

Lysistrata in Kleindeutschland: The German-American Reception of Schubert's *Die Verschworenen* (D. 787)

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Franz Schubert's final attempt at a *Singspiel* was *Die Verschworenen* (*The Conspirators*, D. 787), a loose adaptation of three comedies by Aristophanes: *Lysistrata*, *Ecclesiazusae* (*Assemblywomen*) and *Thesmophoriazusae* (*Women at the Thesmophoria*). Composed in 1823, but not premiered until 1861 (in Vienna), the work was successfully revived for its United States premiere 18 months later, in Hoboken, New Jersey, for a thriving German-American cultural community at the time of the American Civil War. The historical conditions of early performances in Hoboken and the Kleindeutschland neighbourhood of Manhattan, and the reasons for the work's programming by its conductor, Friedrich Adolf Sorge, a prominent German-American political and labour leader who wanted the arts to 'shake up the people', are addressed. Schubert's *Singspiel* had several layers of meaning for its audiences of mostly German immigrants living in the New York City area: as an adaptation of Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*, set in the Crusades, it was a comic plea for peace both in the early years of the Civil War and amid the violent political strife on the path toward German unification. Its use of parts of Aristophanes's *Ecclesiazusae* suggested relevance to labour disputes that Sorge had been involved in since the 1850s and would eventually lead himself after establishing the New York Section of the International Workingmen's Association. In this context, Schubert's work becomes both Germanic and Hellenic, medieval and modern, thereby becoming an assurance of Old-World culture for its varied German-American audiences.

And yet we are involved in a tremendous, gigantic war for our national existence, and are constantly told by our well-meaning brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, that we must go to ruin. God knows, what may be the destiny of this country, but from all appearances we should judge, that, musically at least, it will attain the highest eminence, in shorter time, than any other country in the world.¹

With these words, a commentator writing for *The Musical Review and Musical World* in New York City concluded a summary of the highlights of New York's musical

¹ 'The Past Season', *The Musical Review and Musical World* 14/13 (20 June 1863): 146–7, at 146. See transcription in *Music in Gotham*, www.musicingotham.org/event/22507 (accessed 5 April 2021). These words were written by Theodore Hagen (1823–1871), German-American editor and proprietor of the paper.

season of 1862–63. Printed only weeks before the Battle of Gettysburg and New York City's violent draft riots, these words capture effectively the resilient nature of music two years into the American Civil War. After boasting of the 'great musical resources of [the] city and of the vast progress musical art has made', the commentator proceeds to highlighting that 'a great prominence ... is given to modern writers of eminence' and that 'most of the compositions, which prejudice or want of means exclude from the programmes of most of the concerts in Europe, are made familiar to us, but a short time after they have been published'. Atop the list of examples establishing this trend is a 'little opera' by Schubert, which has been performed 'here, in advance of almost all the stages in Germany'.² That little opera was Schubert's *Die Verschworenen* (*The Conspirators*, D787), and the reference concerns the first performance of a dramatic work by Schubert in the United States. The work's ancient Greek sources in Aristophanic comedy, its American premiere in 1863 in Hoboken, New Jersey, and subsequent performances by German-Americans in Manhattan later in 1866 and 1867 are the objects of study here.

Die Verschworenen was Schubert's last attempt at a *Singspiel* and, as was the case with many of his works for the stage, he never witnessed a production. Composed in early 1823 to a libretto by Viennese poet and playwright Ignaz Franz Castelli (1780–1862), this one-act *Singspiel* was alternately named *Der häusliche Krieg* (*The Domestic War*) at the behest of Viennese censors fearful of highlighting the conspiracy at the centre of the plot. Set during the medieval crusades, the *Singspiel* depicts Count Heribert von Lüdenstein and his fellow knights returning home from battling Saracens to find that their wives have schemed against them. By withholding amorous affection, they seek to end the continued absences of their warring husbands. However, the Count's page Udolin thwarts the plot when, disguised as a woman, he attends the oath-swearing ceremony of the wives, learns of their designs and forewarns the returning men, who then devise their own scheme to ignore their wives and hatch plans for battle in which their wives would join them. Ultimately, joyous reconciliation is achieved after the Count's wife Ludmilla and the other wives reveal their sworn plot, before the husbands divulge their own.

At its core, Castelli's libretto is a loose adaptation of two plays by Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (412 BCE) and *Ecclesiazusae* (391 BCE), both of which satirize Athenian politics, with strong women who subvert gender norms and exert political and sexual control. Castelli's peace-seeking conspiracy is drawn from *Lysistrata*, while the elements of cross-dressing and disguise are found in *Ecclesiazusae*. An element of a third play by Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* (412 BCE), features as well in Castelli's libretto, namely the use of a disguised spy to attend the secret meeting.³

² 'The Past Season'. The reviewer also noted other works by Schubert performed in New York during the season: Liszt's transcription of the Wanderer Fantasy (D. 760), the String Quartet in D Minor ('Der Tod und das Mädchen', D. 810), 'Ständchen' (D. 920), and the Piano Trio in B♭ Major (D. 898).

³ Till Gerrit Waidelich, 'Die Verschworenen, "umsonst komponirt"? Ignaz Franz von Castelli Libretto-Adaption der Lysistrata, vertont von Franz Schubert und Georg Abraham Schneider', *Schubert-Jahrbuch* 1 (1996): 41–60, at 46–8; Simone Beta, "'Attend, O Muse, Our Holy Dances and Come to Rejoice in Our Songs": The Reception of Aristophanes in the Modern Musical Theater', in *Ancient Comedy and Reception: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey Henderson*, ed. S. Douglas Olson (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014): 824–48, at 843, and Waidelich, "'... imitée d'Aristophane": Die Lysistrata von Hoffman und Solié (1802) als Bindeglied zu den Verschworenen von Castelli und Schubert mit einem Ausblick auf die Rezeption des Sujets im Musiktheater', *Schubert Perspektiven* 9 (2009): 216–28, at 221–4;

Additionally, two early nineteenth-century French adaptations, which Castelli would have known, might also have served as models for his libretto. The first was François-Benoît Hoffman's (1760–1828) *Lysistrata ou Les Athéniennes, comédie en un acte et en prose, mêlée de vaudevilles, imitée d'Aristophane*, performed four times at the Théâtre Feydeau in 1801–02 before performances were suspended by censors.⁴ The second was an 1817 adaptation of *The Assemblywomen* by Eugène Scribe (1791–1861) and Antoine-François Varner (1789–1854) titled *Les comices d'Athènes; ou Les femmes orateurs. Comédie vaudeville en un Acte, traduit du grec d'Aristophane*.⁵ In addition to his own early studies in Greek, Castelli would have known each of these Greek plays from the several editions and German translations of Aristophanes's comedies available by around 1820, such as the *Lysistrata* translations by August Christian Borheck (1806) or Johann Heinrich Voss (1821), and a new scholarly interest in Aristophanes reflected in literary journals published in Weimar and Leipzig in the late 1810s and early 1820s.⁶

In his short life, Schubert set a handful of classical or classically themed texts, including Johann Mayrhofer's translation of Aeschylus ('So wird der Mann, der sonder Zwang') and 'Schöne Welt, wo bist du?' from Schiller's *Die Götter Griechenlands*, but the 1819 fragments for an opera titled *Adrast* (libretto by Mayrhofer) may be the most classically oriented work by Schubert after *Die Verschworenen*.⁷ Schubert also set three of Castelli's texts to music in addition to *Die Verschworenen*: 'Trinklied' (D. 148, Feb. 1815), 'Frohsinn' (D. 520, 1817) and 'Das Echo' (D. 990C, publ. 1830).⁸

Pieter Bergé, introduction to the Opera Explorer reprint of *Die Verschworenen* (Munich: MPH, 2008).

⁴ Hoffman challenged the ban in his preface to the 1802 printed edition. Charalampos Orfanos, 'Revolutionary Aristophanes?', in *Aristophanes in Performance, 421 BC–AD 2007*, ed. Edith Hall and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Legenda, 2007): 106–16; Waidelich, "'... imitée d'Aristophane'", 216–20. Hoffman wrote the libretti for Luigi Cherubini's *Médée* (1797) and Étienne-Nicolas Méhul's *Adrien empereur de Rome* (1791, premiered 1799). The music for *Lysistrata* has been attributed to Jean-Pierre Solié.

⁵ Vasiliki Giannopoulou, 'Aristophanes in Translation before 1920', in *Aristophanes in Performance*, 309–42, at 320; Beta, "'Attend, O Muse'", 833.

⁶ Waidelich, 'Die Verschworenen', 45–48. Ignaz Franz Castelli, *Memoiren meines Lebens* (Vienna: Kober & Markgraf, 1861): I: 45–6.

⁷ On the classical inspirations of Schubert and his colleagues, see Reinhold Hammerstein, "'Schöne Welt, wo bist du?'" Schiller, Schubert und die Götter Griechenlands', in *Musik und Dichtung: Neue Forschungsbeiträge, Viktor Pöschl zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet*, ed. Michael von Albrecht and Werner Schubert (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990): 305–30; Ilija Dürhammer, 'Deutsch- und Griechentum: Johann Mayrhofer und Theodor Körner', in *200 Jahre, Schloß Achberg: Ich lebe und componire wie ein Gott—Schuberts Leben und Schaffen*, ed. Ilija Dürhammer and Till Gerrit Waidelich (Heidelberg: Braus, 1997): 21–4; John M. Gingerich, "'Those of us who found our life in art': The Second-Generation Romanticism of the Schubert-Schober Circle, 1820–1825", in *Franz Schubert and His World*, ed. Christopher Gibbs and Morten Solvik (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014): 67–114. On *Adrast*, see Elizabeth Norman McKay, 'Schubert and Classical Opera: The Promise of *Adrast*', in *Der vergessene Schubert: Franz Schubert auf der Bühne* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997): 62–76. Another unfinished three-act opera on a classical theme is *Die Bürgschaft* (D. 435), which concerns a rebellion against the King of Syracuse.

⁸ Lucia Porhansl, 'Schuberts Lieder nach Textvorlagen von Ignaz Franz Castelli', *Schubert durch die Brille* 15 (1995): 100–04; Walburga Litschauer, 'Ignaz Franz Castelli als Textdichter für Schubert', in *Schuberts Lieder nach Gedichten aus seinem literarischen Freundeskreis*, ed. Walther Dürr, Siefried Schmalzriedt, and Thomas Seyboldt (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999): 241–55.

Die Verschworenen, as a one-act, loose adaptation of Aristophanes's political satire *Lysistrata*, achieved considerable prominence in the second half of the nineteenth century with several well-received productions on both sides of the Atlantic. Aside from a possible performance with piano accompaniment in the Viennese home of schoolmaster Cajetan Giannattasio del Rio (1764–1828), it was not until a concert performance in Vienna on 1 March 1861 and the premiere staging in Frankfurt am Main on 29 August that year that the public reception of *Die Verschworenen* truly launched, aided by the 1862 publication of a vocal score by C. A. Spina in Vienna (Fig. 1).⁹

On 21 March 1863, two years to the month after Johann von Herbeck (1831–1877) revived the *Singspiel* in a concert performance in Vienna's Musikverein with the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, the score of Schubert's music was used for a staged performance in America, not in New York, Boston or Philadelphia, as one might expect, but in Hoboken, New Jersey.¹⁰ In the only known review of the concert, Hoboken is given due praise as New York's 'lively and enterprising neighbor' for staging the work immediately after productions in Leipzig, Frankfurt and Munich.¹¹

Situated across the Hudson River from the island of Manhattan and accessible to New Yorkers in 15 minutes via steam-powered ferry service, Hoboken had become a city in 1855. The city's first ward was home to a burgeoning community of German immigrants, who had been arriving in the New York environs in swelling waves since the revolutions of 1848–49. They established artistic and cultural institutions that sustained a sense of *Heimat*, while connecting with German immigrant communities in Manhattan, especially Kleindeutschland (the Lower East Side and East Village of Manhattan today), the largest German-speaking population in the world after Vienna and Berlin during this period.¹² The number of German-born living in Hoboken during this period ranged between 35 to 42 per cent of the city's total population.¹³

⁹ For the most detailed performance history of *Die Verschworenen*, see Elizabeth Norman McKay, *Franz Schubert's Music for the Theatre* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1991): 240–42. On the house performance, see Otto E. Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977): 667; Simone Beta, 'Aristofane a Vienna: "Le congiurate" di Franz Schubert', *Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica*, n.s., 67 (2001): 143–59, at 146 n6. Alfred Loewenberg (*Annals of Opera 1597–1940*, 3rd ed. (London: John Calder, 1978): 952–3) lists the following performances: 1 Mar. 1861 (Vienna), 19 Aug. 1861 (Frankfurt am Main), 19 Oct. 1861 (Vienna, first staging there?), Apr. 1862 (Budapest), 21 Mar. 1863 (Hoboken, NJ), 2 Mar. 1872 (concert performance in London's Crystal Palace), 16 June 1877 (New York City) [?], and 14 Mar. 1880 (Prague).

¹⁰ Three additional performances took place in Vienna during the 1862–63 season, including at the Hofopertheater directed by Dessof. See 'Wiener Operntheater, 1862–1863: Übersicht', *Recensionen und Mittheilung über Theater und Musik* (31 May 1863): 337–42; and McKay, *Franz Schubert's Music*, 240.

¹¹ *The Musical Review and Musical World* 14/7 (28 Mar. 1863): 76. The review is cited and discussed briefly in Robert Stevenson, 'Schubert in America: First Publications and Performances', *Inter-American Music Review* 1 (1978): 5–28, at 19–20. A shortened version of the review appeared in *Dwight's Journal of Music* 23/1 (4 Apr. 1863), 5–6.

¹² Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845–80* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990): 29–46; Christina A. Ziegler-McPherson, *Immigrants in Hoboken: One-Way Ticket, 1845–1985* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011): 36–54.

¹³ Ziegler-McPherson, *Immigrants*, 38. In comparison, only 15 per cent of New York City's population was German born.



Fig. 1 Title page of the vocal score of Franz Schubert, *Die Verschworenen* [sic], oder der häusliche Krieg (Vienna: C. A. Spina, 1862). Harvard University Libraries, Houghton Library, *Mus.Sch783Ve.1862 (by permission)

Through the lens of the nineteenth-century reception of Aristophanes on both sides of the Atlantic, this study explores the German-American reception of Schubert's *Die Verschworenen* in and around immigrant communities of New York City. This first American performance of a theatrical work by Schubert happened amid a short-lived surge of German opera productions in New York, conducted by Carl Anschütz, when, simultaneously, many new editions, translations and staged productions of Aristophanes's comedies were appearing. The circumstances of the 1863 American premiere in Hoboken under the baton of German-American music teacher and Socialist labour organizer Friedrich Adolph Sorge are here distinguished from subsequent 1866–67 performances by Manhattan's preeminent Gesangverein, the Deutscher Liederkranz, under the leadership of William Steinway. I argue that the echoes of *Lysistrata*'s oath-sworn conspiracy to strike to effect change must have resonated powerfully for the German-American performers and audiences seeking an end to the bloody Civil War, yearning for peace in the *Heimat*, and fighting for greater strength in the American workplace. In addition to an examination of Castelli's libretto and the indirect influence of ancient Greek sources, I will survey adaptations of Schubert's setting and analyse published concert reviews of American performances and newly identified musical parts copied by Sorge and others expressly for these performances in order to establish the late nineteenth-century enthusiasm for this 'little work of no pretension'.¹⁴

Nineteenth-Century Reception of Greek Comedy and Castelli's Libretto

The nineteenth-century reception of Aristophanes throughout German-speaking lands has been traced back to the writings of Goethe and Schlegel.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Musical Review and the Musical World* 14/7 (28 Mar. 1863): 76.

¹⁵ For a recent survey of scholarship, see Paul Touyz, "'Der ungezogene Liebling der Grazien": A Re-examination of Goethe's Early Reception of Aristophanes', *Oxford German Studies* 44 (2015): 136–57.

An enchantment with Greek tragedy had much older roots, but Greek comedy became swept up only in the broader European fascination with ancient Greece in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ The complete edition of Aristophanes's 11 plays in Greek produced by Filippo Invernizi in 1794, expanded with commentaries, revisions and scholia by Christian Daniel Beck and Wilhelm Dindorf over the next three decades, went through many reprints; more than three dozen new critical and school editions appeared across Europe in the nineteenth century.¹⁷ German translations of the Aristophanic corpus abounded as well, including translations of *Lysistrata* and *The Assemblywomen* (*Ecclesiazusae*).¹⁸ Additionally, plays and poetry modelled on Aristophanes by Ludwig Tieck, Heinrich Heine, Friedrich Rückert, August von Platen and others were popularly received.¹⁹

The European craze for classical antiquity found a home in American culture as well in the nineteenth century.²⁰ Adaptations of tragedies became a regular part of theatrical seasons in New York City and Philadelphia starting in the 1840s, including several adaptations of *Ion*, *Oedipus*, *Antigone*, *Alcestis* and *Medea* before 1870 in the form of burlesque, vaudeville, opera, operetta or stage play.²¹ By the 1880s, Greek drama was a mainstay of collegiate theatre productions in the wake of much touted performances in the original Greek of *Agamemnon* (Balliol College, Oxford, 1880) and of *Oedipus Tyrannus* (Harvard College, 1881).²²

An interest in Greek comedy came later to the United States: the English-speaking reception of Aristophanes picked up with the publication of English translations of his plays published in Britain and reprinted in the USA.²³

¹⁶ Jason Geary, *The Politics of Appropriation: German Romantic Music and the Ancient Greek Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014): 10–27; Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 87–152.

¹⁷ For a survey of editions and translations of Aristophanes by nineteenth-century German scholars, see Martin Holtermann, *Der deutsche Aristophanes: Die Rezeption eines politischen Dichters im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004): 279–312.

¹⁸ Giannopoulou, 'Aristophanes in Translation', 309–42; Holtermann, *Der deutsche Aristophanes*, 292–306.

¹⁹ Holtermann, *Der deutsche Aristophanes*, 122–84; Rafaël Newman, 'Heine's Aristophanes: Compromise Formations and the Ambivalence of Carnival', *Comparative Literature* 49 (1997): 227–40.

²⁰ Caroline Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780–1910* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002): 44–98; eadem, *The Mirror of Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition, 1750–1900* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007): 102–41; Carl J. Richard, *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009): 105–51.

²¹ Helene P. Foley, *Reimagining Greek Tragedy on the American Stage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012): 27–31; and in *Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the Americas*, ed. Kathryn Bosher, Fiona Macintosh, Justine McConnell and Patrice Rankine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Lee T. Percy, 'Grecian Theater in Philadelphia, 1800–1870', Ch. 4, and Fiona MacIntosh, 'Thebes in the New World: Revisiting the New York *Antigone* of 1845', Ch. 5.

²² D. E. Pluggé, *History of Greek Play Production in American Colleges and Universities from 1881 to 1936* (New York: Columbia University Teachers College, 1938); Foley, *Reimagining Greek Tragedy*, 31–42.

²³ Edith Hall, 'The English-Speaking Aristophanes, 1650–1914', in *Aristophanes in Performance*, 66–92; Philip Walsh, 'The Verbal and the Visual: Aristophanes' Nineteenth-

Political and social interpretation of the plays in Europe led to considerable debate both in German and in English.²⁴ Moralizing concerns for an ‘imprudent’ interest in *Lysistrata* are apparent in the prefatory remarks of translator Charles Apthorp Wheelwright in 1837: ‘*The Lysistrata* bears so evil a character that we must make but fugitive mention of it, like persons passing over hot embers.’²⁵ Ultimately, not until 1886 was an original Greek comedy (not an adaptation) seen on an American stage, when a student production of *The Acharnians* took place at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.²⁶

Castelli wrote nearly two hundred comedies or librettos for the Kärntnertheater in Vienna; his libretto *Die Verschworenen* was written around 1820, then published in 1823 as *Der häusliche Krieg* in *Dramatisches Sträußchen*, the literary journal published by Johann Baptist Wallishauser. Castelli issued a challenge in the preface for any interested composer to take up his libretto, since so many had heretofore complained about the texts of German opera.²⁷ It remains uncertain whether Schubert and Castelli knew one another personally, but Castelli regularly published reviews of Schubert’s music during the last ten years of Schubert’s life.²⁸

One of the immediately apparent features of Castelli’s adaptation is the removal of the explicitly sexual content at the heart of *Lysistrata*. Far from Castelli’s text are the overt and vivid references to genitalia, sexual frustration and promiscuity of Aristophanes, which would later cause a shocking scandal with, for example, the 1896 London translation of the play, featuring explicit pen and ink drawings by Aubrey Beardsley.²⁹ Additionally, Castelli’s transfer of the setting from ancient Athens to medieval Central Europe has been explained as part of a broader medievalist interest in the Crusades and Castelli’s attempt to

Century English Translators’, in *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Aristophanes*, ed. Philip Walsh (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016): 217–39.

²⁴ Holtermann, *Der deutsche Aristophanes*, 185–265; Philip Walsh, ‘A Study in Reception: The British Debates over Aristophanes’ Politics and Influence’, *Classical Receptions Journal* 1 (2009): 55–72.

²⁵ C.A. Wheelwright, *The Comedies of Aristophanes*, 2 vols (Oxford: Talboys, 1837): II: 61. Later English translations of *Lysistrata* include those by Benjamin Bickey Rogers (1878) and Samuel Smith (London, 1896, featuring eight scandal-inducing drawings by Aubrey Vincent Beardsley).

²⁶ Lee T. Percy, ‘Aristophanes in Philadelphia: The “Acharnians” of 1886’, *The Classical World* 96 (2003): 299–313. A repeat performance took place at the Academy of Music (Irving Place) in New York City as a fundraiser for the recently established American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

²⁷ Ignaz Castelli, preface to *Die Verschwornen* [sic] in *Dramatisches Sträußchen* 8 (1823): 223; cited in McKay, *Franz Schubert’s Music*, 231. We know of three composers who took on Castelli’s challenge: Schubert, Georg Abraham Schneider (1770–1839), and Franz de Paula Roser von Reiter (1779–1830). Schneider’s version premiered in early 1824 in Berlin, causing Schubert frustration, which he expressed in a letter to Leopold Kupelweiser (31 Mar. 1824); *ibid.*: 232. For an analysis of Schneider’s setting and its early reception, see Waidelich, ‘Die Verschwornen’, 48–57. On Roser von Reiter’s attempt, see Waidelich, ‘“... imitée d’Aristophane”’, 224.

²⁸ On Castelli’s reviews of Schubert’s music, see Till Gerrit Waidelich, ‘“Ers soll’s Maul aufmachen”: Schubert im Tagebuch aus Wien der Dresdner Abend-Zeitung von Ignaz Franz Castelli’, in *Schubert durch die Brille* 18 (1997): 25–40. On the idea that Castelli did not know Schubert’s setting, see McKay, *Franz Schubert’s Music*, 240.

²⁹ See note 25, above.

root the story in a Germanic setting.³⁰ The warring soldiers of Athens and Sparta are here knights of the Crusades: Count Heribert of Lüdenstein and his noble vassals Astolf von Reisenberg, Garold von Nummen, Friedrich von Transdorf, together with a Chorus of Knights. Lysistrata and her fellow conspirators are the wives of these knights, respectively: Countess Ludmilla von Lüdenstein, Helene, Luitgarde and Camilla. They are joined by an unnamed wife and a chorus of wives. Ludmilla's maid Isella and Heribert's page Udolin open the dramatic action of the *Singspiel* with a duet ('Sie ist's! Er ist's!') and continue to feature through the plot, foiling the conspiracy at several turns. Aside from a manuscript fragment of an overture, Schubert's setting of Castelli's libretto contains 11 vocal numbers: two duets, three solo movements and six choral numbers, such as the *Verschwörungsschor* of the wives ('Ja, wir schwören') withstanding the 'call of Love' or the knights' march and chorus ('Vorüber ist die Zeit') returning from battle.³¹ Despite the resulting distance of Castelli's adaptation from its ancient Greek sources, the sight and sound of the patriotic valour of these Teutonic knights would certainly have resonated with German-American immigrants longing for tales of the *Heimat*.

Modern-day scholars have criticized Schubert's *Die Verschworenen* as 'a superlative example of naïve comic one-act Viennese *Singspiel* of the 1820s in a style ... long outdated' by the time of its concert and stage premieres in Vienna and Frankfurt am Main in 1861.³² Yet in the second half of the nineteenth century performers and audiences in Europe and America were charmed by the work and by the opportunity (as Herbeck had written about the work when he revived it) to 'rescue a splendid work ... from oblivion', thereby encouraging translations and adaptations of Schubert's setting in addition to staging the original (see Table 1).³³

Within eight years of the first-ever performance, Moritz von Schwind's 1869 painted lunette dedicated to Schubert in Vienna's Hofoper would highlight five scenes or characters from all of Schubert's music. In its centre is the reconciliation of Heribert with Ludmilla, bedecked in armour. Around New York City from the Hoboken premiere in 1863 through additional performances in 1866 and 1867 in Manhattan, reviews and diaries reveal a sustained interest in Castelli's and Schubert's adaptation of Aristophanes. Looking more closely at commentaries related to these early German-American performances reveals how *Die Verschworenen* was received in America.

³⁰ On the medieval setting, see Elizabeth Siberry, *The New Crusaders: Images of the Crusaders in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2000): 182–3.

³¹ An incomplete manuscript of the overture was discovered in 1963 and later reconstructed in an edition by Fritz Racek, 'Franz Schuberts Singspiel *Der häusliche Krieg* und seine jetzt aufgefundene Ouvertüre', *Biblos* 12 (1963): 136–43; cf. Maurice J.E. Brown, 'Schubert: Discoveries of the Last Decade', *The Musical Quarterly* 57 (1971): 351–78, at 360–61. The 1861 premiere in Vienna used the overture to *Des Teufels Lustschloss*. An edition with a completion of the missing portions was published by Doblinger (1964). The autograph manuscript of the *Singspiel* is London, GB-Lbl, Add MSS 29,802, www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_29802_fs001r (accessed 5 April 2021).

³² McKay, *Franz Schubert's Music*, 239–40.

³³ McKay, *Franz Schubert's Music*, 240.

Table 1 Selected Nineteenth-Century Translations of Castelli's Libretto or Adaptations of Schubert's Score *Die Verschworenen*

Year	City / Institution	Language	Title (if known)	Personnel Involved / Notes
1862	Paris	French	<i>La croisade des dames</i> ⁱ	Victor Wilder (French trans. of Schubert's setting); performed at Théâtre des Fantaisies Parisiennes (3 Feb. 1868)
1870	Vienna (Hofopertheater)	German (from French)	<i>Der Kreuzzug der Damen</i>	German translation from Wilder's French translation
1883	Boston (Boylston Club)	English	<i>The Conspirators, or, The Household War</i> ⁱⁱ	George L. Osgood (English trans.)
1884	London	English	<i>The Conspirators</i> ⁱⁱⁱ	Marian Millar (English trans. of Castelli's libretto); set by Henry Hiles
1884	Budapest	Hungarian	<i>Cselre cselt : Vig dalmú egy felvonásban</i> ^{iv}	Kuliffar Ede

i. The review of the Paris premiere in Wilder's translation is in *Revue et Gazette musicale* 35/6 (9 Feb. 1868): 41. See also McKay, *Franz Schubert's Music*, 241; Robert Clerq, 'L'Itinéraire Vienne-Paris-Vienne d'un opéra-comique de Franz Schubert', *Cahiers F. Schubert* 2 (1993): 27–47; Simone Beta, 'The Metamorphosis of a Greek Comedy and its Protagonist: Some Musical Versions of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*', in *Ancient Drama in Music for the Modern Stage*, ed. Peter Brown and Suzana Ograjenšek (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 240–57, at 245.

ii. Reference to the Boston performance is in *The Musical Record* (26 May 1883): 73. Osgood's piano-vocal score edition and translation was published by O. Ditson (Boston) in 1883, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nc01.ark:/13960/t6b28x553> (accessed 5 April 2021).

iii. On Millar's translation, see Beta, 'The Metamorphosis', 245.

iv. See McKay, *Franz Schubert's Music*, 241; the libretto was published in Budapest by Ferdinand Pfeifer, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2010657000/> (accessed 5 April 2021).

Conspiring in Hoboken: The American Premiere

The German-language programme of the 1863 Hoboken premiere performance (Fig. 2) indicates that *Die Verschworenen* was 'performed for the first time in America, and completely staged, in honor of the fifth celebration of the founding of the Concordia Verein, under the direction of F.A. Sorge'.³⁴

The Musical Review and Musical World's account of the Hoboken premiere offers details on the musical forces involved, allowing us to assemble a picture of the individuals connected to this performance.

To the singing society Concordia and its able and faithful conductor, Mr. Sorge, especially is due the merit of having given us an opportunity, seldom afforded in Europe, to judge of Franz Schubert as a dramatic composer, and this simple fact alone would be sufficient to consider the society as well as its conductor well deserving of our heartfelt thanks The choruses, some of which are by no means easy, were creditably sung, and the soloists, Miss Ludecus, Messrs Urchs and Schoenfeldt, and two or three others, whose names we could not ascertain, gave general satisfaction. We need simply add that Mr. Timm was at the Piano (one of Steinway's Grands) to satisfy our readers, that the accompaniment was in the right hands. The performance was preceded by the overture to 'Euryanthe', rendered by Messrs Timm and H. Bruckhausen.³⁵

There were at least three German singing societies in the region around New York named 'Concordia' at this time, including the one in Hoboken formed by Sorge. For the staging, the critic found that 'the scenery worked well, the costumes were very appropriate and pretty and everything was neat and acceptable'.³⁶ The accompanist for the *Singspiel* performance was the widely known pianist, organist and Philharmonic conductor Henry Christian Timm (1811–1892), who had emigrated from Hamburg in 1835.³⁷ Joining Timm at the piano (a Steinway Grand, according to the reviewer) for the overture to the *Singspiel* was

³⁴ 'zum erstern Male in Amerika ausgeführt und vollständig in Scene gefest, zur Feier des fünften Stiftungs-Festes des Vereins Concordia, unter Leitung von F.A. Sorge'. A facsimile of the title page of the programme appears in Hugo Leichentritt, 'Schubert's Early Operas', *The Musical Quarterly* 14 (1928): 620–38, at 627, where it is identified as being in the possession of Joseph Muller of Closter, NJ, later staff at the New York Public Library. It also appears, without citation, in Stevenson, 'Schubert in America', 21. The dedicatee of the programme copy in Figure 2 is Leipzig-native Sylvester Rosa Köhler (1837–1900), founding editor of the short-lived *American Art Review* and the first Curator of Prints at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MA). Another copy of the Concordia programme and a performance announcement are among the Sylvester Rosa Koehler papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Box 6, Folder 29, https://edan.si.edu/slideshow/viewer/?damspath=/CollectionsOnline/koehsylv/Box_0006/Folder_029 (accessed 3 November 2021).

³⁵ *The Musical Review and Musical World* 14/7 (28 Mar. 1863): 76. Much of this review was reprinted the next week in *Dwight's Journal of Music* 23/1 (4 Apr. 1863): 5–6, which added that *Die Verschworenen* was 'the first operatic work of Schubert ever attempted in this country'.

³⁶ *The Musical Review and Musical World* 14/7 (28 Mar. 1863): 76.

³⁷ Robert Stevenson, 'Timm, Henry Christian', *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, www.oxfordmusic.com (accessed 5 April 2021). Several collaborations between Sorge and Timm over the years moved Sorge to present Timm with a gift of a music stand during a concert in 1864 and to praise him for his willing support of Sorge's musical endeavours; reported in the Leipzig newspaper, *Die neue Sangerhalle* 3/27 (2 July 1864): 212–13.

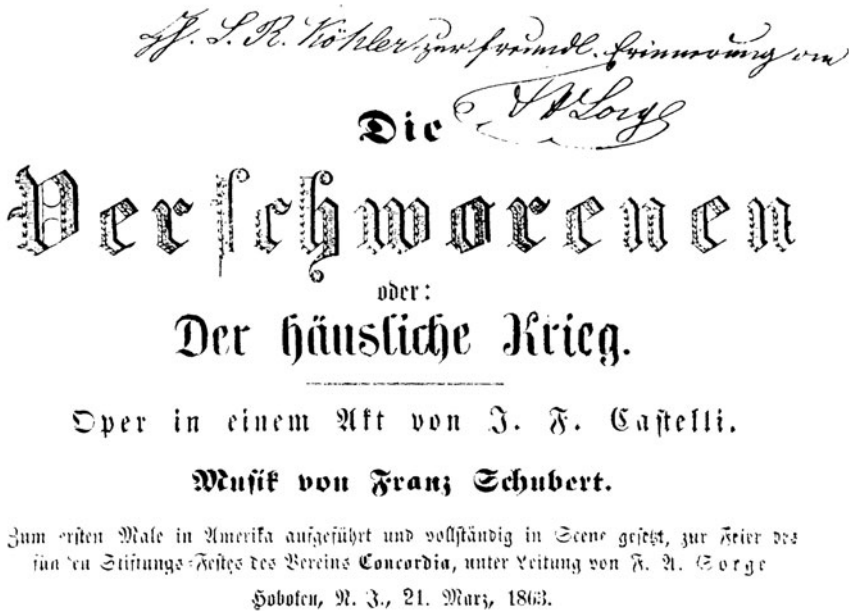


Fig. 2 Title page of the programme for the American premiere of Schubert's *Die Verschworenen* at Hoboken, New Jersey, 21 March 1863. Atop the page is a dedication signed by the conductor Friedrich Adolph Sorge to 'Ch. S. R. Köhler zur freundlichen Erinnerung von F.A. Sorge' (to Sylvester] R[osa] Köhler, in friendly remembrance, from F. A. Sorge), from Hugo Leichtentritt, 'Schubert's Early Operas', *The Musical Quarterly* 14 (1928): 620–38 (reprinted with permission)

one H. Bruckhausen, a music teacher based in Hoboken. Since, at this time, *Die Verschworenen* lacked an overture of its own, the overture to Weber's *Euryanthe* (also composed in 1823) was supplied. This was an ironic choice given Schubert's distaste for that opera, but the two works share plots set in the medieval era.³⁸ Among the holdings in Sorge's 1906 bequest to the New York Public Library is his 1857 two-volume piano arrangement edition of Weber's music, which includes the overture to *Euryanthe* from which Timm and Bruckhausen may have performed for the *Die Verschworenen* performances in 1863 and 1864.³⁹

The commentator for *The Musical Review and Musical World* found Schubert's music to be 'simple, very intelligible', and overall not especially 'Schubertish', since the music neither resembles his Lieder nor features 'those riches of modulation' or 'traits of originality' found in his late works. Although the commentator observed a modernity in the music that made it stand apart from other comic

³⁸ See Otto Erich Deutsch, ed., *Schubert: Memoirs by His Friends*, trans. Rosamund Ley and John Nowell (New York: Macmillan, 1958): 27; Michael Tusa, *Euryanthe and Carl Maria von Weber's Dramaturgy of German Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991): 64.

³⁹ NYPL PA Drexel 5603–5603.1. *Compositionen von Carl Maria von Weber; erste rechtmässige Gesamtausgabe revidirt und corrigirt von H. W. Stolze* (Wolfenbüttel: L. Holle, 1857).

operas of that period, he identified some problems: 'The music does not reach its climax, on the contrary it loses its interest. It is true this is partially caused by the libretto ... but on the whole this libretto is better than the majority of text-books of this class, especially of an older period of operatic art'. All in all, after proposing a 'few cuttings and alterations', such as a larger stage and an orchestra, the commentator admitted that 'the operetta has proved quite attractive, as all those can testify, who witnessed the performance in Hoboken'.⁴⁰

Notice of planned future performances appeared at the end of the review, signalling that the work would be repeated 'for the benefit of Mr. Sorge'.⁴¹ A notice in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* later that spring indicated that a subsequent Hoboken performance did in fact happen; it opened with the overture to *Euryanthe*, and was performed in two acts – with one surprising addition: 'the lead role sang as an interlude the C major aria of the Countess from *Le nozze di Figaro* (!)'.⁴² A year later, on 28 May 1864, a notice in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* referred to a third performance by the Concordia Gesangverein of Hoboken of two movements, namely the Romanze ('Ich schleiche bang und still herum') and the march and chorus 'Vorüber ist die Zeit' on a programme also featuring excerpts from Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*, Ferdinand Hiller's *Lorelei* and Andreas Romberg's *Das Lied von der Glocke*.⁴³

In the *Musical Review and Musical World* review of the 1862–63 musical season in New York City, the critic singled out the efforts by the Concordia and its conductor Sorge to procure so quickly a copy of the published score from Vienna.⁴⁴ I have identified manuscript parts copied by Sorge among the Liederkrantz papers, which are housed at the Fales Library and Special Collections of the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library at New York University.⁴⁵ Among the Liederkrantz Collection's holdings are ten folders of scores and parts for *Die Verschworenen*, including multiple manuscript copies of the vocal parts, choral parts and various orchestral parts, as well as an overview of scenes and a full manuscript score. This music is catalogued as undated, but consultation reveals, on several pages, dates and Sorge's signature. These are the parts Sorge copied, using red ink to include all the spoken parts and cues of the *Singspiel*, then signed in Latin and dated between late October 1862 and early January 1863 in advance of the 21 March 1863 premiere in Hoboken.⁴⁶ Figure 3 shows one of Sorge's colophons.

⁴⁰ *The Musical Review and Musical World* 14/7 (28 Mar. 1863): 76.

⁴¹ *The Musical Review and Musical World* 14/7 (28 Mar. 1863): 76.

⁴² *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 22 (27 May 1863): 394. A Hamburg performance (30 Apr. 1863) post-dated the Hoboken concert, as reported in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 22 (13 May 1863): 362.

⁴³ *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 60/28 (8 July 1864): 247. This performance is also reported in *Die neue Sängerkhalle. Deutsche Gesangvereinszeitung für das in- und Ausland* (5 June 1864): 5. The latter journal is the only one that mentioned the Gluck opera, as *Iphigenie [sic] in Aulis*; despite this title, it is likely that the excerpts would have been sung in German and not French.

⁴⁴ 'The Past Season', *The Musical Review and Musical World* 14/13 (20 June 1863): 146.

⁴⁵ Manuscript music for Franz Schubert, *Die Verschworenen*, 1862–1880s?; Liederkrantz Collection; MSS 130; Box I.A.7, Folders 28 and 28A-C and Box I.A.8, Folders 29–34; Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University Libraries. The finding aid for the collection is found at <http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingsaids/html/fales/liederkrantz/index.html> (accessed 5 April 2021).

⁴⁶ Of the surviving 59 choral parts for *Die Verschworenen* in the collection, 24 were copied by Sorge, as well as the parts for Ludmilla, Heribert, Camilla, Garold, and Friedrich von Trausdorf. Dates on these parts range from 30 Oct. 1862 to 2 Jan. 1863.

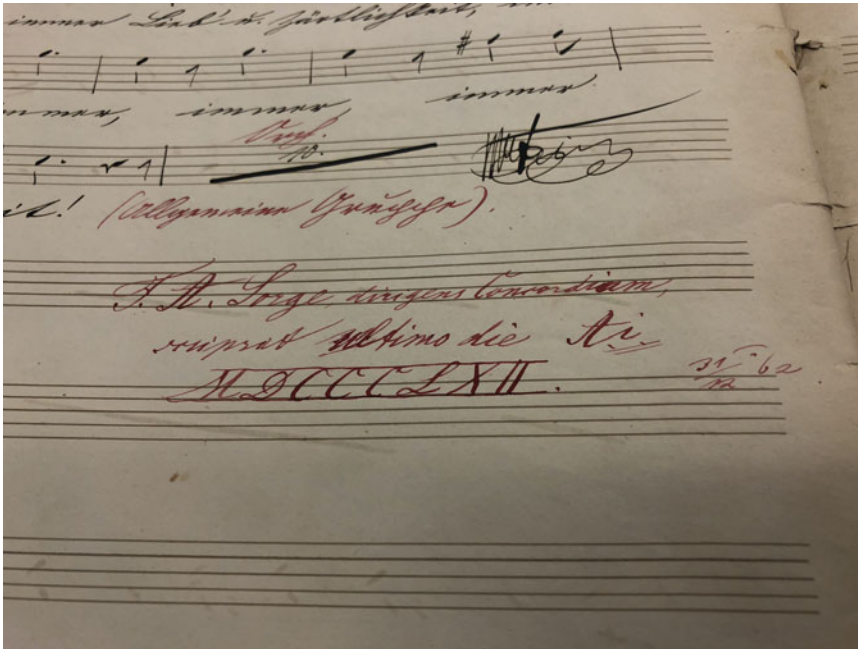


Fig. 3 Colophon at the end of Ludmilla's vocal part: 'F.A. Sorge, dirigens Concordiam, scripsit ultimo die a[n]ni MDCCCLXII', 1862; Liederkranz Collection; MSS 130; Box I.A.8, Folder 31; The Fales Library & Special Collections, New York University (by permission)

Several additional parts and the full manuscript score appear to have been used by the Liederkranz for their performances of the *Singspiel* in 1866–67 and later (to be discussed below). The other materials related to *Die Verschworenen* appear to have been copied by Agricola Paur (1824–1897), the Liederkranz director in the 1860s, and at least two other unidentified copyists. In summary, at some point between 1863 and 1866, these manuscript parts moved from Sorge into the hands of another German-American musical organization in Manhattan, the Deutscher Liederkranz, where they would remain.

Hoboken and Kleindeutschland: German-American Identity and Music

For German-Americans living in Manhattan, Hoboken was a place of refuge, relaxation and entertainment, especially during the heat of the summer months. In the diary of William Steinway (fourth son of Steinway & Sons founder Henry E. Steinway), we learn of William's near daily ferry rides to Hoboken in July and August to enjoy the baths, a stroll in the Elysian Fields along the Hudson, or a meal and an evening of beer, bowling or singing with friends at Charles Vollman's Park Hotel on Hudson Street.⁴⁷ Outdoor musical entertainments by bands or choral societies were regularly scheduled each summer, drawing crowds

⁴⁷ *The William Steinway Diary, 1861–1896*, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/steinwaydiary/> (accessed 16 June 2018). Hoboken is referenced over 100 times in the diary.

of German immigrants that were surpassed only by those gathering at Jones's Wood, located on the banks of the East River on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and once praised as a 'summer Walhalla for Little Germany'.⁴⁸ Beer gardens like the Atlantic Garden or the Terrace Garden in Manhattan or the Germania Garden in Hoboken were also significant venues for performing and hearing German music.⁴⁹

Another haven of German culture for Steinway and his friends was Hoboken's German Club, located at the corner of Hudson and Sixth Streets, first formed in 1857 and later incorporated in 1864. (It appears in the lower left of Fig. 4.) Soon it hosted weekly entertainment for its members in the winter and its rooms were always open.⁵⁰ In winter 1863–64, a Brooklyn-based Gesangverein named Germania performed Carl Reinecke's *Der vierjährige Posten* there, making it a 'favorite piece of the club'.⁵¹ The German Club was described in 1884 as 'frequented by the entire families of the members', who are 'composed of the very best citizens of Hoboken, with some from New York' (Fig. 5).⁵² Clubs such as this one fostered a German-American identity that was at once patriotic for America while also rooted in German culture, language and society. Hoboken's German immigrants quickly established German-language newspapers, churches and a German-language school called the Hoboken Akademie, where Latin and Greek, as well as music, were taught, all of which provided for the social, economic and educational needs of the community.⁵³

German-language theatre thrived on both sides of the Hudson River with amateur and professional productions of vaudeville, opera, operetta, musical comedy and drama. German immigrants turned to German-American and foreign-born artists for playwrights, performers and composers; and many of the German-language theatres in Manhattan were located in Kleindeutschland, particularly near or on the Bowery, drawing a mostly German-American audience.⁵⁴ By the 1860s, Hoboken's first ward had become home for theatres like the Germania

⁴⁸ George C.D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage*, 15 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927–63): VII: 426. On Jones's Wood and working-class culture, see Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992): 233–7.

⁴⁹ John Koegel and Jonas Westover, 'Beethoven and Beer: Orchestral Music in German Beer Gardens in Nineteenth-Century New York City', in *American Orchestras in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. John Spitzer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012): 130–55; John Koegel, *Music in German Immigrant Theater: New York City (1840–1940)* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2009): 81–100. After a beer garden was constructed at Jones's Wood, larger crowds appeared for events there.

⁵⁰ William H. Shaw, *History of Essex and Hudson Counties, New Jersey*, 2 vols (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1884): II: 1220.

⁵¹ *Die neue Sangerhalle* 3/27 (2 July 1864): 213.

⁵² Shaw, *History of Essex and Hudson Counties*, II: 1220.

⁵³ Ziegler-McPherson, *Immigrants*, 36–54. The history of the Hoboken Academy is found in *Zur Feier des 25-jahrigen Bestehens der Hoboken Akademie den 11ten Februar 1886* (New York: Sudhaus & Elenkotter, 1886); Robert Waters, *Reminiscences of the Hoboken Academy* (New York: Steiger, 1904).

⁵⁴ Theatres included the Stadttheater (first and second), the Germania, Irving Place Theatre, and Wallack's. On the history of German-language theatre and its music in New York City, see Frederick Adolph Herman Leuchs, *The Early German Theatre in New York, 1842–1872* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); John Koegel, 'The Development of the German American Musical Stage in New York City, 1840–1890', in



Fig. 4 The city of Hoboken, New Jersey, 1881 (Boston, O. H. Bailey & Co., 1881). Washington, D.C, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, G3814.H9A3 1881.B3 (by permission)

Garden, Gantzberg's Hall and the Harmonia Hall, which featured vaudeville, stage productions and musical performances, often highlighting repertory aimed at German-speaking audiences.⁵⁵ The exact location of the Schubert premiere remains uncertain, but the German Club, Germania Garden or the Hoboken Akademie are likely candidates.

In addition to classics of German-language drama by Goethe, Lessing and Schiller, new works were staged regularly that drew on the experiences of immigrant life in New York City, Hoboken and elsewhere.⁵⁶ Amid the broader opera scene of New York, German-language productions of opera and operetta slowly got off the ground in the early nineteenth century.⁵⁷ During the very season

European Music and Musicians in New York City, 1840–1900, ed. John Graziano (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006): 149–81.

⁵⁵ *The History of Theatre, Vaudeville and Movies in Hoboken*, vol. 1 (Hoboken: The Hoboken Historical Museum, 1987): 5–9; Ziegler-McPherson, *Immigrants*, 54.

⁵⁶ *Volksstücke* like Adolf Philipp's *Der Corner Grocer aus der Avenue A* or *Der Pawnbroker von der Eastside* appealed directly to audiences in Kleindeutschland. See Koegel, *Music in German Immigrant Theater*, 197–275.

⁵⁷ On opera in America during the nineteenth century, see Katherine K. Preston, 'To the Opera House? The Trials and Tribulations of Operatic Productions in Nineteenth-Century



Fig. 5 Hoboken German Club, 1860s. Hoboken Historical Photographs, Hoboken Public Library, <https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3125TX1> (by permission)

Sorge procured his vocal score of *Die Verschworenen* and arranged the Hoboken performance, conductor Carl Anschütz's efforts to elevate interest in German opera in America brought many American premieres of classics, German translations of others and newer works to Wallack's Theatre and the Academy of Music in the 1862–63 season – *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Fidelio*, Lortzing's *Der Wildschütz*, Mollenhauer's *The Corsican Bride*, *Tannhäuser*, *Faust* and *Der Freischütz*, among others.⁵⁸ As a *Singspiel* portraying a medieval story of warring German knights and their plotting wives, *Die Verschworenen* sat comfortably alongside these contemporary works connected to German culture. Interest in seeing opera in German (save Wagner) waned toward the end of the century in favour of English-language performances, leaving German-language productions to be staged by touring companies or local *Gesangvereine* and to be attended by smaller audiences, often of mostly or exclusively German-Americans in centres

America', *The Opera Quarterly* 23 (2007): 39–65. On German-language opera in the United States, in particular, see Koegel, 'The Development of the German-American Musical Stage', 149–81; John Graziano, 'An Opera for Every Taste: The New York Scene, 1862–1869', in *European Music and Musicians in New York City, 1815–60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997): 188–200.

⁵⁸ Mark Curtis McKnight, 'Music Criticism in the *New York Times* and the *New York Tribune*, 1851–1876' (PhD diss., The Louisiana State University, 1980): 217–25; Graziano, 'An Opera for Every Taste', 257–8.

with large German immigrant communities like New York, Milwaukee and Cincinnati.⁵⁹ German-Americans in Hoboken maintained their own theatres, often drawing audiences from Manhattan, Brooklyn and elsewhere in New Jersey.

As elsewhere across the United States in communities of German immigrants, Hoboken's German singing societies thrived, constructing through musical performances large and small a sense of *Heimat*, camaraderie and identity in singing for its participants and audiences. Singing festivals, too, helped establish broad cultural connections among German-Americans across the region and nation, breaking boundaries of class and musical taste.⁶⁰ The Hoboken Quartette Club appears to have risen to regional notoriety quickly, earning second prize at the 1867 Sangerfest in Philadelphia behind only the long established Liederkrantz of Manhattan.⁶¹

Such choral performances attracted throngs of German-Americans seeking to be transported home. As Jason Geary and Simon Goldhill have demonstrated, by the middle of the nineteenth century the very idea of the chorus had become both intrinsically Greek and innately German, a layered duality that Mendelssohn and Wagner each embraced wholeheartedly in his own way.⁶² These musical

⁵⁹ Studies of general musical audiences in New York in the mid- to late nineteenth century include Karen Ahlquist, 'Mrs. Potiphar at the Opera: Satire, Idealism, and Cultural Authority in Post-Civil War New York', in *Music and Culture in America, 1861–1918*, ed. Michael Saffle and James R. Heintze (New York: Garland, 1998): 29–51; Christopher Bruhn, 'Taking the Private Public: Amateur Music-Making and the Musical Audience in 1860s New York', *American Music* 21 (2003): 260–90; Adrienne Fried Block, 'Matinee Mania, or the Regendering of Nineteenth-Century Audiences in New York City', *19th-Century Music* 31 (2008): 193–216; eadem, 'Thinking about Serious Music in New York, 1842–82', in *American Orchestras*, 435–50. On the place of German immigrants in the broader scene of music and music-making in and around New York City, see eadem, 'New York's Orchestras and the "American" Composer: A Nineteenth-Century View', in *European Music and Musicians in New York City*, 114–34; Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009): 66–108; Douglas W. Shadle, *Orchestrating the Nation: The Nineteenth-Century American Symphonic Enterprise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 82–9.

⁶⁰ Suzanne G. Snyder, 'The Mannerchor Tradition in the United States: A Historical Analysis of Its Contribution to American Musical Culture' (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1991); Mary Sue Morrow, 'Somewhere Between Beer and Wagner: The Cultural and Musical Impact of German Mannerchore in New York and New Orleans', in *Music and Culture in America*, 79–109; Mary Jane Corry, 'German Singing Societies in New York City in the Nineteenth Century', in *On Bunker's Hill: Essays in Honor of J. Bunker Clark*, ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Sterling Heights, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2007): 45–52; Karen Ahlquist, 'Musical Assimilation and "the German Element" at the Cincinnati Sangerfest, 1879', *The Musical Quarterly* 94 (2011): 381–416; Christopher Ogburn, 'Brews, Brotherhood, and Beethoven: The 1865 New York City Sangerfest and the Fostering of German American Identity', *American Music* 33 (2015): 405–40; Heike Bungert, 'The Singing Festivals of German Americans, 1849–1914', *American Music* 34 (2016): 141–79.

⁶¹ *Watson's Art Journal* 7/13 (20 July 1867). For more on the Quartette Club and its building in Hoboken, see A.M., 'Der Hoboken Quartett Club', *Watsons Art Journal* 7/16 (10 Aug. 1867): 20.

⁶² Geary, *The Politics of Appropriation*, 99–134; Simon Goldhill, *Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 166–200; idem, 'The Greek Chorus: Our German Eyes', in *Choruses, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Joshua Billings, Felix Budelmann, and Fiona Macintosh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 35–52.

links between *dem Volk* and the Greek chorus, even as adapted in *Die Verschworenen*, could carry Hoboken audiences both to the ancient (or here, medieval) past and to a far-off *Heimat*. As the Civil War relentlessly ravaged the country, music was also a balm from the fighting and losses, which took a profound toll on German-American communities across the nation.⁶³ Reflecting in 1883 on musical life amid the war, Frédéric Louis Ritter wrote:

After the first excitement of the war-fever was over, people in large cities, as if to counteract the effects of the terrible suspense cause by the uncertainty of ever-occurring battles, began to flock in crowds to places of amusement, in order to seek temporary forgetfulness of the terrible drama that was being enacted on the battlefield. The opera, as well as the theaters, for a time reaped an abundant harvest.⁶⁴

Under the shadow of war, Sorge's Concordia Verein is documented performing *Die Verschworenen* on three occasions in 1863–64, but it does not appear to have participated in the competitive singing festivals as the Hoboken Quartette Club had done. Instead, the elite Liederkranz of New York took possession of Sorge's performing parts and presented Schubert's *Singspiel* twice in 1866–67.

Musician and Socialist: Friedrich Adolph Sorge

Celebrated by contemporary critics for the American premiere of *Die Verschworenen*, Sorge is better known by historians today as an influential political theorist and leader in American labour movements in the second half of the nineteenth century. Aside from scant references in scholarly literature on American labour history to Sorge's career as music teacher and the appearance of his name as conductor in the Hoboken performance, there has been little discussion before now of his musical life. His diverse passions were instrumental in his programming choice of *Die Verschworenen* and his motives behind the performance.

Born in 1827 in Bethau bei Torgau, Saxony, Friedrich was educated in literature and the arts by his father, a Lutheran pastor and member of the Saxon 'Friends of the Light'.⁶⁵ Later in life, Sorge fondly recalled his father dedicating much of their studies to the ancient languages, as well as Greek, Roman and German history, and that the 'history of Athens and Sparta, the noble and heroic acts of leadership by

⁶³ On German-Americans and the Civil War, see Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Alison Clark Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); *Germans in the Civil War: The Letters They Wrote Home*, ed. Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich, trans. Susan Carter Vogel (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

⁶⁴ Frédéric Louis Ritter, *Music in America* (New York: Scribner, 1883): 331, cit. in *Strong on Music: The New York Music Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong*, Volume III: *Repercussions 1857–1862*, ed. Vera Brodsky Lawrence (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999): 469. Ritter (355) believed the Deutscher Liederkranz premiered *Die Verschworenen* in America.

⁶⁵ Many of the details in the following profile are found in the most complete biographical account of Sorge's life: Philip S. Foner, 'Friedrich Adolph Sorge: "Father of Modern Socialism in America"', in *Friedrich A. Sorge's Labor Movement in the United States: A History of the American Working Class from Colonial Times to 1890* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977): 3–42.

Epaminondas, Themistocles, Leonidas, Aristides, etc.'. made a strong impression on him as, at the age of ten, he developed into a 'little communist fanatic'.⁶⁶ By the time Sorge reached this age, several editions and translations of Aristophanes, including the ribald *Lysistrata*, were circulating in German-speaking lands, especially in schools, but it remains uncertain whether Greek comedy was part of his juvenile curriculum.

Sorge attended the Frankeschen Stiftungen in Halle briefly, but his studies ended in 1848 with the revolutions, in which the twenty-year-old Sorge participated avidly, fighting alongside future fellow members of the Communist League.⁶⁷ After two tours, Sorge settled in Geneva, where he taught music, sang quartets with friends and participated in the activities of the Workers' Cultural Society.⁶⁸ Sorge later moved to London where he met Karl Marx in 1851, but dissatisfied with life there, he left for New York City, arriving on 21 June 1852.⁶⁹

Within a year of his arrival in New York City, Sorge began working with two Marxists and fellow forty-eighters, Joseph Weydemeyer and Wilhelm Weitling, as well as the American wing of the Bund für Deutsche Freiheit und Einheit, which sought to financially support the revolution in Germany from afar.⁷⁰ It appears that this drive by Sorge and his colleagues to raise funds may have prompted several of Sorge's public performances of music. In February 1860, 'a grand vocal and instrumental concert took place at Hoboken for the benefit of Mr. F.A. Sorge, a very distinguished musician, and leader of a singing club'. How these concerts actually benefitted Sorge, his efforts with labour movements in the USA, or revolutionary efforts in Germany remains uncertain, but they do appear to have been more than mere income supplements. Alongside these musical endeavours, Sorge's labour organizing activities in the 1850s and 1860s with other German Socialists steered him to positions of leadership quickly. Sorge established another Communist Club in Hoboken soon thereafter and participated in a New York-based Freethinkers association known as the Secularisten, a spin-off of an English group dedicated to rationalism and the writings of Thomas Paine.⁷¹

While Sorge was producing dozens of copies of vocal and instrumental parts and copying out and reading the lines of Castelli's libretto, the actions of the conspirators in the librettist's adaptation and in the original play of Aristophanes must have resonated with these endeavours to organize labourers in class struggle. For example, before the *Verschwörungsschor*, Ludmilla warns her companions that no one can break the oath of the unified effort of the strike: 'Keine rührt sich von der Stelle, wenn anders unser Plan ausgeführt werden soll. Alle gehen mit mir Keine Einrede, keine Zweifel! Wollt Ihr, oder wollt Ihr nicht? Euer eigenes Glück hängt davon ab, dass Ihr mir gehorcht'. ('If our plan is to be successful,

⁶⁶ Friedrich Adolph Sorge, 'Erinnerungen eines Achtundvierzigers', *Die Neue Zeit* 17 (1898–99): 156.

⁶⁷ Foner, 'Friedrich Adolph Sorge', 3.

⁶⁸ Sorge, 'Erinnerungen', 319–20. Sorge was especially impressed by the spectacle of parades and choirs singing at the Vevey winegrowers' festival; *ibid.*, 383.

⁶⁹ Sorge, 'Erinnerungen', 414, 448.

⁷⁰ Foner, 'Friedrich Adolph Sorge', 5.

⁷¹ On Sorge's association with Freethinkers, see William Frederic Kammen, *Socialism in German American Literature*, 3 vols (Philadelphia: Americana Germanica Press, 1917): III: 55; Stanley Nadel, 'The Forty-Eighters and the Politics of Class in New York City', in *The German Forty-Eighters in the United States*, ed. Charlotte L. Brancaforte (New York: Peter Lang, 1989): 51–66, at 52.

no one can move. Everyone, do as I do No buts, no doubt! Do you want this or not? Your happiness depends on your following me'.) Following this warning, the women all promise to form the conspiracy: 'Dies schwören wir, und wollen's halten'. ('This we swear, and want to keep it'.) Ludmilla's scorn is revealed later while she attempts to preserve unity: 'Ha! Welche Uneinigkeit unter den Verschwornen. Halt, keine Unvorsichtigkeit! Seht mich an!' ('Ha! What disunity among the conspirators. Stop, no imprudence! Look at me!')

Such a call for unity in the face of the temptation to yield appears later in a tract published by Sorge in 1876, where he argues forcefully: 'to carry on this war successfully, the workers must be organized. Singly and isolated they are powerless; if all would unite for the same purpose, they would be a formidable power which nothing could resist. You may easily break many single matches, but you may try in vain to break a whole bundle of them tied together'.⁷² Of course, Castelli's adaptation of *Lysistrata* leaves the wives outsmarted by the knights, whose spy Udolin has revealed the women's secret plan, leading to the husbands' efforts to unify against the women. Ultimately, Castelli presents the women as weaker than their Aristophanic counterparts when they sing at the end of the Finale: 'Suchet keine stärkern Waffen, keine euch zum Ehe Streit. Eure angeboren siegen immer, Lieb' und Zärtlichkeit'. ('Seek no stronger weapons, none for your quarrel. Your innate weapons are love and tenderness, which always conquer'.) It is likely that Sorge would have taken issue with this, or at least he would have later in his career, since his published history of the labour movement in America highlights at length the Workingmen's Party of the United States platform on women's rights 'to organize themselves and take their places within the ranks of struggling labor' and to 'recogniz[e] each other as peers'.⁷³

One of Castelli's models, Aristophanes's *Ecclesiazusae*, confronts the problems of self-interest, namely greed and lust, when, on behalf of the women of Athens, Praxagora proposes a proto-communist government, wherein all private ownership of wealth and debt is banned and replaced by a common fund to support all citizens, while new laws of sexual equality are enforced.⁷⁴ Sorge's early Classical education may or may not have included *Ecclesiazusae* and he may have encountered the play later in life, but such ideas are found elsewhere in ancient literature (for instance, Plato's *Republic*) and would have appealed to Sorge's political and social ideals. Compare, for example, Sorge's argument that only with socialism will the working man be 'no longer deprived of the fruit of his work, his property, and everybody who will work will be able to spend a good deal more on food, clothing, lodging, recreation, pleasure, and instruction than he can spend at present'.⁷⁵ By the early 1860s, overtly political theatre was already being produced in New York.⁷⁶

⁷² Sorge, 'Socialism and the Worker', trans. in Friedrich A. Sorge's *Labor Movement*, 310.

⁷³ Sorge, 'Labor Movement in the United States', trans. in Friedrich A. Sorge's *Labor Movement*, 163.

⁷⁴ On the political nature of *Ecclesiazusae*, see Kenneth Rothwell, *Politics and Persuasion in Aristophanes' 'Ecclesiazusae'* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); and Alan Sheppard, 'Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* and the Remaking of the Patrios Politeia', *The Classical Quarterly* 66 (2016): 463–83.

⁷⁵ Sorge, 'Socialism and the Worker', 309.

⁷⁶ See Koegel, *Music in German Immigrant Theater*, 74–9. In fact, one of Sorge's fellow fighters at Baden in 1848 was a playwright in New York City named Max Cohnheim (c. 1829–1896), who had worked at the Stadttheater and later joined Sorge's Communist Club

The union of music and labour organizing, however, is no more apparent than Sorge's efforts in the May–June 1872 strikes for the eight-hour workday, which involved more than 100,000 workers in New York City and climaxed when Steinway & Co. resisted the strikes.⁷⁷ Additionally, William Steinway collaborated with fellow German-American and owner of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* Oswald Ottendorfer (1826–1900) to demonize the strikers as following the lead of communists and union agitators like Sorge and Adolf Douai.⁷⁸ Steinway designed and established a new German village for Steinway workers in Queens, claiming a need for more space, but also:

we wished to escape the anarchists and socialists who even at the same time were constantly breeding discontent among our workmen and inciting them to strike. They seemed to make us a target of their attacks and we felt that if we could withdraw our working men from contact with these people, and with other temptations of city life in the tenement districts, they would be more content.⁷⁹

The painful irony of this fleeing from dangerous socialists is that the Deutscher Liederkrantz, the musical organization to which Sorge handed his manuscript copies of *Die Verschworenen* around 1864–65, was led by Steinway and Ottendorfer, when they proceeded to produce their own renditions of the *Singspiel* for the elite German-Americans of Manhattan. Within a year of handing the musical parts for the *Singspiel* to them, Sorge began substantial correspondence with Marx and Engels, requesting to establish an American section of the International Workingmen's Association (Section 1 for North America), which Marx heartily encouraged.⁸⁰ In 1868, Sorge left his position with the Secularistenbund and became president of the first socialist political party in America, the Social Party for New York City and Vicinity.⁸¹ Writing just four years after the Steinway strike, Sorge offered words echoing closely those of Aristophanes's Praxagora to challenge people like Steinway who possessed a fear of socialists: 'if you are a capitalist yourself, reflect how much nobler it is to help to promote the welfare of the many than to serve only your own interest, ugly and hideous egoism'.⁸²

The Deutscher Liederkrantz and *Die Verschworenen*

By 1866, three years after the US premiere of *Die Verschworenen* in Hoboken, Sorge's parts had crossed the Hudson River to Manhattan, where the most prominent German singing society in New York City presented the work at their

in 1857 before serving as an artillery captain during the Civil War. Cohnheim had written a play about the German revolution set in the Shakespeare Hotel in New York.

⁷⁷ Nadel, 'The Forty-Eighters', 58–9.

⁷⁸ On the politics espoused by Ottendorfer, see Nadel, 'The Forty-Eighters', 58–9; Christina A. Ziegler-McPherson, *The Great Disappearing Act: Germans in New York City, 1880–1930* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2021), 28–29.

⁷⁹ James Sigurd Lapham, 'The German-Americans of New York City, 1860–1890' (PhD diss., St. John's University, 1977): 156; Lieberman, *Steinway and Sons*, 77–83.

⁸⁰ Foner, 'Friedrich Adolph Sorge', 8. Sorge's correspondence, including letters from Marx and Engels, is US-NYpl MssCol 2819.

⁸¹ Nadel, 'The Forty-Eighters', 57.

⁸² Sorge, 'Socialism and the Worker', 310.

clubhouse on East Fourth Street in Kleindeutschland on 15 May. Founded in 1847, the Deutscher Liederkrantz had become, by the 1860s, one of the leading musical organizations in New York, collaborating regularly with the Philharmonic Society from 1861.⁸³ Many of the most elite German-Americans of New York belonged to the Liederkrantz, whose membership numbered over 1,000 in the late 1860s. Its members paid high dues to enjoy not only regular concerts but also renowned social balls, masquerades and fundraisers.⁸⁴

During the year following the Hoboken premiere led by Sorge, plans for the Liederkrantz to perform *Die Verschworenen* in Manhattan appear to have been discussed, since Steinway recorded in his diary on 17 November 1864: 'at L.K. [Liederkrantz] Resolve not to perform Operetta "Die Verschworenen"'.⁸⁵ Finally, on 15 May 1866, the Liederkrantz performed the work in its clubhouse with its conductor Paur.⁸⁶ Steinway noted his presence, but did not remark on the quality of the singing as he often did for other concerts.⁸⁷ From the review in the *New-Yorker Musik-Zeitung*, we learn that the turnout was good, and the performance was strong by all the musical forces, soloists, orchestra and chorus.⁸⁸ The review for the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* (owned by then president of the Liederkrantz) went further to add: 'the solo singers of the chorus did not just sing but also acted excellently, which cannot be expected of amateurs. In addition, the choruses worked well together and made the best impression. The auditorium

⁸³ The History Committee of the Liederkrantz, comp., *History of the Liederkrantz of the City of New York 1847 to 1947 and of The Arion, New York* (New York: Dreschel, 1948); Christopher Bruhn, "'Between the Old World and the New": William Steinway and the New York Liederkrantz in the 1860s', in *European Music and Musicians in New York City*, 139–45. An 1854 dispute over allowing women to join the chorus led to some members splitting off to form the Arion Gesangverein, to which Sorge belonged later in life.

⁸⁴ A vivid account of one of the musical masquerades is in *Strong on Music*, 448. On elite club memberships in the 1860s, see Clifton Hood, *In Pursuit of Privilege: A History of New York City's Upper Class and the Making of a Metropolis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016): 136–70. Sorge conducted benefit concerts for the German Hospital in 1858 and 1870. On these, see the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* (22 Dec. 1858: 2; and 2 Jan. 1870: 2); cit. in Matthew Reichert, 'Carl Bergmann in New York: Conducting Activity 1852–1876' (PhD diss., City University of New York, Graduate Center, 2011): 278, 779–80.

⁸⁵ *The William Steinway Diary* (17 Nov. 1864); see also Edwin M. Good, 'William Steinway and Music in New York, 1861–1871', in *Music and Culture in America*, 3–28, at 11, where the author erroneously surmises that this 1866 performance 'must have been the first in North America'.

⁸⁶ The announcement for the concert appears in *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* (14 May 1866), cit. in *Music in Gotham*, www.musicingotham.org/event/85841 (accessed 5 April 2021). See also *History of the Liederkrantz*, 144.

⁸⁷ *The William Steinway Diary* (15 May 1866).

⁸⁸ *New-Yorker Musik-Zeitung* (21 May 1866): 253, trans. in *Music in Gotham*, www.musicingotham.org/event/85841 (accessed 5 April 2021). See also Hermann Mosenthal, *Geschichte des Vereins Deutscher Liederkrantz in New York: Im Auftrage des Vereins zur Feier seines 50jährigen Bestehens am 9. Januar 1897* (New York: F.A. Ringler, 1897): 25. Of the soloists in this performance, Fritz Schoenfeld had performed in the Hoboken staging. The other soloists were bass-baritone Friederich Steins, Bischoff, soprano Therese Haag, soprano 'Mme. Krehbiel' (the wife of music critic Henry Edward Krehbiel), Laura Petzold, and 'Mr. [J. George?] Schenk'. Paur had formed an amateur orchestra from the Liederkrantz's membership in 1865, enabling the ensemble to arrange an orchestral performance more easily. See *History of the Liederkrantz*, 8.

was too small to accommodate everybody comfortably, although only members and press were admitted'.⁸⁹

On 9 May 1867, the choir's music director Paur led another rendition of the work with the same cast, dividing the one-act *Singspiel* into two parts and adding an interpolation he had composed.⁹⁰ Steinway, elected as Liederkrantz president earlier in 1867, did not mention this performance in his diary and yet it would seem unlike him to have been absent from such a public occasion for the organization. For the English-language press, the critic for the *New York Herald* claimed *Die Verschworenen* to be 'Schubert's only operetta' and noted a 'brilliant and fashionable audience' and that the 'affair was an entire success'.⁹¹ The German-language critics – despite some concerns over particular aspects with the first act, especially when the chorus of the knights return home, and the loud volume of the orchestra, praised Paur's ability to handle the 'difficulties of working with amateurs' and lauded the soloists who 'moved around the stage as if they are home on it', performing 'with accuracy, freshness, naturalness and verve'.⁹²

Whether additional performances were arranged by the Liederkrantz in later years remains uncertain, but annotations in multiple hands and ink in the scores and parts, signalling cuts and additions, suggest repeated performances. From the favourable response of critics and audiences to these two staged performances in Manhattan, it would have made sense for the German-Americans of this club to continue enjoying Schubert's *Singspiel*.

Conclusion

Just over one year before Sorge staged the American premiere of *Die Verschworenen*, the critic Theodore Hagen praised the German-American choirs of New York, namely the Liederkrantz and the Arion, for 'dig[ging] up the treasures of the old masters and hunt[ing] after those of modern authors, perform[ing] them as well as they can, and, what is still better, feel[ing] a real gratification in this task'.⁹³ For a forty-eighter like Sorge, the attempt to dig up Schubert's *Singspiel* was not only a project of musical gratification, but one steeped in a deeper social cause to use the arts to 'shake up the people' and to raise funds that might support the upending of the political system on both sides of the Atlantic. While the foiled actions of the women in Castelli's libretto stray far from the effective upheaval achieved by Lysistrata and her compatriots, this more covert message of organized assembly and unified oath-swearing to achieve social change and end war may

⁸⁹ *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* (20 May 1866): 4, trans. in *Music in Gotham*, www.musicinthegotham.org/event/85841 (accessed 5 April 2021).

⁹⁰ The announcement for the concert appears in *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* (9 May 1867): 8, trans. in *Music in Gotham*, www.musicinthegotham.org/event/102568 (accessed 5 April 2021). See also *History of the Liederkrantz*, 12, which gives the wrong date of 19 May 1867. See also Good, 'William Steinway', 11; Mosenthal, *Geschichte des Vereins Deutscher*, 26. The *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* review refers to Paur's interpolation. Several choral and orchestral parts of Paur's interpolation, a choral number by the women inserted after the duet 'Ich muss sie finden', are among the Schubert scores in the Liederkrantz Collection.

⁹¹ *New York Herald* (12 May 1867): 5.

⁹² German-language reviews appear in *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* (10 May 1867: 8; 12 May 1867: 4; 18 May 1867: 648); trans. in *Music in Gotham*, www.musicinthegotham.org/event/102568 (accessed 5 April 2021).

⁹³ *The Musical Review and Musical World* (15 Feb. 1862): 40, cit. in *Strong on Music*, 530.

have still invited the political discourse Sorge and his colleagues in Hoboken sought in the decade leading up to his more outright embrace of tumultuous labour strikes and an agenda to overturn the capitalist system. To the upper-class German-Americans of Manhattan's Liederkrantz, however, the joyous end of a stymied plot was innocuous enough amid their annual masquerades, balls and fundraisers.

German vocal music, especially opera, bore many meanings for many audiences in and around New York City in the 1860s. Although the socio-economic circumstances and political views of the members of the Gesangvereine in Hoboken and Kleindeutschland might have differed widely, for all involved there was a profound pride in performing new music by Schubert. Franz Mehring's obituary for Sorge emphasized his 'considerable grounding in the classical languages, history, and literature'.⁹⁴ Steeped in an Aristophanic spirit of subversion, Sorge – by means of this operatic adaptation of Castelli and Schubert – revived for his German-American neighbours a charming one-act *Singspiel* that was at once Germanic and Hellenic, medieval and modern.

⁹⁴ Mehring, 'F.A. Sorge'; *Die Neue Zeit* 25 (1906–07): 145–7, trans. Daniel Gaido in *Historical Materialism* 11 (2003): 301–04, at 302.