

Jewishness in Music

by Richard Wagner

**Translated by
Howard Rogers**

September 6th 2020

Taken from the first part of the re-printed version of 1869, as reproduced at
[https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Das_Judenthum_in_der_Musik_\(1869\)](https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Das_Judenthum_in_der_Musik_(1869))

In the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik", a "Hebrew taste in art" was recently discussed: a challenge and a defense of this expression could not and should not be avoided. It does not seem unimportant to me to discuss in more detail the subject on which the criticism is based, or which has been touched on by the outbreak of a certain excitement. Here it will not be important to say something new, but merely to explain that unconscious feeling, which manifests itself in people as a visceral aversion to Jewishness. This essay shall therefore clearly explain something that really exists, but will not artificially create something that is unreal, by imaging it. Criticism goes against its essential nature if it tries to do anything else, whether in attack or defense.

So I want to explain the reason for the current popular aversion to Jewishness specifically in relation to art, and especially music. I therefore will completely ignore the explanation of the same phenomenon in the field of religion and politics. For in religion, the Jews have long ceased to be hateful enemies to us – largely thanks to all those who, within the Christian religion, have drawn to themselves the hatred of the people! And in the realm of pure politics, we never really got into conflict with the Jews; we granted them the establishment of a Jerusalem kingdom ourselves, and in this respect we have rather regretted that Mr. Rothschild was too clever to make himself King of the Jews, whereas, as is well known, he preferred to remain 'the Jew of Kings'. The situation is different where politics shades into questions about society: here the special position of the Jews has been an invitation to exercise human justice for just as long as the urge for social liberation awakened to a clearer consciousness. When we fought for the emancipation of the Jews, however, we were actually more fighters for an abstract principle than for a specific case: our liberalism was a not very foresighted mental game in that we indulged ourselves for the freedom of a people without actually knowing them: people, indeed, for whom we had an aversion for any real contact. Our zeal for the equality of the Jews arose much more from the suggestion of a general idea than from a genuine sympathy; for in all talk and writing for the emancipation of the Jews we always felt involuntarily repelled by them when we actually had any active contact with them.

Here we come to the point that brings us closer to our project: we have to explain to ourselves what is involuntarily repulsive to us about the personality and nature of the Jews, so that we can explain and justify this instinctual aversion, which we can clearly see is stronger and more powerful than any conscious desire we might have to rid ourselves of this aversion. Even now, we only deliberately lie to ourselves in this regard when we believe it is frowned upon or immoral to announce publicly our natural aversion to Jewish people. It is only recently that we seem to have come to the realization that it would be more sensible to free ourselves from this compelling self-delusion and instead consider the object of our violent emotions and our aversion to it, despite all liberal pretenses to make us understand it.

We are now astonished to see that in our liberal struggle we were floating in the air and fighting with clouds, while the beautiful soil of physical reality found an appropriator, whom our aerial

games have entertained, but who thought us far too silly to stop to compensate us by some abandonment of this usurped, tangible soil. Quite unnoticed, the 'believer of kings' has become the 'king of the believers', and we cannot now find this king's request for emancipation as anything other than extremely naive, since we see ourselves now need to fight for emancipation *from* the Jews. According to the present state of affairs in this world, the Jew is really already more than emancipated: he rules, and will rule as long as money remains the power before which all our doings and dealings lose their vigour. The fact that the historical misery of the Jews and the predatory brutality of the Christian-Germanic rulers brought this power into the hands of the sons of Israel does not need to be discussed here. But we have to consider more closely now the fact that it is impossible, on the basis of that stage to which artistic development has now reached, and without a complete change of that basis, to further develop the natural, necessary and truly beautiful. For the public taste of art of our time has been brought to be a matter for the busy fingers of the Jews. For what miseries and griefs the rulers of the Roman and medieval world heaped upon the serfs has now been converted by the Jew today into money. Who notices that innocent-looking paper [money] is covered with the blood of countless generations, which sticks to the notes? And what the heroes of the arts wrested from the art-hostile demon of two unfortunate millennia with unparalleled air and life-consuming effort, the Jew today has turned into an art market: who sees behind their well-manned tricks that it is held together by the holy sweat of the genius of two millennia?

We do not have to first prove the be-Jeweing of modern art: it stares you in the face and impinges itself upon the senses. We would have to go way too far off the point if we wanted to explain or demonstrate this phenomenon from the character of our art history itself. But it seems to us most necessary to emancipate ourselves from the force of Judaism and so we must first examine our strength in this struggle for liberation. However, we shall not gain this strength by having an abstract definition of the phenomenon [of Jew-hating] itself, but only by a precise understanding of the nature of the involuntary sensation which is inherent in us, which expresses itself in us as an instinctual aversion to Jewishness. We shall be invincible if we frankly admit this feeling. It will become clear what we hate about the Jew. What we then definitely know, we can make headway against. Indeed, even by its laying bare, we can hope to beat the demon on the field, on which he can only preserve himself under the protection of a twilight half-darkness; a darkness that we good-natured humanists threw over him ourselves, to make us his and to make the sight of him less obnoxious to us.

The Jew, who, as is well known, has a God entirely to himself, strikes us first in common life through his external appearance, which, regardless of which European nationality we belong to, has something unpleasantly foreign about it compared to that nationality: we instinctively know we have nothing in common with a person who looks like this. Up to now this had to be regarded as a misfortune for the Jew; but more recently we have come to recognize that he feels quite comfortable with this misfortune. After his successes, his difference from us may seem to him something of a special distinction. Ignoring the moral aspects of the effects of this

inherently unpleasant freak of nature, we shall mention here only in respect of its effect on art: that we cannot conceive of this exterior being an object of expression for the performing arts. If the visual arts want to represent Jews, it takes its models mostly from the imagination, with wise refinement or complete omission of everything that characterizes the Jewish appearance in common life. But the Jew never strays onto the theatrical stage: the exceptions to this are of the type in number and peculiarity that they only confirm the general rule. We cannot imagine any ancient or modern character, be it a hero or a lover, represented by a Jew on the stage without involuntarily feeling that it is a ridiculously unsuitable idea. This is very important: a person whose appearance we must consider incapable of artistic representation, not in this or that personality, but generally according to his genre, we must also not consider to be at all capable of artistic expression in his inner-being.

However, it is far more important, indeed crucially important, to observe the effect on us which the Jew produces through his language; and this is especially the essential point of reference for the exploration of the Jewish influence on music.

The Jew speaks the language of the nation under which he lives from generation unto generation, but he always speaks it as a foreigner. It is out of scope to deal with the reasons for this phenomenon, so we cannot discuss the accusation that it was the result of Christian civilisation keeping the Jews violently segregated; nor, on the other hand, that the Jews succeeded despite their segregation.

Our role, however, is to here shed light on the æsthetic character of the results of these matters. First of all, the fact that the Jew speaks the modern European languages only as he has learned them, not as innate languages. This must exclude him from all ability to express himself in them according to his nature: that is, in an idiomatic and independent manner. A language, its expression and its further development is not the work of separate individuals but of an historical community: only those who have grown up unconsciously in this community also take part in its creations. But the Jew stood outside such a community, lonely with his Jehovah, in a fragmented, landless tribe, to which all development had to be denied, just as even the peculiar (Hebrew) language of this tribe is only preserved for him as a dead one. It is true to say that poetry in a foreign language has hitherto been impossible, even for the greatest geniuses. But all of our European civilization and art has remained a foreign language for the Jews; for, just as he took no part in the development of the one, he did not take part in the development of the other. Rather, he has been a cold, indeed hostile, unfortunately-stateless onlooker. In language and art, the Jew can only repeat or reproduce, not truly write poetry or create original works of art.

But we are particularly disgusted by the purely physical manifestation of the Jewish language. Despite two thousand years of intercourse with European nations, culture has not succeeded in breaking the particular tenacity of the Jewish disposition in respect of the peculiarities of

Semitic pronunciation. Thus a hissing, shrill, humming and grumbling phonetic expression of the Jewish way of speaking strikes our ears as quite strange and unpleasant: a completely inappropriate use of our national language and an arbitrary twisting of the words and phrase constructions gives this phonetic expression the character of unbearable, jumbled blabber. Upon hearing this Jewish speech, our attention involuntarily lingers more on this disgusting 'how' than on the actual 'what' it contains.

We must recognise and record how this circumstance is extremely important for explaining the impression on us of the musical works of modern Jews. When we hear a Jew speak, we are unconsciously offended by the lack of any purely human expression in his speech: the cold indifference of his peculiar "bejabbering" never does manage to rise to any higher, heart-felt passion. If, on the other hand, we find ourselves impelled to use this higher manner of expression in conversation with a Jew, he will simply avoid us because he is incapable of responding. The Jew never gets impassioned in the common exchange of feelings with us, unless it is to express the special egoistic interest of his vanity or his profit. When he speaks this way in such circumstances, his distorting way of speaking in general then gives his passion the character of the ridiculous; and he is quite incapable of arousing in us any sympathy for the speaker's interests. Of course, it is conceivable that in intercourse among themselves, and especially when purely human feelings are expressed amongst the family, Jews might well be able to express their emotions effectively enough amongst themselves. But that cannot be considered here, when we have to listen to the Jew who is speaking directly to *us*, about life and art.

If the characteristics of his manner of speaking described here makes the Jew almost incapable of expressing his feelings and opinions artistically through speech, then his ability to express his feelings and opinions through song must be far less possible. Singing is speech that is excited to the highest passion: music is the language of passion. If the Jew elevates his way of speaking, in which he can only reveal himself to us with a passion that appears ridiculous, but never with the sense of genuinely sympathetic passion; then when he sings, he becomes absolutely unbearable to us. All that was disgusting to us in its outward appearance and language has the effect of chasing us away when it is sung, provided we are not captivated by the utter ridiculousness of this phenomenon. Very naturally in song, since it is the most lively and irrefutably truest expression of personal sentiment, the disgusting deliberateness of Jewish nature comes to its head. We might then naturally assume that the Jew could be considered capable in every field of art, except that which is based on song.

However, the sensual intuition of the Jews was never able to allow even the visual artists to emerge from them: their eye has always been concerned with much more practical things than the beauty and spiritual content of the formal world of appearance. In our times we know nothing of a Jewish architect or sculptor, as far as I know: whether newer painters of Jewish descent have really been creative in their art, I must leave to experts in their field to judge; but it

is very likely that these artists should not take any other position on the visual arts than that of the modern Jewish composers on music, which we now turn to, and take a closer look at.

The Jew, who is incapable of expressing himself to us artistically, either through his outward appearance or through his way of speaking, let alone by his singing, has nonetheless been able to master the art in the most widespread of modern art forms: the music of public taste. In order to explain this phenomenon, let us first consider how it was possible for the Jew to become a musician.

The Jews' only real trade had been to make money without doing real work, thanks to usury. Now, there came a real turning-point in our social development, when money was elevated evermore obviously to the real power-giving nobility. And at this point, not only couldn't the Jews be denied the noble diploma of the new society, which needed only money, but they brought it with them all by themselves, in their pockets. That is to say, our modern culture, which is only accessible to the affluent, was therefore all the less closed to them since it had become a luxury item that could be bought. From now on, the educated Jew appears in our society, whose difference from the uneducated, common Jew we have to pay close attention to.

The educated Jew has taken the most unthinkable effort to cast off all the conspicuous characteristics of his lower-class co-religionists: in many cases he has considered it expedient to work towards the erasure of all traces of his parentage through Christian baptism. But this zeal never allowed the educated Jew to gain the fruits he had hoped for: it only led him to become completely lonely and to make him the most heartless of all men, to such an extent that we ourselves have lost whatever earlier sympathy for the tragic fate of his tribe we had.

The connection he had with his former fellow sufferers, which he tore up in exuberant high spirits, has been impossible to replace with a connection to the society in which he has hauled himself upwards. He is only connected to those who need his money: but money has never been able to establish a thriving bond between people. Thus, the educated Jew stands alien and disinterested in the midst of a society which he does not understand, with whose inclinations and strivings he does not sympathize, and whose history and development he has remained indifferent to. In such a situation, we have seen thinkers arise among the Jews: the thinker is the poet looking backwards; but the true poet is the prophet who foretells. Only the deepest, most soulful sympathy with a great, equal-striving community, whose unconscious expression the poet interprets according to its content, enables such a prophetic office. Completely excluded from this commonality of nature in his position, completely torn out of the connection with his own tribe, the noble Jew could only regard his own acquired and paid-for education as a luxury, since he basically did not know what to do with it.

Our modern arts, however, had now also become a part of this education, and among these, especially the art that is easiest to learn, namely music. Music, which, distinct from its sister arts,

thanks to the work and power of the greatest geniuses, had been raised to the level of the most general expressive ability, through which composers could now express, in a new context with other arts, the most sublime of feelings. Or music which, in continued isolation from those other arts, could express the most trivial thoughts at will. What the educated Jew in his appointed situation had to say if he wanted to make himself known artistically could, of course, only be indifferent and trivial, because his whole drive for art was only the pursuit of an unnecessary luxury. Depending on his mood or an interest outside of art, he could express himself in this way or in another way; for he never felt the urge to express something definite, necessary, and real; he just wanted to speak, no matter *what* there was to say. Inevitably, therefore, the matter of *how* to say it was then the only thing left to worry about.

At the present time, no art offers the ability to 'speak' without having anything really to say, more than music, since the greatest geniuses have already said what needed to be said via it as an absolute and unique art. Once this was said, it could only be parroted, very meticulously and deceptively, just as parrots can repeat human words and speeches, but also just as these foolish birds manage the trick without any genuine expression or real feeling. Unfortunately, in this mimicking way of our Jewish music-makers, a special peculiarity is noticeable: namely that the Jewish way of speaking in general, which we have characterized in more detail above, becomes apparent in their music.

Though the most glaring peculiarities of this Jewish way of speaking and singing belong above all to the common Jews who have remained true to their origin; and though the educated Jew tries with untold effort to get rid of them; they nonetheless remain associated with the Jew of all types with impertinent tenacity.

Even if this mishap can be explained purely physiologically, it is also clear that the social position of the educated Jew has caused the problem. Even if all our luxurious art is almost entirely floating in the air of our arbitrary imaginations, nevertheless a fiber of the connection with its natural soil, the real folk-spirit [Volkgeiste], still manages to anchor it. The true poet, regardless of the type of art in which he writes, always gets his stimulation only from the faithful, loving contemplation of instinctive life, the life that only appears to him in the community of the people. But where does the educated Jew find this 'community of people'? It is impossible, surely, on the soil of the society in which he plays his artistic role? If he has any connection with this society, it is only with that outgrowth of it that is completely detached from its real, healthy stem. But this connection is absolutely loveless, and this lovelessness must become more and more evident to him when he descends onto the soil of the surrounding society in order to gain nourishment for his artistic work: not only does everything here become stranger and incomprehensible to him. Worse, the involuntary repugnance of the common people towards him confronts him in a most hurtful, naked way, for it is not weakened or broken, as would be the case amongst the richer classes, by calculating advantage and observing certain common politenesses.

Being pushed away in this most insensitive way by contact with this people [Volke], at any rate completely unable to grasp the spirit of this people, the educated Jew sees himself pushed back to the taproots of his own tribe, where at least mutual understanding is definitely easier for him. Willingly or unwillingly, he must draw from this source; but he can only take a 'how' from it, not a 'what'. The Jew has never had an art of his own, and thus has never had a life of art-capable subject matter. Even now, the seeker cannot find a universally valid human form of subject matter, but only a special form of expression -that is, precisely the mode of expression we have already characterised in more detail above.

In fact, the only musical expression of his people offered to the Jewish composer is the musical celebration of his Jehovah's rites: the synagogue is the only source from which the Jew can draw understandable popular motifs for his art. And whilst we would love to imagine this musical celebration of God as noble and sublime in its original purity, we shall see all-too-clearly that this purity has only come upon us in the most repulsive cloudiness: here nothing has developed out of the inner abundance of life for thousands of years. Instead, as in Judaism in general, everything has remained rigid in content and form. A form which is never animated by renewing the subject matter, however, disintegrates; an expression, the content of which is no longer living or feeling, becomes meaningless and becomes distorted.

Who has not had the opportunity to convince themselves of the travesty of the chanting to God in an actual people's synagogue? Who has not been seized by the most disgusting sensation, mixed with horror and ridiculousness, while listening to that mind- and spirit-confusing gurgling, yodelling and babbling that no intentional caricature could distort or make more disgusting than it is presented here with full, naive seriousness?

In more recent times the spirit of reform through the attempted restoration of the older purity has shown itself actively in these chants: what happened here on the part of the higher, reflective Jewish intelligentsia is, however, just an effort from above, which is by its nature fruitless and which can never take root downward to such an extent that the educated Jew, who seeks the real source of popular life that his art needs. This source can never be the mirror of his intelligent endeavors. He seeks the instinctive, not the reflected, since that is already his. And all the instinctive material he may come across is mere distorted expression.

Every artist generally goes back unintentionally to a folk-source, dictated by the nature of the subject with unconscious necessity. In the case of the educated Jew, this is also true: and the result is that the impressions received from the Jew's folk-source is going to dominate his entire way of looking at things and hence his artistic productions. So those melismaa and rhythms of synagogue singing will occupy his musical imagination in the same way that the involuntary absorption of the tunes and rhythms of our own folksongs and folk dances constituted the real formative power of the creators of our art song and instrumental music.

The musical perception of the educated Jew can therefore only grab from the wide circle of our popular and artistic music that which is to him understandable at all -and, indeed, so understandable that he is able to use it artistically. Inevitably, this means only things which, by some approximation or other, resemble the peculiarities of Jewish music.

If the Jew were nevertheless to try to fathom the heart and vital sinews of our naive or consciously-artistic music, he would have to realize that his own musical nature in truth does not resemble anything in the least. He would find it completely alien, and he would have to shrink back from this phenomenon to such an extent that he could not possibly maintain the courage to participate in our creation of art.

However, his entire position among us does not induce the Jew to penetrate so deeply into our being: either intentionally (as soon as he recognizes his position towards us) or involuntarily (as soon as he cannot understand us at all) he listens to our artistic efforts and their life-giving inner being only very superficially. By virtue of this indifferent listening, he can perceive intelligently only those external similarities with things which are peculiar to his special nature.

The most fortuitous external phenomena in our musical spheres of life and art must therefore apply to him as their fundamental essence. And in this way, his perceptions of it, when he reflects them back to us as an artist, appear strange, cold, peculiar, indifferent, unnatural and twisted, so that Jewish musical works often sound to us as would a Goethe poem read to us in Jewish jargon.

Just as words and constructions are mixed up in this jargon with strange expressionlessness, so the Jewish musician also mixes up the various forms and styles of all masters and times. Side-by-side, in the most colorful chaos, we find the formal peculiarities of all schools piled up. Since these productions are only concerned with the fact that people should speak at all, but not with the idea that was first intended to be conveyed by speaking, this babbling can only be made somehow stimulating for the hearing by the continual change of external modes of expression every moment, so that new stimulus to attention is constantly provided. Inner excitement, genuine passion, finds its peculiar language at the moment when, struggling for understanding, it begins to communicate: the Jew, whom we have already characterized in this respect, has no true passion, least of all a passion which leads him to art-creation. But where this passion does not exist, there is no rest either. True, noble rest is nothing other than the passion appeased by resignation. But where tranquility is not preceded by passion, we only recognize idleness. The opposite of idleness is merely that tingling unrest that we perceive in Jewish musical works from beginning to end, except where they pause to give way to that mindless and insensitive idleness. What springs from the Jews' undertaking to make art must therefore necessarily have the quality of coldness, indifference, to the point of triviality and ridiculousness, and we must historically see the period of Judaism in modern music as that of perfect unproductivity, denote declining stability.

This phenomenon becomes all the more clear to us, and indeed is only really perceptible, in the work of a musician of Jewish descent who was endowed by nature with a specific musical talent like few musicians before him.

Everything that was presented above by way of evidence in the investigation of our antipathy to Jewishness; all the contradiction of this Jewishness in itself and towards us; all its inability, standing outside our soil, to still communicate with us on that soil; even the desire to develop further those things which had grown out of that soil: all these things are intensified into a completely tragic conflict in the nature, life and artistic work of the early-taken Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

He has shown us that a Jew can be of the richest specific abundance of talents; the finest and most diverse culture; the most exalted, most delicately sensitive sense of honour ... without any of these advantages ever being able to make it possible to produce, not even once, that deep-heart and soul-moving effect on us. We expect that effect from art, because we know it is capable of it and because we have felt this effect countless times as soon as a hero of our art, so to speak, only opens his mouth to speak to us.

Professional critics, who should probably have come to the same level of awareness on this matter as we have, can be left to confirm the truth of this undoubtedly certain phenomenon from the details of Mendelssohn's artistic output. But we can say that we could only feel captivated when nothing beyond our more-or-less entertainment-addicted imagination was presented with the stringing and intertwining of the finest smoothest and most skillful figures, as in the changing colours and shapes of the kaleidoscope, but never where these figures were intended to take the form of profound and pithy feelings of the human heart.

Indeed, Mendelssohn lost all ability to produce forms, which is why he grabbed at every type of form, which a predecessor had chosen for this or that style or pattern, as an individually characteristic feature. So, when he began drama, in the oratorio, which was particularly his own, it is significant that the composer chose our old master, Bach, as a model to imitate for his modern language, which was incapable otherwise of expression. Bach's musical language was formed in the period of our musical history where the general musical language was still struggling for the ability to be more individual and clear in expression: the purely formal and pedantic still clung to it so strongly that it was only through the power of Bach's tremendous genius that purely human accents were able to break through.

The language of Bach stands in relation to the language of Mozart and, finally, of Beethoven, in the same relationship as the Egyptian sphinx to the Greek human statue: just as the sphinx with the human face still strives out of the animal body, so Bach's noble human head strives out from under the periwig.

There is an incomprehensibly thoughtless confusion brought about by the luxurious taste in music of our time and evidenced by the fact that we let the language of Bach speak to us at the same time as that of Beethoven, or which leads us to believe that there is only an individually difference of form in the languages of both, but not a real difference in the cultural history between them. The reason for this, however, is easy to see: Beethoven's language can only be spoken by a perfect, whole, warm person, because it was the language of such a perfect musician that he was necessarily compelled to go beyond absolute music. He had measured the musical area and fulfilled it to its extreme limits, whilst instructing us on the way to fertilize all arts through music as the only possible successful extension to absolute music.

The language of Bach, on the other hand, can just about be mimicked by a very accomplished musician, even if not in the true Bachian sense, because the formal element in it is still the predominant one. Thus and purely human expression is not yet so definitely predominant within it that it is really only saying *what* could or ought to be said. It is still in the process of shaping the *how* of speech.

Thus, the disintegration and arbitrariness of our musical style is, if not brought about, at least increased to the maximum by Mendelssohn's efforts to express an unclear and almost trivial content as interestingly and dazzlingly as possible.

Whilst Beethoven, the last in the chain of our true musical heroes, had the highest desire and miraculous ability for the clearest, most secure expression of an unspeakable content through sharply-cut sculptural design of his tone pictures, Mendelssohn manages only to blur these figures in his productions into flowing, fantastic shadow-images, whose vague shimmer of colour stimulates our capricious, anxious imagination at will. Meanwhile, our purely human inner longing for clear artistic vision is hardly touched with the hope of fulfillment.

Only where the oppressive feeling of this inability seems to seize the composer's mood and urge him to express soft and melancholy resignation can Mendelssohn present himself to us characteristically -that is, in the subjective sense of a tender individuality, which admits her impotence in the face of impossibility. This, as we have said, is the tragic feature of Mendelssohn's story; and if, in the realm of art, we were to give our sympathy to sheer personality, we should not deny it to Mendelssohn to a great extent. But the strength of this sympathy should be weakened by the realisation that the tragic in his case is more attached to Mendelssohn when he came to a real, painful and purifying consciousness.

But no other Jewish composer can arouse such sympathy. Another Jewish composer, famous far and wide [i.e., Meyerbeer] in our time, has turned with his productions to a section of our public in whom all music tastes are confused -not because he made it so, but certainly that he might exploit it for profit.

The public in our opera theater today has for a long time been gradually and completely dissuaded from the demands which are to be made not only on the dramatic work of art itself, but on works of good taste in general. The rooms of these entertainment venues are usually only filled with that part of our bourgeois society in which the only reason for changing any occupation is boredom: but the sickness of boredom cannot be cured by enjoying art, because it cannot be purposely dissipated, but can only be deceived away from yourself by some other form of boredom.

That famous opera composer has now made this deception his artistic life's work. It is pointless to describe in more detail the expenditure of artistic means which he used to achieve his life's work: it is enough to say that, as we can see from his success, he completely understood how to deceive, and more particularly that he did this taking the jargon we have already described in some detail, and offering to his bored audiences as a modern, piquant pronunciation of all the trivialities which had so often already been presented to them in their natural silliness. The fact that this composer was also concerned with thrilling situations and with the effective weaving-in of emotional catastrophes should not surprise anyone who knows how necessary such things are desired by those who are bored. That that he succeeds in his intentions in this respect should also not surprise anyone who considers the reasons why everything must succeed under such circumstances. This deceptive composer even goes so far as to deceive himself, and this perhaps just as deliberately as he deceives his bored admirers.

We genuinely believe that he wants to create works of art, but at the same time knows that he cannot do so. In order to get out of this embarrassing conflict between want and ability, he writes operas for Paris, and then has them easily performed in the rest of the world, which is the surest way to earn artistic fame without being an artist these days. Under the pressure of this self-deception, which may not be as effortless as one might think, we sometimes think him almost tragic. On the other hand, the purely personal aspect of hurt pride turns it into tragedy-comedy, just as, in general, the cold and utterly ridiculous that is characteristic of Jewishness manifests itself in the music in which the famous composer shows himself to us.

From a closer examination of the phenomena we have described here, which we were able to learn to understand through the exploration and justification of our insurmountable aversion to Jewishness, we particularly now see the ineptitude of our musical artistic epoch. If the two Jewish composers mentioned in great detail above had actually promoted our music to a greater flowering, we would only have to admit that our lagging behind them is based on an organic incapacity that has arisen in us: but this is not the case.

On the contrary, the individual, purely musical faculties turn out to be increased rather than diminished in comparison to past artistic epochs. The inability lies in the spirit of our art itself, which longs for a life other than that which is artificial, which it is now painstakingly preserved. The incapacity of the musical art form itself is demonstrated to us in Mendelssohn, the

specifically and extraordinarily gifted musician. But the vacuousness of our entire public art, its thoroughly inartistic nature and desires, becomes most evident to us from the successes of that famous Jewish opera composer.

These are the important points which now exclusively have to attract the attention of everyone who means to treat art with honesty. We have to research this, to ask ourselves and to bring to a clear understanding. Anyone who shies away from this work, who turns away from this research, either because he thinks there is no need to do it, or because he rejects in advance the possible knowledge that might be gained by it which would drive him off the sluggish path of a thoughtless and feeling-less routine, we now understand as belonging to the category of 'Jewishness in Music'.

The Jews could not have gained control of this art until it was exposed what they had shown in it: their inner incapacity for life. As long as the special musical art had a real organic need for life in it, with the exceptional times of Mozart and Beethoven, there was nowhere a Jewish composer to be found: it was impossible for an element completely foreign to this organism to participate in the formation of this life. Only when the inner death of a body is evident do the things lying outside gain the strength to take hold of it, though only to decompose it. So then the flesh of this body will dissolve into a teeming abundance of worms: but who would like to consider the body itself to be alive when looking at them? The spirit, that is life, has fled away from this body to other similar bodies, and this is now the only life left. But only in true life can we also find the spirit of art again, not with its worm-eaten corpse.

I said above that the Jews did not produce a true poet. We now have to mention Heinrich Heine here. At the time when Goethe and Schiller wrote poetry with us, there were no poetic Jews. But when poetry became a lie for us, everything became possible for the completely unpoetic elements of life. Of course, no true poet wanted to sprout from the completely unpoetic elements of life, but it was the job of a very talented poetical Jew to expose this lie, the bottomless dryness and Jesuitical hypocrisy of our alleged poets with ravishing mockery. He also mercilessly lashed his famous musical tribal comrades for merely *pretending* to be artists. He was not deceived into negating the negable, but strove onwards restlessly, through all the illusions of modern self-deception, to the point where he duped himself into being a poet. And for this, he was rewarded by having his poetic lies set to music by our composers.

Heine was the conscience of Judaism, just as Judaism is the bad conscience of our modern civilization.

We have to name another Jew who appeared among us as a writer. From his special position as a Jew he stepped among us in search of redemption: he did not find it and had to become aware that only with our redemption would he be able to find it amongst true people.

For the Jew, to become human in community with us initially requires this: stop being a Jew. Börne had fulfilled this criterion. But Börne also teaches how this redemption cannot be achieved in comfort and indifferent, cold complacency, but that, as it does for us, it costs sweat, anguish, fears and abundance of suffering and pain. If you take part ruthlessly in this work of redemption, which regenerates through self-annihilation, we will be united and undifferentiated! But remember that only one thing can be your redemption from the curse that weighs on you: the redemption of the Wandering Jew - the downfall!

[Signed] K. Freigedank

[i.e.: K. Free-Thought]