German Opera

Background

- No Established Tradition
- Singspiel Only (French Opera)
- Other Important Music Outlets
  - More open to Experimentation
- Nationalism
  - Simple folk-like melodies
- Plots from history, legend, or fairy tale
  - Village or Country Life
- Supernatural
  - Conflict of Good and Evil
- Deliverance from sin through suffering, conversion or revelation
- Increasingly Chromatic Harmony
- Importance of the Orchestra

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)

- Education
  - Michael Haydn
- Three-Fold Career
  - Kapellmeister at 17
  - Concert Pianist (1809-13)
    - Composed Concert Works
  - Opera Director
    - Prague 1813
    - Dresden 1817
- Der Freischütz (1821)
  - Established German Romantic Opera
  - Systematic Use of Recurrent Themes
    - Leitmotif
      - Coined by Weber's biographer/cataloger F. W. Jähns
Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

- Theatrical Interest by 14
- Private Music Lessons (Leipzig)
- 1833 Chorus Master
- 1834 Began Producing Operas
- 1836 Married Minna Planer
- 1839 Paris
  - Rienzi (1837-40)
  - The Flying Dutchman (1840-41)
- 1842 Dresden
  - Tannhäuser (1842-45)
  - Lohengrin (1843-48)
- 1849 Weimar/Zurich
- Published Writer (1849-51)
- Art and Revolution
- The Artwork of the Future
- Opera and Drama
- Jewry in Music
- Began work on the “Ring”
  - Tristan und Isolde (1857-59)
  - Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (1861-67)
- 1866 Minna Dies
  - Cosima Liszt von Bülow
- 1871-76 Bayreuth
  - “Ring” Performed in entirety
  - Parsifal (1857-1882)

Contributions

- The Verdi of Germany
- Music only for Dramatic Expression
- Music Drama
  - Gesamtkunstwerk
    - Total, Complete, Joint Artwork
    - Inner: Orchestra
    - Outer: Sung Words
  - Leitmotif
    - Association with a particular person, thing, emotion or idea
    - Accumulates Significance
  - Infinite Melody
- Dissolution of Tonality