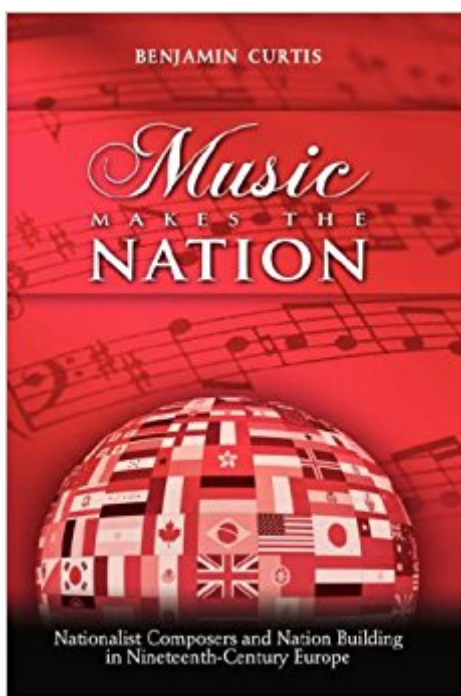


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Music Makes The Nation: Nationalist Composers And Nation Building In Nineteenth-Century Europe



Synopsis

This book is an intellectual and cultural history about one of the most striking phenomena in all of nineteenth-century culture—namely, the interaction of nationalism and music. Nearly all the nation-building movements that swept across Europe in that century found some of their most influential and lasting expressions through the art of nationalist composers who took an active part in those movements. The political, intellectual, and artistic story behind some of the greatest musical works of the time and the artists who created them is the book's focus. Beginning with a theoretical explanation of the relationship between nationalism and music, three composers then come forward to stand at the center of the analysis: Richard Wagner in Germany, Bedřich Smetana in the Czech lands, and Edvard Grieg in Norway. Their political and artistic projects to create a national music for their countries are the topic of the second chapter. The third chapter explores in detail the essential role that folk music played in nationalism as an attempt to fuse artistically the urban and rural populations into one national whole. The fourth chapter discusses the conflicts within nationalist movements over foreign artistic influence on the national culture. The international dimensions of nationalist music are the subject of the fifth chapter, examining Wagner's, Smetana's, and Grieg's aspirations for their art to represent their nations to the world. Finally, the concluding chapter offers a sweeping overview of nationalist composers and their works for a probing historical summary of music's contribution to nation building. As one of the very few broad, comparative studies of nationalist music, *Music Makes the Nation* is an essential resource for students and scholars in history and musicology. In addition, as a groundbreaking analysis of the socio-political functions of nationalist music, the book will be of interest to those studying nationalism and political science.

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Customer Reviews

"The author's philosophical discussion of nationalism is enlightening: he challenges many earlier romantic concepts...Recommended." --Choice Academic Reviews

Benjamin Curtis is an Assistant Professor in the Humanities in Seattle University's Matteo Ricci College. Specializing in international history and politics, he has published widely, on topics ranging from European integration to nationalist conflict.

Music may make the nation, but this book makes a lot of sense. It is the clearest and most insightful exploration of music as an artistic, cultural, and political endeavor. It delves deep into the rich interplay between a nation's music and a nation's sense of self. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in music, notions of nationhood, or indeed anyone who can read.

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