in comparison to Mendelssohn's original. (Levi, 72)

If an argument could be made to point out a failure of the German Musical Propaganda machine it would be that it wasn't universally standardized. The laws governing racial purity in music were often lackadaisically enforced. Richard Strauss was the father-in-law of a Jewish woman, but this topic was avoided. The operas of Mozart, many of which had libretti written by baptized Jew Lorenzo da Ponte, were still performed, though occasionally “corrected” with updated text. (Levi, 192) These inconsistencies lend credibility to the argument that the Reich was less interested in the racial purity of a composer or his associates, as his perceived nationalism and dedication to the Nazi cause.
Chapter 4
The American Musical War Effort
-No Longer the War to End All Wars-

The United States fought the First World War under motivation stemming from it being deemed a “war to end all wars” by the Wilson Administration. By the time American forces entered the conflict it was already early 1917 and it appeared as though the war was already well on its way to being concluded. There was an optimism and a sanguinity surrounding the war effort that would prove to be non-repeatable in the upcoming conflict only a few short decades away. Such ditties as “Over There” and “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary” were played in millions of homes and the American public anticipated quick and clean victory. Sure enough, by October of 1918 the conflict was all but resolved and the war was rapidly coming to a close. The Americans had seen the war come and go within a span of less than two years.

The feeling of the American public surrounding the Second World War was not the same. The international conditions that had contributed to the motivation of the Americans in World War One were now drastically different. First and foremost, an attack had been felt on American soil. A far cry from the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915, an unprovoked attack on an American possession introduced an existential element to the ensuing conflict. Not only would the United States again be employing its military forces to aid international allies and defend far-flung regions of the world from tyranny and injustice, we would now be fighting for our own survival in the faces of such foes.

This new feeling of urgency and threat manifested itself to great degree in the musical landscape of the United States in a variety of ways. First, there was a new
direction to take the content of music being written. Songwriters and composers were given the theme of war, and subsequently victory, to incorporate into their craft. After the initial bombing of the naval installation at Pearl Harbor by the Japanese on December 7, 1941 a flurry of activity surrounded the American musical lifestyle. In some cases, short popular tunes originating with the attack were penned within days or even hours of the exchange in Hawaii. For example, the song “We Did It Before and We Can Do It Again,” by Charles Tobias and Cliff Friend was written the very day of the attack. Promising to “take the Nip out of the Nipponese and chase ‘em back to their cherry trees”, the Tobias-Friend collaboration was an energetic reminder of the prior military victories and bouts of glory by the United States’ armed forces. By the 9th of December that same year, “We Did It Before” had been inserted into the Broadway production *Banjo Eyes* in which Tobias’ brother-in-law was starring. (Smith, 13)

In the same musical style of “We Did It Before”, the martial march-like tempo of “You’re a Sap, Mr. Jap (To Make a Yankee Cranky)” was also composed only a brief time after the bombing. In this case, songwriters Carl Hoff and Orrin Tucker completed and copyrighted the song a mere three hours before the formal declaration of war on Japan by the United States Congress. Though it is considered by some to be the most high-profile early American World War Two song, “You’re a Sap, Mr. Jap” maintained noticeable sales (namely sheet music and records) only into early 1942. (Smith, 145)

-Mass Media and Public Dissemination-

By and large, there were two major obstacles in the way of attaining and ennobling the perfect American War Song for World War Two. The aspect of the difficulty more apparent and reliant upon the American public itself was the
modernization of methods of musical distribution. Since the growing use of the phonograph and the widespread popularity of the radio, the consumers of music were more readily able to hear, purchase, and subsequently grow tired of their products much more quickly than in any prior military engagement. During the First World War, music was largely created in the home by family and friends. Radio was not yet a mainstream venue and phonograph and recording technology was still rather primitive. As a result, music publishers had the niche of having a near monopoly over the musical culture of the 1910s. Distribution centers in New York and elsewhere along the eastern seaboard were slower to usher their product into the Midwest and West Coast. Because of this delay in distribution logistics, “hit” music remained popular for much longer periods of time. The near immortality of “Over There” during this era is partially due to its widespread sales as sheet music. During the less than two years of United States involvement in World War One it is estimated “Over There” sold over two million copies of sheet music and over a million records. (Smith, 72) When compared to the sales of “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition”, one of the Second World War’s most popular songs at 2 million records the two seem to have similar successes. “Praise the Lord” reached the top of Billboard charts in 1942 and had attained the eighth spot the prior year. However, the successes were only momentary. This piece, as nearly all of its contemporaries, faded into obscurity after a brief, sprinting run within the musical landscape of the United States. Though it had been rated among the top 10 songs of 1942, “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition” was still trumped by songs non-related to the war, such as “White Christmas” and “Mr. Five by Five”. This is one sliver of evidence revealing a much deeper cause of the lack of a stirring and sticking war
song, namely, the reluctance of the listener and the soldier. This particular obstacle will be addressed later in this chapter.

The driving force behind the organized dissemination of musical propaganda throughout the United States was a core group of organizations at the governmental and private levels. President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Office of War Information (OWI) on June 13, 1942 with Executive Order 9182 to serve as the executive agency charged with the distribution of propaganda and controlled, war-related news pertaining to the progress, objectives, and conduct of the United States military effort. Also within its purview was the critical duty of shoring up support on the home front for the war. This included, but was not limited to, acting as an official liaison between the federal government and various trades and professions, as well as maintaining the continuous public campaign of promoting bond purchasing (in conjunction with the Department of the Treasury), voluntary rationing, scrap drives, and the like. (Records)

What the OWI lacked was a deep and specialized grip on the intricacies of the contemporary American music industry. This was in part remedied by the music industry’s overwhelming cooperation with the OWI. Most notably four organizations came to the aid of the organized war effort: the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), the National Wartime Music Committee (NWMC), and later, the Wartime Music Committee (WMC).

ASCAP was founded in February 1914 by composer Victor Herbert as an organization whose primary focus was to maintain proper royalty compensatory
practices for its members anytime their music was performed. Prior to American entry into the war, ASCAP initiated a strike from January to October, 1941. This was a result of difficulties with broadcasters honoring licensing fees established by ASCAP. Upon a contract expiration in December of 1940, ASCAP demanded a renewed contract at twice the amount of royalty payments as the 1935 to 1940 agreement. Anticipating such a move by the bargaining organization, major broadcast outlets formed their own collective, Broadcast Music, Incorporated (BMI), to compete with the monopolistic ASCAP. During the ten-month standoff, BMI dominated the airwaves in place of ASCAP-sanctioned performances. By the conclusion of the disagreement in October, 1941 BMI had accumulated over 36,000 works and was boasting fifty-two publishing firms. This long-lasting animosity and scars of bargaining agreements left a deep and lasting impression upon the musical world for the duration of the war. America’s Tin Pan Alley, the chief engine for musical composition and development, experienced a vast internal rift as a result of the ASCAP strike of 1941. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, ASCAP members were encouraged to cooperate with and support the American musical war effort by composing war-themed, motivational popular music for widespread appeal and distribution. Indeed, many ASCAP members, such as Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Johnny Mercer, and Cole Porter obliged and lent their assistance to the task of building support for the war at home. (History)

The largest trade union for individual musicians during the era was the American Federation of Musicians. This group was also rocked by a strike during the 1940s, this time during America’s war years. However, great lengths were taken to ensure the patriotic duties of the musicians and of the organization at-large were left unfettered.
The fundamental fire feeding the strike was the nationwide prevalence of jukeboxes. At this point in history, it was estimated that there existed nearly 500,000 jukeboxes across the United States. AFM President James Petrillo argued that the widespread use of recorded music in lieu of live musicians was beginning to take its toll on the personnel rosters of bands and orchestras. He proposed that in order to establish an assistance program for unemployed musicians, fees would be increased for publishers and record companies. When said companies refused, the AFM issued a blanket prohibition of all commercial recording by its members. Professional vocalists, who were not members, were able to continue recording and performing, but without instrumental accompaniment. This inadvertently led to a rise in focus on a cappella groups during the period of the strike. (Smith 40)

Regardless of the tension between musicians and recording venues, Petrillo declared that recording for servicemen was not to be interrupted. AFM musicians settled for lower fees and many simply donated their time to the production of records for those in uniform. During the period of the strike, nearly 250,000 V-disks were being produced and distributed to American soldiers around the world. V-disks (short for Victory Disks) were records fashioned out of the new, lightweight material Vinylite specifically designed for field play. The only condition placed upon V-disk production by the AFM was that upon the resolution of the strike or conclusion of the war (whichever occurred first), the records were to be collected and destroyed. Naturally, this edict was largely ignored and many V-disks survived. (Smith 43)

Though the professional trade organizations lent the personal touch of individual musicians and related to the war effort, the coordination and organization of the musical
community’s response to the conflict rested squarely on the close working relationship between the Office of War Information and its advisory bodies in the performance realm. The first of these boards to surface was the National Wartime Music Committee.

From the beginning of its existence, the OWI had a great deal of interest in monitoring and promoting proper and appropriate war music coming from Tin Pan Alley. After nearly a year of painfully limited success in hit compositions and a growing concern that the music industry was trying too hard to recreate success in the image of World War One popular songs, the OWI created the National Wartime Music Committee in November, 1942. The NWMC was charged with analyzing and ruling on the suitability of new war music for publication. The OWI sought to avoid works that conveyed too vividly the horrors of war. To focus attention on the more positive and encouraging activities on the home front, the NWMC was given four fundamental areas of advisory authority:

First, it was to handle and answer all correspondence pertaining to individual involvement of musicians, orchestras, choral societies, etc. who wished to lend their services to the effort. A great deal of emphasis was placed upon community-oriented organization, such as neighborhood sing-alongs and distribution and performance of American music to foreign language groups.

Secondly, it was to organize and coordinate all use of music for civil service. Examples include bond and scrap collection efforts, Victory garden programs, and military parades. Whenever a government agency was in need of music, the NWMC was called upon to see that it was delivered be it commercial or specially composed works.
Third, handle any and all requests by government agencies to acquire commercially produced music for use in such events or any other means of wartime promotion. In essence, this channeled all questions of copyright through the NWMC.

Fourth, survey government operations, both domestic and abroad, to discern what agreements, contracts, policies, and procedures were already in place for civilian musicians, composers, and publishers. Especially crucial were agreements between the government and the Music Publishers’ Protective Association, the Songwriters’ Protective Association, the AFM, and various other trade organizations. Also included, are the other industry committees that had sprung up in hopes of aiding the war effort. These included such organizations as the Songwriters’ Victory Committee, the Publishers’ Victory Committee, and the Writers’ Victory Committee. (Smith 82)

It was hoped that the NWMC would soon assimilate itself into the American musical industry and become the federal government’s eyes and ears on the ground in Hollywood and Tin Pan Alley. However, the hopes of the government far exceeded the results. The committee’s sheer inactivity led to its ultimate demise. Little activity was directed toward new musical initiatives to promote war song composition, there was great dysfunction between members and other government agencies, and it was increasingly at odds with organizations such as ASCAP over publication contracts. Up to this point, any agreements for publication or performance had to be drawn up with individual publishers. The committee sought to standardize all bargaining agreements
under uniform contracts. Ironically, just days before the committee was dissolved on April 13, 1943, ASCAP agreed to settle and begin negotiations on a uniform publication and reproduction agreement. (Smith, 112)

Many faulted the National Wartime Music Committee’s ineffectiveness as a byproduct of its inception as a strictly advisory board. Many in the music community asserted that full cooperation was offered to the committee on all accounts, but because expectations of the industry itself by the government were unclear and hazy, they were unable to garner a full understanding of what exactly the OWI wanted. In response to criticism that the committee was hollow and ineffective, the OWI announced the formation of a new committee. The new board, the Wartime Music Committee (WMC) was assigned the all-important task of solidifying uniform bargaining agreements with the major publishing associations operating in the music industry. This would greatly ease the utilization of commercial music for government-sanctioned services and the mass production of recordings meant for the American armed forces in the European and Pacific Theaters. It was to be chaired by Jack Joy of the Office of War Information. (Smith, 114)

It was at this time the industry itself became motivated to spawn an advisory committee of its own persuasion. In a renewed effort to promote cooperation with the OWI (and a general lack of faith in the federal government’s ability to sanction its own committee to work effectively within the musical landscape) Tin Pan Alley, led largely by the American Theater Wing and a group of Broadway businessmen, formed the Music War Committee (MWC) in May, 1943. This new board aimed to approach the promotion and publication from the angle of musical business. They asserted that
songwriters should steer clear of the march-like militaristic songs of the prior war and instead focus on fitting the sentiments of a war song to the styles and methods that were popular, and profitable, in the current decade. The different feel of World War Two made music about voluntary sacrifice and active social participation in the unified war effort a must for a functional home front. But perhaps most importantly, keep the contextual focus of the music away from harsh realities of war while still maintaining the serious mindset necessary for victory. The MWC also urged members to assume a positive approach to their writing. They were encouraged to forget about writing of the soldier who missed his family/home/girl back in the states and instead emphasize the enlisted man’s undying fighting spirit and commitment to the freedoms of his homeland. Having been criticized by the OWI for his 1940 hit song “The Last Time I Saw Paris,” even MWC President Oscar Hammerstein II took on a new philosophy of avoiding sad and wistful war music and concentrating on the promotion and composition of positive and uplifting popular war songs.

- A Reluctant Public and a Resistant Military -

Shifting away from the trade and commercial reasons a trademark World War Two song never coalesced, the national climate proved a difficult demon to overcome. The niche created by the Office of War Information and the various groups promoting wartime composition was arguably done so outside of the whims and will of the population as a whole, both civilian and military. Simply put, the critical need for a thumping war anthem was not that of the public, but rather, that of the American propaganda effort.
Throughout the US involvement in the war, even the most successful of war-oriented music was still oversold by popular hits completely disaffiliated with the fighting. Even in the flurry of songwriting directly following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, “Chattanooga Choo-Choo” and “Elmer’s Tune” continued to dominate music sales. “You’re a Sap, Mr. Jap” was seen as token, being referred to as “America’s Greatest Novelty” in Variety magazine in January 1942 (Smith 145).

The best-selling piece of music during World War Two, oddly enough, was “White Christmas” by Irving Berlin and recorded by Bing Crosby. It is estimated to have sold over 50 million copies, in addition to other recordings. When taking into account the various artists who have recorded and sold the holiday classic since its composition, some project its sales at over 100 million copies. (Harris) An important element in the 1940s American musical culture is prevalent in the vocal strains of “der Bingle” as his whole note “I’m” personalizes the inherent plea of the song; escapism.

The German occupation of France, Poland, and the constant bombardment of British cities, coupled with the speedy and deadly mobilization of the Japanese navy and armies in southeastern Asia, presented a bleak and depressing prospect for the onset of American involvement in this new global conflict. As opposed to the earlier world war, the United States civilian population was better able to see the urgency of the situation at hand. The reaction was a backlash against the musical attitudes and tastes of the earlier conflict. Rather than embracing musical jingoism, Americans searched for respite and escape through their musical recreation. The Home Front was all too familiar with the horrors and sacrifices in war, and as a result they were less
inclined to allow their recreation to be infiltrated by the very global concerns they wished to distance themselves from. (Smith 118)

A strange hybrid style also existed, in that songs would combine the understated feeling of war with a more pastoral setting. The 1942 Jimmy Dorsey work “This is Worth Fighting For” is a clear example of the fusion between a quasi-motivational military style and the sentimental values of Americana:

I saw a peaceful old valley
With a carpet of corn for a floor
And I heard a voice within me whisper
This is worth fighting for,

I saw a little old cabin
and the river that flowed by the door
And I heard a voice within me whisper,
This is worth fighting for.

Didn't I build that cabin?
Didn't I plant that corn?
Didn't my folks before me
Fight for this country before I was born?

I gathered my loved ones around me
And I gazed at each face I adore
Then I heard that voice within me thunder,
This is worth fighting for (Dorsey)

“This is Worth Fighting For” sold like an old newspaper and was forgotten shortly after its debut in late 1942. The OWI was pleased with the content of the song, but the failure to sell demonstrated its weakness. Though it possessed the qualities of a functional American ballad, such as slow tempo and bucolic imagery, the message simply didn’t resound with Americans, civilian and military. Bandleader and songwriter Eddie DeLange once recalled how after a live performance of the song, he was asked by a serviceman on the dance floor, “Yes. Then why aren’t you in uniform?” (Smith 118)
A similar attempt to blend overtly patriotic music with something more palatable for the United States’ musical consumers was done by putting the war in “boy-girl” terms. By composing numbers focused more on the romantic side of the Home Front lifestyle, songwriters hoped to lure listeners. Tin Pan Alley was discouraged from composing music that touted the eventual conclusion of the war, as it was deemed unsuitable for uniting an effective war effort at home. They were also steered away from instilling a sense of a soldier never returning through song. Accordingly, the remake of the song “I’ll Be Back in a Year” into “I Won’t Be Back in a Year” upon the passage of the draft extension in 1941 raised eyebrows within the OWI. The ploy of conveying the war through personal terms rooted in love also did little to attract the mass audiences that were being hoped for. Tunes like “I’m in Love with the Girl I Left Behind Me” and “He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings” were both longings, though not entirely melancholy, coming from both the soldier in the theater and his girl on the Home Front. (Smith 30)

What did prove to be immensely successful during the war was swing and love songs unrelated to the war in any direct manner. “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore” and “You’ll Never Know” could be interpreted to be lamentations by a girl whose soldier has gone to war. However, because there is no clear statement of such a situation, and the numerous other conditions that could be applied to the songs, they could be inserted into different contexts. For that reason, they remained popular both in record sales and live performances in clubs around the country. Such music was also issued to soldiers via V-disks by popular demand. (Smith 132) The majority of soldiers polled during the war preferred dance tunes. In addition, they wanted them from jukeboxes,
and not military bands. They wanted the music they had left behind regardless of where in the world they were stationed or embroiled in combat. Fears that the Home Front would not back America's fighting forces without a song to bind the two together were completely unfounded. Civilians of every age, race, and class contributed more to the winning of World War Two than to any previous conflict. So many people volunteered to participate in civil defense programs, scrap drives, bond-purchasing campaigns, and other war-related civilian activities that in many cases local, as well as national government, was entirely overwhelmed. The lack of a war song did not dampen the enthusiasm as the country closed ranks against Germany and Japan.
Bibliography

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,747609-1,00.html>.


*JSTOR*. Web


