

**Music, Text and Context in Felix Mendelssohn's
Choral Works for Berlin Cathedral**

Orla Flanagan

**Dissertation submitted to Dublin City University in partial fulfilment of the
Doctorate of Music in Performance at the Royal Irish Academy of Music**

July 2012

Supervisor: Dr Denise Neary

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctorate of Music in Performance, is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: _____ ID No.: _____

Date: _____

Terms and Conditions of Use of Digitised Theses from Royal Irish Academy of Music

Copyright statement

All material supplied by Royal Irish Academy of Music Library is protected by copyright (under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 as amended) and other relevant Intellectual Property Rights. By accessing and using a Digitised Thesis from Royal Irish Academy of Music you acknowledge that all Intellectual Property Rights in any Works supplied are the sole and exclusive property of the copyright and/or other Intellectual Property Right holder. Specific copyright holders may not be explicitly identified. Use of materials from other sources within a thesis should not be construed as a claim over them.

Access Agreement

By using a Digitised Thesis from the Royal Irish Academy of Music you are bound by the following Terms & Conditions:

I have read and I understand the following statement: All material supplied as a Digitised Thesis from the Royal Irish Academy of Music is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of a thesis is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or for educational purposes in electronic or print form providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

Table of Contents

List of Music Examples	ii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Mendelssohn's 'Berlin Cathedral' Music in Context	8
1.1 The 'Jewish Question'	8
1.2 Formative Years, Influences and Early Choral Compositions	13
1.3 The Biographical Context of Mendelssohn's Career at Berlin Cathedral	29
1.4 Conclusion	32
Chapter Two: Mendelssohn, Psalmody and the Prussian Liturgy	35
2.1 Liturgical Limits and Musical Beginnings	35
2.2 Music and the Prussian Liturgy: Eclectic Simplicity	42
2.3 Three Psalms, Op.78	47
2.4 Symphonic Subterfuge versus Economy of Expression: Psalms 98 and 22	90
2.5 Conclusion	93
Chapter Three: Forms of Expression in <i>Sechs Sprüche zum Kirchenjahr</i> , Op.79	98
3.1 Mendelssohn's <i>Sechs Sprüche</i> in Context	98
3.2 Compositional Restriction: Textu(r)al Clarity	101
3.3 Mendelssohn's 'Translation'	110
3.4 'Mixed Messages'	115
3.5 Conclusion	132
Chapter Four: Mendelssohn's 'Berlin Cathedral' Legacy	135
4.1 Miscellaneous Compositions from 1844	135
4.2 German and Anglican Liturgical Settings	145
4.3 Beyond Mendelssohn: A Model for Schumann and Brahms	158
4.4 Conclusion	169
Conclusion	170
Bibliography	174
Critical Editions of Scores Used	182

List of Music Examples

Chapter One

Example 1.1	(a)	<i>Mitten wir im Leben sind</i> , bb. 1–36	21
	(b)	<i>Mitten wir im Leben sind</i> , bb. 223–229	24

Chapter Two

Example 2.1		Psalm 91 from <i>Lobwasser Psalmen</i> (complete)	46
Example 2.2		Psalm 22, bb. 1–3	49
Example 2.3	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 1–6, first version	51
	(b)	Psalm 2, bb. 1–6, second version	52
Example 2.4	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 42–51, first version	53
	(b)	Psalm 2, bb. 40–49, second version	54
Example 2.5	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 61–65, first version	55
	(b)	Psalm 2, bb. 59–63, second version	55
Example 2.6	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 137–142, first version	57
	(b)	Psalm 2, bb. 136–142, second version	57
Example 2.7	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 28–30, first version	58
	(b)	Psalm 2, bb. 27–29, second version	58
Example 2.8	(a)	Psalm 43, bb. 1–10, first version	60
	(b)	Psalm 43, bb. 1–10, second version	61
Example 2.9		Psalm 2, <i>Gloria Patri</i>	63
Example 2.10	(a)	Psalm 43, bb. 132–142, first version	64
	(b)	Psalm 43, bb. 139–148, second version	64
Example 2.11	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 13–16, first version	67
	(b)	Psalm 2, bb. 13–16, second version	67
Example 2.12	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 31–34, first version	69
	(b)	Psalm 2, bb. 30–34, second version	69
Example 2.13	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 105–112, first version	70
	(b)	Psalm 2, bb. 104–111, second version	71
Example 2.14		Psalm 22, bb. 72–84	73
Example 2.15		<i>Hear my Prayer</i> , bb. 36–51	74
Example 2.16		Psalm 22, bb. 1–21	76
Example 2.17		Psalm 2, bb. 112–142, second version	77
Example 2.18	(a)	Psalm 43, bb. 67–80, second version	80
	(b)	Psalm 22, bb. 130–151	81
Example 2.19	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 17–20	83
	(b)	Psalm 22, bb. 16–21	83
	(c)	Psalm 43, bb. 21–29	84
Example 2.20		Rheinberger: <i>Credo</i> , bb. 114–125	86
Example 2.21		Brahms: Psalm 13, bb. 60–77	88
Example 2.22	(a)	Psalm 22, bb. 52–56	92
	(b)	Allegrì: <i>Miserere</i> , bb. 7–12	92
Example 2.23	(a)	Psalm 2, bb. 64–71	95
	(b)	Psalm 43, bb. 37–48	96

Chapter Three

Example 3.1	<i>In der Passionszeit</i>	103
Example 3.2	<i>Am Karfreitage</i>	106
Example 3.3	<i>Am Neujahrstage</i>	118
Example 3.4	<i>Weihnachten</i>	123
Example 3.5	<i>Im Advent</i>	125
Example 3.6	<i>Am Himmelfahrtstage</i>	128
Example 3.7 (a)	<i>Lobgesang, bb. 1–2</i>	131
(b)	<i>Am Himmelfahrtstage, bb. 1–3</i>	131

Chapter Four

Example 4.1 (a)	Psalm 100, bb. 17–21	137
(b)	<i>Am Neujahrstage, bb. 10–13</i>	138
Example 4.2 (a)	Psalm 100, bb.48–51	139
(b)	<i>Am Neujahrstage, bb. 18–21</i>	139
Example 4.3	<i>Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen über dir, bb. 1–12</i>	144
Example 4.4 (a)	<i>Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe, bb. 1–6</i>	149
(b)	<i>Heilig, bb. 1–8</i>	149
Example 4.5 (a)	<i>Kyrie, bb. 1–5</i>	152
(b)	<i>Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe, bb. 26–36</i>	153
Example 4.6	Schumann: <i>An die Sterne, bb. 67–70</i>	161
Example 4.7 (a)	Schumann: <i>Ungewisses Licht, bb. 1–2</i>	162
(b)	Schumann: <i>Ungewisses Licht, bb. 9–10</i>	162
Example 4.8 (a)	Schumann: <i>Ungewisses Licht, bb. 48–52</i>	164
(b)	Mendelssohn: Psalm 22, bb. 146–151	164
Example 4.9 (a)	Schumann: <i>Zuversicht, bb. 45–54</i>	165
(b)	Mendelssohn: <i>Denn er hat seinen Engeln, bb. 64–72</i>	166

Abstract

Although the towering presence of Mendelssohn's oratorios has dominated the scholarship on his choral music, new light has recently been shed upon some of the shorter vocal works. During Mendelssohn's tenure as *Generalmusikdirektor* (Royal Composer of Church Music) at Berlin Cathedral from 1843 to 1844, he composed several fine liturgical pieces. However, various frustrations at Berlin Cathedral appear to have cut short Mendelssohn's career there, ultimately causing him to seek release from his duties in 1844.

This thesis examines the religious background and overall context surrounding the Berlin Cathedral period of Mendelssohn's career in order to enable a more complete understanding of the music and its legacy. The composer's stature as a *Neuchrist* is considered with a view to elucidating his approach to the composition of sacred music. A detailed investigation of the Berlin Cathedral music focuses upon two principal aspects: text and style. A new argument is presented for innovation in Mendelssohn's treatment of text insofar as is evidenced in the *a cappella* works written for Berlin Cathedral, including *Drei Psalmen*, Op.78 *Sechs Sprüche*, Op.79, and *Die Deutsche Liturgie*. The question of influence has always weighed heavily upon Mendelssohn scholarship; this study will address Mendelssohn's use of earlier styles with particular reference to Palestrina and the Italian polychoral music of the Sistine Chapel, as has been explored by James Garratt and others. Finally, new light is shed on the extent to which, with his Berlin Cathedral choral music, the 'epigonal' Mendelssohn left a legacy for his German contemporaries and successors, Schumann and Brahms.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Dr Denise Neary, who has provided invaluable guidance, assistance and support during the preparation of this thesis and throughout my doctoral studies. Dr Philip Graydon, as interim supervisor, played a crucial role in shaping my work; his energy and precision and have been a great source of inspiration. Dr Lorraine Byrne Bodley's generous and detailed feedback for my lecture recital and early thesis review gave important direction to my work. I am also grateful to Professor John Michael Cooper for taking the time to meet me while he was in Dublin. The library staff at Trinity College Dublin and the Royal Irish Academy of Music has also been most helpful; in particular, I would like to thank Philip Shields and Laoise Doherty.

To Professor Péter Erdei, for teaching me about choral conducting and for allowing me to benefit from his wisdom ever since; and to all my Hungarian teachers, who have been so central to my development as a musician: *köszönöm szépen!*

I am deeply grateful to all of my colleagues at Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin for their support, especially to Andrew Johnstone for his unfailing generosity in matters technological and musical. I also wish to thank Evangelia Rigaki, Wolfgang Marx, Ciaran Crilly, Desmond Earley, Richard Duckworth, Donnacha Dennehy, Martin Adams, Michael Taylor and Simon Trezise. I gratefully acknowledge Gráinne Redican's support, both administrative and emotional. Thanks to Ernie Dines for his typesetting work, and for turning it around in a short time frame. I also wish to thank Alex Jolk for his help with German translations. Nicole Grimes and Angela Mace, the editors of *Mendelssohn Perspectives*, kindly allowed me to have an advance preview of several chapters. I am also grateful to the authors for their consent: Colin Eatock, Jason Geary, Nicole Grimes, Anselm Hartinger and R. Larry Todd.

To the members of Milltown Chamber Choir, the National Chamber Choir of Ireland, and the Mornington Singers, who sang with such beauty, passion and commitment for my various doctoral recitals. In particular, I express my heartfelt gratitude to every single member of the Morningtons for allowing me to grow as a conductor over the

past ten years. My joy in working with this fantastic group of people enabled me to begin my journey with Mendelssohn's choral music, and I hope to enjoy many more years of music-making with them.

My friends have provided untold help and support. In particular, I want to thank Fionnuala Dillane for her poise, style, focus and incomparable *Weisheit*; Róisín Blunnie, my fellow choral anorak, for many cups of tea and pearls of wisdom; Elaine Whitehouse for her expertise with Word, her excellent proofreading skills and her wicked sense of humour; Áine Jackson for being one of my dearest (and least punctual!) friends since the beginning of our TSM adventure together in 1995. A very special mention is due to my favourite eight-month-old, the delightful Muireann Laird, and her fabulous mother Clíodhna Ní Fhátharta, who have restored much-needed perspective and, occasionally, prosecco.

Heartfelt thanks are due to my parents and all of my family, for their love throughout the years; in particular, to Pat, who has been a constant force in my musical development.

Most of all, I wish to thank Arthur, who has been there for me every step of the way with love, support, patience and encouragement.

Introduction

Felix Mendelssohn, although recognised primarily for his oratorios and symphonic works, made a significant and sizeable contribution to the canon of sacred choral music. One of the composer's most fruitful periods of choral writing occurred as a result of his brief tenure as *Generalmusikdirektor* (Royal Director of Church Music) at Berlin Cathedral from December 1843 until October 1844. During this time, under the employ of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, Mendelssohn set numerous psalms and verses for the newly-formed Berlin Cathedral Choir. He continued to compose for this choir throughout 1845 and 1846, during which years he undertook revisions of the 1843 and 1844 psalms in addition to his first setting of the Prussian Liturgy, *Die Deutsche Liturgie*.

This 'Berlin Cathedral' repertory is central to the present study. Initially prompted by several performances of this music for the bicentenary of Mendelssohn's birth and a desire to investigate these works more deeply, the thesis presents an examination of the context surrounding this period of Mendelssohn's career with a view to enabling a more complete understanding of the music and its legacy. Although Mendelssohn's period at Berlin Cathedral has been examined in earlier studies, most have tended to dwell upon the complex web of circumstances surrounding the genesis of these works, with less emphasis upon the music itself.¹ This study addresses this balance, positing a new view of the Berlin Cathedral music through a close examination of the repertoire within its context.

¹ David Brodbeck, 'A Winter of Discontent: Mendelssohn and the Berliner Domchor' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–32; Wolfgang Dinglinger, 'Mendelssohn – General-Musik-Direktor für kirchliche und geistliche Musik' in *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Kongreß-Bericht Berlin 1994*, ed. Christian Martin Schmidt (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1997), 23–36.

The thesis aims to clarify the context of Mendelssohn's appointment at Berlin Cathedral. Any study of Mendelssohn's sacred music raises complex questions regarding the composer's Jewish heritage and early conversion to Christianity; this background will be interpreted insofar as it relates to the Berlin Cathedral music.² While something of a paradox is presented by the concept of Mendelssohn's Jewish birth and his role as Director of Church Music in a Lutheran cathedral, a closer examination of Mendelssohn's Jewish background and subsequent conversion reveals a composer fully assimilated into Christian society, yet never rejecting his roots.

Studying the intersection between text and music provides a crucial aid to understanding the Berlin Cathedral music. Mendelssohn's approach to text setting is a central focus of this study, insofar as it provides a connection between context and music. Mendelssohn's rationale for different compositional choices is examined and the extent to which features of the text setting represent obedience to the liturgical requirements or the composer's true preferences. The existence of two versions of some of the psalm settings is used as a point of comparison in an exploration of Mendelssohn's intentions; these alternate versions have not been examined in detail before and new conclusions are drawn about Mendelssohn's text setting and prioritisation of textual clarity.

² Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah*, which followed on from the Berlin Cathedral works, is arguably his greatest choral masterpiece. There is much to be explored in the connection between the Berlin Cathedral style and *Elijah*; however, the oratorios and other choral-orchestral works by Mendelssohn are outside the scope of the present study. For a thorough musical and textual examination of *Elijah*, including an assessment of Mendelssohn's Jewish origins, see Jeffrey S. Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

The question of stylistic influence has become an increasingly important aspect of Mendelssohn scholarship in recent years. While Mendelssohn has been seen in the past as an epigonal figure accused of an over-dependence on earlier musical styles, this view has only relatively recently been challenged by such scholars as James Garratt and John Michael Cooper.³ The influence of earlier styles upon Mendelssohn's music is undeniable; however, a need has been identified for new perspectives that accommodate the originality of Mendelssohn's music. This thesis adopts this line of thought with a view to demonstrating the importance and the innovative aspects of the Berlin Cathedral works within Mendelssohn's *oeuvre*, as well as for the choral music canon as a whole. An exploration of how this music interacts with earlier styles such as Palestrina and Bach leads to a conception of these works as an important model for other nineteenth-century composers. Although the perceived traditionalism of Mendelssohn's music was criticised as derivative, this historically-informed stylistic orientation was praised in the music of Johannes Brahms, who was lauded as heir to Beethoven and even to J. S. Bach and Schütz. This study argues, therefore, that Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral music represents a coalescence of synchronic and diachronic musical languages. Through the use of a wide spectrum of musical languages ranging from Palestrina and Schütz, through Bach, to Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, Mendelssohn left an important legacy for his successors, Schumann and Brahms. The music of Berlin Cathedral represents the pinnacle of this legacy; this thesis posits a view of the Berlin Cathedral music as part of a diachronic chain of musical languages from Palestrina to Brahms and beyond.

³ See, for example, James Garratt, 'Mendelssohn's Babel: Romanticism and the Poetics of Translation', *Music & Letters* 80 (1999), 23–49; John Michael Cooper, 'Knowing Mendelssohn: A Challenge from the Primary Sources', *Notes* 61 (2004), 35–95.

Chapter One reconstructs the background to Mendelssohn's tenure as Prussian church musician, setting the parameters for an original perspective on this part of the composer's *oeuvre*. Important contextual and biographical information surrounding Mendelssohn's appointment as *Generalmusikdirektor* at Berlin Cathedral is provided. The first section focuses upon Mendelssohn's religious background and how it affected his career and the reception of his music. The second section traces a path from Mendelssohn's beginnings in choral music at the Berlin Singakademie to the 'Berlin Cathedral' compositions, preparing the ground for an assessment in later chapters of the relevance of one to the other. *Mitten wir im Leben sind* is introduced as a seminal piece from the composer's early career that foreshadows his Berlin Cathedral style where past and future musical languages coincide in a most compelling fashion. Finally, the third section examines Mendelssohn's position at Berlin Cathedral in the light of his previous employment at Berlin Court and elsewhere. The purpose of this exploration is to define Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral period as a distinct and crucial point in the composer's career and to explicate why this unjustly neglected body of work gains in significance and importance when examined in context.

Chapter Two reconsiders Mendelssohn's psalm settings for Berlin Cathedral – the seven short *Lobwasser* psalms; the three psalms posthumously published in 1849 as *Drei Psalmen*, Op.78; and Psalm 98 for choir and orchestra (published in 1851 as Op.91) – by placing them within the chronology of Mendelssohn's career at Berlin Cathedral. The first section of the chapter is devoted to an examination of Mendelssohn's position within the Prussian court in order to contextualise the extent to which Mendelssohn operated within limitations at Berlin Cathedral. These

limitations ultimately led to Mendelssohn's particularly creative approach to text; thus, attention will be given to the composer's deep commitment to liturgically-appropriate text setting, which hitherto has been underestimated and relatively unexplored in Mendelssohn scholarship. The Op.78 settings represent the most extended *a cappella* sacred works from this period in Mendelssohn's life. This music – as well as its rather complicated genesis – will provide the principal material for this exploration.

Chapter Three examines the *Sechs Sprüche zum Kirchenjahr*, Op.79, and the extent to which Mendelssohn's compositional style was indeed limited by the demands of the liturgy. In line with the 'old style' espoused by the Prussian liturgical revival of 1843, textual clarity is paramount in the six pieces; as a result, they display certain stylistic elements reminiscent of Palestrina and other exemplars of the polychoral music of the Sistine Chapel. However, while this textual directness necessitated a certain musical restriction, Chapter Three argues that Mendelssohn succeeded in finding alternative means of forging his individual style through a characteristically Romantic language of rich chromaticism and textural variety. James Garratt's concept of translation is integral to the interpretation of this style and as an illustration of the versatility of Mendelssohn's approach to text, a comparison is made between the musical language of the *Sechs Sprüche* and that of one of Mendelssohn's contemporaneous dramatic compositions, *Antigone*. The small space occupied by *Sechs Sprüche* can be viewed in retrospect as a microcosm of Mendelssohn's most refined choral language, the Berlin Cathedral music.

Chapter Four considers the concept of legacy with regard to Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral works. As is observed in Chapters Two and Three, the composer's choral style underwent various refinements, primarily with regard to textual delivery, during his period of employment at the court of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Although these refinements were necessary in order to accommodate liturgical requirements, it is argued that, as a result of this Berlin period, Mendelssohn clarified his choral expression to the point that textual clarity became his compositional preference. This chapter contends that the remaining small-scale choral compositions from the final three years of Mendelssohn's life bear the hallmark of this Berlin Cathedral period, even though not all of them were written for Berlin Cathedral. The Berlin Cathedral music can therefore be said to represent the zenith of Mendelssohn's choral legacy, at least in terms of the *a cappella* repertoire. In order to evaluate this legacy, this chapter will examine pieces from the composer's late choral style that fall outside the remit of the preceding chapters in the light of their relationship to the choral language Mendelssohn adopted for his Berlin Cathedral compositions. Stylistic elements within these works will be considered with a view to locating them within the continuum of Mendelssohn's choral music and, indeed, evaluating the position of this repertory as part of a historical lineage.

While Brahms is regarded as direct heir to J. S. Bach in particular,⁴ this thesis concludes by positing an argument for the significance of Mendelssohn's work within a fuller and richer series of influences than has been hitherto acknowledged. Selected choral works by Schumann and Brahms will be considered briefly as a demonstration of the extent to which these composers can be said to take

⁴ See, for example, Georg Feder, 'Decline and Restoration' in Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music: A History* (London: Gallancz, 1975), 400.

Mendelssohn's music as a model. Mendelssohn has often been unjustly omitted from the lineage that joins Bach and Mozart to Schumann and Brahms, and it is this omission that informed the choice of two such canonic figures as a basis for comparison rather than Mendelssohn's direct contemporaries at Berlin Cathedral such as Otto Nicolai and Emil Naumann, upon whose work Mendelssohn's influence was undoubtedly profound.⁵ Ultimately, this thesis suggests that Mendelssohn's choral output for Berlin Cathedral represents an original and modern contribution to the genre of sacred *a cappella* choral music and that it had a lasting and significant influence on the work of Schumann and Brahms.

⁵ James Garratt has shed important new light on these lesser-known figures; great scope exists for further research into this area. See James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 62–132.

Chapter One

Mendelssohn's 'Berlin Cathedral' Music in Context

1.1 The 'Jewish Question'

Felix Mendelssohn's Jewish birth represents a somewhat unusual starting point when considered in light of his later employment at Berlin Cathedral and his lifelong commitment to composing for the Christian church. A brief examination of the circumstances of Mendelssohn's background and reception as a *Neuchrist* provides essential context for this thesis insofar as it points to possible motivations for the composer's subsequent choices of text and, crucially, the manner in which he set these texts.

The Mendelssohn family's conversion to Christianity in 1816 appears to have been a response to the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century that was the antithesis of the liberal thinking and tolerance advocated by Enlightenment philosophers, including Moses Mendelssohn.¹ Eric Werner claimed that Felix was spat at and taunted during one of the anti-Jewish 'Hep-Hep' Riots in 1819 and that it was this event that prompted the Mendelssohns to convert to Christianity.² Leon Botstein describes an incident where Felix and Fanny were 'roughed up by a roving gang' in 1824.³ However, R. Larry Todd, whose

¹ Leon Botstein, 'The Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation: Reconstructing the Career of Felix Mendelssohn' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 18. In this chapter, Botstein provides a summary of the socio-cultural situation for Jews in early nineteenth-century Germany. For detailed information on the Mendelssohn family background, see R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), xvi–xvii and 1–23.

² Eric Werner, *Mendelssohn: A New Image of the Composer and His Age* (London: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 28. Werner's biography was, for decades, the accepted authority on Mendelssohn, coming as it did after a long period of inactivity in Mendelssohn studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

³ Botstein, 'Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation', 21.

2003 biography is now generally regarded as the authoritative study of Mendelssohn's life, challenges the accuracy of Werner's account: by 1819 the Mendelssohn children had already converted to Christianity and there is no evidence of violence against the Mendelssohns beyond a sketchy description of a taunting incident.⁴ On the other hand, all three authors agree that the environment in Germany in 1819 was one of hostility towards the Jewish race, particularly those who had attempted by conversion to assimilate into Christian society (*Neuchristen*). Thus, despite the Mendelssohn family's efforts to become fully assimilated and accepted into German society, Felix Mendelssohn would face prejudice throughout his lifetime and beyond.

In the introduction to his 2006 monograph, *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition*, Jeffrey Sposato summarises several well-documented instances of this prejudice and racism towards Mendelssohn, most famously by his organ teacher, August Wilhelm Bach, and his composition teacher, Carl Friedrich Zelter.⁵ The latter's comment: 'it would be a truly rare thing, if the son of a Jew (*Judensohne*) were to become an artist', is particularly jarring, given his close relationship to the family as Mendelssohn's teacher.⁶ Even Mendelssohn's friend Robert Schumann was less than sensitive in correspondence to his wife regarding Mendelssohn's Jewish background: he and Clara wrote in their marriage diary regarding a need to maintain a certain distance

⁴ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 49–51. See also Jeffrey Sposato, 'Creative Writing: The [Self-] Identification of Mendelssohn as Jew', *Musical Quarterly* 82 (1998), 192–194.

⁵ Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832) was an important figure in Mendelssohn's musical formation. Primarily known as a composer, conductor and teacher, Zelter was the second director of the Berlin Singakademie (after C. F. C. Fasch). He taught composition to both Felix and Fanny and was responsible for introducing Mendelssohn to Goethe.

⁶ Jeffrey S. Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4.

from Mendelssohn because of his Jewishness.⁷ Perhaps most prominently, Wagner's article *Das Judentum in der Musik* ('Judaism in Music'), first published in 1850 under the pseudonym 'K. [Karl] Freigedank',⁸ did nothing but damage to Mendelssohn's posthumous reception.⁹ Wagner's essay was re-published in his own name in 1869 and was widely read – an indication of the growing anti-Semitic movement in Germany in the nineteenth century. The betrayals by good friends such as Zelter and the Schumanns indicate the extent of the complexity of Jewish identity in mid-nineteenth century Germany.

Because of the prejudices that attended Mendelssohn's life and works, literature on the composer is not as extensive as one might expect. The absence of a complete edition of Mendelssohn's music and the very recent publication of a thematic catalogue are perhaps the most striking instances of the relative infancy of Mendelssohn studies.¹⁰ When Werner's 1963 biography, *Mendelssohn: A New Image of the Composer and His Age*, was published it was by far the most significant study of Mendelssohn, partly because of the long period of relative inactivity prior to its publication, and partly because it was the most detailed biography on Mendelssohn up to that date.

⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁸ 'K. Free-thought'. Wagner's essay was first published in 1850 in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* of Leipzig. The greatly-expanded 1869 version consisted of a lengthy diatribe against Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer and other Jewish composers and musicians aimed at reclaiming music from the Jews.

⁹ Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation*, 4.

¹⁰ Mendelssohn's friend, composer and cellist Julius Rietz (1812–1877), catalogued Mendelssohn's works during the 1860s and he was also responsible for the first attempt at a complete edition of Mendelssohn's works, published in 1877. Albert Mell and Matthias Wiegandt, 'Rietz, Julius', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.)

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23451?q=julius+rietz&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit> [accessed 12 June 2012]. Ralf Wehner, *Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke (MWW)* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2009).

However, the accuracy of Werner's biography came under scrutiny in an article published in *The Musical Quarterly* by Jeffrey Sposato in 1998, where several documents and sources in the book were found to be misleading or even to have been falsified.¹¹ A lively debate ensued in the next few volumes of the journal, with responses from Leon Botstein, Peter Ward Jones and Michael Steinberg.¹² It would appear that some of the articles in this heated debate are strongly coloured by the religious beliefs of their authors: a defensive tone lingers in the arguments of Botstein and Steinberg as they come to Werner's aid which, considering the shared heritage of these three writers, is an entirely understandable explanation for their desire to emphasise Mendelssohn's self-identification as a Jew. On the other hand, Sposato – born into a mixed Jewish-Christian background – cannot be accused of bias as easily; as a result, his viewpoint comes across as rather more measured (with the added weight of Peter Ward Jones's agreement). Furthermore, Sposato makes a convincing argument for Mendelssohn as a typical German *Neuchrist*. As this thesis attests, a particular focus upon text selection in Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral choral music adds a dimension to this debate that has not hitherto been addressed.

One of the principal arguments in favour of Mendelssohn's self-identification as Jew rests upon his choice of texts. Several years before the *Musical Quarterly* controversy, Botstein posited a theory that Mendelssohn sought to find a bridge between Judaism and Christianity through this very outlet:

¹¹ Jeffrey Sposato, 'Creative Writing', 190–209.

¹² Leon Botstein, 'Mendelssohn and the Jews', *Musical Quarterly* 82 (1998), 210–219; Peter Ward Jones, 'Letter to the Editor', *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999), 27–30; Michael P. Steinberg, 'Mendelssohn's Music and German-Jewish Culture: An Intervention', *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999), 31–44; Leon Botstein, 'Mendelssohn, Werner, and the Jews: A Final Word', *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999), 45–50; Jeffrey Sposato, 'Mendelssohn, "Paulus", and the Jews: A Response to Leon Botstein and Michael Steinberg', *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999), 280–291.

Mendelssohn's prominent and public commitment to and interest in the theology of Christianity and his reverent use of music to evoke Christian faith and religious sentiment reflected a quality and depth of conviction that rivaled that of J. S. Bach. However, the residue of commitments to what Mendelssohn knew to be the heritage of his forebears is evident in his music. The texts Mendelssohn selected, the prominence played by the issues of conversion and graven images (in *St Paul*), and the attraction to the figure of Elijah are markers of the extent to which Mendelssohn devoted his artistic energy to finding bridges between Judaism and Christianity, between his childhood and his adult life.¹³

While acknowledging the depth of Mendelssohn's public commitment to Christianity, Botstein carefully avoids extending this commitment to the composer's private life, as if to suggest an even deeper connection to Judaism. The notion of Mendelssohn using Old Testament texts to find a bridge between Judaism and Christianity is an attractive one, and one that ties in neatly with such details as Mendelssohn retaining his Jewish name throughout his life. However, Botstein tends to dwell on such details to the point of exaggeration. The eventual supremacy of Christianity in the story of the conversion of Saul, for instance, is surely more an indication of Mendelssohn's identification with Christianity than with Judaism. The proliferation of Old Testament characters in the great oratorios of George Frideric Handel, for example, is one prominent instance of another Christian composer embracing the texts and stories of the Old Testament; indeed, Handel's version of the St Paul story even bears the pre-conversion title, *Saul*. Thus, while not wishing to dismantle Botstein's 'bridge', perhaps Sposato's idea of 'assimilation' is a more accurate description of Mendelssohn's approach to his sacred texts; indeed, it could be argued that in this eager embrace of psalms and other Old Testament texts, Mendelssohn demonstrates his commitment to Lutheranism.¹⁴

¹³ Botstein, 'Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation', 22.

¹⁴ A more detailed examination of this phenomenon can be found in Chapter Two, pp. 47–49.

1.2 Formative Years, Influences and Early Choral Compositions

Mendelssohn's musical beginnings as a child prodigy are well documented.¹⁵ As the Mendelssohn family was financially comfortable, both Felix and his sister Fanny were supported in their musical training from an early age. Their most prominent teacher was Carl Friedrich Zelter, who taught composition to both siblings. It was because of Zelter's influence that Mendelssohn was steeped in the choral tradition of the Berlin Singakademie. At the age of ten, Zelter encouraged him to start attending rehearsals. On 1 October 1820 he became a singing member (initially singing alto before moving to tenor in 1824) with Fanny.¹⁶ Still active today, the Singakademie was founded in 1791 by the composer and harpsichordist, Carl Friedrich Christian Fasch (1736–1800), as a 'Kunstverein' ('art association') for sacred music.¹⁷ Fasch rehearsed and performed much of his own music with the choir and, upon his death in 1800, his former student, Zelter, took over the directorship until his own death in 1832. It was during Zelter's long tenure as director of the Singakademie that he encouraged his young pupils Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn to join the Singakademie. The young Mendelssohns were thus exposed to a wide range of choral music as members of the Singakademie, from works by its directors Fasch and Zelter to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

From as early as 1821 Felix was also invited by Zelter on a regular basis to rehearse and perform his own sacred choral works with the choir, starting with a performance

¹⁵ See, for example, R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn's Musical Education: A Study and Edition of His Exercises in Composition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁶ William A. Little, 'Mendelssohn and the Berlin Singakademie: The Composer at the Crossroads' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn and his World*, 66.

¹⁷ More information on the origins of the Berlin Singakademie can be found on its website <<http://www.sing-akademie.de>>.

of his Psalm 19.¹⁸ Other significant works by Mendelssohn performed under the direction of the composer include his motets *Tu es Petrus* in 1828 and *Hora est* in early 1829, the same year that Mendelssohn conducted the *St Matthew Passion*.¹⁹ Upon Zelter's death in 1832, Mendelssohn initially hoped to assume directorship of the Singakademie but, after a formal election process, Zelter's assistant conductor Carl Friedrich Rungenhagen – also a composer and conductor – was appointed to the post.²⁰ Rungenhagen's appointment marked an unfortunate breakdown in Mendelssohn's relationship with the Berlin Singakademie and even with Berlin itself; offended at not being chosen as Zelter's successor, he refused an offer to be Rungenhagen's deputy director and soon afterwards accepted a position as music director in Düsseldorf from October 1833.

The appointment of Rungenhagen as director of the Singakademie after Zelter's death has been a source of debate regarding Mendelssohn and the 'Jewish Question'. Although the Mendelssohn family were very ambitious for Felix to be appointed, they had to persuade him to put his name forward; indeed, a further measure of his reticence can be gauged by Mendelssohn's correspondence, which indicates his presumption that Rungenhagen would get the job.²¹ Perhaps predictably, Eric Werner described the whole affair in negative terms; as William Little observes: 'by reading selectively and falling back on polemics, [Werner] sees the entire episode in terms of a Judeo-Christian conflict.'²² Since Rungenhagen was Zelter's second-in-command,

¹⁸ Little, 'Composer at the Crossroads', 67.

¹⁹ This was the first time the *St Matthew Passion* was performed since Bach's death and, as such, was a very significant historical performance that had an enormous influence on the historical reception of J. S. Bach's music.

²⁰ For further detail on Mendelssohn's relationship with the Singakademie, his bid for directorship, and the election of the director, see Little, 'Composer at the Crossroads', 65–85.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

²² *Ibid.*, 78.

and had been associated with the Singakademie for thirty-two years, he was the obvious candidate for the post (as Little further commented), regardless of Mendelssohn's brilliance; therefore it is highly unlikely that Mendelssohn's Jewishness affected the appointment.²³ Nevertheless, considering Zelter's prominent role in establishing Mendelssohn as one of Prussia's foremost musical talents, this rejection by the Singakademie must have stung the young composer; hence, his relocation to Düsseldorf provided a welcome break from the politics of Berlin musical society.

Mendelssohn's exposure to choral music at the Berlin Singakademie left an indelible mark on his choral writing. Given the prolific amount of composition by Mendelssohn during his years at the Singakademie, his choral style developed in earnest around this time, albeit very much under the guidance of Zelter. A brief survey of the choral music over Mendelssohn's career reveals the influence of Baroque and Classical styles – the oratorios of Handel, for example, and the elegant phraseology of Mozart. The Baroque influence appears more prominently in Mendelssohn's earlier works, before he had developed his own choral language, but it colours all of his vocal writing as far as *Elijah*. As has been widely documented, this Baroque influence stemmed directly from Mendelssohn's training at the Singakademie, where he absorbed and performed a wide range of music from this era.

Much has been made, in particular, of the undeniable influence of the music of J. S. Bach on Mendelssohn. Nowhere is this influence more obvious than in the choral

²³ Ibid., 78–79.

music; for example, many commentators have observed similarities between Mendelssohn and Bach in terms of his chorale harmonisations and his approach to counterpoint. However, Mendelssohn's regard for Bach's music went much deeper than mere influence, and it was reflected in his dedication to the revival of J. S. Bach's music. The 'Bach revival' can be described as an act of sincere homage and a manifestation of Mendelssohn's respect for Bach's Lutheranism. Indeed, Mendelssohn's employment of chorales throughout his sacred music (which also extended to his purely orchestral music, as highlighted below) can be seen as a profession of his Lutheran faith, emulating the composer who represented the pinnacle of Lutheranism in music. While Bach's music was clearly of great significance in the development of Mendelssohn's compositional style, the former's manifest Christianity may have been equally compelling for the young *Neuchrist*.

In addition to the Lutheran influence of J. S. Bach, the music of sixteenth-century Catholic Italian masters such as Allegri, Gabrieli and Palestrina was an important source of inspiration for Mendelssohn in his choral writing. Mendelssohn travelled to Italy in 1830 and attended Easter services in the Sistine Chapel, Rome, which appear to have had a profound effect on him, as they precipitated a flurry of sacred composition. A gift of a book of chorale melodies from baritone Franz Hauser while Mendelssohn visited Vienna en route to Italy was also partially responsible for reigniting Mendelssohn's passion for sacred music.²⁴ James Garratt has written insightfully on the links between Mendelssohn and Palestrina, persuasively positing the theory of Mendelssohn as pluralist. Tackling the typically late-nineteenth-century view that Mendelssohn's music merely imitates that of other composers, Garratt

²⁴ R. Larry Todd, 'Mendelssohn', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51795pg3#S51795.3>> [Accessed 7 June 2011].

suggests that the composer used different historical styles deliberately and creatively. Furthermore, Garratt argues in favour of translation as a central aspect of Mendelssohn's language:

The concept of translation is of use in discussing the *Drei Psalmen*, not merely because it can create a perspective with which to consider Mendelssohn's intention in these and other similarly problematic pieces but also because it can provide a method of approaching the dialogism, the combination of two or more languages present in such works.²⁵

Because this concept of translation perfectly accommodates the unique stylistic compass of the Berlin Cathedral choral music, it forms a central part of this thesis and its consideration of this body of work in later chapters.

From the second half of the nineteenth-century to the present, Mendelssohn's harshest critics have dwelt heavily upon this question of influence. The notion of Mendelssohn's music as 'derivative' became fashionable after his death, starting with the polemical commentary of Richard Wagner, Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, and later, George Bernard Shaw, that was clearly coloured by their own religious and racial prejudices.²⁶ However, the idea of Mendelssohn the imitator gained currency, particularly in England (where, ironically, he was most appreciated during his lifetime) and through the prominent American scholar Charles Rosen, who further enhanced this misconception by accusing Mendelssohn of an over-dependence upon

²⁵ James Garratt, 'Mendelssohn's Babel: Romanticism and the Poetics of Translation', *Music & Letters* 80 (1999), 35. This is examined in further detail in Chapter Three of this thesis. John Michael Cooper has also explored the concept of pluralism in Mendelssohn's music, most recently at a lecture given on 18 April 2012 at the Royal Irish Academy of Music entitled, 'Music History as Sermon: Style, Form, and Narrative Strategy in Mendelssohn's 'Dürer' Cantata (1828)'.

²⁶ Richard Wagner, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (1850 and 1869); Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823–1897), 'Bach und Mendelssohn aus dem socialen Gesichtspunkte' in *Musikalische Charakterköpfe* (Stuttgart, 1857); quoted in Botstein, 'The Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation', 17; George Bernard Shaw, *London Music in 1888–1889 as Heard by Corno di Bassetto (Later Known as Bernard Shaw) with Some Further Autobiographical Particulars* (London: Constable, 1938), 38–39.

Beethoven.²⁷ This conception of Mendelssohn as derivative stands in stark contrast to the Moritz Hauptmann's reading of Op.78 Psalms:

From a purely musical or technical point of view, they are nothing out of the way, and not beyond the reach of other composers; but admitting that, what other modern music is to be compared with them for beauty? Now-a-days, anyone can imitate, but Mendelssohn had no one to copy from. He took the Psalm itself, and nothing but the Psalm; he never thought of Bach, Handel, Palestrina, nor anyone else, nor did he adapt it to any particular style; consequently, his music is neither old-fashioned nor new-fangled, it is simply a fine setting of the psalm. Three thousand years have not made the words sound strange to us, and I think time will not affect the music either.²⁸

Although Hauptmann's assertion that Mendelssohn took the psalm as his sole starting point highlights an important aspect of the composer's approach to text setting, the suggestion that Mendelssohn never thought of Bach, Handel or Palestrina is rather far-fetched. This thesis argues that, on the contrary, Mendelssohn *did* invoke the music of Bach, Handel and Palestrina – to list Hauptmann's examples alone. Moreover, he did so consciously, resulting in an impressively fluent eclecticism that is in line with James Garratt's presentation of translation as one of the central aspects of Mendelssohn's creativity.²⁹ This musical eclecticism forms a focal aspect of the examination of Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral choral music in Chapters Two and Three. Examples of Mendelssohn's path to eclecticism will now be considered, in the form of his early choral works.

²⁷ Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 570–582.

²⁸ Letter of 18 January 1850 from Moritz Hauptmann to Franz Hauser in Alfred Schöne and Ferdinand Hiller (eds.), *Letters of a Leipzig Cantor*, trans. A. D. Coleridge, 2 vols. (Novello, Ewer and Co: London and New York, 1892), vol. II, 73–74. Part of this letter is also quoted in David Brodbeck, 'A Winter of Discontent: Mendelssohn and the Berliner Domchor' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 32.

²⁹ Garratt, 'Mendelssohn's Babel', 49.

As mentioned above, Zelter gave Mendelssohn ample opportunity to test his own choral music with the Singakademie choir. One instance of this is his polychoral motet, the aforementioned *Hora Est*. The origins of this motet can be traced back to Italian Renaissance polyphony, although it was written two years before Mendelssohn travelled to Italy. Mendelssohn composed it in 1828 for sixteen voices (four SATB choirs), organ and continuo *ad lib.*, and it was performed several times by the Singakademie choir. It is likely that this early choral work was inspired by Fasch and Zelter, Mendelssohn's predecessors at the Singakademie. Both were diligent upholders of past musical traditions, and both composed polychoral music themselves. For the foundation of the Singakademie, Fasch wrote a sixteen-part *Kyrie* and *Gloria* inspired by a mass by Italian composer Orazio Benevoli, which Johann Friedrich Reichardt brought back from Italy,³⁰ while Zelter's output includes numerous motets for double chorus.³¹ Thus, while the young Mendelssohn followed in the footsteps of his teacher – and his teacher's teacher – a path can also be traced back as far as the Italian polychoral school of composition, to which Fasch and Zelter paid homage. *Hora Est* displays characteristics of this compositional tradition beyond the scoring, such as antiphonal effects and block chords over slowly-moving harmony, but the influence of Fasch's *Kyrie* and *Gloria* is also palpable in the sharply contrasting sections, the use of solo voices and the functional tonality.

Mendelssohn's desire to emulate his Singakademie predecessors is evident in the music of *Hora Est*. In setting himself the challenge of writing for sixteen-part choir

³⁰ Orazio Benevoli (1605–1672), Italian composer; Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752–1814), German composer and intellectual, who visited Venice in 1783 and was deeply impressed by the music of Palestrina.

³¹ Examples of Zelter's double choir repertoire include the following motets: *Averte faciem* (1791); *Der Mensch lebt und bestehet* (1803); *Wer spannt den Bogen* (1803); *Hymnus an die Sonne* (1808). I am grateful to the staff at Berlin Singakademie for enabling me to access Zelter's music.

(four SATB choirs), he yielded to the frequently heavy and potentially unwieldy aspects of such a texture. A rather protracted opening with eight male voices sets the tone for excessive amounts of textual repetition and a resultant lack of economy with musical material. The somewhat archaic continuo accompaniment, harking back to Fasch, Benevoli and Gabrieli, betrays a backward glance to past masters for guidance while, at the same time, the setting for sixteen voices displays Mendelssohn's desire to test the boundaries of the choral medium. The reliance on such a conventional, even old-fashioned, device as the *basso continuo* exemplifies the technically-accomplished young composer on the path to maturity (and indeed, on the merits of such successes as the Octet and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, already astonishingly mature in many respects), but perhaps not yet fully ready to forge his own choral style. However, one need only look two years later to Mendelssohn's 1830 psalm setting *Mitten wir im Leben sind* for evidence of a more mature composer employing archaic styles in a modern harmonic and textural language.

It is interesting to note that when Mendelssohn travelled to Italy in 1830 his compositional output did not immediately follow such an obviously polychoral model. *Mitten wir im Leben sind* ('In the midst of life we are in death') was written as part of *Drei Kirchenmusik*, Op.23 during Mendelssohn's first visit to Rome, and it is telling to compare its style to that of the music Mendelssohn absorbed at the Sistine Chapel in Rome. This dramatic setting, with its clearly defined block progressions and its syllabic directness, stands in its own right as an impressively mature work. (Example 1.1(a))

Example 1.1 (a): *Mitten wir im Leben sind*, bb. 1–36

Choral

S1
S2
A1
A2
T1
T2
B1
B2

Mit - ten wir im Le - ben sind mit dem Tod um - fan - gen. Wen seh'n wir, der
 Mit - ten wir im Le - ben sind mit dem Tod um - fan - gen. Wen seh'n wir, der
 Mit - ten wir im Le - ben sind mit dem Tod um - fan - gen. Wen seh'n wir, der
 Mit - ten wir im Le - ben sind mit dem Tod um - fan - gen. Wen seh'n wir, der

11

Das bist du, Herr, al - lei - ne!
 Das bist du, Herr, al - lei - ne!
 Das bist du, Herr, al - lei - ne!
 Das bist du, Herr, al - lei - ne!
 Das bist du, Herr, al - lei - ne!

Hül - fe thu', daß wir Gnad' er - lan - gen? Uns
 Hül - fe thu', daß wir Gnad' er - lan - gen? Uns
 Hül - fe thu', daß wir Gnad' er - lan - gen? Uns
 Hül - fe thu', daß wir Gnad' er - lan - gen? Uns

Example 1.1(a) continued

21

reu - et un - ser Mis - se - tat, die dich Herr, er - zür - net hat.

reu - et un - ser Mis - se - tat, die dich Herr, er - zür - net hat.

reu - et un - ser Mis - se - tat, die dich Herr, er - zür - net hat.

reu - et un - ser Mis - se - tat, die dich Herr, er - zür - net hat.

Vivace

29

Hei - li - ger Her - re Gott! Hei - li - ger, star - ker Gott! _____

Hei - li - ger Her - re Gott! Hei - li - ger, star - ker Gott! _____

Hei - li - ger Her - re Gott! Hei - li - ger, star - ker Gott! _____

Hei - li - ger Her - re Gott! Hei - li - ger, star - ker Gott! _____

Hei - li - ger Her - re Gott! Hei - li - ger, star - ker Gott! _____

Hei - li - ger Her - re Gott! Hei - li - ger, star - ker Gott! _____

Hei - li - ger Her - re Gott! Hei - li - ger, star - ker Gott! _____

Hei - li - ger Her - re Gott! Hei - li - ger, star - ker Gott! _____

Part of its impact stems from Mendelssohn's employment of typically Romantic dynamic and registral contrasts between the four-part *Männerchor* (*forte*) and the answering *Frauenchor* (*piano*), followed by a combination of the two depicting the formidable strength of God: 'Heiliger Herre Gott! Heiliger starker Gott!' ('Holy Lord God! Holy Strong God!') The other extraordinary aspect of this music is its harmonic self-assurance. A simple chorale-style opening in C minor yields to C major for the first *tutti* entry ('Heiliger Herre Gott!'). The surprising appearance of F minor on a widely spread chord on 'starker' in the second phrase ('Heiliger starker Gott!') arrests the listener's attention, and alludes to the strength of God by its very prominent suddenness. This clear instance of word painting undermines the effect of the tonic major, suggesting it as either the dominant of F minor, or perhaps betraying Mendelssohn's Romantic tendencies with the Schubertian flattened 6th. These three keys recur throughout, but this setting is predominantly in the key of F minor, despite the opening tonality. Although the psalm ends on C major (Example 1.1(b)), the ending's flattened subdominant chords and *pianissimo* dynamic signify a harmonic weakening, with only final remnants of steely strength emanating from the tenor and bass accents on the last four syllables.

Example 1.1(b): *Mitten wir im Leben sind*, bb. 223–229

Given that this motet was written in Rome at the time of Mendelssohn’s first actual experience of the music of the Sistine Chapel – yet also during a time when Mendelssohn was becoming immersed in the music of J. S. Bach – it is hardly surprising that it represents a synthesis of Palestrinian and Lutheran musical styles. James Garratt’s reading of *Mitten wir im Leben sind* tallies with this theory, although he emphasises a distance between this setting and, for example, the ‘Berlin Cathedral’ music:

This work can be viewed as an attempt to create an ideal fusion of two traditions of liturgical music, the Protestant chorale and old Italian homophony, a dual orientation reflected in Mendelssohn’s description of it as a ‘Lutheran chorale for eight voices *a capella*’ ... None of the sections in this work presents the kind of compositional engagement with old Italian music exhibited in Mendelssohn’s later liturgical music. Even so, it is clear that the work represents a response to contemporary ideals of church music reform: it complies with

Abraham Mendelssohn's demand for a combination of old and new free from the mannerism of the Nazarenes, providing an austere new exemplar of the church style.³²

Mendelssohn's exploration of extremes of register between the male and female voices was perhaps inspired by a performance of Allegri's *Miserere*, which he had experienced at the Sistine Chapel;³³ on the other hand, the psalm is firmly anchored, via the chorale tune, in the Lutheran tradition. The voice of J. S. Bach can be further observed in the knotty chromatic twists of the 'Kyrie eleison' refrain. However, the unmistakable hallmark of Mendelssohn the Romantic coexists comfortably alongside these more archaic influences: the music's stark dynamic contrasts, dramatic declamatory phrases, dense textures and directness of textual expression epitomise a composer immersed in the musical and artistic aesthetic of his time. This motet provides a significant early instance of the deliberate synthesis of styles found within the Berlin Cathedral choral music.

While Botstein and others have pointed to Mendelssohn's tendency to seek out Old Testament texts as a demonstration of loyalty to his Jewish background, Todd demonstrates the composer's openness to producing music for various religious traditions – Anglican, Catholic, Huguenot, and possibly one piece for the consecration of the new Jewish temple in Hamburg.³⁴ However, it is clear that he devoted the vast portion of his creative energies towards composition for the

³² James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 82.

³³ *Ibid.*, 82.

³⁴ R. Larry Todd, 'On Mendelssohn's Sacred Music, Real and Imaginary' in R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn Essays* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 96–97. Todd goes on to question Eric Werner's suggestion that Mendelssohn's setting of Psalm 100, *Jauchzet dem Herrn*, was composed for the consecration of the new Jewish temple in Hamburg in 1844, but concludes that this is very unlikely. Lily E. Hirsch also argues that this composition is far more likely to have been written for Berlin Cathedral; Lily E. Hirsch, 'Felix Mendelssohn's Psalm 100 Reconsidered', *Philomusica On-line* 4 (2004) <<http://riviste.paviauniversitypress.it/index.php/phi/article/view/04-01-SG02/23>> [accessed 16 October 2011]. Stylistic and circumstantial issues involving this psalm setting will be considered in greater detail in Chapter Four, pp. 135–140.

Protestant tradition. Part of this may have been circumstantial: much of Mendelssohn's working life was spent in the service of the Prussian Church, and therefore many of his compositions for the church were commissioned by the clergy or the King. However, many of his letters also appear to reveal a deep personal commitment to Lutheranism that extended beyond the music he was employed to compose.

One important instance of Mendelssohn's outward demonstration of his faith is his prominent use of chorales, which has sparked many comments on his personal faith. The source for Mendelssohn's use of chorales can be traced directly from his close study of J. S. Bach's music under the tutelage of Zelter. On a deeper level, however, the frequent appearance of chorales can be interpreted as a clear expression of Mendelssohn's Lutheranism: an outward manifestation of his personal creed. In fact, Mendelssohn disclosed in 1830 that he was a follower of the Prussian theologian Schleiermacher, whose central belief lay in 'the collective fellowship of the congregation over the spirituality of the individual'.³⁵ This belief is broadly congruent with the kind of collective spirituality experienced in the common singing of chorales. The extension of the use of chorales into Mendelssohn's orchestral music would appear to support an argument for the strength of his Christian faith; this presence of chorales in his purely orchestral music has also provoked discussion as to whether Mendelssohn was attempting to reconcile music written for the concert hall with that which had a specifically liturgical function. In his examination of this phenomenon, Larry Todd posits that

to contemporary nineteenth-century audiences, the introduction of popular chorales in Felix's music – to the examples adduced, we might add the insertion of *Ein' Feste Burg* into the

³⁵ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 197–198.

finale of the *Reformation* Symphony (1830), and of several chorales in the Organ Sonatas, op. 65 (1845), not to mention the striking appearance of *Vom Himmel Hoch* in *Athalie* – would have imparted a seemingly clear meaning: like an avowal of faith, they would have symbolized to the general public Felix’s musical Protestantism.³⁶

For Todd, the symphony-cantata *Lobgesang* stands as a kind of ‘imaginary’ church music – a term coined by Carl Dahlhaus in *Das Problem Mendelssohn*: that is, instrumental music striving towards church music.³⁷ Taking this concept a step further, it can be argued that Mendelssohn’s imaginary church music extends also to the symphonic repertoire: in addition to the famous quotation of the chorale *Ein’ Feste Burg* in the finale of the ‘Reformation’ Symphony as pointed out above by Todd, the plaintive main theme in the second movement of the Italian Symphony, while not an explicit quotation, echoes the responsorial psalmody to which Mendelssohn was exposed during his attendance at the Sistine Chapel. This permeation of Mendelssohn’s orchestral music with clearly audible and recognisable resonances of Christian worship is an unequivocal public statement by the composer about his faith.

However, this view of Mendelssohn’s orchestral music has been countered by Charles Rosen, who argues that Mendelssohn’s music is more pious than genuinely religious.³⁸ Rosen highlights the nineteenth-century diffusion of boundaries between music intended for sacred and secular spheres when he posits that, ‘for Mendelssohn,

³⁶ Todd, ‘On Mendelssohn’s Sacred Music’, 104–105.

³⁷ Carl Dahlhaus, ‘Mendelssohn und die musikalischen Gattungstraditionen’ in Carl Dahlhaus (ed.), *Das Problem Mendelssohn* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1974), 58; referred to in R. Larry Todd, ‘On Mendelssohn’s Sacred Music’, 105 n53.

³⁸ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 593–598.

religion was not out of place in the concert hall',³⁹ before continuing in a similar vein:

Like Mendelssohn, Liszt aimed at inducing a glow of piety in the listener, but his religious subjects have an exotic air ... in contrast to Mendelssohn's more homely Lutheran sources that rendered both his bombast and his sentimentality more effective than Liszt's.⁴⁰

Earlier in his chapter, Rosen argues that Mendelssohn's model for imitation was late-period Beethoven, and goes on to demonstrate some striking similarities between Beethoven's A minor String Quartet, Op.132, and Mendelssohn's early quartet in A minor. However, it is impossible to ignore the air of condescension that runs throughout Rosen's narrative: 'Mendelssohn rounds off his phrases, his paragraphs, and eventually his sections with a certain comfortable sweetness'.⁴¹

Of course, Rosen is only one in a long line of Mendelssohn detractors to pen similar criticism, stretching back to the journalist and historian Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, who wrote that

[Mendelssohn] sought to enliven the doctrines of the church with a heightened subjective emotionalism ... Were one to perform a piece of Bach's at tea-time, one would profane it. But a piece of Mendelssohn's church music would not be profaned since it actually evokes and lifts the mood of tea-time society.⁴²

The patronising tone evident in Rosen's and Riehl's criticisms can be viewed as an indication of racial prejudice in Mendelssohn reception; no matter whether he was traditional or innovative in his compositions, Mendelssohn would always be

³⁹ Ibid., 592.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 596.

⁴¹ Ibid., 571.

⁴² Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, 'Bach und Mendelssohn aus dem socialen Gesichtspunkte' in *Musikalische Charakterköpfe* (Stuttgart, 1857); quoted in Botstein, 'The Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation', 17.

regarded as a second-rate outsider. Crucially for his career, it seems that this prejudice was much more prevalent after his death than during his lifetime.

1.3 The Biographical Context of Mendelssohn's Career at Berlin Cathedral

Given the prevailing anti-Semitic attitude in nineteenth-century Germany, it is perhaps surprising that Mendelssohn found himself employed as *Generalmusikdirektor* at Berlin Cathedral. However, there are several factors to consider here: the good standing of the Mendelssohn family; the outwardly strong Christian faith of Felix Mendelssohn; and the circumstances surrounding his appointment to this Cathedral post.

As mentioned above, Mendelssohn's family converted to Christianity early in the composer's life, and although there was a tendency to eye *Neuchristen* with a degree of suspicion, the Mendelssohn family was generally well regarded in Berlin's social milieu. In addition, Felix's many compositions for the Christian church, even prior to his arrival in Berlin court, demonstrate a steadfast belief in the teachings of Christianity. As Sposato has argued, Mendelssohn had thus already been assimilated into German society, and he maintained a high profile as a Christian. As there is no evidence of overt prejudice, it can be concluded, tentatively, that Mendelssohn and his family had no major problems in terms of being accepted. The third consideration regarding how he was appointed will be discussed in more detail in the next section but, with regard to the 'Jewish Question', it is pertinent that he initially assumed the position as Kapellmeister and that the association with the Cathedral was a later appointment, designed as a last-resort attempt by the King to retain Mendelssohn in his service. Therefore, the issue of his Jewish birth does not appear to have been a

factor, at least for King Friedrich Wilhelm IV.⁴³ David Brodbeck has described the various incarnations of Mendelssohn's role at Berlin court that ultimately led to his role as *Generalmusikdirektor für kirchliche und geistliche Musik* at Berlin Cathedral, in charge of a newly-formed choir and small orchestra.⁴⁴ A brief background of the reforms to the Prussian liturgy will now be outlined in order to contextualise the role for which this new choir was created.

While the works of Johann Sebastian Bach are seen as representing the zenith of orthodox Lutheran church music, the period during the Enlightenment witnessed a decline as services became much less formal, involving what Brodbeck has wryly observed as 'little more than unembellished hymns, moralistic prayers, and preaching'.⁴⁵ In the early nineteenth century, this decline of music and worship became a source of frustration and dissatisfaction to many musicians such as Carl Zelter and, spurred by these stirrings of discontent, King Friedrich Wilhelm III instigated a reform of the liturgy. The most important revisions of this form of the Prussian liturgy were drafted in 1829 and 1843. In the 1829 version, the congregation had a very limited role, singing only a few chorales during the service. In this version, most of the service alternated between *Geistliche* (Minister) and *Chor* (Choir), with chorales at the beginning, the end, and before and after the sermon. However, the 1843 version of the Prussian liturgy (which originated during the reign of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV) saw an increased prioritisation of the role of music within the service. The most significant musical changes were the reintroduction of an Introit Psalm at the beginning of the service, the singing of the verse before the Alleluia (this had previously been performed by the celebrant), and a greater

⁴³ Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795–1861) reigned as King of Prussia from 1840 until his death.

⁴⁴ Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 1–32.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

emphasis on congregational participation – including the singing of several responses together with the choir.⁴⁶

In his biography of Mendelssohn, Todd describes the confusion that attended the introduction of the revised liturgy at the service on 10 December 1843, and the composer's own reservations concerning the revisions:

The Viennese *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* ran a brief report of the service, as did the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, which commented, "As edifying as this version of the sacred service is, its musical portion is still fragmented, and one would hope that in the future ... entire, even if shorter, vocal works are performed ..." Felix himself grouched about the new liturgy.⁴⁷

One can understand Mendelssohn's dissatisfaction, both at the fact that the much-heralded new liturgy amounted to so little musically, and also that the negotiations regarding his position seemed to be consuming much of his valuable time. Although the King saw Mendelssohn as the ideal person to lead a renewal of church musical practice, Mendelssohn had mixed feelings about the wisdom of accepting the King's proposal. These feelings appeared to stem from a fear of difficulties with his own artistic freedom of expression, given that he would be composing functional music for the liturgy. The composer had written to Pastor Bauer eight years earlier – albeit with regard to the pre-reform Prussian liturgy – about his problems reconciling the sacrifices necessary in a fusion of music and liturgy:

Actual church music, that is, music during the Evangelical Church service, which could be introduced properly while the service was being celebrated, seems to me impossible; and this, not merely because I cannot at all see into *which* part of the public worship this music

⁴⁶ The practice of singing a psalm as an introit at the beginning of the service extended as far back as the early Church, although the number of verses sung became truncated during the Medieval era, due to restrictions on Entrance processions. John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 69–71.

⁴⁷ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 465.

can be introduced, but because I cannot discover that *any* such part exists ... But even without any reference to the Prussian Liturgy, which at once cuts off everything of the kind, and which will, probably, neither remain as it is nor go further, I do not see how it is to be managed that music in our Church should form an integral part of public worship, and not become a mere concert, conducive more or less to piety.⁴⁸

Although the reformed Prussian liturgy in 1843 saw more music included in the services, the amount remained relatively small and is unlikely to have amounted to a musically fulfilling role for Mendelssohn.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of recent scholarly debate over Mendelssohn's religious background and views, offering an interpretation of the significance of his Jewish heritage and its effect upon both his career and his posthumous reception. Although it is difficult to arrive at a definitive conclusion regarding the complex and somewhat nebulous issue of Mendelssohn's religious allegiances, it would appear that the composer wholeheartedly embraced Lutheranism both in his life and in his music, while at the same time retaining a certain affinity towards his Jewish background. Mendelssohn's devotion to Lutheranism through the vehicle of his music, both sacred and secular, points to the composer's genuine assimilation of Christianity, but does not necessarily imply a negation of his heritage. Although the profession of personal faith as witnessed by his music implies a steadfast and straightforward commitment, it has been suggested that Mendelssohn's attitude towards his position as *Generalmusikdirektor* at Berlin Cathedral was rather more

⁴⁸ Letter of 12 January 1835 from Mendelssohn to Pastor Bauer in Paul & Carl Mendelssohn Bartholdy (eds.), trans. Lady Wallace, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy from 1833 to 1847* (London: Longman, 1864), 63–64. This section of the letter is also quoted in a slightly different translation in Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 4–5.

ambivalent, resulting in a degree of limitation with regard to the music he produced there. Given the composer's commitment to his Lutheran faith and to the production of choral music throughout his career, the period at Berlin Cathedral ought to have been a happy and fruitful one, but, as will be shown, Mendelssohn's dissatisfaction with the situation led to an early termination of the position, and thus the remaining corpus of music is relatively small.

As demonstrated above, two early choral works, *Hora Est* and *Mitten wir im Leben sind*, provide a snapshot of Mendelssohn's early choral music, written without any apparent liturgical or religious constraints. It has been argued that *Mitten wir im Leben sind* represents the beginnings of Mendelssohn's mature choral style while *Hora est* – unsurprisingly, considering its creation when its composer was firmly ensconced in the Berlin Singakademie, and carefully emulating the works of Fasch and Zelter – is the somewhat more derivative product of a composer learning his craft. The incorporation of various earlier styles evident in *Mitten wir im Leben sind* can be viewed as a kind of blueprint for Mendelssohn's later choral compositions for Berlin Cathedral such as the group of psalms subsequently published as Op.78: while this 1830 motet is unmistakably Romantic in its aesthetic, an eclectic mixture of historical influences such as Allegri, Palestrina and Bach accommodates this aesthetic. Thus *Mitten wir im Leben sind* laid down the foundations for Mendelssohn's later works, the sumptuous Berlin Cathedral choral music of thirteen years later. Combining greater economy in its approach to both text setting and musical material with a more thoughtful and sophisticated expressive palette for word painting, the Berlin Cathedral music appears to fulfil its liturgical function with ease and confidence while simultaneously bearing the unmistakable hallmark of Mendelssohn's musical language. Indeed, the assimilation of earlier musics – upon

which the composer has been accused of over-reliance – coexists comfortably with a distinctly Romantic approach to the music that strives towards a monumental, symphonic stature.

Chapter Two

Mendelssohn, Psalmody and the Prussian Liturgy

2.1 Liturgical Limits and Musical Beginnings

Mendelssohn's short career as director of music at Berlin Cathedral extended from November 1843 until October 1844, when he sought royal permission to be relieved of his duties.¹ He thus served for only one season, and composed music for just four liturgical occasions: Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Passion Sunday and Good Friday. For each of these services, he composed an introit psalm and a verse before the Alleluia, in addition to various less significant chorale harmonisations. The music for the first two services was composed in December 1843, and the works for the two Lenten services were written in February 1844.² However, even before this first liturgical year had passed, Mendelssohn had apparently tired of setting psalms for the cathedral, suggesting that other well-known composers be enlisted to finish the year-cycle of psalms.³ In October 1844 he reached an amicable agreement with King Friedrich Wilhelm IV whereby, with a reduced salary, he was free to move away from Berlin and had only to fulfil occasional royal commissions.⁴

It still remains a matter of conjecture as to why Mendelssohn became so frustrated with his position at Berlin Cathedral, particularly in such a short space of time.

¹ R. Larry Todd, *A Life in Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 483.

² For comprehensive background information about the circumstances surrounding Mendelssohn's career at Berlin Cathedral, see David Brodbeck, 'Eine kleine Kirchenmusik: A New Canon, a Revised Cadence, and an Obscure "Coda" by Mendelssohn', *The Journal of Musicology* 12 (1994), 179–205; David Brodbeck, 'A Winter of Discontent: Mendelssohn and the Berliner Domchor' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–32; also Wolfgang Dinglinger, 'Mendelssohn – General-Musik-Direktor für kirchliche und geistliche Musik' in *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Kongreß-Bericht Berlin 1994*, ed. Christian Martin Schmidt (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1997), 23–36.

³ Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 23, n41.

⁴ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 483.

Brodbeck, Dinglinger and others have posited various reasons for Mendelssohn's frustration with the post. Firstly, personal relationships appeared to have played a role; a letter from Fanny indicates that Mendelssohn had a fractious relationship with the cathedral cleric, Friedrich Adolph Strauß.⁵ Other letters indicate a certain degree of exasperation with the clergy; however, this state of frustration could be said to be typical of the state of relationships between many clergy and church musicians and so may not have amounted to much more than an annoyance for Mendelssohn with regard to his role at the cathedral. However, such practical frustrations were compounded by the bureaucratic ineptitude of the preceding years, where Mendelssohn's position within King Friedrich Wilhelm's grand cultural plan was vague and constantly shifting; thus, any discord with the clergy may have proved one thing too many for the composer.

Perhaps a more pertinent consideration – albeit circumstantial – concerns the tie to Berlin, which appears to have been a mixed blessing for Mendelssohn at this time. More than ever before in his career, he needed the freedom to travel, particularly to England where he enjoyed celebrity status during his lifetime, but also throughout Germany, where he was in great demand as a conductor. Additionally, Mendelssohn's family, particularly his brother Paul, had even encouraged the composer to move to Berlin so that he could be nearer to them. This family link was significantly weakened in 1842 by the death of his mother Lea; by this time the composer, devastated by this loss, had more reason to distance himself from Berlin after her death.⁶

⁵ Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 20.

⁶ Dinglinger, 'Mendelssohn – General-Musik-Direktor', 36.

With regard to compositional issues, Eric Werner and Rudolf Werner have suggested that Mendelssohn's employment of instruments in church services may also have been a source of tension.⁷ According to their argument, the composer's preference for choral-orchestral forces over *a cappella* music was somewhat at odds with the prevailing view of what constituted correct church music ('*Die Wahre Kirchenmusik*'), which was to be sung *a cappella*, as in the services of the Sistine Chapel. Apparently, Mendelssohn was attracted to the greater possibilities for texture and timbre afforded by a wider variety of media; indeed, he had devoted most of his creative energies in the preceding decade to large-scale pieces such as the oratorio, *St Paul*, in addition to his symphonic works. The relative austerity imposed by the new Prussian liturgy has been considered a significant limitation for Mendelssohn. Although he pushed the boundaries of the cathedral traditions by including music by Handel ('For unto us a child is born' on Christmas Day and the 'Hallelujah' chorus with orchestra on New Year's Day) – in addition to composing Psalm 98 for chorus and orchestra (also for New Year's Day) – he was never given total freedom with regard to the forces at his disposal. However, although Todd has argued persuasively that 'all this festive music ran counter to Strauß's ascetic tastes',⁸ it is unlikely that the use of instrumental forces was the main issue at stake for Mendelssohn. The notion that Mendelssohn held aspirations to compose large-scale choral-orchestral pieces for Berlin Cathedral carries a limited amount of weight, particularly given Mendelssohn's insistence upon an austere mode of expression for suitable liturgical music.⁹ Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the acrimony between Mendelssohn and the clergy appears to have reached its height around Lent, when his settings were at

⁷ Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 20, n36.

⁸ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 466.

⁹ See page 40.

their most solemn, and strictly unaccompanied; therefore, the presence or absence of instruments is unlikely to have been the main bone of contention for the composer.

Another possible point of conflict with the clergy regarding Mendelssohn's choral style was the distinction between music written for the concert hall and that written for church services. Brodbeck has suggested that the psalm-cantata-like structure of Psalm 2 (and also Psalm 98) may have run contrary to the simplicity of the Evangelical service, and it is possible that this posed problems for Mendelssohn with regard to creative freedom.¹⁰ While attention has already been drawn in Chapter One to Rosen's acerbic criticism concerning the occurrence of religious music in the concert hall, the reverse is also problematic, as the church authorities would have frowned upon any overlap.¹¹ However, the interpretation of Mendelssohn's Psalm 2 as 'non-liturgical', occupying the boundary between church and concert hall, jars with his sister Fanny Hensel's reaction to the same setting, which she described as 'very beautiful, very Gregorian and Sistine-like'.¹² Although Brodbeck's observation about the overall structure of the psalm is valid, a closer examination of this setting yields a distinct affinity to the sacred music of the Italian Renaissance in terms of texture and declamation. As James Garratt has pointed out, a 'plurality of stances' exists with regard to these pieces;¹³ the examination of various textual and musical aspects of these psalm settings that follows later in this chapter aims to add an alternative reading of these works.

¹⁰ Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 21.

¹¹ Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 569–598.

¹² James Garratt, 'Mendelssohn's Babel: Romanticism and the Poetics of Translation', *Music and Letters* 80 (1999), 27.

¹³ James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 85.

However, it has been suggested that Mendelssohn's approach to text setting represented perhaps the greatest cause for concern on the part of the Church authorities.¹⁴ David Brodbeck has argued that the most problematic issue lay chiefly in one of the central restrictions imposed by the liturgy: that is, the concept that music must be the servant of the Word:

This comparatively free approach to text setting is perhaps best understood as a symptom of Mendelssohn's underlying orientation toward *geistliche* rather than *kirchliche Musik*, toward "artistic" settings of sacred texts rather than "liturgical music" in the strict sense. Under that circumstance, conflict with the clergy was inevitable.¹⁵

According to Brodbeck, this conflict can be pared down to a struggle between artistic ideals and liturgical necessities and, while this struggle has doubtless been a factor for numerous composers through the ages, he argues that it appears to have been a particular source of conflict between Mendelssohn and the clergy at Berlin Cathedral. Central to this struggle is the distinction between textual clarity and musical expression; for example, the Prussian liturgy demanded the direct communication of text afforded by Gregorian chant or chorales: in other words, monophonic or homophonic music. This implies a restriction of texture that can be traced in Mendelssohn's choral compositions during that winter and beyond. Brodbeck contends that Mendelssohn eventually capitulated to the demands of the Prussian liturgy in his setting of the Good Friday psalm (Psalm 22), the last psalm he wrote for Berlin Cathedral. The discussion of Psalm 22 that follows later in this chapter reveals precisely how this particular work is strikingly economical with its text, in a manner almost entirely syllabic and without repetition.

¹⁴ Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 21.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

The issue of text setting may not be as clear-cut a struggle between musical and liturgical demands as Brodbeck seems to suggest, however. Two elements are at stake here: firstly, that Mendelssohn's choral style had evolved over time to become more textually direct even in terms of his secular choral pieces, for example, the dramatic music for *Antigone*, or his numerous choral partsongs; in this manner, Brodbeck's theory with regard to Mendelssohn's reluctant capitulation in providing a more restricted type of text setting in these Berlin years becomes necessarily weakened.¹⁶ The second factor relates directly to the aesthetics of church music: Mendelssohn, long before his Berlin appointment, indicated the suitability of homophonic, syllabic settings for liturgical music. As Garratt attests:

Mendelssohn's descriptions of the papal choir's performances – which he approached, rather self-consciously with the skepticism of Goethe rather than the enthusiasm of the Romantic circle – repeatedly emphasise a single point: that the starkly homophonic music performed in Holy Week, while artistically restricted, is perfectly attuned to its liturgical context.¹⁷

Thus, since he made it clear that liturgically appropriate music was his chief concern with regard to the composition of sacred music, text setting was not a bone of contention for Mendelssohn. A brief exploration of the composer's first official association with liturgical music – his position as Stadtmusikdirektor at Düsseldorf – amply illustrates this phenomenon.

Mendelssohn had previously gained experience of serving as a church musician as *Stadtmusikdirektor* (Civic Director of Music) in Düsseldorf from 1833–1835, where he had been expected to direct music for church services in addition to eight concerts

¹⁶ The issue of restriction in order to achieve textual clarity will be discussed on pp. 101–110 in Chapter Three below as it pertains to the *Sechs Sprüche* and *Antigone*.

¹⁷ Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination*, 82.

per year.¹⁸ With regard to his attitude to musical style in liturgy, a connection can be traced between Mendelssohn's role in Düsseldorf in 1833 and his role as *Generalmusikdirektor* in Berlin a decade later in 1843.

As mentioned above, the music of the Sistine Chapel was generally held to be the most exalted type of liturgical music in the eyes of the Prussian liturgical revivalists.¹⁹ While working as a church musician in Düsseldorf, Mendelssohn had actively sought out the music of Palestrina and Lassus for performance at services. Given that Düsseldorf was mainly a Catholic city, and that it was Mendelssohn's responsibility to conduct music for both Catholic and Protestant services, it is unsurprising that he turned to sixteenth-century Italian sacred music in an attempt to improve the repertoire performed at church services there.²⁰ Moreover, a letter from the composer after his first service in Düsseldorf indicates his principal motivation to seek out this music:

Haydn's Mass was scandalously gay, but the whole thing was very tolerable ... Unluckily, I could not find among all the music here even one tolerable solemn Mass, and not a single one of the old Italian masters; nothing but modern dross.²¹

Thereby, Mendelssohn set about his aim to supplement the church's diet of 'scandalously gay' music by Haydn and Mozart with a selection of 'solemn' mass settings by Palestrina and Lassus. It is likely that Mendelssohn sacrificed the opportunity to develop his own choral style while working in Düsseldorf, since he

¹⁸ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 280.

¹⁹ See page 37.

²⁰ Cecelia Hopkins Porter, 'The Reign of the "Dilettanti": Düsseldorf from Mendelssohn to Schumann', *The Musical Quarterly* 73 (1989), 486.

²¹ Letter of October 1833 from Mendelssohn to Rebecca Dirichlet in Paul & Carl Mendelssohn Bartholdy (eds.), trans. Lady Wallace, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn from 1833 to 1847* (London: Longman, 1864), 8–10.

deemed the music of the Italian masters – although, in his opinion, secondary to the church service – the most appropriate music for the liturgy:

As for actual church music, or if you like to call it so, music for public worship, I know none but the old Italian compositions for the Papal Chapel, where, however, music is a mere accompaniment, subordinate to the sacred functions, co-operating with the wax candles and the incense, etc.²²

This suggests that, as early as 1835, Mendelssohn favoured the music of the sixteenth-century Italian school of sacred composition as the most appropriate church music; therefore, Brodbeck's contention that textual restriction was a matter of reluctant obedience for Mendelssohn is only partially correct. Admittedly, there is a disparaging note in the above quotation, hinting that functional sacred music is akin to musical wallpaper. Nonetheless, Mendelssohn's choice throughout the remainder of his career was to compose church music in this style: in this way, the Berlin Cathedral period saw a refinement of his approach to liturgical composition. Thus, it would appear that Mendelssohn viewed his role – both in Düsseldorf and, later, in Berlin – as servant of the text, and custodian of liturgically appropriate music:

Were I a Catholic, I would set to work at a Mass this very evening; and whatever it might turn out, it would at all events be the only Mass written with a constant remembrance of its sacred purpose.²³

2.2 Music and the Prussian Liturgy: Eclectic Simplicity

Chapter One outlined the revisions the Prussian liturgy underwent during the first half of the nineteenth century. As far as the musical contributions to the liturgy were concerned, Georg Feder details how these reforms appear to have incorporated a number of styles:

²² Letter of 12 January 1835 from Mendelssohn to Pastor Bauer in Paul & Carl Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (eds.), *Letters from 1833 to 1847*, 64.

²³ *Ibid.*, 65.

Musically speaking, the Prussian liturgy was far from a return to the liturgical singing of the Reformation; rather it represented a mixture of a great variety of ingredients: Lutheran intonation formulas, Gregorian chant, and elements of Russian church music.²⁴

Thus, in a sense, the Prussian liturgy represented a return to the simplicity of plainchant and responsorial psalmody, yet with something of a stylistic patchwork incorporating various modern elements. This eclectic mixture of styles is in keeping with the nineteenth-century fascination with the past, particularly in the case of Gregorian chant. The influence of Russian church music was a relic of the previous Prussian *Agende* of 1829, when King Friedrich Wilhelm III's fondness for the simple devotional style of Russian orthodox worship prompted him to commission a liturgical setting from Dmitry Bortnyansky.²⁵ Elements of this tradition were carried over into the revised liturgy of 1843, in what Adolph Bernhard Marx described as 'a most meager and, in fact, unartistic and artistically inefficient substitute for that which the music of the Lutheran church once was'.²⁶ While it seems that King Friedrich Wilhelm IV may not have been particularly musically enlightened, one of his principal innovations, his investment in the establishment of the cathedral choir in Berlin, indicates that he held well-intentioned and, indeed, lofty ambitions for the enhancement of the liturgy:

King Friedrich Wilhelm IV reorganized the Berlin cathedral choir in 1843 (whose origins went back to the era of liturgical efforts under Friedrich Wilhelm III) into a salaried group with a yearly budget of 33,288 marks. It became probably the best German a cappella choir

²⁴ Georg Feder (trans. Reinhard G. Pauly), 'Decline and Restoration' in Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1975), 377.

²⁵ Dmitry Bortnyansky (1751–1825), Ukrainian composer principally based in St Petersburg, and credited with the development of the Russian sacred choral concerto. Marika Kuzma, 'Bortnyansky, Dmitry Stepanovich', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.) <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03638?q=bortniansky&search=q uick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit> [Accessed 12 June 2012]. For more information, see Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 7–10.

²⁶ Adolph Bernhard Marx, *The Music of the Nineteenth Century and its Culture*, trans. August Heinrich Wehrhan and C. Natalia Macfarren (London: Robert Cocks and Co., 1855), [(*Die Musik des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts und ihre Pflege*) (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1855)], 55; quoted in Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 1.

of the mid-19th century. The court chapel at St Petersburg served as a model, and the choir consisted of boys and men only (a total of sixty to eighty singers) under the direction of a conductor and a voice teacher. The choir was invisible to the congregation, thus conforming to the most romantic aspect of the a cappella concept.²⁷

The establishment of the Berlin Cathedral choir represented progression and innovation as outlined in the King's initial plans in 1840,²⁸ but it was also founded upon the traditional and historicist principles represented by the Prussian liturgical revival. Thus, a difficult balancing act had to be negotiated by Mendelssohn in his role as *Generalmusikdirektor*. Although Mendelssohn was cognisant of the liturgical ideals exemplified by the Prussian *Agende*'s return to old styles of worship and sacred expression, a certain tension existed within his creative desires: he knew what was most suitable but it appears that such music did not necessarily inspire his own creativity. Not only did the reforms represent a return to traditional styles, they also dramatically reduced the amount of music in the service, leaving little scope for musical innovation. A comment in a letter from Mendelssohn to Ferdinand David on 19 December 1843 expressed his disappointment at how the role of music for the Prussian liturgy seemed to be ever receding: 'And in the end the great, much discussed church music is reduced so that it shrivels up to one piece before the beginning of the service.'²⁹ While Mendelssohn found the limited musical scope disappointing, Garratt, however, highlights the contribution Mendelssohn made to the Evangelical liturgy with this body of work:

Mendelssohn, admittedly, was frustrated by the limited opportunities for choral music within the service and had no interest in composing choral arrangements for the congregation; nevertheless, his appointment as *Generalmusikdirektor* provided an opportunity to put his

²⁷ Feder, 'Decline and Restoration', 383.

²⁸ See Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 1–7.

²⁹ R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Der 98. Psalm op.91: Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* Stuttgarter Mendelssohn-Ausgaben (Stuttgart: Carus, 1987), CV 40.075/07, foreword, vi.

earlier theories on true liturgical music into practice, and to continue the line of experimentation represented by ‘Mitten wir im Leben sind’.³⁰

Thus, the requirements of the Prussian liturgy gave Mendelssohn the opportunity to re-engage with sixteenth-century Italian homophony as he had in 1830. Firstly, however, he had to engage in some more mundane musical tasks – the substance of which will be examined briefly below.

Mendelssohn’s first exercises in Prussian psalmody, *Sieben Psalmen nach Lobwasser*, illustrate his initial willingness to toe the line in terms of liturgical requirements. These seven psalm-settings – his first assignment as *Generalmusikdirektor* at Berlin Cathedral – were composed on 13 November 1843.³¹ Part of the Prussian liturgical revival by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV involved the singing of a psalm by the choir at the beginning of the service; this was a significant departure from the 1829 revision by his father, King Friedrich Wilhelm III, which did not include psalms in any form. Thus, the new King was committed to the incorporation of psalms into the Prussian liturgy and, on certain liturgical occasions, the psalm would be sung by the choir: hence, Mendelssohn’s first task for the Berlin Cathedral Choir. Ambrosius Lobwasser was responsible for the German translations of the Huguenot Psalter, which the King wished to reinstate.³² The seven psalm settings are musically straightforward chorale harmonisations in the Lutheran tradition that would have been accessible both to the fledgling cathedral choir and to the congregation, in accordance with the new Prussian liturgical aim of greater congregational inclusion. Mendelssohn’s harmonisations provide yet another

³⁰ Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination*, 85.

³¹ Pietro Zappalà (ed.), *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Neun Psalmen und Canticum* Stuttgarter Mendelssohn-Ausgaben (Stuttgart: Carus, 1996), CV 40.479/90, foreword, 7–8.

³² Todd, *A Life in Music*, 464–465.

testament to his lifelong study of the music of J. S. Bach, as can be seen in the setting of Psalm 91, for instance. (Example 2.1)

Example 2.1: Psalm 91 from *Lobwasser Psalmen* (complete)

S
A
1. Wer in des Al - ler - höch - sten Hut und Schut - ze sei - ner Gna - den
wie ei - nem Schat - ten woh - nen tut, be - wahrt für al - lem Scha - den.

9
Der - selb für - wahr wohl - kühn - lich spricht: "Gott ist mein Burg und Fe - ste. Er -

17
ist mein Trost und Zu - ver - sicht, er tut bei mir das Be - ste."

While there is no information as to whether these psalms were ever performed, it is likely that Mendelssohn's subsequent and more complex settings of Psalm 2 and Psalm 98 – significantly, two of the same psalms included in the *Lobwasser* settings – would have eclipsed these simpler settings. It is difficult to imagine how these pieces would have satisfied Mendelssohn's creative impulses as a composer; the *Three Psalms*, Op.78, are evidence that a greater fusion of tradition and innovation was both desirable and possible.

2.3 Three Psalms, Op.78

Leon Botstein's theory regarding Mendelssohn's approach to language (here, in relation to *St Paul*) provides an interesting starting point for an examination of the large-scale psalms Mendelssohn composed for Berlin Cathedral:

In the theological framework of the oratorio, language is the decisive link between humankind and God; it contains the proof that human beings possess the potential to reflect divine truth. The capacity for language and knowing through the word – as set forth, for example, at the beginning of the Gospel According to St. John – reconciled the Judaic emphasis on the abstract nature of God with a Protestant emphasis on the humanity of Christ.³³

The idea of a reconciliation between Judaism and Protestantism is crucial to the interpretation of the psalm settings, insofar as Mendelssohn imbued them with a Christological interpretation. On a purely textual level, these psalms can be viewed as messianic – as Martin Luther's reading of Psalm 2 illustrates:

Luther consistently sets forth the Jews as the enemies of Christ and the church and criticizes the Jews' inaccurate and vain expectations concerning the Messiah and his kingdom. Thus the "bonds" of Ps 2:3 are the bonds of the law to which the Jews cling in their denial of Christ. Furthermore, the Jews are the ones who "take counsel against the Lord and his anointed" (Ps 2:2) and who will "perish in the way" (Ps 2:11). Christ will "speak to them in his wrath" (Ps 2:5) and "break them with a rod of iron" (Ps 2:9) [...] The first verses of Psalm 2 provide the assurance of Christ's ultimate victory (Ps 2:4) over the enemies.³⁴

While it is highly unlikely that Mendelssohn would have taken such an adversarial position on the Jewish race in his musical realisation of Psalm 2, a messianic or Christological interpretation is not only possible, but appears to be emphasised

³³ Leon Botstein, 'Songs without Words: Thoughts on Music, Theology, and the Role of the Jewish Question in the Work of Felix Mendelssohn', *Musical Quarterly* 77 (1993), 567.

³⁴ G. Sujin Pak, *The Judaizing Calvin: Sixteenth-Century Debates Over the Messianic Psalms* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 35–36.

throughout the musical setting, in terms of tonal language and text setting. John Michael Cooper describes this reading of the text:

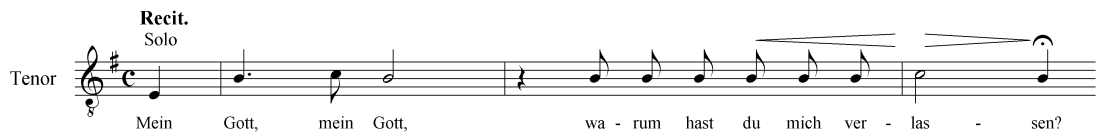
What is new here, however, is Mendelssohn's assertively Christological (re-)interpretation of the psalm text – a strategy in keeping with the Christological perspective characteristic of Prussian theology of the day (best known today through the ideas of Friedrich Schleiermacher). The verses whose focal points are the heathen and the earthly kingdom are consistently in the minor mode and modulatory, whereas those that (from a Christian perspective) foretell Christ as redeemer are in the major mode and characterized by comparatively stable harmonic language.³⁵

Cooper goes on to highlight the 'euphonious arrival of E-flat major at the first reference to Christ the Son'; the choice of this key can be viewed, perhaps, as an instance of the same Trinitarian symbolism that has often been observed in the music of J. S. Bach. In addition to the harmonic features, Mendelssohn emphasises these differences with stark musical contrasts of register and dynamic; this is particularly obvious in the setting of Psalm 43, which polarises the male and female voices in a potent illustration of textual contrasts. A Christological interpretation can also be applied to the setting of Psalm 22, with its plaintive opening cry, 'Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen?' ('My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'). The sense of abandonment expressed within this psalm text – the context of which foretells Jesus Christ's last words on the cross – holds a powerful resonance for Christians. (Example 2.2) Its liturgical centrality to Good Friday services has endowed it with a recognisable association with Passiontide and all that entails for the Christian faith. That such a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy attends this text renders Mendelssohn's setting all the more significant. This psalm text – and

³⁵ John Michael Cooper (ed.), *Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Psalmen/Psalms Op. 78* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2006), BA 8941, vi.

Mendelssohn's interpretation thereof – can thus be viewed as another manifestation of the bridge between Judaism and Protestantism as described by Leon Botstein.³⁶

Example 2.2: Psalm 22, bb. 1–3



Recit.
Solo

Tenor

Mein Gott, mein Gott, wa - rum hast du mich ver - las - sen?

John Michael Cooper's and David Brodbeck's critical editions of the Op.78 Psalms present both the original and revised versions of Psalms 2 and 43.³⁷ Psalm 2, originally composed in December 1843 for Christmas Day, was revised by Mendelssohn in March 1845 for publication by Bote & Bock; in the event, it was not published until 1848 by Breitkopf. John Michael Cooper has argued that the second version should not be seen as an improvement on the original; that the differences between the two rather suggest two alternative versions.³⁸ However – and as David Brodbeck also notes in his edition of these psalms – Mendelssohn's adjustments to the musical writing in the second version appear to indicate a refinement rather than an alternative version.³⁹ It is pertinent that the changes Mendelssohn made upon revising Psalm 2 can be traced back to textual considerations, as will be shown below.

The two versions are structurally almost identical. The main difference between them is that the first version was written for choir with organ accompaniment whereas the

³⁶ See Chapter One, page 12, n13.

³⁷ Cooper (ed.), *Psalmen*; David Brodbeck (ed.), *Drei Psalmen, Op. 78 Stuttgarter Mendelssohn-Ausgabe* (Stuttgart: Carus-Verlag, 1997), CV 40.125.

³⁸ Cooper (ed.), *Psalmen*, Preface, iv.

³⁹ Brodbeck (ed.), *Psalmen*, Foreword, viii.

revision was for eight-part *a cappella* choir and soloists; also, only the revised version includes a *Gloria Patri* ('Ehre sei dem Vater'), due to Mendelssohn's decision for the first performance to use Handel's chorus 'For unto us a child is born' in place of the doxology. The organ part may have been included in the original version for the benefit of the newly-trained and inexperienced Berlin Cathedral choir who perhaps needed the harmonic support; this theory is strengthened by the simplicity of the chordal organ part which floats in and out of the psalm, unobtrusively shadowing the voices. The doxology will be discussed on pp. 67–69; firstly, however, various subtle differences that distinguish the two versions will be considered, principally with regard to text setting.

The 1843 version begins with each choir echoing its own first phrase: an extra 'warum?' in the case of Choir I and a repeated 'vergeblich' for Choir II. The occurrence of these echoes simultaneously with the other choir's antiphonal response lessens the impact of the antiphonal effect and also muddies the textual clarity; Mendelssohn omitted these echoes in the revision. (Example 2.3 (a) and (b)) The other difference in these opening two statements concerns the rate of harmonic change: the omission of Choir I's 'warum?' echo allows Mendelssohn to break into harmony on Choir II's 'reden so vergeblich', and the bass line moves from G to F on the fourth beat of the bar (previously, the Choir I bass part had a minim F from beat 3, thus producing the same 6-4-2 chord). The second version's more dramatic, rhythmic movement here matches the agitated nature of the text, and adds more emphasis to the arrival of the Bass II on the submediant E flat for the strong syllable of 'ver-geb-lich' (rather than on the last syllable as before). A further rhythmic adjustment Mendelssohn made to the opening is on the very first syllable of the

psalm. Initially this anacrusis was written as a crotchet, whereas the revision begins with a quaver: a small change that adds greatly to the dramatic impact of this opening question, ‘Why do the heathen rage?’.

Example 2.3(a): Psalm 2, bb. 1–6, first version

Moderato

S1 *p* War - um to - ben die Hei - den? *p* war - um? *cresc.* Die Kö - ni - ge im Lan - de leh - nen sich auf, *f*
 A1 *p* War - um to - ben die Hei - den? *p* war - um? *cresc.* Die Kö - ni - ge im Lan - de leh - nen sich auf, *f*
 T1 *p* War - um to - ben die Hei - den? *p* war - um? *cresc.* Die Kö - ni - ge im Lan - de leh - nen sich auf, *f*
 B1 *p* War - um to - ben die Hei - den? *p* war - um? *cresc.* Die Kö - ni - ge im Lan - de leh - nen sich auf, *f*
 S2 *p* und die Leu - te re - den so ver - geb - lich? *cresc.* ver - geb - lich? *f* und die
 A2 *p* und die Leu - te re - den so ver - geb - lich? *cresc.* ver - geb - lich? *f* und die
 T2 *p* und die Leu - te re - den so ver - geb - lich? *cresc.* ver - geb - lich? *f* und die
 B2 *p* und die Leu - te re - den so ver - geb - lich? *cresc.* ver - geb - lich? *f* und die
 Org *p*

Example 2.3(b): Psalm 2, bb. 1–6, second version

Moderato

p *cresc.* *f*

S1 War - um to - ben die Hei - den? Die Kö - ni - ge im Lan - de leh - nen sich auf *f*

A1 War - um to - ben die Hei - den? Die Kö - ni - ge im Lan - de leh - nen sich auf *f*

T1 War - um to - ben die Hei - den? Die Kö - ni - ge im Lan - de leh - nen sich auf *f*

B1 War - um to - ben die Hei - den? Die Kö - ni - ge im Lan - de leh - nen sich auf *f*

S2 *p* *f*

A2 und die Leu - te re - den so ver - geb - lich? und die Herr *f*

T2 und die Leu - te re - den so ver - geb - lich? und die Herr *f*

B2 und die Leu - te re - den so ver - geb - lich? und die Herr *f*

Such distillations of the text and its musical realisation provide the main difference throughout the revision of Psalm 2. Other areas of improvement can be observed in the second version, where Mendelssohn achieves greater economy of expression by employing a more compact rhythmic structure. The solo section at the beginning of the second movement is refined, both in the area of harmonic direction and in the fluid rendering of some previously rather heavy-handed text setting. (Example 2.4 (a) and (b)) In addition, Mendelssohn's revision addresses the links between movements of the psalm: in the revised version, the cadence at the conclusion of the second movement ('Eigentum') points more openly towards the third movement, by preparing the C minor with an imperfect cadence; the original version had finished in E flat, thus the revision created a smoother transition into the third movement. (Example 2.5 (a) and (b))

Example 2.4(a): Psalm 2, bb. 42–51, first version

42 *Con moto*
Soli

S1 A - ber ich ha - be mei - nen Kō - nig ein - ge - setzt —
Soli

A1 ich hab' ihn ein - ge - setzt
Soli

T1 ich hab, ihn ein - ge - setzt

B1

S2 auf mei - nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge Zi - on.
Soli

A2 auf mei - nem Ber - ge Zi - on.
Soli

T2 auf mei - nem Ber - ge Zi - on.

B2

Con moto
Org *pp* manualiter

47

S1 Ich will von ei - ner sol - chen Wei - se pre - di - gen, —

A1 Ich will von sol - chen Wei - se pre - di - gen,

T1 Ich will von sol - chen Wei - se pre - di - gen,

B1

S2 daß der Herr zu mir ge - sagt hat:

A2 daß der Herr zu mir ge - sagt hat:

T2 daß der Herr zu mir ge - sagt hat:

B2

Org

Example 2.4(b): Psalm 2, bb. 40–49, second version

40 *Andante*

S1

A1 *Solo*
auf mei-nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge Zi - on,

T1 *Solo*
auf mei-nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge Zi - on,

B1 *Solo*
auf mei-nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge Zi - on,

S2

A2 *Solo*
A - ber ich ha - be mei - nen Kö - nig ein - ge - setzt.

T2 *Solo*
A - ber ich ha - be mei - nen Kö - nig ein - ge - setzt.

B2 *Solo*
A - ber ich ha - be mei - nen Kö - nig ein - ge - setzt.

45 *Solo*
daß der Herr zu mir ge - sagt hat:

Solo
daß der Herr zu mir ge - sagt hat:

Solo
daß der Herr zu mir ge - sagt hat:

Solo
Ich will von ei - ner sol - chen Wei - se pre - di - gen,

Solo
Ich will von ei - ner sol - chen Wei - se pre - di - gen,

Solo
Ich will von ei - ner sol - chen Wei - se pre - di - gen,

Example 2.5(a): Psalm 2, bb. 61–65, first version

62

S1 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

A1 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

T1 und der Welt En - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

B1 und der Welt En - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

S2 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

A2 und der Welt En - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

T2 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

B2 und der Welt En - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

Org

Example 2.5(b): Psalm 2, bb. 59–63, second version

60

Con moto *f*

S1 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum. Du *f*

A1 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum. Du *f*

T1 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum. Du *f*

B1 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum. Du

S2 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

A2 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

T2 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

B2 und der Welt En - - - de zum Ei - gen - tum.

A greater sense of resolution is achieved at the end of the revised version with the omission of the menacing basses (who had continued until the end of the first version) and the addition of a gloriously soaring soprano solo on a high G. (Example 2.6 (a) and (b)) Further intensification of word painting is found in the second version, indicating Mendelssohn's greater commitment to the text; for example, 'spottet' is more dramatic on its second iteration in the second version, with its leap of a seventh in the second soprano part highlighting the meaning, 'scorn' (Example 2.7 (a) and (b)).

Example 2.6(a): Psalm 2, bb. 137–142, first version

137

Tutti *sf* Solo Tutti

S1 en. A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - - en!

A1 en. A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - - en!

T1 en. A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - - en!

B1 en. A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - - en!

S2 *pp* A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - - en!

A2 *pp* A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - - en!

T2 *pp* A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - - en!

B2 *pp* denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - - - - - nen!

Org

Example 2.6(b): Psalm 2, bb. 136–142, second version

136

sf *f* +Tutti *p*

S1 en! A - ber wohl al - len, al - - - len, die auf ihn trau - en.

A1 en! A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.

T1 en! A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.

B1 en! A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.

S2 *pp* denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - - - - - nen. A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.

A2 *pp* denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - - - - - nen. A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.

T2 *pp* A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.

B2 *pp* A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.

In the case of Psalm 43, written in February 1843 for the *Judica* (Passion) Sunday service, the differences between the two versions are more subtle instances of Mendelssohn's attention to the text setting. A brief comparison of the opening phrases of each version demonstrates this phenomenon. In the first version, the tenor and bass unison line leaps from F up to B flat on 'mei-ne' at the end of bar 3, thus producing an undesirable stress on the weak syllable; the second version 'corrects' this with the more fluid solution of a passing note G. (Example 2.8 (a) and (b)) When the female voices enter in the second phrase, the melodic contour of the top line (Soprano 1) is more effective in the revised version: by starting on an A and leaping a fourth to D on 'falsch-en', more emphasis is placed on this important word, and a more satisfying sequential melodic line is produced by the ensuing C sharp–F leap of a diminished fourth (with this chromatic interval now foreshadowed in the alto part of the previous bar). Furthermore, by placing both alto parts in unison rather than the soprano parts, a more balanced voicing of the chord is produced, where in the first version, unison sopranos on the C sharp overemphasised the third of the A major chord.

Example 2.8(a): Psalm 43, bb. 1–10, first version

Con moto

S1
S2
A1
A2
T1
T2
B1
B2

f Rich - te mich, Gott! und füh - re mei - ne Sa - che wi - der das un - hei - li - ge
f Rich - te mich, Gott! und füh - re mei - ne Sa - che wi - der das un - hei - li - ge
f Rich - te mich, Gott! und füh - re mei - ne Sa - che wi - der das un - hei - li - ge
f Rich - te mich, Gott! und füh - re mei - ne Sa - che wi - der das un - hei - li - ge

6

p und er - ret - te mich von den fal - schen und bö - sen Leu - ten!
p und er - ret - te mich von den fal - schen und bö - sen Leu - ten!
p und er - ret - te mich von den fal - schen und bö - sen Leu - ten!
p und er - ret - te mich von den fal - schen und bö - sen Leu - ten!
p Volk.
p Volk.
p Volk.
p Volk.

Example 2.8(b): Psalm 43, bb. 1–10, second version

Allegro moderato

S1
S2
A1
A2
T1
T2
B1
B2

f
Rich - te mich, Gott, und füh - re mei - ne Sa - che wi - der das un - hei - li - ge

f
Rich - te mich, Gott, und füh - re mei - ne Sa - che wi - der das un - hei - li - ge

f
Rich - te mich, Gott, und füh - re mei - ne Sa - che wi - der das un - hei - li - ge

f
Rich - te mich, Gott, und füh - re mei - ne Sa - che wi - der das un - hei - li - ge

6
p
und er - ret - te mich von den fal - schen und bö - sen Leu - ten!

p
und er - ret - te mich von den fal - schen und bö - sen Leu - ten!

p
und er - ret - te mich von den fal - schen und bö - sen Leu - ten!

p
und er - ret - te mich von den fal - schen und bö - sen Leu - ten!

p
Volk.

p
Volk.

p
Volk.

p
Volk.

David Brodbeck has examined in detail the rather complex genesis of the doxologies of Psalms 2 and 43.⁴⁰ The presence of several versions of the settings of ‘Ehre sei dem Vater’ (‘Glory be to the Father’) suggests Mendelssohn’s customary agonisation over the finer details of counterpoint and text setting. In the case of Psalm 2, the *Gloria* – only begun in 1845 for the revised version – Mendelssohn explores different facets of musical quotation. Beginning with a simple imitative motive for ‘Ehre sei dem Vater’, he then illustrates the text ‘wie es war im Anfang’ (‘as it was in the beginning’) with word painting in bar 149, which restates the opening motive. (Example 2.9) The inherent debt of this particular motive to sixteenth-century Italian contrapuntal writing also represents a self-conscious homage to the past by Mendelssohn, insofar as this *Gloria* marks a very obvious compositional shift to a style of writing directly relating to Palestrina’s imitative church music. Moreover, the symbolism in Mendelssohn’s text setting does not end there, as David Brodbeck has noted:

by finally settling in mm. 9ff. on a sequential exploration of a single gesture – the stepwise pentachord, directed upwards towards the heavens, marked by crescendos and expressive dynamic swells, and led through a variety of chromatic permutations – Mendelssohn reflects the sense of eternity implied by the final lines of the text.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Brodbeck, ‘Eine Kleine Kirchenmusik’, 183–197.

⁴¹ Ibid., 189.

Example 2.9: Psalm 2, *Gloria Patri*

143

S1.2 Eh - re sei dem Va - ter und dem Soh - ne und dem Hei - li - gen Gei - ste. Wie es war zu

A1.2 Eh - re sei dem Va - ter und dem Soh - ne und dem Hei - li - gen Gei - ste.

T1.2 Eh - re sei dem Va - - ter und dem Soh - ne

B1.2 Eh - re sei dem Va - - ter und dem

150 *cresc.* An - fang, jetzt und im - mer - dar und von E - wig - keit zu E - wig - keit. *f*

Wie es war zu An - fang, jetzt und im - mer - dar und von E - wig - keit zu *cresc.* *f*

und dem Hei - li - gen Gei - ste. Wie es war zu An - fang, jetzt und im - mer - dar *cresc.* *f*

Soh - ne und dem Hei - li - gen Gei - ste. Wie es war zu An - fang, jetzt und *f*

156 *f* A - men, a - - men, a - men! *dim.* *p*

E - wig - keit. A - - men, a - - men, a - men! *dim.* *p*

cresc. und von E - wig - keit zu E - wig - keit. A - - - - men! *dim.* *p*

im - mer - dar und von E - wig - keit zu E - wig - keit. A - - - - men! *sf*

The main alteration to the doxology of Psalm 43 was the rewriting of the ‘Amen’: in 1845, Mendelssohn eschewed the original contrapuntal ‘Amen’ that echoed the opening ‘Ehre sei dem Vater’ in favour of a layered chordal approach.⁴² (Example 2.10 (a) and (b))

⁴² This revised doxology was later transposed down a semitone into E major and incorporated into the doxology for Mendelssohn’s *Deutsche Liturgie* in 1846.

Example 2.10 (a): Psalm 43, bb. 132–142, first version

132

S1 A - men, a - - - men, a - - - - - men.

S2 A - men, a - - - men, a - - - - - men.

A1 A - men, a - - - - - men, a - - - - - men.

A2 A - men, a - - - - - men, a - - - - - men.

T1 A - men, a - - - - - men, a - - - - - men.

T2 A - men, a - - - - - men, a - - - - - men.

B1 A - men, a - - - - - men, a - - - - - men.

B2 A - men, a - - - - - men, a - - - - - men.

Example 2.10(b): Psalm 43, bb. 139–148, second version

139

S1 A - men, a - - - - - men.

S2 A - men, a - - - - - men.

A1 A - men, a - - - - - men.

A2 A - men, a - - - - - men.

T1 A - men, a - - - - - men.

T2 A - men, a - - - - - men.

B1 A - men, a - - - - - men.

B2 A - men, a - - - - - men.

Based on these observations regarding the nature of the changes Mendelssohn made to the two versions of Psalm 2 and Psalm 43, it is possible to arrive at some conclusions. Firstly, the level of detail involved in Mendelssohn's 1845 revisions indicates the extent to which he cared about the legacy of these pieces. The very fact that most of the changes made were on a minute detail suggests a tightening up of the musical writing and therefore it is likely that the composer viewed the revisions as improvements to the original compositions. Furthermore, the nature of the changes made frequently addressed the unity of music and text; invariably this connection was rendered stronger in the revised version. Although John Michael Cooper makes an interesting argument for the original versions of Psalms 2 and 43 as worthy compositions – and bearing in mind that neither version was published during the composer's lifetime – it can be concluded that the revised versions of both psalm settings represent a refinement of Mendelssohn's expression.

In Psalm 2 several sections of music, while not marked as recitative, imitate speech with their declamatory style. This syllabic style of composition prioritises the communication of ideas in the text – a principal concern for the transmission of the liturgy – and it is very likely that Mendelssohn conceived such exposed, plainsong-like phrases with a consciousness of the newly revised liturgy. Indeed, as James Garratt puts it, 'Mendelssohn's re-creation of the sound world of the Sistine Chapel is aided by the use of stylized plainchant'.⁴³ The following section examines this aspect of Mendelssohn's psalm settings, with particular reference to Psalm 2.

⁴³ Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination*, 86.

Much of the recitative-style writing in Psalm 2 is sung by the tenor and bass voices in a responsorial format, starting early in the setting with ‘laßt uns zereissen ihre Bande, und von uns werfen ihre Seile!’ (‘let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us’). These textual expressions of violence are suitably matched by the stark declamation of the tenor and bass voices in unison. In this phrase, Mendelssohn’s revision achieves a simplification of the melodic contour; while the first version centres around A, C sharp and D, emphasising the raised fourth and the tritone from G to C sharp, the 1845 revision dispenses with the potential distraction of chromaticism and dissonant melodic leaps, instead limiting the melodic activity to a simple G minor phrase. The less arresting melody ensures a focus on the text, and on a more pragmatic level, putting the phrase ending in a more central part of the male-voice range (rather than on the previous version’s high D) avoids any potential unwanted emphasis on the weak final syllable. Furthermore, by removing chromaticism from these very exposed, chant-like phrases, Mendelssohn was strengthening the direct reference to ancient psalmody, in which tritones and chromaticism did not feature. (Example 2.11 (a) and (b))

Example 2.11(a): Psalm 2, bb. 13–16, first version

13

S1

A1

T1 *f*
Las - set uns zer - rei - ßen ih - re Ban - de!

B1 *f*
Las - set uns zer - rei - ßen ih - re Ban - de!

S2

A2

T2 *f*
und von uns wer - fen ih - re Sei - le!

B2 *f*
und von uns wer - fen ih - re Sei - le!

Org

Example 2.11(b): Psalm 2, bb. 13–16, second version

13

S1

A1

T1 *f*
Laßt uns zer - rei - ßen ih - re Ban - de,

B1 *f*
Laßt uns zer - rei - ßen ih - re Ban - de,

S2

A2

T2 *f*
und von uns wer - fen ih - re Sei - le!

B2 *f*
und von uns wer - fen ih - re Sei - le!

At bar 32, another declamatory section imitates recitative: ‘Er wird einst mit ihnen reden in seinem Zorn / und mit seinem Grimm wird er sie schrecken’ (‘In wrath He shall speak / to vex them in His sore displeasure’). This time, the ‘recitative’ is sung in unison in both bass parts, with dramatic octave leaps matching the anger expressed in the text. Again, Mendelssohn made some refinements to the second version here, retaining a jagged dotted rhythm all the way to ‘Zorn’, which serves to emphasise this word (‘wrath’), whereas the previous version had a weaker ending, stopping at ‘reden’. Furthermore, the sopranos and altos of the second version augment this ‘wrath’ with their answering phrase in bars 32–34, where the soprano 1 part ascends the G melodic minor scale as far as a high F sharp on ‘Zorn’, leaving the listener in no doubt as to God’s wrath. (Example 2.12 (a) and (b))

The solo sections at ‘Aber ich habe meinen König eingesetzt’ (‘Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion’) are also recitative-like, albeit with a three-part homophonic texture.⁴⁴ Perhaps the most striking invocation of recitative occurs at the link between the third and fourth movements at bb.103–111: ‘so lasset euch nun weisen, ihr Könige’ (‘be wise now, therefore, O ye kings’), with its four recitative-like phrases divided amongst different sections of the choirs. Once more, this is executed with greater success in the revision, due to a few simple rhythmic adjustments and the resultant impression of a more seamless line between the phrases. Here, Mendelssohn employs the entire choir, using different voice parts to provide a sense of dialogue. (Example 2.13 (a) and (b))

⁴⁴ See Example 2.4(b), page 54.

Example 2.12(a): Psalm 2, bb. 31–34, first version

31

S1 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den

A1 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den

T1 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

B1 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

S2 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den

A2 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den

T2 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

B2 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

Org

Example 2.12(b): Psalm 2, bb. 30–34, second version

30

S1 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

A1 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

T1 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

B1 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn, und mit sei - nem Grimm

S2 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

A2 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

T2 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn,

B2 Er wird einst mit ih - nen re - den in sei - nem Zorn, und mit sei - nem Grimm

Example 2.13(a): Psalm 2, bb. 105–112, first version

105

p

S1 So las - set euch nun wei - sen, ihr Kö - ni - ge,

A1 So las - set euch nun wei - sen, ihr Kö - ni - ge,

T1

B1

S2 *p* und las - set euch züch - ti - gen, ihr

A2 *p* und las - set euch züch - ti - gen, ihr

T2

B2

Org *pp*

Ped.

108

p

Die - net dem Herrn mit Furcht,

p

Die - net dem Herrn mit Furcht,

Rich - ter auf Er - den.

Rich - ter auf Er - den.

p

und freu - et euch mit Zit - tern!

p

und freu - et euch mit Zit - tern!

Example 2.13(b): Psalm 2, bb. 104–111, second version

Andante *p* 104

S1 So las - set euch nun wei - sen, ihr Kö - ni - ge,
 A1 So las - set euch nun wei - sen, ihr Kö - ni - ge,
 T1
 B1
 S2 und las - set euch züch - ti - gen, ihr
 A2 und las - set euch züch - ti - gen, ihr
 T2
 B2

107

S1
 A1
 T1 *pp* Die - net dem Herrn mit Furcht
 B1 *pp* Die - net dem Herrn mit Furcht
 S2 Rich - ter auf Er - den.
 A2 Rich - ter auf Er - den.
 T2
 B2 *p* und freu - et euch mit Zit - tern!
 S1 *p* und freu - et euch mit Zit - tern!
 B2

Other noteworthy instances of the same idiom can be observed in Psalm 43, where the tenor and bass parts sing in syllabic unison for much of the setting. A more striking example still can be found in the opening of Psalm 22, where a bare and lonely tenor solo intonation, centring like plainchant on the fifth degree of the scale, matches perfectly the atmosphere of the text.⁴⁵ Later in the psalm, the influence of Mendelssohn's experience of Holy Week services at Rome's Sistine Chapel becomes clear; an extract from his letter of travel advice to Fanny on her 1839 trip to Rome is illuminating:

Holy Week; be as weary as you please during the whole chanting of the Psalms, it's no matter, but listen carefully when they intone the *last*, "Benedictus Dominus, Israel" – all four voices *unisono fortissimo* in D minor – it sounds very grand.⁴⁶

In Mendelssohn's Psalm 22, bars 72–80 exemplify this technique: the full choir is pitted against a solo quartet in this instance and, although the *unisono fortissimo* is in E minor, it would appear that this section of the psalm is indebted to Holy Week services at the Sistine Chapel. (Example 2.14) Indeed, he repeated this style in the dramatic central section of *Hear my Prayer*, based on Psalm 55, where the full unison choir responds *unisono fortissimo* to the solo soprano.⁴⁷ (Example 2.15)

⁴⁵ See Example 2.2, page 49.

⁴⁶ Letter of 14 September 1839 from Mendelssohn to Fanny Hensel in Paul & Carl Mendelssohn Bartholdy (eds.), *Letters from 1833 to 1847*, 170.

⁴⁷ See also Chapter Four, pp. 140–141.

Example 2.14: Psalm 22, bb. 72–84

72

S Solo macht, Sie teil-en mei-ne Klei-der un-ter sich,

A Solo macht, Sie teil-en mei-ne Klei-der un-ter sich,

T Solo macht, Sie teil-en mei-ne Klei-der un-ter sich,

B Solo macht, Sie teil-en mei-ne Klei-der un-ter sich,

S1,2 sie ha-ben mei-ne Hän-de und Fü -ße durch - gra ben, und wer-fen das Los um mein Ge-
sf p cresc. f

A1,2 sie ha-ben mei-ne Hän-de und Fü -ße durch - gra ben, und wer-fen das Los um mein Ge-
sf p cresc. f

T1,2 sie ha-ben mei-ne Hän-de und Fü -ße durch - gra ben, und wer-fen das Los um mein Ge-
sf p cresc. f

B1,2 sie ha-ben mei-ne Hän-de und Fü -ße durch - gra ben, und wer-fen das Los um mein Ge-
sf p cresc. f

78

— und wer-fen das Los um mein Ge-wand. Sie wer-fen das Los. A-ber du, Herr, sei nicht

— und wer-fen das Los um mein Ge-wand. Sie wer-fen das Los.

— und wer-fen das Los um mein Ge-wand. Sie wer-fen das Los.

— und wer-fen das Los um mein Ge-wand. Sie wer-fen das Los.

wand, und wer-fen das Los, das Los um mein Ge-wand.

wand, und wer-fen das Los, das Los um mein Ge-wand.

wand, und wer-fen das Los, das Los um mein Ge-wand.

wand, und wer-fen das Los, das Los um mein Ge-wand.

Example 2.15: *Hear my Prayer*, bb. 36–51

36 *Allegro moderato*

S Solo
The e - ne - my shou - teth, the god - less come fast!

S
The e - ne - my shou - teth, the god - less come

A
The e - ne - my shou - teth, the god - less come

T
The e - ne - my shou - teth, the god - less come

B
The e - ne - my shou - teth, the god - less come

Org
Allegro moderato
The e - ne - my shou - teth, the god - less come

43
I - ni - qui - ty, ha - tred, u - pon me they cast!

fast! I - ni - qui - ty, ha - tred, u - pon me they cast!

fast! I - ni - qui - ty, ha - tred, u - pon me they cast!

fast! I - ni - qui - ty, ha - tred, u - pon me they cast!

fast! I - ni - qui - ty, ha - tred, u - pon me they cast!

fast! I - ni - qui - ty, ha - tred, u - pon me they cast!

Mendelssohn's credentials as an oratorio composer are abundantly evident in his frequent employment of recitative-like singing. On one level, the direct expression of the text exemplified by the recitative style allowed the composer to fulfill his liturgical requirements as laid out by the Prussian *Agende*. This liturgically correct declamation of the text ensures, importantly, that the text retains primacy over the music. Furthermore, however – as is also the case in Mendelssohn's oratorios – the recitative provides a vital dialogue. Examples of this phenomenon abound: the solo tenor pitted against a *tutti* chorus in the opening of Psalm 22 (Example 2.16); the solo quartet against the rest of the choir, as in the central section of Psalm 22 (bb. 58–102) (Example 2.14); and the extended G major section of Psalm 2 (bb. 112–142) (Example 2.17), for instance. This dialogue serves two functions: to accentuate dramatic points in the text, and to vary the historical lens of the music.

Example 2.16: Psalm 22, bb. 1–21

Andante
pp

S1.2 Ich heu - le, a - ber mei - ne Hil - fe ist fern.

A1.2 Ich heu - le, a - ber mei - ne Hil - fe ist fern. **Recit. Solo**

T1.2 **Recit. Solo** Mein Gott, mein Gott, wa - rum hast du mich ver - las - sen? **Tutti** Ich heu - le, a - ber mei - ne Hil - fe ist fern. **Recit. Solo**

B1.2 Ich heu - le, a - ber mei - ne Hil - fe ist fern.

8 **Tempo**
pp

und des Nachts schwei - ge ich auch

und des Nachts schwei - ge ich auch

Gott, des Ta - ges ru - fe ich, so ant - wor - test du nicht, und des Nachts schwei - ge ich auch

und des Nachts schwei - ge ich auch

15 *cresc.* **p**

nicht. der du woh - nest un - ter dem Lo - be Is - ra - els.

nicht. *cresc.* **p**

nicht. **Solo** *cresc.* **Tutti** *cresc.* **p** der du woh - nest un - ter dem Lo - be Is - ra - els.

nicht. A - ber du bist hei - lig, der du woh - nest un - ter dem Lo - be Is - ra - els.

nicht. der du woh - nest un - ter dem Lo - be Is - ra - els.

Example 2.17: Psalm 2, bb. 112–142, second version

112 Solo *p* Tutti *p* Solo

S1 Küs - set den Sohn, daß er nicht zür - ne, und ihr um-kom-met auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den Sohn, daß er nicht zür -

A1 Küs - set den Sohn, daß er nicht zür - ne, und ihr um-kom-met auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den Sohn, daß er nicht zür -

T1 Küs - set den Sohn, daß er nicht zür - ne, und ihr um-kom-met auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den Sohn, daß er nicht zür -

B1 Küs - set den Sohn, daß er nicht zür - ne, und ihr um-kom-met auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den Sohn, daß er nicht zür -

S2 Küs - set den Sohn, und ihr um-kom-met auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den Sohn, daß er nicht zür -

A2 Küs - set den Sohn, Küs - set den Sohn, Küs - set den Sohn, Küs - set den Sohn,

T2 Küs - set den Sohn, Küs - set den Sohn, Küs - set den Sohn, Küs - set den Sohn,

B2 Küs - set den Sohn, Küs - set den Sohn, Küs - set den Sohn, Küs - set den Sohn,

121 *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *f*

S1 ne, und ihr um-kommt auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den Sohn, denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren-nen. A - ber

A1 ne, und ihr um-kommt auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den Sohn, denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren-nen. A - ber

T1 ne, und ihr um-kommt auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den Sohn, denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren-nen. A - ber

B1 ne, und ihr um-kommt auf dem We - ge. Küs - set den Sohn, denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren-nen. A - ber

S2 *p* *f* *dim.* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

S2 denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen, denn sein Zorn wird bald an-bren - nen.

A2 *p* *f* *dim.* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

A2 denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen, denn sein Zorn wird bald an-bren - nen.

T2 *p* *f* *dim.* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

T2 denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen, denn sein Zorn wird bald an-bren - nen.

B2 *p* *f* *dim.* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

B2 denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen, denn sein Zorn wird bald an-bren - nen.

Example 2.17 continued

128

wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en. A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau -
 wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en. A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau -
 wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en. A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau -
 wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en. A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau -

denn sein Zorn wird bald an-bren - nen!
 denn sein Zorn wird bald an-bren - nen!
 denn sein Zorn wird bald an-bren - nen!

136

en! A - ber wohl al - - len, die auf ihn trau - en. +Tutti
 en! A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - - len, die auf ihn trau - en. +Tutti
 en! A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - - len, die auf ihn trau - en. +Tutti
 en! A - ber wohl, a - ber wohl al - - len, die auf ihn trau - en. +Tutti

denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen. A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.
 denn sein Zorn wird bald an - bren - nen. A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.
 A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.
 A - ber wohl al - len, die auf ihn trau - en.

While recitative has been viewed as an important means for Mendelssohn to foreground the text, he also uses harmonic connections in these psalm settings as a form of ‘tonal’ word painting. The key relationships governing Psalm 2 are typical of the nineteenth-century proclivity for third-relations: G minor; E-flat major; C minor; and G minor/major (followed by the doxology in C major). Indeed, such third-relationships emphasise the link with the submediant key. Mendelssohn’s employment of the submediant – an instance of which can be found in each of the three psalms – is noteworthy insofar as it occurs at more intimate moments in the text, highlighting the personal faith of the individual Christian. In Psalm 2, bar 40, the text ‘Aber ich habe meinen König eingesetzt’ (‘but I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion’) marks the first occurrence of the first person, for which Mendelssohn appropriately employs solo voices in the submediant key, E-flat major.⁴⁸ (Example 2.4 (b))

An affecting shift to the submediant can also be found in Psalm 43 where, after a very decisive perfect cadence, *forte*, in D minor, B flat major suddenly and quietly – if briefly – asserts itself at the start of a chain of secondary dominants for ‘dir Gott auf dem Harfe ...’ (Example 2.18 (a)) The third psalm of the set, Psalm 22, withholds the submediant (C sharp minor) until the final moments of the setting: ‘Euer Herz soll ewiglich leben’ (‘Your heart shall live forever’) – where, in a simple four-part progression incorporating one of Mendelssohn’s trademark 6-5 chords, it provides a muted and personal promise of eternal life. Indeed, a glance at the last few lines of this psalm text might suggest a more bombastic setting, but Mendelssohn’s interpretation instead conveys a sense of hushed awe, implying that Mendelssohn

⁴⁸ This is followed by a personal declaration in E flat major: ‘Du bist mein Sohn’ (‘you are my son’).

was ever mindful of the liturgical setting in which the psalm would be sung.

(Example 2.18 (b))

Example 2.18(a): Psalm 43, bb. 67–80, second version

67 *p dolce*
S1 — mein Gott, dir, dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der
S2 dir, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der
A1 dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der
A2 — mein Gott, dir dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der
T1 — und dir Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, dir, Gott, auf der
T2 — und dir Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, dir, Gott, auf der
B1 Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, dir, Gott, auf der
B2 dir, Gott, dir, dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der

74 *dim.* *ritard.* **Allegro maestoso**
S1 Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott.
S2 Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott.
A1 Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott.
A2 Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott.
T1 Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott.
T2 Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott.
B1 Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott.
B2 Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott, dir, Gott, auf der Har - fe dan - ke, mein Gott.

Example 2.18(b): Psalm 22, bb. 130–151

Recit. Solo 130 Tutti Tempo *pp* Recit.

S1 und die nach dem Herrn fra-gen, wer-den ihn prei - sen; eu - er Herz soll e - wig-lich le - ben.

A1 eu - er Herz soll e - wig-lich le - ben.

T1 eu - er Herz soll e - wig-lich le - ben. Es wer-de ge-dacht al-ler

B1 eu - er Herz soll e - wig-lich le - ben.

S2 eu - er Herz soll e - wig-lich le - ben.

A2 eu - er Herz soll e - wig-lich le - ben.

T2 eu - er Herz soll e - wig-lich le - ben.

B2 eu - er Herz soll e - wig-lich le - ben.

138 Solo Tutti Tempo *pp*

daß sie sich zum Herrn be-keh - ren, und vor ihm an - be - ten al - le Ge-schlech-ter der

und vor ihm an - be - ten al - le Ge-schlech-ter der

Welt En - de, und vor ihm an - be - ten al - le Ge-schlech-ter der

und vor ihm an - be - ten al - le Ge-schlech-ter der

und vor ihm an - be - ten al - le Ge-schlech-ter der

und vor ihm an - be - ten al - le Ge-schlech-ter der

und vor ihm an - be - ten al - le Ge-schlech-ter der

und vor ihm an - be - ten al - le Ge-schlech-ter der

Example 2.18(b) continued

144 *cresc.* *f* *dim.* *pp*

Hei - den. Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

cresc. *f* *dim.* *pp*

Hei - den. Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

cresc. *f* *dim.* *pp*

Hei - den. Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

cresc. *f* *dim.* *pp*

Hei - den. Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

cresc. *f* *dim.* *pp*

Hei - den. Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

cresc. *f* *dim.* *pp*

Hei - den. Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

Another more obvious third-relationship – that between a minor key and its relative major – is repeatedly used in all three psalm settings to emphasise textual subtleties. In the case of this harmonic relationship, the relative major can be viewed as a symbol of holiness or heaven. In bar 17 of Psalm 2, B-flat major replaces gloomy G minor for the words ‘Aber der im Himmel wohnt’ (‘he that sitteth in the heaven’) (Example 2.19 (a)); the use of the full double choir in homophony provides a wonderful contrast to the previous two exposed phrases (‘Lasst uns zereissen ihrer Bande ...’ (Example 2.11)), and the sumptuous, richly-spread B flat major chords appear to word-paint the warm glow of heaven with the use of the relative major. Similarly, the darkness of E minor opens out into G major in Psalm 22, bar 16 for ‘aber du bist Heilig’ (‘but you are holy’) (Example 2.19 (b)). The most dramatic example, however, can be found in Psalm 43, at the words ‘Sende dein Licht und deine Wahrheit’ (‘Send your light and your truth’), where the first instance of four-

part homophony coincides with the arrival of F major (after D minor) in an Enlightenment-style realisation harking back to Haydn's *Creation*.⁴⁹ (Example 2.19

(c))

Example 2.19(a): Psalm 2, bb. 17–20

17 *f*

S1 A - ber der im Him - mel woh - net, la - chet ih - rer,

A1 *f* A - ber der im Him - mel woh - net, la - chet ih - rer,

T1 *f* A - ber der im Him - mel woh - net, la - chet ih - rer,

B1 *f* A - ber der im Him - mel woh - net, la - chet ih - rer,

S2 *f* A - ber der im Him - mel woh - net, la - chet ih - rer,

A2 *f* A - ber der im Him - mel woh - net, la - chet ih - rer,

T2 *f* A - ber der im Him - mel woh - net, la - chet ih - rer,

B2 *f* A - ber der im Him - mel woh - net, la - chet ih - rer,

Example 2.19(b): Psalm 22, bb. 16–21

16 *cresc.* *p*

S1.2 der du woh - nest un - ter dem Lo - be Is - ra - els.

A1.2 *cresc.* *p* der du woh - nest un - ter dem Lo - be Is - ra - els.

T1.2 *Solo cresc.* *Tutti cresc.* *p* A - ber du bist hei - lig, der du woh - nest un - ter dem Lo - be Is - ra - els.

B1.2 *cresc.* *p* der du woh - nest un - ter dem Lo - be Is - ra - els.

⁴⁹ Leon Botstein has written insightfully about Mendelssohn's relationship to Enlightenment philosophy, particularly with regard to *Die erste Walpurgisnacht* and *St Paul*; see 'Songs without Words', 566–7.

Example 2.19(c): Psalm 43, bb. 21–29

21

S1 *f* Sen - de dein Licht und dei - ne Wahr - heit, daß sie mich lei - ten zu dei - nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge,

S2 *f* Sen - de dein Licht und dei - ne Wahr - heit, daß sie mich lei - ten zu dei - nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge,

A1 *f* Sen - de dein Licht und dei - ne Wahr - heit, daß sie mich lei - ten zu dei - nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge,

A2 *f* Sen - de dein Licht und dei - ne Wahr - heit, daß sie mich lei - ten zu dei - nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge,

T1 *f* Sen - de dein Licht! _____ und dei - ne Wahr - heit, _____ daß sie mich lei - ten _____ zu dei - nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge,

T2 *f* Sen - de dein Licht! _____ und dei - ne Wahr - heit, _____ daß sie mich lei - ten _____ zu dei - nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge,

B1 *f* Sen - de dein Licht! _____ und dei - ne Wahr - heit, _____ daß sie mich lei - ten _____ zu dei - nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge,

B2 *f* Sen - de dein Licht! _____ und dei - ne Wahr - heit, _____ daß sie mich lei - ten _____ zu dei - nem hei - li - gen Ber - ge,

A particularly Schubertian tendency can be noted in Mendelssohn's use of the tonic or parallel major at points of resolution; here, in the form of the conclusions of all three psalms (disregarding their respective doxologies) on the tonic major. One of the most striking examples of this is in Psalm 2, where a solo quartet sings a setting of the text 'Küsst den Sohn' ('Kiss ye the Son'). The G major tonality and its chorale-style execution create a sense of simplicity and directness that mirrors the text, implying a sense of breaking free from the dominance of G minor throughout the setting. On the second iteration of this theme, the solo quartet is underpinned by a menacing unison line, *tutti*, in the altos, tenors and basses: 'denn sein Zorn wird bald anbrennen' ('for His wrath will soon be kindled'), which attempts to tip the music into E minor, but the optimism of the text and major tonality eventually win out: 'aber wohl, die auf ihn trauen' ('blessed are they that put their trust in Him'). (Example 2.17) The contrast between solo and *tutti*, in addition to that between

major and minor, heightens the sense of dialogue and tension. Similar instances of the use of the tonic major can be found in Psalms 43 and 22; in all three psalms, the tonic major coincides with the common textual realisation that all who trust and praise God shall be blessed. Garratt argues that this culminatory use of the tonic major separates the psalms from the old Italian style:

The varied tonal schemes present in the *Drei Psalmen* indicate that Mendelssohn's desire to conform with the Palestrinian ideal did not involve a restriction of large-scale tonal relationships. Each of the psalms follows a trajectory from tonic minor to major; it is the use of the tonic major as a culminatory gesture – an essential part of Mendelssohn's style – that serves most clearly to distance these psalms from their old Italian models.⁵⁰

Indeed, the occurrence of the tonic major is a typically nineteenth-century harmonic characteristic that can be observed, for example, in many of Schubert's *Lieder*. What has been overlooked, however, is the way in which the harmonic mechanism employed by Mendelssohn in these pieces is linked to moments of textual lucidity. Mendelssohn's predecessors in the second half of the nineteenth century continued to use the tonic major to highlight moments of spiritual epiphany; see, for example, the 'Et vitam venturi saeculi' in the *Credo* of Rheinberger's Mass in E flat '*Cantus Missae*', Op.109, where C minor is replaced by a joyful and bright C major symbolising the promise of eternal life. (Example 2.20) Brahms adopted the same tonal strategy at the textual turning point of his setting of Psalm 13, 'Herr, wie lange willst du mich' ('How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord?'): the words 'Ich hoffe aber darauf' ('But I have trusted in thy mercy'). (Example 2.21) Thus, Mendelssohn's sacred music set a standard by which engagement with the meaning of the text extended far beyond mere word painting; through careful thought behind his tonal plans and key relationships, he sought to emphasise spiritual truths on a deeper

⁵⁰ Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination*, 86.

semantic level in a uniquely nineteenth-century harmonic language. This can be viewed as an instance of the composer's originality; one in which he actively re-created church music, breathing spirituality and freshness into the musical and liturgical conventions of the time.

Example 2.20: Rheinberger: *Credo*, bb. 114–125

114 *ff* *pp*
 S1 et ex - spe - cto re - sur - re - cti - o - nem mor - tu -
 A1 et ex - spe - cto re - sur - re - cti - o - nem mor - tu -
 T1 et ex - spe - cto re - sur - re - cti - o - nem mor - tu -
 B1 et ex - spe - cto re - sur - re - cti - o - nem mor - tu -
 S2 to - rum, re - sur - rec - ti -
 A2 to - rum, re - sur - rec - ti -
 T2 to - rum, re - sur - rec - ti -
 B2 to - rum, re - sur - rec - ti -
p *p* *p* *p*

119 *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*
 o - - - - rum. et
 o - - - - rum. et
 o - - - - rum. et
 o - rum. et
 o - nem mor - tu - o - - - - rum. et
 o - nem mor - tu - o - - - - rum. et
 o - nem mor - tu - o - - - - rum. et
 o - nem mor - tu - o - - - - rum. et
 o - nem mor - tu - o - - - - rum. et

Example 2.20 continued

122

The musical score consists of six systems, each with two staves (treble and bass clef). The lyrics are: vi - tam ven - tu - ri sae - - - cu - li, repeated across all systems. The first system features a melisma on the word 'sae' in the first staff, indicated by a long horizontal line above the notes. The second system has a similar melisma in the second staff. The third system has a melisma in the third staff. The fourth system has a melisma in the fourth staff. The fifth system has a melisma in the fifth staff. The sixth system has a melisma in the sixth staff.

vi - tam ven - tu - ri sae - - - cu - li,
vi - tam ven - tu - ri sae - - - cu - li,
vi - tam ven - tu - ri sae - - - cu - li,
vi - tam ven - tu - ri sae - - - cu - li,
vi - tam ven - tu - ri sae - - - cu - li,
vi - tam ven - tu - ri sae - - - cu - li,

Example 2.21: Brahms: Psalm 13, bb. 60–77

60 *f*

S1 Daß nicht mein Feind rüh - me, er sei mein mäch - tig wor - den, und mei - ne Wi - der -

S2 Daß nicht mein Feind rüh - me, er sei mein mäch - tig wor - den, und mei - ne

A Daß nicht mein Feind rüh - me, er sei mein mäch - tig wor - den,

Org *f*

65

sa - cher sich nicht freu - en, daß ich nie - der - lie - ge.

Wi - der - sa - cher sich nicht freun, daß ich nie - der - lie - ge.

und mei - ne Wi - der - sa - cher sich nicht freun, daß ich nie - der - lie - ge.

mf

Example 2.21 continued

70 *mf espr.*

Ich hof - fe a - ber dar - - -

Ich hof - fe a - ber dar - - -

Ich hof - fe a - ber dar - - -

74

auf, daß du so gnä - dig bist;

auf, daß du so gnä - dig bist;

auf, daß du so gnä - dig bist;

2.4 Symphonic Subterfuge versus Economy of Expression: Psalms 98 and 22

While the tonal plan for Mendelssohn's setting of Psalm 98 follows a similar pattern to that of Psalm 2, founded upon third-relationships: D-b-G(-D), it has more in common with his large-scale choral-orchestral psalm settings than with the Three Psalms, Op.78. The composer's gradual introduction of instruments reflecting the sequence of instruments listed in the text of Psalm 98 has been well documented:

As if to circumvent those restrictions, Felix now attempted an ambitious introtit psalm with orchestral accompaniment. On Christmas Day he was still composing this new setting (of Psalm 98), rushed into rehearsal the next day, and premiered at the New Year's Day service ... According to Fanny, Psalm 98 was marred by the sermon – "miserable beyond description" – of the minister F. A. Strauss, who appears to have held strong views about the role of music in the liturgy ... Psalm 98 led Felix to develop an especially cunning strategy. For the first three verses he limited himself to eight-part choral writing ... But the imperatives of the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses – to make joyful noises to the Lord with instruments – induced him to add a harp, trombones, and trumpets in a discrete accompaniment to the chorus ... The imagery of the seventh and eighth verses, in which the roaring sea and rejoicing hills join the praise, inspired a full orchestral accompaniment ...⁵¹

That the rather grand scale of this piece did not meet with the approval of Minister Strauss might be seen as unsurprising given the austerity of expression that was intrinsic to the quietistic Prussian liturgical revival; that Mendelssohn followed this psalm setting with a rendition of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus from *Messiah* may have compounded such a reaction.⁵² Considering Mendelssohn's frequent insistence upon a restrained, *a cappella* style of sacred music as being the most liturgically appropriate, it can be asked why, then, he employed a full orchestra for this psalm setting. It would appear that the composer, faced with a decision between

⁵¹ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 465–466.

⁵² Brodbeck, 'Winter of Discontent', 16.

faithfulness to the liturgy and faithfulness to the text, the latter ultimately won out. A choral depiction of instruments without musical illustration thereof must have seemed like a bridge too far for the composer. Therefore, although this piece stands out as something of an affront to the type of music expected by the Prussian liturgical revivalists – and indeed, even by Mendelssohn himself – it is a further testament to the composer’s commitment to the communication of the Word. Botstein’s allusion to the connection between music and its emotional effect provides a thought-provoking summation of the phenomenon:

Mendelssohn held fast – and this again recalls the example of J. S. Bach – to a belief in the magical connection, within a theological context, between the logic and grammar (so to speak) of music, despite its nonlinguistic essence, and its unique emotional effect. Music, despite its autonomy, possessed certain similarities to language, particularly in the communication of religious belief. If God’s word had not only a philosophical but also a mystical dimension, and if language could generate true feelings of religious faith (which was Schleiermacher’s view), then it was possible that music could help convey religious faith in partnership with language.⁵³

If Psalm 98 represents a daring choice by Mendelssohn in favour of communication of the text, his Psalm 22, which fluently negotiates the divide between historical and ‘modern’ forms of sacred expression, represents textual clarity at its zenith. It is significant that this setting is the only one of these three psalms not to be revised by the composer. In a sense, Psalm 22 stands in opposition to the bombast of Psalm 98, and a musical parallel to this textual contrast can be easily observed in Mendelssohn’s text setting. One of its most remarkable features is its lack of either text repetition or melismatic writing. ‘Hat er *Lust* zu ihm’ ([let him deliver him], if he delight in him’) provides one of the very few examples of both text repetition and

⁵³ Botstein, ‘Songs without Words’, 570.

melismatic writing together. James Garratt has made an insightful comparison of this melisma (on ‘Lust’) with the cadential writing of Allegri’s *Miserere*, where the same kind of ornamental melismatic cadence is found – albeit harmonically more conventional in the seventeenth-century language.⁵⁴ (Example 2.22 (a) and (b))

Example 2.22(a): Psalm 22, bb. 52–56

Example 2.22(a) shows a musical score for four vocal parts: Soprano 1 (S1.2), Alto 1 (A1.2), Tenor 1 (T1.2), and Bass 1 (B1.2). The lyrics are: "hat er Lust zu ihm, hat er Lust zu ihm, hat er Lust zu ihm." The score includes melismatic passages on the word "Lust" in the final measure of each line, marked with dynamics like *f* and *sf*. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature.

Example 2.22(b): Allegri: *Miserere*, bb. 7–12

Example 2.22(b) shows a musical score for five vocal parts: Soprano 1 (S1), Soprano 2 (S2), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The lyrics are: "mi - se - ri - cor - di - am, mi - se - ri - cor - di - am tu - am." The score includes melismatic passages on the word "am" in the final measure of each line. The music is in a key with two flats (Bb) and a common time signature.

⁵⁴ Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination*, 87.

The removal of melismatic writing and textual repetition results in a potency of expression at a local level, where an interval as small as a semitone becomes a phrase-defining event as, for example, in the tenor solo in the opening section. (Example 2.16) This apparent simplicity serves to underline the frailty of the human condition as expressed in the pleading of the text; in an environment where repetition is minimised, every syllable is made to count, and the meaning becomes all the more immediate.

In conclusion, whether employing the large-scale dramatic power of symphonic forces or the more economical expression of text afforded by an *a cappella* choir, Mendelssohn's chief concern was textual expression. This priority, ever-present throughout his *oeuvre*, had become pronounced and refined by this point in his career.

2.5 Conclusion

The semantic connections between music and text, as has been shown, are emphasised by Mendelssohn's choice of musical idiom in his settings. The composer's knowledge of and facility with the music of the past meant that he had a wealth of styles at his fingertips – styles that he embraced consciously and then employed through the nineteenth-century filter of his own voice. Krummacher views this practice as a hindrance, and something that restricted Mendelssohn:

Like no other composer before him, Mendelssohn was steeped in the music of the past. He integrated the standards of the Classical era into his orchestral and chamber works; and in his vocal and organ music, he struggled with the self-imposed responsibility he had discovered in the legacy of J.S. Bach. Thus in his vocal music – from the lied to the oratorio – we find

him struggling to free himself from an overriding obligation to the text and to incorporate this text into a more purely musical framework.⁵⁵

However, the originality with which Mendelssohn approached the music of the past suggests a fresh engagement with and employment of this music, rather than a desire to free himself from its shackles. This new approach has been examined in the present chapter, insofar as Mendelssohn consciously employed recitative or chant-like writing throughout these settings and also emulated Palestrinian homophony, in addition to his debts to the music of J. S. Bach, much-discussed in other literature. However, the ‘voices’ of some less obvious composers can also be identified; for instance, Gabrieli’s dance-like double-choir music is invoked in Psalm 2 for the text ‘Du sollst sie mit eisernem Zepter zerschlagen!’ (‘Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron’) with its archaic triple time-signature of 3/2. The employment of the double choir in question-and-answer format – rather than merely echoing each other – recalls Gabrieli’s innovative approach to the potential of multiple choirs. (Example 2.23 (a)) A similar triple-time effect can be observed in Psalm 43 in the 3/8 section, where the dialogue is instead between male and female choral quartets. (Example 2.23 (b))

⁵⁵ Friedhelm Krummacher, ‘Mendelssohn’s Late Chamber Music: Some Autograph Sources Recovered’ in Jon Finson and R. Larry Todd (eds.), *Mendelssohn and Schumann* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1984), 74.

Example 2.23(a): Psalm 2, bb. 64–71

63 *Con moto* *f*

S1 *f* tum. Du sollst sie mit ei - ser - nem Zep - ter zer -

A1 *f* tum. Du sollst sie mit ei - ser - nem Zep - ter zer -

T1 *f* tum. Du sollst sie mit ei - ser - nem Zep - ter zer -

B1 *f* tum. Du sollst sie mit ei - ser - nem Zep - ter zer -

S2 tum.

A2 tum.

T2 tum.

B2 tum.

67

S1 schla - gen!

A1 schla - gen!

T1 schla - gen!

B1 schla - gen!

S1 *f sf* Wie Töp - fe sollst du sie zer - bre - - chen.

A1 *f sf* Wie Töp - fe sollst du sie zer - bre - - chen.

T1 *f sf* Wie Töp - fe sollst du sie zer - bre - - chen.

B1 *f sf* Wie Töp - fe sollst du sie zer - bre - - chen.

Example 2.23(b): Psalm 43, bb. 37–48

37 *Andante*

daß ich hin-ein - ge - he zum Al - tar Got - tes, zu dem Gott,

daß ich hin-ein - ge - he zum Al - tar Got - tes, zu dem Gott,

daß ich hin-ein - ge - he zum Al - tar Got - tes, zu dem Gott,

daß ich hin-ein - ge - he zum Al - tar Got - tes, zu dem Gott,

daß ich hin-ein - ge - he zum Al - tar Got - tes, zu dem Gott,

daß ich hin-ein - ge - he zum Al - tar Got - tes, zu dem Gott,

daß ich hin-ein - ge - he zum Al - tar Got - tes, zu dem Gott,

daß ich hin-ein - ge - he zum Al - tar Got - tes, zu dem Gott,

The choral-orchestral setting of Psalm 98 is cast in the mould of Handel’s great oratorio choruses, serving as an outward manifestation of Mendelssohn’s strong link with England and his admiration of the rhythmic, textural and harmonic features of Handel’s music. The text setting of ‘Sende dein Licht’ in Psalm 43 has already been likened above to Haydn’s *Creation* and ‘Let there be light’, albeit in a different tonal context using the relative major, F major, instead of Haydn’s tonic major, C major. At the heart of Mendelssohn’s approach to musical languages is a stylistic eclecticism utterly in tune with the mindset of the nineteenth century, and also with the reforms to the Prussian liturgy with its mixture of older styles and forms of worship. This is why Mendelssohn could freely vary the historical style of the music: it was, to a great extent, a feature of the new liturgy. What is remarkable is how easily Mendelssohn could move back and forth between the present (contemporary

idioms) and the past. James Garratt's theory on translation is a valuable way of viewing the eclectic mixture of styles that exists in the Berlin Cathedral choral music, and the concept of translation will be explored further with regard to *Sechs Sprüche zum Kirchenjahr* in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three

Forms of Expression in *Sechs Sprüche zum Kirchenjahr*, Op.79

3.1 Mendelssohn's *Sechs Sprüche* in Context

The *raison d'être* of the *Sechs Sprüche* stemmed from one of most significant reforms that King Friedrich Wilhelm IV brought to the Prussian liturgy: the singing of the verse before the Alleluia. Four of the six pieces (*Weihnachten*, *Am Neujahrstage*, *In der Passionszeit*, and *Am Karfreitage*)¹ were written for the liturgical occasions implied by their titles, during Mendelssohn's tenure as Royal Director of Church Music in Berlin. After the composer sought release from his duties at the Cathedral in October 1844, he held a more convenient position in Berlin that required him to fulfil certain royal commissions, thereby relieving him of the responsibility of regular cathedral services. It was on this basis that the last two of the *Sechs Sprüche* (*Im Advent* and *Am Himmelfahrtstage*) were commissioned by the King in October 1846. It is pertinent to mention that the first edition of this set of pieces was marked '*Für achtstimmigen Chor beim Gottesdienst zu singen*': thus, Mendelssohn set the texts for eight-part choir (SSAATTBB) rather than the antiphonal double choir (SATB SATB) he had employed for Psalms 2 and 22. Like Psalm 43 (*Richte mich, Gott*) and the earlier setting from *Drei Kirchenmusik*, Op.23 (*Mitten wir im Leben sind*), the dispensation of the voices in this format permits Mendelssohn to exploit the possibility of juxtaposition of tessitura, allowing for polarisation of male and female voices.

¹ Christmas, New Year, Passiontide and Good Friday.

The order of composition of the *Sechs Sprüche* follows the church year, with settings for Ascension and Advent added in 1846.² However, when all six pieces were published posthumously by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1849, they appeared in a random order (in a liturgical sense). A likely explanation for the published order concerns key relationships, governed by the typically nineteenth-century concept of the six pieces being performed together in cyclical order. The key sequence of the published Op.79 alternates between major and minor, unlike the liturgical order, which has three minor-key pieces in a row (see Fig 1: Tonal Sequence of *Sechs Sprüche zum Kirchenjahr*, Op. 79).

Fig. 1: Tonal Sequence of *Sechs Sprüche zum Kirchenjahr*, Op. 79

(a) Order of Publication	
<i>Weihnachten</i>	G major
<i>Am Neujahrstage</i>	D minor
<i>Am Himmelfahrtstage</i>	B flat major
<i>In der Passionszeit</i>	D minor
<i>Im Advent</i>	G major
<i>Am Karfreitage</i>	E minor
(b) Liturgical Order	
<i>Im Advent</i>	G major
<i>Weihnachten</i>	G major
<i>Am Neujahrstage</i>	D minor
<i>In der Passionszeit</i>	D minor
<i>Am Karfreitage</i>	E minor
<i>Am Himmelfahrtstage</i>	B flat major

The publishers may have wished to effect an agreeable and smooth transition between keys, in order to avoid the tritone relationship between E minor (Good Friday) and B flat major (Ascension), or the repetition of keys (G major for both

² Although the settings *Im Advent* and *Am Himmelfahrtstage* were composed two years later, all six pieces will be considered in this chapter since they were grouped together as a six-piece unit by Mendelssohn.

Advent and Christmas, or D minor for both New Year and Passiontide). Furthermore, the sequence of the published version of Op.79 alternates between livelier and more sombre numbers, thus providing greater contrast and variety between consecutive pieces. Although the *Sprüche* were not originally conceived as a musical unit, there is evidence to suggest that Mendelssohn revised the set for publication in 1846, but for unknown reasons subsequently withdrew them. R. Larry Todd further suggests that the liturgical order is the authentic version.³

On the one hand, because the *Sechs Sprüche* were composed above all with a specifically liturgical purpose in mind, it is surprising that Mendelssohn would have authorised a performance order which meant that Ascension was placed between New Year and Lent. Indeed, several musical links reinforce this theory: the fact that Mendelssohn set the Advent piece in G major almost three years later, and included similar motivic material in both pieces suggests a possible wish on his part to pair it with the Christmas piece in the same key. On the other hand, if Mendelssohn intended the pieces to be performed as a cycle – as is suggested by his revision of the entire set of six for publication together – then it is likely that he would have favoured a smoother tonal transition between pieces. This is also consistent with the ‘triadic’ tonal plans displayed in the Op.78 Psalms. Furthermore, the pieces would never have been performed as a unit in a liturgical context in any case, as they are intended for six different liturgical dates; therefore, considerations of tonal architecture and textual contrast may have governed Mendelssohn’s conception of the six pieces as a cycle.

³ ‘Curiously, the first edition reshuffled the pieces into an incongruous order, with Ascension Day preceding Passion Week, and Advent before Good Friday, a realignment Felix surely would have rejected. But when placed in the proper sequence, the opus coheres with considerably greater clarity.’ R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 530.

3.2 Compositional Restriction: Textu(r)al Clarity

Taken as a whole, it would appear that Mendelssohn had a clear brief with regard to text setting in his *Sechs Sprüche*. Throughout the six pieces, the delivery of the text is strikingly syllabic, with melismatic treatment reserved almost exclusively for cadential points and passing notes, most noticeably in the Alleluia that concludes each work. This style of syllabic delivery accommodates the liturgical requirements perfectly, ensuring that the verse before the Alleluia is comprehensible when sung. By placing the text in the spotlight, Mendelssohn thereby rendered the music subordinate to the communication of the Christian message (though he did allow for a little relaxation with regard to this rule in the easily distinguishable Alleluia, as will be examined later in the present chapter). Of course, such syllabic treatment of the text also necessitated a textural restriction. In order to ensure intelligibility of the text, Mendelssohn employed homophonic textures for the majority of these pieces.

Three of the *Sprüche* veer briefly into polyphony (*Im Advent*, *Weihnachten* and *Am Himmelfahrtstage*). This may be partly due to seasonal or liturgical considerations – namely, that the joyful nature of these liturgical seasons permits a slightly freer approach to the text. Another pertinent factor, however, is the chronological positioning with regard to the genesis of the three works in question. The two pieces for Advent and Ascension were composed at a remove, when Mendelssohn was no longer involved in the day-to-day running of cathedral music in Berlin. By now only expected to fulfil certain royal commissions, perhaps the composer felt that he could be slightly more adventurous with regard to texture. However, these pieces remain largely syllabic and homophonic; any polyphony occurs on a limited scale.

However, the three minor-key pieces are more austere and minimalist in expressive approach. While two of these were written for Lenten services (Passiontide and Good Friday), the New Year piece is more impervious to a seasonal explanation. The atmosphere of joy and renewal normally associated with the New Year – and indeed, with this text – appears to be somewhat at odds with this very sustained and understated setting in D minor.⁴ The syllabic delivery employed here is consistent with the demands of the liturgy: that the text should be intelligible to the congregation at all times. That Mendelssohn chose above all to prioritise textual clarity, resulting in a simple directness in the delivery of the Word, reinforces the theory that the text was his compositional priority.

An example of this particular style of homophonic, syllabic text setting is *In der Passionszeit*, which pares down texture and rhythm to a minimum, ensuring clear delivery of the text. *In der Passionszeit* was written on 14 February 1844, the same month Mendelssohn composed Psalms 22 and 43. The delivery of this very short verse is simple, following a pattern of call-and-response with solo quartet and double choir. Musical activity is reduced considerably here on a number of levels. Firstly, the rhythm consists almost entirely of crotchets, with the occasional quaver where the text rhythm demands, and minims for emphasis at cadential points or syllabic stresses. This rhythmic uniformity, in conjunction with the homophony throughout the piece, lends a chant-like clarity to the text. Furthermore, any movement of pitch is a large-scale event, with the voice leading placing strict demands on the voices. (Example 3.1)

⁴ ‘Lord God, thou art our Refuge now and always. Before the mountains were made, and the earth and the world created, thou art God from eternity to eternity. Alleluia.’

Example 3.1: *In der Passionszeit*

Adagio

S1 Solo
Herr, ge-den-ke nicht uns-rer Ü-bel-ta - ten, und er - bar - me dich un - se-res E - lends. Herr, der du un-ser

S2
und er - bar - me dich un - se-res E - lends.

A1 Solo
Herr, ge-den-ke nicht uns-rer Ü-bel-ta - ten, und er - bar - me dich un - se-res E - lends. Herr, der du un-ser

A2
und er - bar - me dich un - se-res E - lends.

T1 Solo
Herr, ge-den-ke nicht uns-rer Ü-bel-ta - ten, und er - bar - me dich un - se-res E - lends. Herr, der du un-ser

T2
und er - bar - me dich un - se-res E - lends.

B1 Solo
und er - bar - me dich un - se-res E - lends. Herr, der du un-ser

B2
und er - bar - me dich un - se-res E - lends.

10

S1 Tutti *pp*
Hei-land bist, ste - he uns bei, er - lö - se uns und ver - gib uns un - se-re Sün - den um der Herr - lich-keit

S2 Tutti *pp*
er - lö - se uns und ver - gib uns un - se-re Sün - den um der Herr - lich-keit

A1 Tutti *pp*
Hei-land bist, ste - he uns bei, er - lö - se uns und ver - gib uns un - se-re Sün - den um der Herr - lich-keit

A2 Tutti *pp*
er - lö - se uns und ver - gib uns un - se-re Sün - den um der Herr - lich-keit

T1 Tutti *pp*
Hei-land bist, ste - he uns bei, er - lö - se uns und ver - gib uns un - se-re Sün - den um der Herr - lich-keit

T2 Tutti *pp*
er - lö - se uns und ver - gib uns un - se-re Sün - den um der Herr - lich-keit

B1 Tutti *pp*
Hei-land bist, ste - he uns bei, er - lö - se uns und ver - gib uns un - se-re Sün - den um der Herr - lich-keit

B2 Tutti *pp*
er - lö - se uns und ver - gib uns un - se-re Sün - den um der Herr - lich-keit

Example 3.1 continued

18

dei - nes Na - mens wil - len. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

dei - nes Na - mens wil - len. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

dei - nes Na - mens wil - len. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

dei - nes Na - mens wil - len. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

dei - nes Na - mens wil - len. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

dei - nes Na - mens wil - len. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

dei - nes Na - mens wil - len. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

dei - nes Na - mens wil - len. Hal - le - lu - ja!

For example, in bars 1–3 (which feature solo soprano, alto and tenor) the tenor line provides the only melodic movement in the first bar, the result being that the soprano’s leap of a fourth between bars 1–2 – and the alto’s two-note melismas in bars two and three – represent important musical events in comparison. Similarly, the crescendo onto a widely-spread D minor chord that characterises the eight-part choir entry in bar 4 gives the impression of a large-scale contrast, when presented next to the stark economy of musical material heard in the opening statement. This solo-*tutti*, call-and-response is repeated, but the *tutti* entry represents a departure from the 4+4 bar phrase pattern: the phrase is extended, denying the listener’s expectation of regularity, before building to the biggest contrast of the piece: a *forte* marking on the word ‘*Herrlichkeit*’.

Overall, the harmonic activity is reminiscent of Palestrina's homophonic music: the slow rate of harmonic change and the generally harmony-driven character of the music strongly echo the golden age of choral composition for the Sistine Chapel. Both the call-and-response format and the simplicity of the musical language chosen by Mendelssohn are entirely in character with the Prussian liturgical revival, but just occasionally, Mendelssohn the early Romantic composer emerges, for example, in the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* of the dynamic levels shaping the central extended phrase. However, there appears to be an overall obedience to the demands of a liturgical setting, where music is subordinate to the communication of the Christian message.

Given that these 'Sprüche' were the short texts before the Alleluia and that, before the 1843 reform of the liturgy, they had been spoken by the priest rather than sung by the choir, Mendelssohn's text setting is accordingly cautious. If the simplicity of *In der Passionszeit* aids directness of communication from choir to congregation, the setting of *Am Karfreitage*, written four days later on 18 February 1844 for the Good Friday service, represents a further move in this direction. (Example 3.2) In this eight-part verse, Mendelssohn eliminates all the textural contrast provided by the solo-*tutti* alternation found in *In der Passionszeit* and opts instead for *tutti* homophonic chords for the entirety of the verse. The resultant setting is remarkably austere: syllabic and static once more in the use of rhythm, with only a hint of melisma on the closing repetitions of 'Halleluja'. This syllabic delivery again aids intelligibility of the text for the congregation; however, as will be demonstrated later in the chapter, Mendelssohn also exploits the expressive potential of the eight-part chorus while retaining this clarity of text.

Example 3.2: Am Karfreitage

Sostenuto e grave
pp *sempre p*

S1 *pp* *sempre p*
Um uns-rer Sün-den wil-len hat sich Chri-stus er-nied-ri-get und ist ge-hor-sam ge-wor-den bis zum To-de am Kreu-ze;

S2 *pp* *sempre p*
Um uns-rer Sün-den wil-len hat sich Chri-stus er-nied-ri-get und ist ge-hor-sam ge-wor-den bis zum To-de am Kreu-ze;

A1 *pp* *sempre p*
Um uns-rer Sün-den wil-len hat sich Chri-stus er-nied-ri-get und ist ge-hor-sam ge-wor-den bis zum To-de am Kreu-ze;

A2 *pp* *sempre p*
Um uns-rer Sün-den wil-len hat sich Chri-stus er-nied-ri-get und ist ge-hor-sam ge-wor-den bis zum To-de am Kreu-ze;

T1 *pp* *sempre p*
Um uns-rer Sün-den wil-len hat sich Chri-stus er-nied-ri-get und ist ge-hor-sam ge-wor-den bis zum To-de am Kreu-ze;

T2 *pp* *sempre p*
Um uns-rer Sün-den wil-len hat sich Chri-stus er-nied-ri-get und ist ge-hor-sam ge-wor-den bis zum To-de am Kreu-ze;

B1 *pp* *sempre p*
Um uns-rer Sün-den wil-len hat sich Chri-stus er-nied-ri-get und ist ge-hor-sam ge-wor-den bis zum To-de am Kreu-ze;

B2 *pp* *sempre p*
Um uns-rer Sün-den wil-len hat sich Chri-stus er-nied-ri-get und ist ge-hor-sam ge-wor-den bis zum To-de am Kreu-ze;

9

f
da - rum hat Gott ihn er - hö - het und ihm ei - nen Na - men ge - ge - ben, der ü - ber

f
da - rum hat Gott ihn er - hö - het und ihm ei - nen Na - men ge - ge - ben, der ü - ber

f
da - rum hat Gott ihn er - hö - het und ihm ei - nen Na - men ge - ge - ben, der ü - ber

f
da - rum hat Gott ihn er - hö - het und ihm ei - nen Na - men ge - ge - ben, der ü - ber

f
da - rum hat Gott ihn er - hö - het und ihm ei - nen Na - men ge - ge - ben, der ü - ber

f
da - rum hat Gott ihn er - hö - het und ihm ei - nen Na - men ge - ge - ben, der ü - ber

f
da - rum hat Gott ihn er - hö - het und ihm ei - nen Na - men ge - ge - ben, der ü - ber

f
da - rum hat Gott ihn er - hö - het und ihm ei - nen Na - men ge - ge - ben, der ü - ber

Example 3.2 continued

The image shows a musical score for a choral piece, labeled 'Example 3.2 continued'. It consists of eight staves of music, arranged in four pairs. The top pair of staves is for Soprano and Alto voices, the middle pair for Tenor and Bass voices, and the bottom pair for the Piano accompaniment. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are 'al - le Na - men ist. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!'. The score includes dynamic markings of *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The piano part features a simple harmonic accompaniment with a steady bass line and chords in the right hand.

An interesting parallel emerges upon consideration of the non-liturgical choral music Mendelssohn composed during the same period. In the earlier incarnation of Mendelssohn's role at the Prussian court – immediately prior to his appointment as Kapellmeister in October 1841 – the composer set music for a production of Sophocles' play, *Antigone*, at the request of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Mendelssohn initially considered creating an imitation of ancient Greek music in terms of instrumentation and recitative-like choral singing, but soon discarded this idea, realising that it would be difficult to achieve in a convincing manner.⁵ In his discussion of the background to this period in Mendelssohn's career, Peter Mercer-Taylor briefly discusses the music for *Antigone* with a certain degree of reservation:

⁵ For further background information on Mendelssohn's initial deliberations on how to set this Greek tragedy to music, see Todd, *A Life in Music*, 421, and Jason Geary, 'Converting the Pagans: Mendelssohn, Greek Tragedy, and the Christian Ethos' in Nicole Grimes and Angela Mace (eds.), *Mendelssohn Perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, forthcoming, 2012). I am grateful to the editors and the author for allowing me access to this article in advance of its publication.

Impressive it is, but principally as a demonstration of what Mendelssohn could do, as it were, with one hand tied behind his back. In keeping with the aim of poetic clarity, he abandoned altogether the imitative counterpoint that animated the great bulk of his choral music, opting for the restraints of a homophonic, declamatory style. At the same time, though music for male chorus and orchestra might have been rich with cultural resonance at the time (witness Mendelssohn's own 'Gutenberg' *Festgesang* of the previous year and the proliferation of convivial societies dedicated to the performance of songs for male chorus) the music for Sophocles' on-stage Chorus feels texturally colourless today ... in general, even at its most dramatic moments, the music for *Antigone* tends to make us aware of the tightly circumscribed rhetorical limits within which Mendelssohn was composing.⁶

However, Mercer-Taylor's astute evaluation of the potential limitations presented by Mendelssohn's declamatory writing for voices does not appear to give consideration to the level of freedom and inventiveness with which Mendelssohn exploits the parameters of his Greek chorus. Here it alternates between solos, single lines, four- and eight-part textures, its textual proliferation driven by the demands of the text. Although the music for *Antigone* is indeed syllabic and declamatory in its delivery of the text, it displays a striking vision and imagination for the Greek drama driven entirely by the meaning of the words themselves. Monika Hennemann posits a view of the music for *Antigone* (and the later incidental music for *Oedipus at Colonus* in 1845) as representative of a new flexibility in Mendelssohn's style:

His classical education well equipped him to enter into the antique world of Sophocles' dramas by direct acquaintance with the verse rhythms of the original Greek. It is the attempt to imitate these verse rhythms – in both the German translation and the music – that give Mendelssohn's work its unique flavor. One fortunate consequence of this approach is that it tends to demand irregularity of phrase length, and of accent within phrases, thus avoiding the over-reliance on symmetrical four-bar phrases for which Mendelssohn has often been criticized ... In this music Mendelssohn most closely approaches the freedom of declamation

⁶ Peter Mercer-Taylor, *The Life of Mendelssohn* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 169.

of Berlioz, or even the mature Wagner, although he would no doubt have deprecated either comparison.⁷

Thus, the limitation described in Mercer-Taylor's view of *Antigone* can alternatively be equated to a certain freedom of expression, at least from Hennemann's perspective. This textural freedom, insofar as it relates to the *Sechs Sprüche*, is discussed below in the present chapter. However, neither commentator relates this question of texture in the incidental music to the roughly contemporaneous choral music for Berlin Cathedral. Although the parallels in style could be described as circumstantial – given that both presented a specific set of compositional demands particular to the performance setting – a shift can be observed in Mendelssohn's choral style at this time. As has been argued, the Berlin Cathedral period in his choral writing witnessed a desire on the composer's part to highlight textual delivery that went beyond his expertise at adapting to the requirements of individual commissions. Thus, Mendelssohn's so-called limitations were by no means confined to the domain of liturgical music; the homophonic, declamatory style he employed for the *Sechs Sprüche* (and other Berlin Cathedral music) had its precedent in his earlier works, with the common aim of textual clarity. Restricted, then, is perhaps not the ideal word with which to describe these homophonic textures; Mendelssohn's late choral music is inseparably linked to its text to the extent that it mirrors a quasi-Platonic ideal where music without text is an impossibility.⁸ A quotation from Mendelssohn's letter of 21 October 1841 to Ferdinand David regarding *Antigone* exemplifies this attitude to text: 'The words of all these choruses are to this day so genuinely musical, and yet so different from each other, that no man could wish

⁷ Monika Hennemann, 'Felix Mendelssohn's Dramatic Compositions: from Liederspiel to *Lorelei*' in Peter Mercer-Taylor (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 227.

⁸ For a more detailed discussion of this matter, see James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 109–110.

anything finer for his composition'.⁹ The incidental music for *Antigone* also provides an important point of comparison with the Berlin Cathedral music in relation to the concept of translation, which will be discussed below.

3.3 Mendelssohn's 'Translation'

Mendelssohn's vision ensured that Sophocles' drama was conveyed successfully to nineteenth-century German audiences. Indeed, Mendelssohn felt a responsibility to translate the cultural language of ancient Greece via the medium of his music. Jason Geary has shown how Greek tragedy was used as a vehicle for the propagation of Christian culture, and indeed, this phenomenon can be viewed as another of the many ways Mendelssohn affirmed his credentials as a *Neuchrist*.¹⁰ By ensuring clarity in his text setting, Mendelssohn very deliberately rendered the Greek tragedy accessible to a nineteenth-century German audience, for whom this genre was relatively alien. Thus, as Geary and Hennemann have suggested further, Mendelssohn was translating the cultural language of ancient Greece into one intelligible to modern German audiences through the medium of his music. Hennemann takes this a step further, casting Mendelssohn in the role of the Greek chorus:

By reflecting the play's emotions in the music (his usual approach to vocal composition), Mendelssohn himself became a commentator on the text, thus fulfilling a function similar to that of the ancient Greek chorus.¹¹

⁹ Letter from Mendelssohn to Ferdinand David in Paul & Carl Mendelssohn Bartholdy (eds.), trans. Lady Wallace, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy from 1833 to 1847* (London: Longman, 1864), 254.

¹⁰ For further details on nineteenth-century German views regarding the cultural patrimony of Ancient Greece, see Geary, 'Converting the Pagans'. Geary suggests that *Antigone* 'can be viewed in relation to the Christian ethos surrounding the performance of Greek tragedy at the Prussian court of Friedrich Wilhelm IV.'

¹¹ Hennemann, 'Felix Mendelssohn's Dramatic Compositions', 226.

This compositional construction mirrors the role of the chorus in Mendelssohn's oratorios, *St Paul* and *Elijah*. By endowing the chorus with this important function, Mendelssohn provided a direct reference back to the ancient Greek chorus, imbuing the music with several layers of meaning – not least, the commentary of both chorus and composer upon the action. In effect, what Mendelssohn attempted here and in his oratorios was an act of cultural translation from antiquity to modernity – from ancient Greece to nineteenth-century Germany. In this light, Mendelssohn's role as 'translator' will now be examined with regard to the music of Palestrina.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Prussian liturgical revivalists viewed the music of the Sistine Chapel as the most correct form of church music.¹² Homophonic music by Palestrina, such as the *Improperia*, was the model to which the clergy aspired, rather than the imitative polyphonic works founded upon Fuxian contrapuntal principles for which Palestrina is better known today.¹³ The ideal music for worship was thus achieved through a style of writing that was governed by harmonic considerations; as E. T. A. Hoffmann attests:

Without adornment and without the impetus of melody, chord follows upon chord; most of them are perfect consonances, whose boldness and strength stir and elevate our spirits with inexpressible power ... Palestrina's simple, dignified works are conceived in the highest spirit of piety and love and proclaim godliness with power and splendour ... The movement of the individual parts recalls plainsong; rarely do they exceed the compass of a sixth, and never does an interval occur that is difficult to pitch or, as they say, does not lie in the throat. It goes without saying that Palestrina, following the practice of the time, wrote only for

¹² See Chapter Two, page 37.

¹³ James Garratt provides a helpful outline of this distinction in the introduction to his monograph, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination*, 2–3.

voices, with no instrumental accompaniment. Praise of the highest and holiest should flow straight from the human breast, without any foreign admixture or intermediary.¹⁴

In a letter to his friend, Pastor Bauer, Mendelssohn remarked that the music of the Sistine Chapel was the most liturgically appropriate.¹⁵ However, as Garratt and others have shown, the idealisation of Palestrina's music was a nationwide phenomenon that corresponded with the nineteenth-century growth of historical awareness that was not specific to Mendelssohn; rather, it was part of a wider interest in the music of the past that championed the supremacy of vocal music over instrumental music, and the rather nebulous idea of spiritual content in music over artistic content.¹⁶ Post-Reformation religious divisions were transcended in the Palestrina revival, despite Carl von Winterfeld's attempt to provide a Protestant substitute for Palestrina in the form of Johannes Eccard.¹⁷ The interdenominational aura of the new Berlin services would have appealed to Mendelssohn given that he showed sympathy for the Deutschkatholische reform movement of the 1840s, and recognised the necessity of religious renewal and reconciliation for broader social change.

The likelihood that Mendelssohn was consciously incorporating elements of Palestrina's style into his Berlin Cathedral music has been much discussed, and indeed has been used as a criticism of the composer's music as being over-reliant upon the music of earlier masters. However, as noted in Chapter One, James

¹⁴ David Charlton (ed.) (trans. Martyn Clarke), *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: 'Kreisleriana', 'The Poet and the Composer', Music Criticism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 357–358.

¹⁵ See Chapter Two, page 42.

¹⁶ Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination*, 64.

¹⁷ Carl Georg Vivigens von Winterfeld (1784–1852), jurist and historian. An exploration of Winterfeld's views and his historical importance with regard to the Prussian liturgical revival, including his championing of the music of Johannes Eccard, can be found in Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination*, 93–98.

Garratt's views on translation theory provide an alternative and potentially more flexible interpretation of Mendelssohn's historical orientation.¹⁸ In his examination of Mendelssohn's *Drei Psalmen*, Op.78, Garratt presents the concept of a plurality of musical languages present in the music; that is, the voice of Mendelssohn, the translator, alongside what he terms as the original author – in this case, Palestrina (and also, to a lesser extent here, J. S. Bach). Garratt argues that translation theory can help accommodate the presence of several musical languages in these psalms:

Translation, the idea of a musical work as a 'translating text' containing a dialogue between two musical languages, provides a concept, a body of terms, and a practical tool for discussing an important and relatively neglected part of Mendelssohn's output ... Viewing a significant proportion of Mendelssohn's works in terms of translation brings us closer to an appreciation of their essential nature, allowing us to regard them not as imitative oddities somehow divorced from the rest of his output but as re-creative, transformative interpretations of the music that he most valued. Translation can therefore be viewed as one of the most original aspects of Mendelssohn's creativity.¹⁹

The advantage of using translation theory here is that it frees Mendelssohn's music from the undesirable baggage associated with the terms historicism, revisionism and imitation. Indeed, it sheds new light on what has tended to be seen as clichéd and conventional in Mendelssohn. Although many have criticised Mendelssohn's music as being derivative, Garratt argues persuasively for Mendelssohn's originality via this process of translation: 'one of the most original aspects of Mendelssohn's creativity.'²⁰ It is in this fashion that Mendelssohn emerges as a quintessentially Romantic composer – given that the Romantics saw one of the primary purposes of translation as being centred on the desire 'to increase the significance and the

¹⁸ James Garratt, 'Mendelssohn's Babel: Romanticism and the Poetics of Translation', *Music and Letters* 80 (1999), 35.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

expressiveness of one's own language'.²¹ John Michael Cooper reinforces Garratt's argument that Mendelssohn was innovative:

Moreover, some scholars have argued (drawing on considerations including compositional process, musical form and genre, contemporary awareness of and assumptions about the historical repertoires that were the subjects of these problematical allusions, and of course the composer's correspondence itself) that the historicizing gestures in Mendelssohn's music were by no means stylistic reversions or complacent accommodations of musical convention. Rather, they represented a kind of engagement, a challenge to contemporary performers and listeners. In the eyes of Mendelssohn's contemporaries, such interpretive allusions were acts of translation, which, in the early nineteenth century, was by no means the artistically unimposing and largely utilitarian sort of discourse that it is now considered to be, but a poetic act of the highest order ... the chorales, fugues, and *stile antico* references in his music emerge as gestures that are crucial conveyors of meaning and instigators of and participants in a dialogic process that was, if anything, radically modern rather than reactionary in its aesthetic claims.²²

As has been shown in Chapter One, many of Mendelssohn's earlier choral works bear the hallmarks of an apprentice learning his trade, insofar as they are heavily influenced by the music that Mendelssohn was absorbing at the Singakademie at that time (in particular, that of Fasch, Zelter, and J. S. Bach).²³ In the works for Berlin Cathedral, however, Mendelssohn had become fully versed in these earlier styles and – adeptly and consciously – filtered them through his own distinctively Romantic voice into his liturgical works. His position with regard to the use of historical styles was thus one of innovation and creativity. Taking this a step further, it can be argued

²¹ Wilhelm von Humboldt, introduction to *Aeschylus Agamenon: metrisch übersetzt von Wilhelm von Humboldt*, Berlin, 1816; taken from Lefevre, *Translating Literature*, 41; quoted in Garratt, 'Mendelssohn's Babel', 46, n61.

²² John Michael Cooper, 'Knowing Mendelssohn: A Challenge from the Primary Sources', *Notes* 61 (2004), 68.

²³ Chapter One, pp. 19–20.

that Mendelssohn laid the ground for Brahms's much-lauded remaking of the music of the past. What may appear on the surface as a confusion of styles, or even a cacophony of different voices producing 'mixed messages', demonstrates instead a fluent ability to translate the music of the past via the syntax of the present.

3.4 'Mixed Messages'

The view of Mendelssohn the early Romantic composer, whose music bears such an intimate relationship with the music of the past, is something of a conundrum with which many commentators have grappled; indeed, there is considerable fuel for future debate in the area of stylistic influence. With regard to Mendelssohn's *Sechs Sprüche zum Kirchenjahr*, it has already been shown how a striking textural restriction in these pieces was not only influenced by the nineteenth-century German idealisation of the so-called golden age of composition represented by Palestrina, but also a parallel reverence towards this music that pervaded the liturgical practices of both Catholic and Protestant churches in North and South Germany alike. This restriction provides a platform for textual clarity – apparently mirrored in other liturgical, quasi-liturgical and non-liturgical works by Mendelssohn – that suggests a focus upon direct communication of the text as one of the composer's central compositional concerns in his choral works. The extent to which Mendelssohn's musical language lay in the music of the past is difficult to quantify and, while the concept of translation partially accommodates the composer's historicism, his credentials as a nineteenth-century composer must also be considered alongside his historical orientation. The idea of Mendelssohn simultaneously operating on various levels, incorporating past and present languages and thus producing purposefully 'mixed messages', will be considered in the following part of the current chapter.

Am Karfreitage provides an exemplar of these so-called mixed messages where, on the one hand, block-like chords echo Palestrinian homophony (with syllabic delivery of the text lending the music a sense of restraint), while, on the other, Mendelssohn explores other conduits through which to convey his essentially Romantic sensibility. Indeed, it can be observed that Mendelssohn employs a harmonic syntax that is entirely in line with the language of the early nineteenth century. Tension is created through small, but significant, shifts in voice leading. The first two bars, for instance, present a closed-position E minor chord in bar 1, which becomes a 6/4/2 chord in bar 2 when the second bass part drops a step. (Example 3.2) The word at this point is ‘*Sünden*’ – the instability of the seventh chord perhaps symbolising the errant ways of sin. A progression of seventh chords in bars 5–7 point again to Mendelssohn’s trademark harmonic language in response to the text: ‘und ist gehorsam geworden bis zum Tode am Kreuze’ (‘even to accepting Death on a cross’), with the tension of these unresolved harmonies further intensified by the restraint of the *sempre piano* marking, even though the texture here would signify likely expansion. This sense of restraint bestows even greater impact on the sudden B minor *forte* in bar 9, where the message of the text shifts from one of pessimism and darkness to hope and salvation: ‘darum hat Gott ihn erhöht, / und ihm einen Namen gegeben, der über alle Namen ist’ (‘God has raised him up / and given him a Name which is above all names’). Although the harmony in this statement of optimism comprises primary triads, the progression is unpredictable – especially apparent in the sudden A major to A minor shift in bars 11–12. This abrupt change can be interpreted as a dialogue between darkness and light, finally epitomised in the two closing ‘*Halleluja*’s: the first a bright *forte* in C major (the submediant), yielding to the second: a resigned, *piano*

return to the darkness of E minor. While, on one level, Mendelssohn was complying with the demands laid out by King William Frederick IV and the clergy of Berlin Cathedral in terms of supplying a simple, homophonic delivery of the Christian text, the sharp contrasts and rich harmony are indicative of a distinctly nineteenth-century musical sensibility. The use of early Romantic syntax was therefore central to Mendelssohn's means of expression, insofar as it coexisted comfortably with Palestrinian homophony.

Paradoxically, it is precisely with regard to texture that Mendelssohn demonstrates his standing as an innovative composer of the early Romantic period. Even within the confines of textural restriction outlined earlier, he finds ways to vary the musical fabric: a skill exemplified in part by the use of contrasting solo quartets with *tutti*, unison *tutti* and eight-part chordal declarations in some of the *Sechs Sprüche*. For instance, *Am Neujahrstage* sees Mendelssohn exploring the expressive potential of eight-part choral writing by employing a variety of textures, beginning with the potent tension of unison voices and opening out into harmony on 'unsre Zuflucht' ('our refuge'), before dispersing into eight individual, overlapping statements of 'ehe denn die Berge worden' ('Before the mountains were made') from bar 6. These statements build harmonically from unison to thirds, to triads to seventh chords and on to the tension inherent in 9–8 suspensions, building to a quasi-orchestral climax over a Neapolitan harmony moving between German and French augmented sixth chords, and resolving to D major (the dominant of the subdominant). The final, understated *pianissimo* of the conclusion provides just a hint of melisma in the alto line: 'bist du Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit' ('you are God from eternity to

eternity’). This alternation of unison, independent contrapuntal lines and homophonic statements gives a sense of variety to the texture here. (Example 3.3)

Example 3.3: *Am Neujahrstage*

Andante
p

S1 Herr Gott, du bist uns-re Zu-flucht für und für.

S2 Herr Gott, du bist uns-re Zu-flucht für und für.

A1 Herr Gott, du bist uns-re Zu-flucht für und für.

A2 Herr Gott, du bist uns-re Zu-flucht für und für.

T1 Herr Gott, du bist uns-re Zu-flucht für und für. E - he denn die Ber - ge

T2 Herr Gott, du bist uns-re Zu-flucht für und für. E - he denn die Ber - ge wor - den, e -

B1 Herr Gott, du bist uns-re Zu-flucht für und für. E - he denn die Ber - ge wor -

B2 Herr Gott, du bist uns-re Zu-flucht für und für. E - he denn die

10 *p* *cresc.* *f* *pp*
E - he denn die Ber - ge wor-den, und die Er - de und die Welt er-schaf-fen wor - den, bist du

p *cresc.* *f* *pp*
E - he denn die Ber - ge wor-den, und die Er - de und die Welt er-schaf-fen wor - den, bist du

p *cresc.* *f* *pp*
E - he denn die Ber - ge wor-den, und die Er - de und die Welt er-schaf-fen wor - den, bist du

p *cresc.* *f* *pp*
E - he denn die Ber - ge wor-den, und die Er - de und die Welt er-schaf-fen wor - den, bist du

p *cresc.* *f* *pp*
E - he denn die Ber - ge wor-den, und die Er - de und die Welt er - schaf-fen wor - den, bist du

p *cresc.* *f* *pp*
- he, e he denn die Ber - ge wor-den, und die Er-de und die Welt er - schaf-fen wor - den, bist du

p *cresc.* *f* *pp*
den, e - he denn die Ber - ge wor-den, und die Er-de und die Welt er - schaf-fen wor - den, bist du

p *cresc.* *f* *pp*
Ber - ge, e - he denn die Ber - ge wor-den, und die Er-de und die Welt er - schaf-fen wor - den, bist du

Example 3.3 continued

19

Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. E-he denn die Welt, die Welt erschaffen

Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. E-he denn die Welt, die Welt erschaffen

Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. E-he denn die Welt, die Welt erschaffen

Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. E-he denn die Welt, die Welt erschaffen

Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. E-he denn die Berge worden und die Welt, die Welt erschaffen

Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. E-he denn die Berge, e-he denn die Welt erschaffen

Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. E-he denn die Berge, e-he denn die Welt erschaffen

Gott von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. E-he denn die Berge, e-he denn die Welt erschaffen

28

wor-den, bist du Gott von Ewigkeit zu

wor-den, bist du Gott von Ewigkeit zu

wor-den, bist du Gott von Ewigkeit zu

wor-den, bist du Gott von Ewigkeit zu

wor-den, bist du Gott von Ewigkeit zu

wor-den, bist du Gott von Ewigkeit zu

wor-den, bist du Gott von Ewigkeit zu

wor-den, bist du Gott von Ewigkeit zu

Example 3.3 continued

34

The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble, consisting of eight staves. The lyrics are: "e - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!". The score is divided into two systems of four staves each. The first system includes dynamics *f* and *p*. The second system includes dynamics *f* and *p*. The music is in a minor key and features a mix of vocal lines and accompaniment.

However, it is also interesting to view this feature in light of Mendelssohn's preoccupation with large-scale orchestral textures. In the same way in which he had used quasi-choral textures before in his orchestral music (for example, in the 'Italian' and 'Reformation' symphonies),²⁴ the range and expanse of these otherwise texturally limited pieces lends a quasi-orchestral stature to these pieces, perhaps comparable to the orchestral texture that Mendelssohn so wished to employ. Indeed, he found further outlets for this range and expanse in the last two *Sprüche – Im Advent* and *Am Himmelfahrtstage*; the extent to which he gave free rein to his vocal textures in these pieces will be expanded below. Firstly, however, a case will be made for mixed messages in the 'Hallelujah's.

²⁴ R. Larry Todd, 'On Mendelssohn's Sacred Music, Real and Imaginary' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Essays* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 104, 109.

The liturgical necessity that demanded each of the *Sechs Sprüche* finish with a statement of ‘*Halleluja*’ coincided happily with Mendelssohn’s characteristically Romantic aspiration toward a cyclic conception of this set of pieces. As Todd writes:

Each piece concluded with a short, cadential “Alleluia”, reflecting the placement of the verse before the Alleluia in the *Agende* of 1829 (still observed by Friedrich Wilhelm IV) and also Felix’s interest in imbuing the music with a cyclic, timeless quality.²⁵

Each of the ‘*Halleluja*’s represents a denial of expectations, in some form; even in the most austere pieces, Mendelssohn finds a means of manipulating the listener’s expectations. In *Am Karfreitage* (as mentioned above), the juxtaposition of two sharply contrasting ‘*Halleluja*’s, in C major and E minor, respectively, comes as something of a surprise. (Example 3.2) *In der Passionszeit* is no less surprising: following an exclusively homophonic texture, the closing ‘*Halleluja*’s break forth into imitative polyphony, providing the sole instance of textual repetition in that piece. (Example 3.1)

However, the most elaborate setting of the ‘*Halleluja*’ can be found in *Weihnachten*. It has already been observed that, compared to some of the later *Sprüche*, one of the striking features of this piece is the comparative freedom with which Mendelssohn employs text and musical texture, contrasting imitative counterpoint with homophonic declarations.²⁶ For example, after its unison female-voice opening and tenor-bass homophonic affirmation, this setting bursts forth with eight-part polyphony, making the text less intelligible, and giving a rich variety of musical texture even within the opening bars. This in turn serves to emphasise and reinforce the impact of the ensuing declaration: ‘He has revealed his righteousness unto the

²⁵ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 530.

²⁶ David Brodbeck has also drawn attention to this in ‘A Winter of Discontent: Mendelssohn and the *Berliner Domchor*’ in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 27, n43, where he compares Op.79/2 with Op 79/4.

world' ('Er hat seine Gerechtigkeit die Welt offenbaret'), with its widely-spread eight-part homophonic chords. In the case of its 'Halleluja', *Weihnachten* employs by far the most repetition of this word, alternating it between two choirs, and embedding it in the middle of the verse, unlike any of the other five pieces. (Example 3.4)

The presence of chromatic colour in the final bars of *Im Advent* and *Am Himmelfahrtstage* adds a richness that alludes to Romantic orchestral textures, one which would never have been present in Palestrina's style. Thus, the 'Halleluja's, insofar as they provide a link between the *Sechs Sprüche*, are a further instance of Mendelssohn's mixed messages, distant from the sixteenth century in their reinforcement of characteristically nineteenth-century syntactical elements. (Examples 3.5 and 3.6)

Example 3.4: *Weihnachten*

Allegro moderato

f

S1 Froh - lok - ket, ihr Völ - ker auf Er - den, und prei - set Gott! Der Hei - land ist er - schie - nen, ist er -

S2 Froh - lok - ket, ihr Völ - ker auf Er - den, und prei - set Gott! Der Hei - land ist er - schie - nen, der Hei - land ist er -

A1 Froh - lok - ket, ihr Völ - ker auf Er - den, und prei - set Gott! Der Hei - land ist er - schie - nen, der Hei - land ist er -

A2 Froh - lok - ket, ihr Völ - ker auf Er - den, und prei - set Gott! Der Hei - land ist er - schie - nen, der Hei - land ist er -

T1 und prei - set Gott! Froh - lok - ket, ihr Völ - ker auf Er - den! Der Hei - land ist er -

T2 und prei - set Gott! Froh - lok - ket, ihr Völ - ker auf Er - den! Der Hei - land ist er -

B1 und prei - set Gott! Froh - lok - ket, ihr Völ - ker auf Er - den! Der Hei - land ist er -

B2 und prei - set Gott! Froh - lok - ket, ihr Völ - ker auf Er - den! Der Hei - land ist er -

8

schie - nen, den der Herr ver - hei - Ben. Er hat sei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit der Welt of - fen - ba - ret. Hal - le - lu - ja,

schie - nen, den der Herr ver - hei - Ben. Er hat sei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit der Welt of - fen - ba - ret. Hal - le -

schie - nen, den der Herr ver - hei - Ben. Er hat sei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit der Welt of - fen - ba - ret. Hal - le - lu - ja,

schie - nen, den der Herr ver - hei - Ben. Er hat sei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit der Welt of - fen - ba - ret. Hal - le -

schie - nen, den der Herr ver - hei - Ben. Er hat sei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit der Welt of - fen - ba - ret. Hal - le - lu - ja,

schie - nen, den der Herr ver - hei - Ben. Er hat sei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit der Welt of - fen - ba - ret. Hal - le -

schie - nen, den der Herr ver - hei - Ben. Er hat sei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit der Welt of - fen - ba - ret. Hal - le - lu -

schie - nen, den der Herr ver - hei - Ben. Er hat sei - ne Ge - rech - tig - keit der Welt of - fen - ba - ret. Hal - le -

Example 3.4 continued

17

Hal-le-lu-ja! Er hat sei-ne Ge-rech-tig-keit der Welt of-fen-ba-ret. Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, lu-ja! Er hat sei-ne Ge-rech-tig-keit der Welt of-fen-ba-ret. Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja! Er hat sei-ne Ge-rech-tig-keit der Welt of-fen-ba-ret. Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja! Er hat sei-ne Ge-rech-tig-keit der Welt of-fen-ba-ret. Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, lu-ja! Er hat sei-ne Ge-rech-tig-keit der Welt of-fen-ba-ret. Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, lu-ja!

26

Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja! Froh-lok-et, ihr Völ-ker auf Er-den. Hal-le-lu-ja! lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja! Froh-lok-et, ihr Völ-ker auf Er-den. Hal-le-lu-ja! -ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja! Froh-lok-et, ihr Völ-ker auf Er-den. Hal-le-lu-ja! lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja! Froh-lok-et, ihr Völ-ker auf Er-den. Hal-le-lu-ja! lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja! Froh-lok-et, ihr Völ-ker auf Er-den. Hal-le-lu-ja! ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, ja, Hal-le-lu-ja! ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, Hal-le-lu-ja, ja, Hal-le-lu-ja!

Example 3.5: *Im Advent*

Andante

mf
 S1 Las - set uns froh - lok - ken, las - set uns froh - lok - ken, las - set uns froh - lok -

S2 Las - set uns froh -

mf
 A1 Las - set uns froh - lok - ken, las - set uns

A2 Las - set uns froh - lok - ken,

mf
 T1 Las - set uns froh - lok - ken, las - set uns froh - lok - ken, las - set uns froh - lok - ken, las - set uns froh -

T2

mf
 B1 Las - set uns froh - lok - ken, las - set uns,

B2 Las - set uns froh - lok - ken, las - set uns froh - lok - ken, uns froh -

8

pp *f* *f*
 - ken, las - set uns froh lok - ken, es na-het der Hei - land, es na-het der Hei - land, den Gott uns ver-

pp *f* *f*
 lok - ken, las-set uns froh - lok - ken, es na-het der Hei - land, es na-het der Hei - land, den Gott uns ver-

pp *f* *f*
 froh - lok - ken, uns froh - lok - ken, es na-het der Hei - land, es na-het der Hei - land, den Gott uns ver-

pp *f* *f*
 las-set uns, las-set uns froh - lok - ken, es na-het der Hei - land, es na-het der Hei - land, den Gott uns ver-

mf *pp* *f* *f*
 lok - ken, las - set uns froh - lok - ken, es na-het der Hei - land, es na-het der Hei - land, den Gott uns ver-

pp *f* *f*
 Las - set uns froh - lok - ken, froh-lok - ken, es na-het der Hei - land, es na-het der Hei - land, den Gott uns ver-

pp *f* *f*
 - las-set uns froh - lok - ken, uns froh - lok - ken, es na-het der Hei - land, es na-het der Hei - land, den Gott uns ver-

lok - ken, uns froh - lok - ken, es na-het der Hei - land, es na-het der Hei - land, den Gott uns ver-

Example 3.5 continued

16 *mf* *cresc.*

hei - ßen. Der. Na - me des Herrn sei ge-lo - bet in E - wig - keit, in E - wig - keit, in E - wig - keit.

mf *cresc.*

hei - ßen. Der. Na - me des Herrn sei ge-lo - bet in E - wig - keit, sei ge-lo - bet in E - wig - keit.

hei - ßen, den Gott uns ver - hei - ßen, uns ver hei - ßen. Der Na - me des Herrn sei ge - *cresc.*

hei - ßen, uns ver - hei - ßen. Der. Na - me des Herrn sei ge - lo - bet in *cresc.*

mf *cresc.*

hei - ßen, uns ver - hei - ßen. Der. Na - me des Herrn sei ge-lo - bet in E - wig - keit in E - wig - keit, *cresc.*

hei - ßen, uns ver - hei - ßen. Der Na - me des Herrn sei ge - lo - bet in *cresc.*

hei - ßen, uns ver - hei - ßen. Der. Na - me des Herrn sei ge-lo - bet in E - wig - keit, ge - lo - bet in *mf* *cresc.*

hei - ßen, den Gott uns ver - hei - ßen. Der. Na - me des Herrn sei ge - lo - bet in

23

keit, in E - wig - keit ge - lobt; der Na - me des Herrn sei ge -

keit, in E - wig - keit, der Na - me des Herrn sei ge - lo - bet

lo - bet in E - wig - keit, der Na - me des Herrn sei ge - lo - bet in E - wig - keit, ge -

E - wig - keit, in E - wig - keit, der Na - me des Herrn sei ge - lo - bet, ge -

der Na - me des Herrn sei ge - lo - bet in E - wig - keit, der Na - me des Herrn sei ge -

E - wig - keit, in E - wig - keit, sei ge - lo - bet in E - wig - keit, sei ge -

E - wig - keit, in E - wig - keit, der Na - me des Herrn sei ge -

E - wig - keit, in E - wig - keit ge - lobt, der Na - me des Herrn sei ge - lo - bet in

Example 3.5 continued

28

lo - bet in E - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

in E - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

lo - bet in E - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

lo - bet in E - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

lo - bet in E - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

lo - bet in E - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

lo - bet in E - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

lo - bet in E - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

E - wig - keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!

Example 3.6: *Am Himmelfahrtstage*

Allegro maestoso e moderato

f

S1 Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich - keit,

S2 Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich - keit,

A1 Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich - keit,

A2 Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich - keit,

T1 Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, o Herr, ü ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig

T2 Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich - keit,

B1 Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich - keit, herr - schest

B2 Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich - keit,

9

herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von

herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit zu E - wig

herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit zu E -

herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit zu E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit.

keit, herr - schest du, herr - schest du, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du, herr - schest

herr - schest du von E - wig - keit zu E - wig - keit, herr - schest du, herr - schest du von E - wig

du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig

herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit,

Example 3.6 continued

17

E - wig - keit. Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich -
 keit, herr - schest du. Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich -
 - wig - keit. Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich -
 Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich -
 du von E - wig - keit zu E - wig keit. Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich -
 keit zu E - wig - keit, herr - schest du Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich
 keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit. Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich
 herr - schest du von E - wig - keit. Er - ha - ben, o Herr, ü - ber al - les Lob, ü - ber al - le Herr - lich

24

keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit zu E - wig -
 keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit zu E - wig -
 keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, von E - wig - keit zu E - wig -
 keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, von E - wig - keit zu E - wig -
 keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, von E - wig - keit zu E - wig -
 keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, von E - wig - keit zu E - wig -
 keit, herr - schest du von E - wig - keit, von E - wig - keit zu E - wig -

Example 3.6 continued

The image shows a musical score for eight parts, likely a choir or orchestra. It begins at measure 28. The top four staves are vocal parts, and the bottom four are instrumental. The lyrics are: "keit. Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja!". The music features a strong dynamic of *f* (forte) and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fermatas. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a common time signature.

Viewing the two final *Sprüche* (*Im Advent* and *Am Himmelfahrtstage*), it has been suggested that Mendelssohn's style of expression had attained a certain level of freedom by late 1846, given that he was, by then, at somewhat of a remove from Berlin Cathedral. *Im Advent* opens with almost academic polyphony, evidenced by its Renaissance-style imitative contrapuntal entries but, as the texture builds, it becomes harmonically more lush and Romantic in character. (Example 3.5) When it appears as though the music has exceeded its eight-part boundaries, the setting suddenly shifts into homophony for the text 'es nahet der Heiland' ('the Saviour approaches'), creating not only a sharp contrast, but also a sense of anticipation that mirrors the text through such elements as the *pianissimo* dynamic; the 6/4/2 chord created by the second bass part's stepwise descent (as in *Am Karfreitage*); and the instance of word painting in the repetition of this portion of text with a *crescendo*.

Afterward, the proliferation of voice-pairings (here, in thirds and sixths) calls to mind Mendelssohn's more lyrical works, such as the *Lieder ohne Worte*. Generally, the texture of this piece is much more opaque than the earlier Berlin Cathedral *Sprüche*, suggesting that perhaps Mendelssohn had finally reached a sense of equilibrium between textural restriction and expressive freedom.

On the other hand, *Am Himmelfahrtstage* operates on an altogether grander scale than *Im Advent*, or indeed, any of the other *Sprüche*. (Example 3.6) The fanfare-like opening phrase announced by the tenor line in French overture style, with its dotted rhythms and repeated notes, is reminiscent of the opening of Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*: (Example 3.7(a) and (b))

Example 3.7(a): *Lobgesang*, bb. 1–2



Example 3.7(b): *Am Himmelfahrtstage*, bb. 1–3

This statement is reinforced by the full eight-part choir in a quasi-orchestral repetition of the same text. The opulent gestures continue throughout this piece, where the dynamic marking remains at a robust *forte* throughout, the texture is full, and text repetition, imitation and melismatic writing abound. The chief focus for the latter is the word 'Ewigkeit' ('eternity'), which Mendelssohn clearly wished to emphasise musically through both melisma and repetition, incorporating the use of

suspensions and dissonance. Once again, the predominantly homophonic delivery of the text aids clarity and comprehension, yet there is something distinctly Romantic in the aesthetic and stature of this piece. While functioning safely within the bounds of suitability for the Prussian service, its monolithic block-like textures communicate a sense of grandeur and poise that would not be out of place in the concert hall. This short work epitomises the fusion or synthesis of styles eventually attained by Mendelssohn in his unaccompanied sacred works; indeed, a plurality of musical languages may exist here, but one that is filtered through the distinctly nineteenth-century lens of the composer's own fluent and unmistakable style.

3.5 Conclusion

Chapter One outlined R. Larry Todd's idea of 'Imaginary Church Music' through which it was proposed that Mendelssohn's instrumental music mimics choral music via the insertion of (real or imaginary) chorales and chant-like music into non-liturgical music to evoke a generalised feeling of piety and reverence. Indeed, this practice was of a piece with the general blurring of distinctions between the church and the concert hall that occurred during the nineteenth century. In his purely choral music, however, the reverse is often the case: Mendelssohn strove to imitate orchestral gestures through his use of vocal texture, juxtaposing solo lines with expansive eight-part *tutti* choruses to create an impression of range similar to the broad sweep of a full orchestra. In a sense, Mendelssohn was invoking an imaginary concert hall in his church music, and thus creating a sense of permeability between the two media and, by extension, the two heretofore separate spheres of sacred and secular music. In this approach, Mendelssohn tested the boundaries of the *a cappella* choral medium by exploring the extent to which choral and orchestral textures can

imitate each other. As detailed in Chapter Two, a more obvious overspill between choral and orchestral media may have caused problems for Mendelssohn in his dealings with the Berlin Cathedral clergy, but it also marked him out as a composer firmly in tune with the aesthetic currents of the age.²⁷

Palestrina's homophonic writing was not only a starting point but also an exemplar for Mendelssohn's liturgical approach; the reforms laid out in the Prussian *Agende* witnessed a return to a sixteenth-century styled simplicity of liturgical expression (the Prussian liturgical reforms had parallels all over nineteenth-century Germany, not least within Catholicism, in the form of the Cecilian movement). However, it has been demonstrated that even in his non-liturgical choral works such as his part-songs and incidental dramatic music, Mendelssohn found his ideal choral expression in this declamatory, homophonic style. Given the composer's apparent preference for this style, the syllabic delivery can no longer realistically be viewed as a limitation. Rather, homophony was a very deliberate means of highlighting the text. In this way, Mendelssohn was innovative in the sense that he managed to find a solution to the ever-problematic issue of choral comprehensibility.

It has been shown how Mendelssohn, beyond fulfilling his brief to create liturgically appropriate music for Berlin Cathedral, emphasised his own style via a rich harmonic palette where contrast is central to the music. Through an entirely text-driven approach to contrasts of texture and harmony, the composer found outlets for word painting in his *Sechs Sprüche*. The concept of translation goes some way towards explaining the multiplicity of musical styles present in this music, and the idea of

²⁷ See Chapter Two, pages 90–91.

mixed messages has been posited as a means of accommodating the apparent contradiction between its self-consciously historicist and overtly Romantic layers. While it is difficult to stylistically appraise music that has clear external associations (in this case, a liturgical function), it is significant that the Berlin Cathedral music shares demonstrable features with, for example, Mendelssohn's music for Sophocles' *Antigone* and his oratorios. The common link is text: through their employment of textual declamation and dynamic and textural contrast, the *Sechs Sprüche* display similar dramatic aspirations to these larger-scale works. Albeit on a far smaller scale, they can thus be viewed as a microcosm of the chorus in his oratorios: similarly transcending the boundaries of their medium in order to impart greater meaning to their musical surroundings.

Chapter Four

Mendelssohn's 'Berlin Cathedral' Legacy

4.1 Miscellaneous Compositions from 1844

The first part of this chapter is devoted to an examination of three pieces which, although Mendelssohn composed them during his time in Berlin, do not fit into as obvious a grouping as the Three Psalms, Op.78, or the *Sechs Sprüche*, Op.79. None of these three short works discussed below is known to have been commissioned directly by the King for Berlin Cathedral.¹ Thus, they are of particular interest insofar as they provide an indication of Mendelssohn's stylistic preferences, devoid of any known liturgical associations or baggage. Their musical language can be viewed as a representation of Mendelssohn's preferred choral idiom. The similarities between them can be pared down to one crucial defining feature of Mendelssohn's late choral style: syllabic delivery of text. The central motivation behind this declamatory choral writing, as has been shown in Chapters Two and Three, was the composer's desire to set his texts clearly and appropriately.

A lack of definitive documentation has proved a frustrating barrier to scholars investigating the origins of Psalm 100, *Jauchzet dem Herrn*, completed on 1 January 1844. While Eric Werner believed it to have been composed for the consecration of the new Jewish Temple in Hamburg in 1844, this contention has been questioned in more recent years.² In the absence of concrete evidence, Todd suggests that the

¹ Although Psalm 100 is thought probably to have been written for Berlin Cathedral, there is no official record to tie it to a particular commission, as will be discussed below.

² Eric Werner, *Mendelssohn: A New Image of the Composer and his Age* (London: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 415–416. R. Larry Todd has re-examined the likely origins of this psalm setting in his chapter 'On Mendelssohn's Sacred Music, Real and Imaginary' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Essays* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 96–97.

‘straightforward, popular style of the music and its Lutheran version indicates it was written for the Berlin cathedral’;³ this view is reinforced by Lily E. Hirsch.⁴ The style of this setting renders Todd’s theory entirely plausible, as will be demonstrated below. Furthermore, the time around Christmas 1843 and New Year 1844 was a period of particular productivity for Mendelssohn with regard to the Berlin Cathedral choir, so it is quite possible that Psalm 100 was part of this flurry of activity.

In order to make the case for Psalm 100 as part of Mendelssohn’s Berlin Cathedral legacy, various new observations will be presented regarding this psalm setting to highlight the similarities that abound between Psalm 100 and the other Berlin Cathedral works – specifically, to the Op.78 Psalms and the *Sechs Sprüche*. Firstly, on a structural level, all of the principal requirements of the Prussian liturgy are evident: namely, the unaccompanied, syllabic setting, the largely homophonic texture, and the simplicity of the harmonic writing. Furthermore, Mendelssohn adheres to his preference for providing a variety of textures by juxtaposing contrasting blocks of voices – be it solo octet (SSAATTBB), SATB choir, SSAA, TTBB, ATB, or unison voices. This also bespeaks Mendelssohn’s lifelong study of J. S. Bach’s music – see, for example, his motet, *Jesu, meine Freude*, where different vocal groupings (for instance, SSA, ATB, SSATB) convey different verses of the text.

³ R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 469.

⁴ Lily E. Hirsch, ‘Felix Mendelssohn’s Psalm 100 Reconsidered’, *Philomusica On-line* 4 (2004) <<http://riviste.paviauniversitypress.it/index.php/phi/article/view/04-01-SG02/23>> [accessed 16 October 2011]. Hirsch’s reproduction of the correspondence between Mendelssohn and Dr Maimon Fränkel provides the core of her argument that the ‘final destination’ of Psalm 100 was not the Hamburg Temple, but rather Berlin Cathedral.

However, on closer observation, some more intrinsic links can also be found between Psalm 100 and the works under discussion in Chapters Two and Three. Given that *Jauchzet dem Herrn* bears an autograph mark of 1 January 1844 – the date *Am Neujahrstage* was first performed – certain parallels between these two pieces are of significance, particularly insofar as they shed light on the probable intended context for Psalm 100. From a tonal perspective, the frequency with which Mendelssohn’s setting of Psalm 100 leans towards the supertonic minor (D minor) is noteworthy: D minor is the key of *Am Neujahrstage*, and the early arrival at this key in bar 15 instantly strengthens a connection in the listener’s ear between the two pieces. Indeed, the progression that follows this modulation (bb. 17–20 of Psalm 100) bears more than a passing resemblance to the chordal build-up at bars 10–13 of *Am Neujahrstage*, with its repetition of the same chord intensified by not only a *crescendo*, but also an ascending registral spectrum. (Example 4.1 (a) and (b))

Example 4.1(a): Psalm 100, bb. 17–21

The musical score for Psalm 100, bars 17–21, is presented for four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The score begins at bar 17. The lyrics are: "Er hat uns ge - macht und nicht wir selbst zu sei - nem". The dynamics are marked as *p* (piano) at the start of each line, followed by *cresc.* (crescendo) and *f* (forte) at the end of each line. The music is in D minor, as indicated by the key signature (two flats).

Example 4.1(b): *Am Neujahrstage*, bb. 10–13

The musical score for Example 4.1(b) consists of eight staves: Soprano I (S1), Soprano II (S2), Alto I (A1), Alto II (A2), Tenor I (T1), Tenor II (T2), Bass I (B1), and Bass II (B2). The music is in a minor key and begins at measure 10. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and crescendo (*cresc.*). The lyrics are: "E - he denn die Ber - ge wor - den, und die Er - de".

A further connection between these two pieces can be heard at bars 48–51 in Psalm 100, where the harmonic progression resembles that of bars 18–21 in *Am Neujahrstage*, with an almost identical line in the Alto I part – all the more striking because of its presentation of a rare instance of melismatic writing. (Example 4.2 (a) and (b)) These similarities bear testimony to the fact that Mendelssohn was writing both of these pieces at around the same time; moreover, the deliberately sparse style of textual delivery suggests that Psalm 100 was indeed intended for the Prussian liturgy at Berlin Cathedral. Such textural and harmonic decisions provide compelling evidence in terms of musical details for this intention.

Example 4.2(a): Psalm 100, bb. 48–51

48

S dan - - ket ihm, dan - - - ket ihm, *cresc.*

A dan - - ket ihm, dan - - - ket ihm, *cresc.*

T dan - - ket ihm, dan - - - ket ihm, *cresc.*

B dan - - ket ihm, dan - - - ket ihm, *cresc.*

Example 4.2(b): *Am Neujahrstage*, bb. 18–21

pp

S1 bist du Gott von E - wig - keit zu

S2 *pp* bist du Gott von E - wig - keit zu

A1 *pp* bist du Gott von E - wig - keit zu

A2 *pp* bist du Gott von E - wig - keit zu

T1 *pp* bist du Gott von E - wig - keit zu

T2 *pp* bist du Gott von E - wig - keit zu

B1 *pp* bist du Gott von E - wig - keit zu

B2 *pp* bist du Gott von E - wig - keit zu

The absence of a doxology signifies a more overtly structural link between Psalm 100 and the Op.78 psalm settings for Berlin Cathedral. The setting of Psalm 100 is cut off rather prematurely without a doxology, in a similar manner to the other two psalm settings Mendelssohn composed around that time – Psalm 2 and Psalm 98 – for which the composer instead substituted choruses from Handel’s *Messiah*. The C

major chorus he paired with Psalm 2 for its initial performance, ('For unto us a child is born') would fit equally well with Psalm 100 in terms of tonality, but it is liturgically unlikely that this piece would have been used on any occasion other than on Christmas Day. Unfortunately, it remains a matter of conjecture as to what music – if any – Mendelssohn may have intended to use as a doxology for his setting of Psalm 100. It is clear, however, that the lack of a doxology immediately links this to the other Berlin Cathedral psalms, thereby strengthening a case for their common origins.

What can be said, then, is that the style and structure of Mendelssohn's *Jauchzet dem Herrn* aligns comfortably with the psalms and *Sprüche* that are known to have been composed for Berlin Cathedral. Another piece composed around this time, albeit for a very different circumstance, is *Hear My Prayer*. This paraphrase of Psalm 55 was completed in January 1844 for a sacred concert in London and subsequently enjoyed great popularity in England, where it became a staple of the Anglican cathedral repertory.⁵ Friedhelm Krummacher has examined this hymn and its reception in greater detail.⁶ His analysis, principally being directed towards the English reception of this work, does not address the Berlin Cathedral music. However, in order to assess the stylistic context of *Hear My Prayer*, it is important to outline the areas in which it intersects with its contemporary Berlin choral works. Composed in the style of an English verse anthem and – at least in its first incarnation – aimed at a concert-

⁵ R. Larry Todd details the circumstances of this composition 'written for the newly renovated Crosby Hall on Bishopsgate Street, where Elizabeth Mounsey (later Bartholomew's sister-in-law) organized sacred concerts during the 1840s.' William Bartholomew was responsible for the English paraphrase of the psalm's text, and a German version of this piece, *Hör mein Bitten*, was published in 1845 but 'attracted scant attention on the Continent'. Todd, *A Life in Music*, 468.

⁶ Friedhelm Krummacher, 'Composition as Accommodation? On Mendelssohn's Music in Relation to England' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 100–105.

hall audience in England rather than a liturgical setting in Germany, this hymn nevertheless displays a number of stylistic similarities to the music Mendelssohn was writing at the time for Berlin Cathedral.

Perhaps the most striking of these similarities is the declamatory, responsorial nature of the central 3/8 section, where the solo soprano is echoed by the unison choir.⁷ This simple, unison declamation immediately recalls the plainchant in the Sistine Chapel services experienced by Mendelssohn, whereby the cantor led a call-and-response pattern. Although this 3/8 section in *Hear My Prayer* eventually dissolves into imitative entries, throughout the anthem Mendelssohn continues to return to the medium of unison choir. In these instances, the choir simply chants on a unison D, thereby retaining a connection to the style of textual expression Mendelssohn was exploring at Berlin Cathedral. Moreover, the textual delivery employed in *Hear My Prayer* is largely syllabic, allowing for clear communication of the text; the use of recitative style forges a further link to the direct and declamatory means of textual delivery favoured in the Prussian *Agende*. Thus, although Mendelssohn's brief for *Hear My Prayer* was to compose a concert anthem for performance in London, the resultant piece and its approach to text setting represented a reorientation of the composer's choral style that had been necessitated by his appointment to Berlin Cathedral, as has been argued in Chapters Two and Three.

If *Hear My Prayer* represents an important part of Mendelssohn's legacy to the core repertoire of British cathedrals, its German equivalent – still a favourite with German choirs today – can be found in the motet *Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen über*

⁷ See Example 2.15, page 74.

dir, composed in August 1844 for King Friedrich Wilhelm IV and the Berlin Cathedral Choir. Todd's account of the genesis of this motet gives an insight into Mendelssohn's high esteem for the King:

En route to the festival, he learned of the attempted assassination of Friedrich Wilhelm IV by a disgruntled Brandenburg burgo-master. The jaded royal Generalmusikdirektor experienced a range of emotions, from shock and disbelief to relief the monarch had suffered only slight wounds. Recalling some reassuring verses from Psalm 91 ("For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways"), Felix dispatched to Berlin upon his return to Soden an a cappella motet for eight soloists. Later incorporated into the oratorio *Elijah, Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen über dir* approached the ideal of "pure", contemplative church music favored by the king, with antiphonal blocks of euphony, clear syllabic declamation of the text, and careful control of dissonances, and it became a staple of church choirs.⁸

No doubt this short composition was initially written as a gesture of solidarity and loyalty and as a thoughtful mark of Mendelssohn's regard for King Friedrich Wilhelm. However, Mendelssohn later included this motet, albeit re-scored and lightly orchestrated, as part of *Elijah*. This inclusion sheds important new light on the composer's preferred choral writing: rather than representing an obedience to the 'pure' ideal of Prussian church music out of respect for the King, the syllabic style of this motet was emphatically endorsed by Mendelssohn via its insertion into his masterpiece, *Elijah*. That this oratorio was firmly rooted in the concert hall rather than the church strengthens the case for *Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen über dir* as a fine example of Mendelssohn's mature choral style, one that represented more than mere obedience to the Prussian Church. Moreover, the presence in this psalm setting of characteristics similar to the Berlin Cathedral psalms supports the argument that Mendelssohn, while he may have struggled with the Berlin Cathedral

⁸ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 478.

authorities, was not compositionally limited to a significant extent, and composed within his own parameters. For instance, the simple, syllabic blocks of harmony alternating between SSAA and TTBB provide a stylistic link to other Mendelssohn settings – *Mitten wir im Leben sind*, *Richte mich, Gott* and *Jauchzet dem Herrn*, for example – where contrasting male and female choirs provide variety of texture, and dialogue. Mendelssohn’s choice of the traditionally bright key of G major matches perfectly the angelic, other-worldly nature of the psalm’s text. The frequent replacement of G major with its relative minor, E minor, lends a light-and-shade effect to the music; other noteworthy tonal features that illustrate Mendelssohn’s commitment to conveying the meaning of the text will be discussed below, in order to show how the Berlin Cathedral psalms had left an indelible mark on the composer’s choral style.

The opening two phrases see the upper four voices singing an entirely syllabic phrase ‘Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen über dir’ (‘for he will command his angels to guard you in all your ways’). The first-soprano melody soars from d’’ to g’’ for the beginning of the word ‘Engeln’ (‘angels’), accentuating both the importance of the word within the phrase and the word’s celestial connotations. A downward leap of a 6th from the high G gives the phrase its melodic sweep while the lower three parts fill in the harmony; the relative stasis of these lower parts contributes to a sense of floating legato, despite the syllabic setting and the large leaps in the melody. After this quasi-angelic opening phrase, the tenor-and-bass choir supplies an answering phrase, with the tension of a 9–8 suspension on an A minor chord on the second syllable of ‘behüten’ (‘protect’) gently emphasising this word as the central sentiment of the phrase. If the sopranos and altos invoke the angelic choir, the tenors

and basses, initially at least, are a musical allegory for the perils of our earthly life, with the immediate juxtaposition of their low register perhaps reflecting the human condition. (Example 4.3)

Example 4.3: *Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen über dir*, bb. 1–12

Allegretto non troppo

S1.2 *p* Denn Er hat sei-nen En-geln be-foh-len ü-ber dir,

A1.2 *p* Denn Er hat sei-nen En-geln be-foh-len ü-ber dir,

T1.2 *p* daß sie dich be-hü-ten auf

B1.2 *p* daß sie dich be-hü-ten auf

7

denn Er hat sei-nen En-geln be-foh-len ü-ber dir,

denn Er hat sei-nen En-geln be-foh-len ü-ber dir,

al-len die-nen We-gen,

al-len die-nen We-gen,

Another harmonic feature worthy of mention with regard to word painting is a particularly Mendelssohnian cadence on the dominant of the relative minor. This can be heard in Mendelssohn's earlier Berlin Cathedral psalm settings: in Psalm 2 'zum Eigentum' where the music modulates from E flat major to C minor via a cadence on G major; and in Psalm 43 where the light and splendour of the F major 'Sende dein Licht' is further brightened by an A major chord at 'deine Wohnung' before returning to the relative gloom of D minor. In *Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen über dir*, the same device is used at bar 12 on 'über dir', where a shimmering B major chord suggests the imminent arrival of E minor. This particular feature of

Mendelssohn's harmonic language emphasises the brightness of the mediant key, while at once providing a seamless connection to the relative minor.

This miniature piece exemplifies once again the syllabic requirements of the liturgy and provides another instance of Mendelssohn's appropriate and direct communication of the text, where colour and variety are achieved through contrasting textural blocks (male and female) and judicious employment of harmonic colour. This key concern of textually suitable music pervaded the composer's late choral music, regardless of whether he was composing for a sacred or secular function, or for an English or German audience. During the last two years of his life, Mendelssohn had the opportunity to further prove this versatility when he composed German and Anglican settings of the liturgy.

4.2 German and Anglican Liturgical Settings

Mendelssohn's release from the burden of regular duties at Berlin Cathedral in October 1844 allowed the composer a more flexible arrangement: while fulfilling occasional royal commissions, he was no longer expected to provide regular liturgical music for the cathedral, or to endure the apparent inconvenience of a tie to Berlin. In addition to the two *Sprüche* for Advent and Ascension outlined in Chapter Three,⁹ this new situation accounts for the genesis of Mendelssohn's mass setting, *Die Deutsche Liturgie*, completed two years later on 28 October 1846 and sent to King Friedrich Wilhelm IV in Berlin on 6 November 1846.¹⁰

⁹ As outlined on page 99, n2, these two pieces were considered in Chapter Three, despite their later compositional origin, in order to ensure ease of comparison between them and the other four *Sprüche*.

¹⁰ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 531.

It appears that Mendelssohn was characteristically meticulous in preparing his setting of the Prussian liturgy for the King; although he was working on the revision of *Elijah* at the time, this task had to be put on hold to an extent in order to finish setting the German Liturgy.¹¹ Mendelssohn's concern that *Die Deutsche Liturgie* should be performed to a high standard for the King is also clear, as his letter to Count Wilhelm von Redern indicates:

Since all of the compositions are written for double chorus, I strongly urge you, your Excellency, to put a great deal of stress on a careful rehearsal, and not to let them be sung in the presence of His Majesty until their performance is perfectly clean, secure, and artfully nuanced. They are not difficult.¹²

This composition represents a fulfilment of Mendelssohn's desire to provide a practically suitable liturgical setting that was also in tune, at least to an extent, with his aesthetic sensibilities for musical expression within the liturgy. His dissatisfaction with the excessively dramatic Mozart and Haydn mass settings had led him to sixteenth-century Italian repertoire such as Palestrina, but even this more liturgically appropriate style, borrowed from the Italian Catholic tradition, did not sit comfortably with the composer's idea of an expressly Prussian style. Thus, for Mendelssohn, this setting of the German Liturgy represented more than simply another royal commission; moreover, it was an opportunity to address the dearth of church music composed especially for the new liturgy. Despite his earlier frustrations with his situation at Berlin Cathedral, this assignment was evidently a matter of duty and personal pride to Mendelssohn.

¹¹ Peter Mercer-Taylor, *The Life of Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 199.

¹² Letter of 6 November 1846 from Mendelssohn to von Redern, in Richard Scheumann, 'Briefe berühmter Komponisten', *Die Musik* VIII (1908/9) 264; quoted in Judith Silber Ballan (ed.), *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Die Deutsche Liturgie*, Stuttgarter Mendelssohn-Ausgabe (Stuttgart: Carus-Verlag, 1997), CV 40.128, Foreword, 9. Von Redern was the Intendant-General of Court Music in Berlin. David Brodbeck, 'A Winter of Discontent: Mendelssohn and the Berliner Domchor' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.

As with the composer's earlier Berlin Cathedral settings, *Die Deutsche Liturgie* is a *cappella* and entirely syllabic throughout. Tailored to the complex series of responses between minister, choir and congregation, it comprises a total of ten sections:

1. *Amen*
2. *Ehre sei dem Vater (nach dem Spruch)*
3. *Kyrie*
4. *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe*
5. *Und mit deinem Geiste*
6. *Amen (nach der Kollekt.)*
7. *Alleluia (nach dem Spruch)*
8. *Amen (nach dem Evangelium)*
9. *Amen (nach dem Glauben)*
10. *Heilig*

The second section (*Ehre sei dem Vater*) is identical to Mendelssohn's 1844 doxology for Psalm 43, but transposed down a semitone into E major. The shorter responses (1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) – simple settings based around a plagal cadence in A major – are not particularly noteworthy. The remaining movements (3, 4 and 10) are more extended, corresponding to the *Kyrie*, *Gloria* and *Sanctus* movements of the Latin Mass. All three are set for double choir, with *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe* (*Gloria*) also employing four soloists in the central *Adagio* section. While Mendelssohn once again limits himself to a *cappella* double choir and syllabic text setting for these movements, he nevertheless explores a rich range of expression through a variety of textures and, in the case of *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe*, tempi.

However, the areas of harmony and tonality see Mendelssohn demonstrating his credentials as a distinctly nineteenth-century composer. Considering the fact that G

major is not the principal tonality of either *Heilig* or *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe*, it is remarkable that both of these movements appear to open in this key. Indeed, the opening section of each of these settings follows a similar tonal pattern (G–D–b). The G major opening, followed by the more prominent arrival of D major, can be heard as an extended plagal cadence; from the outset, Mendelssohn wished to emphasise the liturgical links with this churchlike cadence in his setting. (Example 4.4 (a)) A sense of tonal instability is thereby created at the outset of both movements. In the case of *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe*, this is not ultimately resolved until the final section where, after a relatively wide-ranging tonal plan that encompasses the keys of G major, D major, B minor, A major, F sharp minor and C sharp minor, the key of A major is finally and firmly established in bar 82. Despite this eventual tonal clarity, Mendelssohn continues to pepper his vocal lines with occasional flattened sevenths (G natural), leaning towards the subdominant; this hint of the subdominant is also one of the few notable chromatic features of the *Kyrie*, which overall is more harmonically conventional.

Example 4.4(a): *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe*, bb. 1–6

Andante con moto
pp

S1
Und Frie - de auf Er - - den, und den Men-schen ein Wohl - ge - fal - len!

A1
Und Frie - de auf Er - - den, und den Men-schen ein Wohl - ge - fal - len!

T1
Und Frie - de auf Er - - den, und den Men-schen ein Wohl - ge - fal - len!

B1
Und Frie - de auf Er - - den, und den Men-schen ein Wohl - ge - fal - len!

S2
Und Frie - de auf Er - - den, und den Men-schen ein Wohl - ge - fal - len!

A2
Und Frie - de auf Er - - den, und den Men-schen ein Wohl - ge - fal - len!

T2
Und Frie - de auf Er - - den, und den Men-schen ein Wohl - ge - fal - len!

B2
Und Frie - de auf Er - - den, und den Men-schen ein Wohl - ge - fal - len!

Dynamics: *pp*, *f*

Example 4.4(b): *Heilig*, bb. 1–8

Con moto
p *cresc.*

S1
Hei - lig, hei - lig, hei - - lig, hei - lig.

A1
Hei - lig, hei - lig, hei - - lig.

T1
Hei - lig, hei - lig, hei - - lig.

B1
Hei - lig, hei - lig.

S2
Hei - lig, hei - lig, hei - - lig.

A2
Hei - lig, hei - lig, hei - - lig.

T2
Hei - lig, hei - lig, hei - - lig.

B2
Hei - lig.

Dynamics: *p*, *cresc.*

Heilig arrives at its ultimate tonality, D major, in a more direct manner than *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe*, and thereafter is rooted in D major. However, the thirds at the beginning of *Heilig* create a sense of tonal ambiguity – something that has often been lauded in the music of Johannes Brahms. The appearance of falling thirds at the opening and closing phrases of *Heilig* also provides a precedent to a motivic feature that later became a hallmark of Brahms’s music, most famously in his Fourth Symphony, but also in such miniatures as the Intermezzo, Op.119, No.1 for solo piano. Mendelssohn’s opening phrase unfolds in descending thirds over two octaves from d’ to d – an effect described by Todd as ‘suspended heavenly voices eventually “grounded” in a radiant major sonority’.¹³ This emphasis upon third relationships bears witness to the nineteenth-century harmonic palette with which Mendelssohn colours his music. (Example 4.4 (b))

As in the other Berlin Cathedral music, there are earlier influences to consider with regard to *Die Deutsche Liturgie*. On the one hand, as has been demonstrated, the rich harmonic language and tonal ambiguity of this setting represent a distinctly nineteenth-century accompaniment to the Prussian liturgy. On the other hand, however, this music displays stylistic characteristics that are remarkably archaic and conventional. While Georg Feder cites Brahms as an heir to Heinrich Schütz,¹⁴ Mendelssohn’s music – particularly in the case of *Die Deutsche Liturgie* – also bespeaks the influence of his German Protestant forefather. Justifications for this claim will now be posited both on aesthetic and stylistic grounds.

¹³ Todd, *A Life in Music*, 531.

¹⁴ Feder, Georg, ‘Decline and Restoration’ in Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music: A History* (London: Gallancz, 1975), 400.

The shared heritage of German nationality is one important, albeit obvious, aspect of the common ground between Schütz and Mendelssohn. The composition of *Die Deutsche Liturgie* afforded Mendelssohn the opportunity to forge a uniquely German style of liturgical music; this concern had also been an important feature in the music of Schütz two centuries earlier. Schütz's use of the vernacular in a large portion of his vocal music and his employment of the title *Deutsch* for a number of his works, are in line with Mendelssohn's vocation to create a national liturgical style in his setting of *Die Deutsche Liturgie*. Perhaps even more importantly, the music of both composers was permeated by the influence of the Italian school of choral composition. Mendelssohn's engagement with the Italianate style of church music – which began with his quasi-apprenticeship to Zelter and the Singakademie choir and continued with his direct experience of church services in the Sistine Chapel during his 1830 trip to Italy – finds a parallel in Schütz's immersion in Venetian Italy for his period of instruction with Gabrieli.¹⁵ Both Schütz and Mendelssohn drew inspiration not only from sixteenth-century Italian church music, but from a desire to channel the tradition and ritual of this church music into a new form of expression for German liturgical music. In stylistic terms, the antiphonal choirs of Mendelssohn's *Die Deutsche Liturgie* demonstrate his absorption of the music of the Italian polychoral school. The means by which Mendelssohn employs these choirs reflects his fluency with the *cori spezzati* works by Schütz and Gabrieli, for instance, in the *Kyrie* (bars 1–5) and in *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe* (bars 26–35), where Choir II provides an echo effect for Choir I. (Example 4.5 (a) and (b))

¹⁵ Schütz studied composition with Giovanni Gabrieli from 1609–1612, and evidently developed a close relationship with his teacher. Joshua Rifkin, et al., 'Schütz, Heinrich', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45997pg1#S45997.1>> [accessed 21 June 2012].

Example 4.5(a): *Kyrie*, bb. 1–5

Andante sostenuto

cresc.

S1 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son, Ky - ri - e
cresc.

A1 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son, Ky - ri - e
cresc.

T1 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son, Ky - ri - e
cresc.

B1 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son, Ky - ri - e
cresc.

S2 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son,

A2 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son,

T2 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son,

B2 Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Chri - ste e - lei - son,

Example 4.5(b): *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe*, bb. 26–36

27

f

S1 Herr, Gott! Himm - li - scher Kö - nig! All - mäch - ti - ger

A1 *f* len. Herr, Gott! Himm - li - scher Kö - nig! All - mäch - ti - ger

T1 *f* Herr, Gott! Himm - li - scher Kö - nig! All - mäch - ti - ger

B1 *f* Herr, Gott! Himm - li - scher Kö - nig! All - mäch - ti - ger

S2 *f* Herr, Gott! Himm - li - scher Kö - nig!

A2 *f* Herr, Gott! Himm - li - scher Kö - nig!

T2 *f* Herr, Gott! Himm - li - scher Kö - nig!

B2 *f* Herr, Gott! Himm - li - scher Kö - nig!

31

Va - ter! Herr, du ein - ge - bor - ner Sohn, Je - sus Chri - stus, —

Va - ter! Herr, du ein - ge - bor - ner Sohn, Je - sus Chri - stus, —

Va - ter! Herr, du ein - ge - bor - ner Sohn, Je - sus Chri - stus, —

Va - ter! Herr, du ein - ge - bor - ner Sohn, Je - sus Chri - stus, —

All - mäch - ti - ger Va - ter! Herr, du ein - ge - bor - ner Sohn, Je - sus Chri - stus, —

All - mäch - ti - ger Va - ter! Herr, du ein - ge - bor - ner Sohn, Je - sus Chri - stus, —

All - mäch - ti - ger Va - ter! Herr, du ein - ge - bor - ner Sohn, Je - sus Chri - stus, —

All - mäch - ti - ger Va - ter! Herr, du ein - ge - bor - ner Sohn, Je - sus Chri - stus, —

Die Deutsche Liturgie thus plays a very significant role in Mendelssohn's musical legacy and is clearly influenced by his period of residency at Berlin Cathedral. Through the strictures of the newly-reformed Prussian liturgical framework, Mendelssohn's setting allows for a customised realisation of the German Liturgy where previous musical traditions – both Italianate and German – coalesce with Mendelssohn's role as nineteenth-century Prussian court composer. As such, *Die Deutsche Liturgie* represents a musical, historical and cultural milestone for the Prussian Church. Channelling the languages of Palestrina, Gabrieli and Schütz, yet firmly rooted in the musical syntax of the Romantic era, the music for *Die Deutsche Liturgie* stands at a crossroads of sorts within the historical continuum. The eclectic mixture of styles represented within Mendelssohn's setting further strengthens its relevance to the rest of his Berlin Cathedral music.

While *Die Deutsche Liturgie* represents a central part of Mendelssohn's legacy for the Prussian Church (or, more specifically, Berlin Cathedral), his liturgical settings for the Anglican Morning and Evening Services also display musical resonances of the Berlin Cathedral choral works. Despite being written for the Church of England, the Anglican settings also have a discrete German identity in the form of their subsequent publication as *Drei Motetten*, Op.69; moreover, their stylistic traits bespeak an intrinsic link to the Berlin Cathedral works.

Scholarship regarding Mendelssohn's Anglican settings has followed a thorny and complex path plagued by various anomalies surrounding the details of their publication and grouping. Due to several discrepancies between the English and German versions and an absence of source documentation indicating Mendelssohn's

intentions regarding these disparities, some conclusions on these works must remain a matter of conjecture. While only a brief summary is possible within the scope of the present chapter, David Brodbeck and John Michael Cooper have already examined the notoriously problematic and complex genesis of these pieces in meticulous detail.¹⁶

The original background to these pieces dates back to 1832 when Vincent Novello invited Mendelssohn to compose a Morning Service and an Evening Service for the Anglican Liturgy.¹⁷ The composer drafted only the *Te Deum* at this time, leaving it aside until 1845 when he revised it for his English publisher, Ewer & Co., who eventually published the *Te Deum* alone in June 1846. After many delays and much correspondence, the remaining three movements were finally completed in June 1847. As Cooper has observed, the title *Drei Motetten* is in fact something of a misnomer for these works, given that they were originally intended to be performed as two pairs of liturgical pieces.¹⁸ Other areas of contention concern the organ accompaniment, which was intended only for the English version, and the question as to which of the various different incarnations of the doxology was to be used with each version.

¹⁶ For further information regarding the origins and publication of this repertory, please refer to the following: John Michael Cooper (ed.), *Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Motets/Motetten, Op.69* (Kassel: Barenreiter, 2005), BA 8937, Preface, iii–xii; John Michael Cooper, ‘Mendelssohn’s Valediction’, *Choral Journal* 49 (2009), 34–47; David Brodbeck, ‘Eine Kleine Kirchenmusik: A New Canon, a Revised Cadence, and an Obscure “Coda” by Mendelssohn’, *The Journal of Musicology* 12 (1994), 179–205.

¹⁷ Cooper (ed.) *Motets, Op.69*, iii. The works in question are *Te Deum & Jubilate* for the Morning Service and *Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis* for the Evening Service. The *Te Deum*, however, was published separately and the published Op.69 motets consist of *Jubilate*, *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, iii.

Biographical circumstances are another important factor surrounding the composition of the Anglican settings: writers have already pointed to the emotional upheaval Mendelssohn endured during the period immediately following Fanny's death in May 1847.¹⁹ It seems that music (in addition to drawing and painting) provided solace to the composer at this time of grieving. The resultant works, which include the Anglican settings and the String Quartet in F minor, are accordingly powerful:

The musical products of these final months of Mendelssohn's life are remarkable not only for their expressive intensity, but also by the fact that this intensity is achieved within genres and forms characterized by strictness and an imposing historical legacy.²⁰

That Mendelssohn turned to 'learned' styles of writing as a vehicle for his outpouring of grief is telling: as well as allowing inspiration to direct his creativity (in the form of his String Quartet in F minor), he imposed the rigour of contrapuntal discipline upon his writing for the Anglican church services. These diverse styles are a testament to the extent of the personal and creative crisis brought on by Fanny's death. Moreover, it seems fitting that the composer found consolation by immersing himself in the cerebral challenges of counterpoint, the study of which he and his beloved sister had begun together at an early age. While the Berlin Cathedral works had seen a move away from imitative contrapuntal writing in order to retain textual clarity, Mendelssohn allowed himself slightly more freedom (contrapuntal rigour notwithstanding) for his Anglican works.

One of the central compositional issues regarding these works is the way in which Mendelssohn, who was so immersed in the musical demands of the Prussian liturgy,

¹⁹ Ibid., iii; Cooper, 'Mendelssohn's Valediction', 36–37. Todd, *A Life in Music*, 558.

²⁰ Cooper (ed.), *Motets*, Op.69, v.

tackled his setting of the Anglican liturgy. Mendelssohn's approach to the Anglican settings is remarkable insofar as it demonstrates the composer's chameleon-like ability to adapt his musical style to his audience. Cooper has described the works as 'patently English in their conception';²¹ indeed, the additional existence of a German version raises interesting questions regarding the influence of textual language upon musical style. The presence or absence of an organ accompaniment is but one factor in this regard; because of his wish to render his music intelligible to its audience or congregation, it is unsurprising that Mendelssohn adapted each version to the conventions of accompaniment in the English and German liturgical traditions respectively. Mendelssohn's apparent facility in adapting these settings for the two different liturgical traditions is yet another demonstration of his fluency in a wide range of earlier musical styles.

A further illustration of Mendelssohn's translation of earlier styles can be observed in the musical language of these works, in both their German and English incarnations: the voices of Gibbons, Tallis and Byrd can be observed.²² As was concluded in Chapter Two, Mendelssohn's choral music demonstrates his historicist tendencies through the styles of Palestrina and sixteenth-century Italian sacred music, Handel, Bach, Mozart and others. To this can be added, at least in Mendelssohn's Anglican Settings, the music of the English sixteenth-century. The central section of the English version of the *Magnificat* is a case in point: 'For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden' demonstrates features of a typical English verse anthem with its solo and organ setting. The section following this – 'And His mercy is on them that fear him' – displays its archaic flavour with imitative

²¹ Ibid., iii.

²² Cooper, 'Mendelssohn's Valediction', 41.

entries and an idiomatic 3/2 time signature.²³ Therefore, the Anglican settings represent another instance of Mendelssohn demonstrating his credentials as an adaptable composer. The tendency of his music to incorporate earlier musical idioms in a plurality of musical languages is one of his remarkable qualities; this talent is exemplified within the Berlin Cathedral works. By extension, the Anglican settings, insofar as they reflect the composer's key concerns of intelligible text setting and a historically-influenced musical language, also form a significant part of Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral legacy. The expressive path forged by these late choral works will now be examined in the light of the legacy they bestowed upon Mendelssohn's successors, Schumann and Brahms.

4.3 Beyond Mendelssohn: A Model for Schumann and Brahms

Perhaps because of the fact that Mendelssohn reception thus far has been largely inseparable from the 'Jewish Question', there is a relative lack of scholarship concerning his music's influence upon later composers. Mendelssohn's adoption of earlier musical languages has tended to dominate the focus of scholarship without consideration of Mendelssohn's influence on his peers and successors. Although the scope of this thesis does not permit a detailed exploration of this aspect of Mendelssohn's legacy, some pertinent connections are highlighted below, in order to demonstrate how Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral works represented a model for the choral music of Schumann and Brahms.

Mendelssohn's contemporary and close friend, Robert Schumann, became increasingly dedicated to the composition of choral music in the latter years of his

²³ As Cooper has pointed out, the influence of English Renaissance composers on Mendelssohn has yet to be explored in great detail; this points to a possible avenue for further research beyond the parameters of the present study. *Ibid.*, 41, n29.

life. From 1845 he directed the male-voice choir *Liedertafel* in Dresden for two years and, when he began to find this medium limiting, founded the mixed-voice *Chorverein* in late 1847.²⁴ It seems that the latter ensemble provided a worthy instrument for Schumann, and he devoted considerable energy to writing part-songs, romances and ballads for this group from 1847 until his move to Düsseldorf in 1850.²⁵

Always conscious of the burden of music history, Schumann praised Mendelssohn as ‘the Mozart of the nineteenth century’, and went even further with regard to Brahms, hailing him as the long-awaited Messiah of music since Beethoven.²⁶ Schumann’s constant measurement of modern composers against the masters of the past is entirely in line with his general historical orientation; indeed, Laura Tunbridge makes a claim about Schumann’s choral music that corroborates a view of Schumann as historicist:

In his choral music from the 1850s, he constantly strove to construct from the past – be it the Middle Ages, seventeenth-century counterpoint, or his earlier compositions – ‘something absolutely valid which might be realized here and now just as at any other time,’ in Adorno’s words: if not the sound of heaven, then perhaps the sound of legend.²⁷

Schumann’s reverence for Bach and Handel is well documented. A debt to Bach can be found in much of his contrapuntal writing. A deep interest in Baroque repertoire led to Schumann conducting performances of many Handel oratorios during the 1840s; his proclamation of Handel’s *Israel in Egypt* as the ideal choral work bears

²⁴ John Daverio and Eric Sams, ‘Schumann, Robert’, *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40704pg16#S40704.16>> [Accessed 22 June 2012].

²⁵ Schumann moved from Dresden to Düsseldorf in 1850 to assume a position as Municipal Director of Music.

²⁶ R. Larry Todd, ‘The Unfinished Mendelssohn’ in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 158.

²⁷ Laura Tunbridge, *Schumann’s Late Style* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 68.

testimony to this lifelong study.²⁸ However, Schumann's close relationship with Mendelssohn points to a significant influence for Schumann, particularly with regard to the choral music.

Schumann's *Vier doppelchörige Gesänge (für grössere Gesangvereine)*, Op.141, have hitherto been curiously neglected in scholarship. Composed in 1849, these settings of poetry by Goethe, Rückert and Zedlitz are Schumann's only essay in the medium of mixed-voice double choir and, as such, provide an interesting point of comparison with Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral choral works.²⁹ Strictly speaking, Schumann's *Vier doppelchörige Gesänge* inhabit the secular realm. However, frequent references to God – most notably in No.4, *Talismane* – are to be found in the poetry; they can thus be taken as the closest pieces to motets in Schumann's *oeuvre*. Although, in terms of their aesthetic, Schumann's settings have much in common with the German Romantic partsong, they also display an interesting range of similarities with Mendelssohn's sacred choral music. Texture is the area in which Mendelssohn's and Schumann's choral language shares the most common ground. The use of a double choir is significant in itself given that it was not Schumann's usual medium, but more noteworthy still is the means by which Schumann varies the texture of his double choir. In a similar manner to Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral works, the first two pieces of Schumann's Op.141, *An die Sterne* and *Ungewisses Licht*, employ a solo quartet. In the case of *An die Sterne*, this occurs at a moment of textual intimacy: a solo quartet makes its first (and only) appearance at bb. 67–70,

²⁸ Ibid., 52.

²⁹ Schumann's other work for double choir is his motet, 'Verzweifle nicht im Schmerzenstal', Op.93, composed in 1849 for male-voice double choir and organ accompaniment and subsequently orchestrated in 1852. Although it is not clear whether Schumann was familiar with Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral works, the friendship between the composers and Schumann's keen interest in Mendelssohn's music suggests that this may have been the case.

for the line ‘hoffend, glaubevoll’ (‘hopefully, trustingly’). The sudden appearance both of solo voices and of C major (the subdominant) serve to highlight the text and provide a sort of musical parenthesis for this phrase, similar in aesthetic and character to the sincerity of the ‘Küset den Sohn’ section of Mendelssohn’s Psalm 2. (Example 4.6)³⁰ Declamatory unison sections in *Ungewisses Licht* recall the Berlin Cathedral psalms, for example, in the two-bar tenor opening, or the Bass I declamation in bar 92. (Example 4.7) Despite the fact that such dramatic declamatory writing can also be said to have much in common with the story-telling style of the German Romantic partsong, double-choir juxtaposition is not the norm in this genre and Schumann’s knowledge of Mendelssohn’s choral music may have played a part here.

Example 4.6: Schumann: *An die Sterne*, bb. 67–70

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts: Soprano 2 (S2), Alto 2 (A2), Tenor 2 (T2), and Bass 2 (B2). Each part is marked 'Solo pp' and features a long note in measure 68. The lyrics are 'hof - - - fend, glau - be - voll!'.

³⁰ See also Example 2.17, page 77–78.

Example 4.7(a): Schumann: *Ungewisses Licht*, bb. 1–2
Lebhaft und sehr markiert

Musical score for Example 4.7(a) showing a vocal line for Tenors 1 and 2 (T1,2). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo/mood is 'Lebhaft und sehr markiert'. The dynamic marking is *f*. The lyrics are: Bahn - los und pfad - los, Fel - sen hin - an.

Example 4.7(b): Schumann: *Ungewisses Licht*, bb. 9–10

Musical score for Example 4.7(b) showing vocal parts for Soprano 1 (S1), Alto 1 (A1), Tenor 1 (T1), Bass 1 (B1), Soprano 2 (S2), Alto 2 (A2), Tenor 2 (T2), and Bass 2 (B2). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics for S1, A1, and T1 are: nichts hem - met den Fuss!. The lyrics for B1 are: Brau - sen - der Wald, _____, Fluss, Fluss, Fluss, Fluss, Fluss, Fluss, Fluss, Fluss. The dynamic marking *sf* is present for the instrumental parts.

While Mendelssohn demonstrates greater inventiveness and variety with his textural treatment in his Berlin works, this is perhaps because he did not test the boundaries of harmonic language to the same extent as Schumann did. A crucial distinction in these Schumann settings compared with those of Mendelssohn is their harmony-driven nature. Mendelssohn's settings – by liturgical necessity, but also in accordance with his preferred musical idiom – are more harmonically conventional. The Schumann pieces, on the other hand, are much less predictable in this respect,

with abundant chromaticism lending a more open-ended sense to the musical language. Nevertheless, an area of harmonic similarity between the choral style of these two composers can be observed in some of the cadential moments. Firstly, feminine endings are used at cadential moments, presenting an instance of Schumann employing that feature often criticised in the music of Mendelssohn. The final cadence of *Ungewisses Licht* calls to mind the final moments of Mendelssohn's Psalm 22 (Example 4.8 (a) and (b)); and the closing cadential phrases of *Zuversicht* are reminiscent of the end of *Denn er hat seinen Engeln*, both even sharing the key of G major. (Example 4.9 (a) and (b))

Example 4.8(a): Schumann: *Ungewisses Licht*, bb. 48–52

48 *pp*

S1 Ist es die Lie - be? Ist es der Tod?

A1 *pp* Ist es die Lie - be? Ist es der Tod?

T1 *pp* Ist es die Lie - be? Ist es der Tod?

B1 *pp* Ist es die Lie - be? Ist es der Tod? Ist es der Tod?

S2 *pp* Ist es die Lie - be? Ist es der Tod?

A2 *pp* Ist es die Lie - be? Ist es der Tod? Ist es der Tod?

T2 *pp* Ist es die Lie - be? Ist es der Tod?

B2 *pp* Ist es die Lie - be? Ist es der Tod? Ist es der Tod?

Example 4.8(b): Mendelssohn: Psalm 22, bb. 146–151

cresc. 147 *f* *dim.* *pp*

S1 Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

A1 *cresc.* Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

T1 *cresc.* Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

B1 *cresc.* Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

S2 *cresc.* Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

A2 *cresc.* Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

T2 *cresc.* Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

B2 *cresc.* Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht un - ter den Hei - den.

Example 4.9(a): Schumann: *Zuversicht*, bb. 45–54

46

S1 wenn dir die Lie - be bleibt, wenn dir die Lie - -

A1 wenn dir die Lie - be bleibt, wenn dir die Lie - be, wenn dir die

T1 wenn dir die Lie - be bleibt, wenn dir die Lie - be, wenn dir die

B1 bleibt, die Lie - be bleibt, die Lie - -

S2 *p* wenn dir die Lie - be bleibt, Nach o - ben musst du bli - cken, nach

A2 *p* wenn dir die Lie - be bleibt, Nach o - ben musst du bli - cken, nach

T2

B2 *p* wenn dir die Lie - be bleibt, wenn dir die Lie - be, die Lie - be, die

50

- be, die Lie - - be bleibt!

Lie - be, die Lie be bleibt!

Lie - be, die Lie - - be bleibt!

o - - - ben, nach o - - - ben!

o - - - ben, nach o - - - ben!

pp wenn dir die Lie - - - be bleibt!

Lie - - - be, die Lie - - - be bleibt!

Example 4.9(b): Mendelssohn: *Denn er hat seinen Engeln*, bb. 64–72

If Schumann’s music has been described as historically oriented, this conception is more clearly defined with regard to Brahms, the archaic elements of whose music have often been observed in relation to the influence of J. S. Bach and, to a lesser extent, Schütz. In terms of Brahms’s sacred music, obvious precedents provided him with suitable models; for example, Ryan Minor discusses how Brahms’s *Fest- und Gedenksprüche*, Op.109, adopted the *cori spezzati* style as exemplified in the music of Gabrieli and Schütz.³¹ Indeed, these double-choir motets are cast in the same mould as many of the sixteenth-century polychoral motets; Brahms’s employment of echo effects and sequential dialogue between the two choirs bespeaks this influence. Two of Brahms’s best-known motets, Op.74 – *Warum ist das Licht gegeben dem Mühseligen?* and *O Heiland reiß die Himmel auf* – are just one instance of the composer paying overt and conscious homage to J. S. Bach, principally via the use of chorales and counterpoint.³² Furthermore, the practice of rigorous contrapuntal exercises with which Brahms habitually started his day conjures an image of a composer firmly rooted in tradition. Curiously enough, however, this has not equated

³¹ Ryan Minor, ‘Occasions and Nations in Brahms’s “Fest- und Gedenksprüche”’, *19th-Century Music* 29 (2006), 275.

³² For a detailed examination of ‘Warum ist das Licht gegeben’, see Daniel Beller-McKenna, ‘The Great “Warum?”: Job, Christ, and Bach in a Brahms Motet’, *19th-Century Music* 19 (1996), 231–251.

to an accusation of imitation in Brahms's music, as has often been the case with regard to Mendelssohn reception. Instead, allusion is the word that has been most frequently used to describe Brahms's employment of earlier musical styles. While anti-Semitism and other negative issues regarding Mendelssohn reception outlined in Chapter One are likely to have been a reason for this, it is only in relatively recent years, with the work of such scholars as John Michael Cooper and James Garratt, that this misconception has been addressed.³³

While Brahms's close personal relationship with Robert Schumann has highlighted an obvious musical influence, the impression Mendelssohn made upon Brahms has remained largely unexplored.³⁴ However, a pronouncement by Brahms at a dinner in the home of Lili Wach (Mendelssohn's daughter) points to the high esteem in which the younger composer held Mendelssohn: 'The older I grow, the higher in my heaven do the two stars Mozart and Mendelssohn climb'.³⁵ Therefore, it is worth considering Mendelssohn's choral music as an additional model for Brahms. Bearing in mind that Mendelssohn had re-created German Protestant sacred music in the first half of the nineteenth century, a successful and appropriate example of sacred text setting already existed for Brahms. The very fact that Brahms afforded Mozart and Mendelssohn apparently equal status bears testimony to the extent of his regard for Mendelssohn.

³³ John Michael Cooper, 'Knowing Mendelssohn: A Challenge from the Primary Sources', *Notes* 61 (2004), 67–68; James Garratt, 'Mendelssohn's Babel: Romanticism and the Poetics of Translation', *Music & Letters* 80 (1999), 23–49.

³⁴ For references to intersections between Brahms and Schumann, see, for example, John Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann and Brahms* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 155. For a study of Mendelssohn's influence upon Brahms, see David Brodbeck, 'Brahms's Mendelssohn' in David Brodbeck (ed.), *Brahms Studies 2* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 209–231.

³⁵ Ernst Rudorff, 'Johannes Brahms: Erinnerungen und Betrachtungen', *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 97 (1957), 185–186; quoted in Brodbeck, 'Brahms's Mendelssohn', 217.

Brodbeck provides one of the few explorations of a possible intersection between Mendelssohn and Brahms; although his chapter principally examines connections between instrumental works by Mendelssohn and Brahms, he also touches upon the choral music:

both composers took an unusually deep interest in earlier music, not only collecting, editing, and conducting works from the Baroque and Renaissance periods, but also engaging it creatively in their own oeuvre – in their sacred choral works and pieces for organ above all – literally making music out of the past. On more than one occasion the comparable interests of the two artists intersected in a very real way – as in Brahms’s introduction of Mendelssohn’s Bachian eight-part motet “Mitten wir im Leben sind”, op.23, no.3, to a concert of the Vienna Singakademie in 1864, and his use of Mendelssohn’s organ part in his performance ten years later at the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde of Handel’s oratorio *Salomon*.³⁶

Going on to suggest that ‘both Mendelssohn and Brahms might be fairly characterized as true guardians of the “sacred German art”’, Brodbeck summarises the documentary evidence of a common ground between the two composers.³⁷ He concludes that ‘Brahms’s Mendelssohn, in short, was not the “superficial” or “overly sentimental” composer of the increasingly popular image of his day, and he certainly was not at home in the Victorian drawing room.’³⁸ While Beller-McKenna has made a valid argument that Brahms ‘makes a direct bow to J. S. Bach’ in his motet *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her*,³⁹ Brodbeck further suggests that this motet recalls Mendelssohn’s Op.23 *Kirchenmusik*:

Brahms’s many choral works from this time – the part-songs and works for women’s choir, for example – abound with stylistic resonances of Mendelssohn’s own choral music; Brahms’s *a cappella* setting of “Es ist das Heil uns kommen her,” op.29, no.1, recalls various aspects of Mendelssohn’s settings of “Aus tiefer Not” and “Mitten wir im Leben sind,”

³⁶ Brodbeck, ‘Brahms’s Mendelssohn’, 210–211.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 212.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 231.

³⁹ Daniel Beller-McKenna, ‘Brahms’s Motet “Es ist das Heil uns kommen her” and the “Innermost Essence of Music”’ in Brodbeck (ed.), *Brahms Studies* 2, 33.

op.23, nos.1 and 3 ... and the *German Requiem* clearly borrows from the manner of Mendelssohn's psalm cantatas (above all *Psalm 42*, whose big concluding fugue on "Harre auf Gott" is recalled in Brahms's fugal setting of the text "Herr, du bist würdig" with which the sixth movement comes to its rousing close).⁴⁰

The nineteenth-century practice of allusion in music is relevant in this regard: Brahms was (perhaps) alluding to Mendelssohn's Psalm 42, from which Mendelssohn himself had directly quoted in his setting of Psalm 43 for Berlin Cathedral. Thus, Brahms was in fact building upon the plurality of musical languages already observed in Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral choral works.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has suggested an alternative manner in which to view Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral legacy. It has been shown how the Berlin Cathedral choral works had a far-reaching impact upon the music written outside Mendelssohn's remit as court composer to King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Although Mendelssohn's setting of *Die Deutsche Liturgie* was indeed composed for performance in Berlin Cathedral, it was written later and at somewhat of a remove; nonetheless, it proves itself as a worthy companion to *Drei Psalmen*, Op.78 and *Sechs Sprüche*, Op.79. Furthermore, Mendelssohn's works for England – *Hear my Prayer* and the Anglican Settings – have been considered in a new light: that of their similarities to the Berlin music rather than the more common tendency to view them as thoroughly English. Finally, Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral legacy has been considered with regard to its influence upon the choral music of Schumann and Brahms, his direct successors in Germany.

⁴⁰ Brodbeck, 'Brahms's Mendelssohn', 218.

Conclusion

In a letter to Pastor Julius Schubring in 1833, Mendelssohn wrote: ‘You must supply me with all the hymns and passages. You see that I require a great deal from you, but I wish first to enter fully into the spirit of the words, and then the music shall follow.’¹ Although this quotation refers to Mendelssohn’s choice of texts for *St Paul*, it also elucidates the composer’s approach to text setting in a broader sense. Mendelssohn’s desire to capture the ‘spirit’ of the text signals his priorities with regard to the composition of sacred music: that the music takes its lead from the text or, more particularly, the spirit of the text. In addition to affording an insight into Mendelssohn’s approach to text, this statement gestures towards a deeper spiritual commitment on his part towards religious expression. The resultant expression of faith in Mendelssohn’s choral music reflects these priorities and bespeaks a genuine belief in the power of intrinsically linking music to text, thereby enhancing the power and meaning of each.

It has been shown in Chapter One that Mendelssohn’s commitment to a public profession of faith through his music had a negative impact upon his posthumous reception. The complexity surrounding the composer’s position as a *Neuchrist* and the religious associations of many of his secular works, even within his symphonic repertory, appear to have mitigated against him and, as a result, Mendelssohn scholarship is still in its relative infancy. However, it has also been shown how Mendelssohn’s profound faith had a far-reaching influence upon his music, both sacred and secular. The blurring of boundaries between sacred and secular realms

¹ Letter of 1833 from Mendelssohn to Pastor Julius Schubring in Paul & Carl Mendelssohn Bartholdy (eds.), trans. Lady Wallace, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy from 1833 to 1847* (London: Longman, 1864), 6.

has been discussed in relation to Mendelssohn's 'imaginary church music' and a theory has been posited that the reverse is also the case: the unaccompanied sacred music composed for Berlin Cathedral strives at times for symphonic stature in its employment of texture and tessitura.

The Berlin Cathedral period has been revealed as representing a particularly significant part of Mendelssohn's output and it has been argued that the composer refined his choral language through this repertoire. Two principal areas have been investigated: the composer's approach to text and to style. With regard to text, Mendelssohn attained the maximum intersection between textual clarity and expressive power in his Berlin Cathedral repertoire. Chapter Two examined how recitative, tonal word painting and economy of expression all contributed to this directness of communication, while Chapter Three demonstrated how textual clarity reaches its zenith in the *Sechs Sprüche zum Kirchenjahr*, Op.79. This textual clarity, rather than representing Mendelssohn's limitation or restriction as an obedient servant of the King and a composer of liturgical music has, in fact, been shown to be Mendelssohn's expressive preference regardless of whether he was composing for liturgical purposes. It appears that the composer felt a duty to the text and also towards achieving a faithful intersection of music and text where meaning is clearly conveyed. In this way, the Berlin Cathedral choral music laid the ground for the eloquence of *Elijah*'s musical language.

By the time Mendelssohn took up his position at Berlin Cathedral his absorption of earlier musical influences was sophisticated and fluent, unlike in his early choral works such as *Tu es Petrus* and *Hora Est*, which display the hallmarks of a composer

learning his craft. This thesis has defended the originality of Mendelssohn's stylistic eclecticism and argued that the Berlin Cathedral repertoire represents the highlight of this facet of the composer's musical style. Particular consideration has been given to *Drei Psalmen*, Op.78 and *Sechs Sprüche*, Op.79 in order to demonstrate how musical languages are freely mixed in this repertory and James Garratt's adoption of translation theory has provided an important focus in this regard.²

It has been asserted that Brahms followed Mendelssohn's lead in 'translating' the music of the past for a nineteenth-century audience: 'Brahms was by no means the first composer to explore and reveal this concern in his works.'³ That Brahms knew Mendelssohn's *Mitten wir im Leben sind* and endorsed it by introducing it to a Viennese audience, as outlined in Chapter Four, is significant. Insofar as Mendelssohn's motet represents an eclectic mixture of sixteenth-century Italian homophony, Lutheran chorale singing, Bachian chromaticism and Romantic dynamic expanses, it served as a stylistic model for Brahms to reinvent the past through his own voice. However, in between the composition of *Mitten wir im Leben sind* in 1830 and Brahms's historically-oriented choral music from the 1850s stands Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral choral music. The Berlin Cathedral music demonstrates Mendelssohn's ability to merge his own style with earlier styles in a similar but more fluent manner than in *Mitten wir im Leben sind*. It can therefore be said that, in his own 1830 motet, Mendelssohn himself found a model for his Berlin Cathedral style.

² James Garratt, 'Mendelssohn's Babel: Romanticism and the Poetics of Translation', *Music & Letters* 80 (1999), 23–49.

³ *Ibid.*, 23.

While *Mitten wir im Leben sind* has been viewed as a seminal piece for Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral style, this thesis has argued that Mendelssohn in turn left an important legacy in the form of his Berlin Cathedral choral music. Mendelssohn's Berlin Cathedral choral style represents a unique and original body of work because it consciously incorporates the myriad of musical languages Mendelssohn had absorbed from earlier composers but also because of the commitment to textual clarity that exists at its forefront. In these pieces, Mendelssohn demonstrates his consummate mastery of the medium of liturgical music, where music and text combine to elevate the liturgy. Perhaps even more remarkable, however, is Mendelssohn's skill for composing music of expressive power and beauty; music whose enduring appeal emphatically continues to fulfil Hauptmann's prophecy that 'time will not affect the music.'⁴

⁴ Letter of 18 January 1850 from Moritz Hauptmann to Franz Hauser in Alfred Schöne and Ferdinand Hiller (eds.), *Letters of a Leipzig Cantor*, trans. A. D. Coleridge, 2 vols. (Novello, Ewer and Co: London and New York, 1892), vol. II, 74; quoted in Chapter One, page 20.

Bibliography

Applegate, Celia, *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn's Revival of the St Matthew Passion* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005)

———, 'How German is it? Nationalism and the Idea of Serious Music in the Early Nineteenth Century', *19th-Century Music* 21 (1998), 274–296

Beller-McKenna, Daniel, *Brahms and the German Spirit* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004)

———, 'Brahms's Motet "Es ist das Heil und kommen her" and the "Innermost Essence of Music"' in David Brodbeck (ed.), *Brahms Studies 2* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 31–61

———, 'Distance and Disembodiment: Harps, Horns and the Requiem Idea in Schumann and Brahms', *The Journal of Musicology* 22 (2005), 47–89

———, 'The Great "Warum": Job, Christ, and Bach in a Brahms Motet', *19th-Century Music* 19 (1996), 231–251

———, Review: 'The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition by Jeffrey S. Sposato', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 62 (2009), 737–742

Blume, Friedrich, *Protestant Church Music: A History* (London: Gallancz, 1975)

Botstein, Leon, 'The Aesthetics of Assimilation and Affirmation: Reconstructing the Career of Felix Mendelssohn' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 5–42

———, 'Mendelssohn, Werner, and the Jews: A Final Word', *The Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999), 45–50

———, 'Mendelssohn and the Jews', *The Musical Quarterly* 82 (1998), 210–219

———, 'Songs without Words: Thoughts on Music, Theology, and the Role of the Jewish Question in the Work of Felix Mendelssohn', *The Musical Quarterly* 77 (1993), 561–578

———, 'Wagner as Mendelssohn: Reversing Habits and Reclaiming Meaning in the Performance of Mendelssohn's Music for Orchestra and Chorus' in Peter Mercer-Taylor (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 251–268

Brodbeck, David (ed.), *Brahms Studies 2* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998)

Brodbeck, David, 'A Winter of Discontent: Mendelssohn and the *Berliner Domchor*' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–32

———, 'Brahms's Mendelssohn' in David Brodbeck (ed.), *Brahms Studies 2* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 209–231

———, 'Eine kleine Kirchenmusik: A New Canon, a Revised Cadence, and an Obscure "Coda" by Mendelssohn', *The Journal of Musicology* 12 (1994), 179–205

———, 'Some notes on an Anthem by Mendelssohn' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 43–64

Brown, Clive, *A Portrait of Mendelssohn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003)

Byrne Bodley, Lorraine, *Goethe and Zelter: Musical Dialogues* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010)

Charlton, David (ed.), trans. Clarke, Martyn, *ETA Hoffmann's Musical Writings: 'Kreisleriana', 'The Poet and the Composer', Music Criticism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Cooper, John Michael, "'Aber eben dieser Zweifel": A New Look at Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony', *19th-Century Music* 15 (1992), 169–187

———, *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: A Guide to Research* (New York: Routledge, 2001)

———, 'Knowing Mendelssohn: A Challenge from the Primary Sources', *Notes* 61 (2004), 35–95

———, *Mendelssohn, Goethe, and the Walpurgis Night: the Heathen Muse in European Culture, 1700–1850* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007)

———, 'Mendelssohn's *Valediction*', *Choral Journal* 49 (2009), 34–47

———, Review: '*The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* by Jeffrey S. Sposato', *Notes* 64 (2007), 275–278

Dahlhaus, Carl, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989)

Daverio, John and Sams, Eric, 'Schumann, Robert', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.)
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40704pg16#S40704.16>> [Accessed 22 June 2012]

Daverio, John, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann and Brahms* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)

- , *Nineteenth Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology* (New York: Schirmer, 1993)
- , ‘Schumann’s Ossianic Manner’, *19th-Century Music* 21 (1998), 247–273
- Dempsey-Garratt, Sinead, ‘Hero or Has Been? Mendelssohn Reception in England and Germany in the 1840s’, *British Postgraduate Musicology Online* 6 (2004)
- Dinglinger, Wolfgang, ‘Mendelssohn – General-Musik-Direktor für kirchliche und geistliche Musik’ in Schmidt, Christian Martin (ed.), *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Kongreß-Bericht Berlin 1994* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1997), 23–36
- Devrient, Eduard, *My Recollections of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and his Letters to me* (London: Richard Bentley, 1869)
- Eatock, Colin Timothy, *Mendelssohn and Victorian England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009)
- Finson, John W. and Todd, R. Larry (eds.), *Mendelssohn and Schumann: Essays on their Music and its Context* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1984)
- Finson, Jon W., Review: *Mendelssohn Studies* by R. Larry Todd, *Music & Letters* 75 (1994), 96–98
- Garratt, James, ‘Mendelssohn’s Babel: Romanticism and the Poetics of Translation’, *Music & Letters* 80 (1999), 23–49
- , *Music, Culture and Social Reform in the Age of Wagner* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- , *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- , ‘Mendelssohn and the rise of musical historicism’ in Peter Mercer-Taylor (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 55–70
- , ‘Performing Renaissance Church Music in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Issues and Challenges in the Study of Performative Reception’, *Music and Letters* 83 (2002), 187–236
- , ‘Prophets Looking Backwards: German Romantic Historicism and the Representation of Renaissance Music’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 125 (2000), 164–204
- Gillingham, Susan, *Psalms Through the Centuries: Volume One* (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008)

- Grimes, Nicole and Mace, Angela R. (eds.), *Mendelssohn Perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate: forthcoming, 2012)
- Harper, John, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991)
- Hendrickson, Marion Lars, *Musica Christi: A Lutheran Aesthetic* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005)
- Hennemann, Monika, 'Felix Mendelssohn's Dramatic Compositions: from Liederspiel to *Lorelei*' in Peter Mercer-Taylor (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 206–232
- Hirsch, Lily E., 'Felix Mendelssohn's Psalm 100 Reconsidered', *Philomusica Online* 4 (2004) <<http://riviste.paviauniversitypress.it/index.php/phi/article/view/04-01-SG02/23>> [accessed 16 October 2011]
- Hopkins Porter, Cecelia, 'The Reign of the "Dilettanti": Düsseldorf from Mendelssohn to Schumann', *The Musical Quarterly* 73 (1989), 476–512
- Kok, Roe-Min and Tunbridge, Laura (eds.), *Rethinking Schumann* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)
- Korsyn, Kevin, 'Brahms Research and Aesthetic Ideology', *Music Analysis* 12 (1993), 89–102
- , 'Towards a New Poetics of Musical Influence', *Music Analysis* 10 (1991), 3–72
- Krummacker, Friedhelm, 'Composition as Accommodation? On Mendelssohn's Music in Relation to England' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 80–105
- Kuzma, Marika, 'Bortnyansky, Dmitry Stepanovich', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.) <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03638?q=bortnyansky&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit> [Accessed 12 June 2012]
- Leaver, Robin A., 'Lutheran Church Music', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.) <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46760?q=lutheran+church+music&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit> [Accessed 12 January 2011]
- , *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications* (Michigan and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007)
- Little, William A., 'Mendelssohn and the Berlin Singakademie: The Composer at the Crossroads' in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Mendelssohn and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 65–85

Malin, Yonatan, *Songs in Motion: Rhythm and Meter in the German Lied* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Marissen, Michael, 'Religious Aims in Mendelssohn's 1829 Berlin-Singakademie Performances of Bach's St Matthew Passion', *The Musical Quarterly* 77 (1993), 718–726

Mell, Albert and Wiegandt, Matthias, 'Rietz, Julius', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.)
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23451?q=julius+rietz&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit> [accessed 12 June 2012]

Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Paul and Carl (eds.), trans. Lady Wallace, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy from 1833 to 1847* (Longman: London, 1864)

Mercer-Taylor, Peter (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Mercer-Taylor, Peter, *The Life of Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

———, 'Mendelssohn in Nineteenth-Century American Hymnody', *19th-Century Music* 32 (2009), 235–283

———, 'Rethinking Mendelssohn's Historicism: A Lesson from *St. Paul*', *The Journal of Musicology* 15 (1997), 208–229

Minor, Ryan, Review: 'Beethoven after Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works' by Stephen Rumph; *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* by Jeffrey S. Sposato; *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn's Revival of the St Matthew Passion* by Cecilia Applegate', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 133 (2008), 334–352

———, 'Occasions and Nations in Brahms's "Fest- und Gedenksprüche"', *19th-Century Music* 29 (2006), 261–288

Musgrave, Michael (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Pak, G. Sujin, *The Judaizing Calvin: Sixteenth-Century Debates over the Messianic Psalms* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Perrey, Beate (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge, 2007)

Plantinga, Leon, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York and London: Norton, 1984)

- Pritchard, Brian W., 'Mendelssohn's Chorale Cantatas: An Appraisal', *The Musical Quarterly* 62 (1976), 1–24
- Rehding, Alexander, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Reichwald, Siegwart, 'Lost in Translation: The Case of Mendelssohn's *Psalm 95*', *Choral Journal* (2009), 28–47
- Reynolds, Christopher Alan, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2003)
- Rifkin, Joshua, et al., 'Schütz, Heinrich', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45997pg1#S45997.1>> [accessed 21 June 2012]
- Rosen, Charles, *The Romantic Generation* (London: HarperCollins, 1996)
- Samson, Jim (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Romantic Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- Schöne, Alfred and Hiller, Ferdinand (eds.), *Letters of a Leipzig Cantor*, trans. A. D. Coleridge, 2 vols. (Novello, Ewer and Co: London and New York, 1892)
- Seaton, Douglass (ed.), *The Mendelssohn Companion* (Southport: Greenwood Press, 2001)
- Seaton, Douglass, 'But I Don't Like It: Observations and Reflections on the Two Finales of *Elijah*', *Choral Journal* (2009), 24–33
- , 'The Romantic Mendelssohn: The Composition of *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*', *The Musical Quarterly* 68 (1982), 398–410
- Shaw, George Bernard, *London Music in 1888–1889 as Heard by Corno di Bassetto (Later Known as Bernard Shaw) with Some Further Autobiographical Particulars* (London: Constable, 1938)
- Sposato, Jeffrey S., 'A New History of Mendelssohn's *Psalm 42*', *Choral Journal* (2009), 8–27
- , 'Creative Writing: The [Self-] Identification of Mendelssohn as Jew', *The Musical Quarterly* 82 (1998), 190–209
- , 'Mendelssohn, "Paulus", and the Jews: A Response to Leon Botstein and Michael Steinberg', *The Musical Quarterly*, 83 (1999), 280–291
- , 'Saint Elsewhere: German and English Reactions to Mendelssohn's *Paulus*', *19th-Century Music* 32 (2008), 26–51

———, *The Price of Assimilation: The Oratorios of Felix Mendelssohn and the Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Stanley, Glenn, 'Bach's *Erbe*: The Chorale in the German Oratorio of the Early Nineteenth Century', *19th-Century Music* 11 (1987), 121–149

Stein, Deborah, and Spillman, Robert, *Poetry into Song: Performance and Analysis of Lieder* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

Steinberg, Michael P., 'Mendelssohn's Music and German-Jewish Culture: An Intervention', *The Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999), 31–44

Taylor, Benedict, *Mendelssohn, Time and Memory: The Romantic Conception of Cyclic Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

———, 'Musical History and Self-Consciousness in Mendelssohn's Octet, Op.20', *19th-Century Music* 32 (2008), 131–159

Temperley, Nicholas, 'Mendelssohn's Influence on English Music', *Music & Letters* 43 (1962), 224–233

Todd, R. Larry (ed.), *Mendelssohn and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)

Todd, R. Larry (ed.), *Mendelssohn Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Todd, R. Larry and Mace, Angela, 'Mendelssohn and the Free Chorale', *Choral Journal* (2009), 48–69

Todd, R. Larry, *Felix Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)

———, 'On Mendelssohn's Sacred Music, Real and Imaginary' in Peter Mercer-Taylor (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 167–188

———, 'Mendelssohn', *Grove Music Online* L. Macy (ed.)
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51795?q=mendelssohn&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit> [Accessed 7 June 2011]

———, *Mendelssohn Essays* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008)

———, *Mendelssohn's Musical Education: A Study and Edition of his Exercises in Composition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983)

Toews, John, *Becoming Historical: Cultural Reformation and Public Memory in Early Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Tunbridge, Laura, *Schumann's Late Style* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Vitercik, Greg, 'Mendelssohn as progressive' in Peter Mercer-Taylor (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 71–90

Ward Jones, Peter (ed.), *The Mendelssohns on Honeymoon: The 1837 Diary of Felix and Cécile Mendelssohn Bartholdy Together with Letters to their Families* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)

———, 'Letter to the Editor', *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999), 27–30

Weber, Édith, Review: 'Musica Christi: A Lutheran Aesthetic by Marion Lars Hendrickson', *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007), 423–424

Wehner, Ralf, *Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke (MWV)* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2009)

Werner, Eric, 'Felix Mendelssohn's Commissioned Composition for the Hamburg Temple: The 100th Psalm (1844)', *Musica Judaica: Journal of the American Society of Jewish Music* 7 (1984), 54–57

———, *Mendelssohn: A New Image of the Composer and his Age*, trans. Dika Newlin (London: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963)

Westermeyer, Paul, Review: 'Hendrickson, Marion Lars, *Musica Christi: A Lutheran Aesthetic*', *Studies in World Christianity* 13 (2007), 201–203

Wilson-Dickson, Andrew, *A Brief History of Christian Music* (Oxford: Lion, 1992)

Wilson Kimber, Marian, 'Performing *Athalia*: Mendelssohn's Op.74 Incidental Music in the Nineteenth-Century World', *Choral Journal* (2009), 8–23

Critical Editions of Scores Used

David Brodbeck (ed.), *Drei Psalmen, Op. 78* Stuttgarter Mendelssohn-Ausgabe, (Stuttgart: Carus-Verlag, 1997), CV 40.125

John Michael Cooper (ed.), *Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Motets/Motetten, Op.69* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2005), BA 8937

John Michael Cooper (ed.), *Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Psalmen/Psalms Op. 78* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2006), BA 8941

Judith Silber Ballan (ed.), *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Die Deutsche Liturgie*, Stuttgarter Mendelssohn-Ausgabe (Stuttgart: Carus-Verlag, 1997), CV 40.128

R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Der 98. Psalm op.91: Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* Stuttgarter Mendelssohn-Ausgaben (Stuttgart: Carus, 1987), CV 40.075/07

Zappalà, Pietro (ed.), *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Neun Psalmen und Canticum* Stuttgarter Mendelssohn-Ausgaben (Stuttgart: Carus, 1996), CV 40.479/90