



Udo Bermbach
Richard Wagner in Germany
Reception, Distortions
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Subject Area: Music

To this day, the history of the political and aesthetic reception of Richard Wagner's way of thinking has not been fully completed. Taking as their launch pad key concepts of the Bayreuth Ideology, the studies presented in this volume explore the changing approaches to and interpretations of his mindset. They trace how Wagner's thinking and works were ideologically customised by the custodians of his legacy in Bayreuth, first to conservative, then to populist and jingoist, and finally to Nazi specifications, by gradually reemphasising his initial ideas as well as by selectively extracting individual aspects.

To this end, the most prominent Wagner biographies are given a closer look, and the newsletter Bayreuther Blätter (German: Bayreuth Pages), published between 1878 to 1938, has been comprehensively analysed for the first time so as to evaluate in more detail Bayreuth's stance on the modern age, the missionary 'Bayreuth idea' as well as the 'Aryan Christendom' formulated in Bayreuth. Both the founding of the colony of 'Nueva Germania' in Paraguay, which originated in Bayreuth, and the functionalisation of important Wagner works for political purposes are discussed. Thus, it becomes evident, for instance, that there were several decades when Wagner's Siegfried of the Ring used to be a figure in the Bayreuth perception quite distinct from the bellicose role model of the nationalist and populist right. Finally, an inspection of the Bayreuth programmes since 1951 shows some remarkable personal continuities going back to the Third Reich. The time frame spans the period from the German Empire to the Federal Republic of Germany.

In his new book on Wagner Udo Bermbach depicts the changing approaches to and interpretations of Wagner's way of thinking and his works, from the German Empire up to the early Federal Republic of Germany. Drawing on a wealth of documents he shows how Wagner's heirs in Bayreuth and some authors that were closely linked to Bayreuth, such as Hans von Wolzogen or Houston Stewart Chamberlain, adapted Wagner's world view to ideologically to meet first conservative, then populist and jingoistic, and finally Nazi specifications. He also discusses the consequences that ensued from this ideological distortion.

About the Authors:

Udo Bermbach, founder and co-editor of the international magazine wagnerspectrum; Professor of Political Sciences at the University of Hamburg until 2001; Honorary Professor and Honorary Doctor at the Lorand Eötvös University of Budapest; and conceptual consultant for Jürgen Flimm's Bayreuth restaging of the Ring from 2000 to 2004

Intended Audience:

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- 1 Wagnerians and Wagner researchers
 - 2 Musicologists and contemporary historians
 - 3 Hitler researchers

Key Features:

- 1 The Bayreuth reinterpretation of Wagner and its consequences
- 2 Bayreuther Blätter material reviewed for first time
- 3 Solidly grounde study backed up by a host of documents

